



David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

Media statement

November 22, 2016

David Littleproud MP: Revised Murray-Darling Basin Plan doesn't go far enough to support to Qld

THE Murray-Darling Basin Authority has today released its proposed amendments but Maranoa MP David Littleproud said the plan doesn't support Queensland communities enough, as a result of the state water minister's no-show at important talks last week.

In the Condamine/ Balonne catchments, the amended Murray-Darling Basin Plan proposes to reset recovery targets from 142 gigalitres to 100 gigalitres.

"This is more achievable when compared to the previous target but I believe the remaining 49 gigalitres – required from both the Condamine/Balonne and the Border Rivers catchments – doesn't go far enough in providing security for the George, Goondiwindi and Dirranbandi communities," Mr Littleproud said.

Last Friday, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Group – which oversees the MDBA and is comprised of all State Government Water Ministers and the Federal Government's Water Minister – met to make crucial recommendations.

"It was an absolute disgrace Queensland's State Water Minister Dr Anthony Lynham failed to attend last week's important Murray-Darling Basin meeting as that meeting hashed out what was to be announced," Mr Littleproud said.

"Queensland's contribution to this meeting was the Minister Lynham's one-hour phone-in. That was it.

"Minister Lynham's no-show meant Queensland communities like St George and Dirranbandi – communities which rely on the Murray-Darling Basin for their very survival – were abandoned.

"All the other states got a seat at the table, but all Queensland could manage was a phone call, so we've been sold out by our own state government.

"While I'm pleased by the targets reduction – and that further recovery is now within the realm of possibility – it still doesn't go far enough to support Queensland economies, particularly in St George and Dirranbandi.

"We now know NSW has potentially over-recovered up to 49 gigalitres from the Macquarie and Naomi catchments and I see this as an opportunity for Queensland to negotiate with NSW.

"I'm calling on Minister Lynham to actually do something for Queensland and reach out to the Federal Water Minister and the NSW Water Minister to negotiate our remaining target.

"Ultimately, there needs to be flexibility in the MDB Plan so long as the end game of supplying South Australia is met, then I think the states should be able to negotiate their targets between themselves. This is something that needs to be considered as part of the upcoming consultation before the amendments are finalised and I also call on Minister Lynham to work with me on this."

Mr Littleproud believes that part of the current 49 gigalitre recovery target could be negotiated with NSW as well as looking to investment in infrastructure and technologies and identifying unnecessarily underutilised licences to reach the target.

"We need to overcome the economic uncertainty in St George and Dirranbandi and work with these communities to get them back on their feet. This just doesn't impact irrigators – it's the whole community that will be affected and we can't sit by and witness any more pain," he said.

"Water is a precious resource and we need sustainable management of our rivers, but not at the expense of these communities, which have done their fair share in the heavy lifting and contributed greatly towards our nation's economy."

FACT BOX:

1. The MDB plan previously required the recovery target of 142 gigalitres in the Condamine/Balonne catchments, from which 65 gigalitres was recovered.
2. The new target for the Condamine/Balonne is now 100 gigalitres, meaning another 35 gigalitres needs to be recovered - instead of 77 gigalitres under the original target.
3. The amended MDB Plan, means that a further 14 gigalitre recovery is required from the Border Rivers catchment.
4. This means Queensland will need to recover another 49 gigalitres in total.
5. In NSW, there is an over-recovery of potentially up to 49 gigalitres.
6. The MDBA's 11-week consultation period has now commenced. You can make a submission before 5pm on February 10, 2017 at:
Online at www.mdba.gov.au/BPamendments

Via email to submissions@mdba.gov.au

By post to Basin Plan Amendment Submissions, Murray-Darling Basin Authority, GPO Box 2256, Canberra ACT 260.

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