



Community Advisory Committee
of the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council

Communiqué

Saturday, June 4, 2005

Communities heard more about the Living Murray

Community members from Victoria, South Australia and NSW gathered in Mildura today to learn more about the Living Murray Business Plan. The plan guides the implementation of the Ministerial Council's decision on a First Step for the Living Murray and outlines how water will be recovered, managed, accounted for and delivered to the six Living Murray significant ecological assets.

Attending the forum was Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council Chairman Minister Warren Truss, Victorian Minister for the Environment John Thwaites and South Australia's Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald. The Ministers were present to outline how they will work together to implement the First Step Decision.

The Living Murray Business Plan details how the \$500 million commitment by the Australian, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and ACT governments will be implemented. The plan will provide strategic direction as well as guiding planning and decision making on an annual basis.

Key elements of the Business Plan include:

- water recovery
- water application
- consultation and communications.

The Ministers noted that a major focus of the plan is the cost effective, permanent, recovery of water to achieve the environmental objectives at the six significant ecological assets. Feasibility assessments of infrastructure improvement projects for water recovery are currently underway. Many of these projects reduce water 'losses' from evaporation and seepage.

Water application will be managed through Asset Environmental Management Plans and a Living Murray Environmental Watering Plan. There will be a single Asset Environmental Management Plan for each of the six significant ecological assets, which will detail strategic long-term objectives as well annual priorities.

The Living Murray Environmental Watering Plan will provide a framework for managing available environmental water across the River Murray system to meet the objectives across the Assets.

The Ministers also stated their commitment to consultation and communication to ensure there is opportunity for input in implementing the First Step for the Living Murray. This would

ensure the consideration of a diverse range of views when making decisions around water recovery and the significant ecological assets.

The community leaders forum was a joint initiative of the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council's Community Advisory Committee and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission.

Smaller forums are proposed to be held around each of the significant ecological assets in the future. These will cover similar information about the Living Murray Business Plan.

For more information on the Living Murray: www.thelivingmurray.mdbc.gov.au

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