



**David Littleproud MP**  
Federal Member for Maranoa

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

31 March 2022

### **Federal Budget keeps communities and jobs at the heart of the Basin Plan**

Federal MP David Littleproud has welcomed a new instalment to the Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package as part of the Federal Budget.

“We’ve made great strides in the past 18 months to put people back at the centre – putting a stop to buybacks, empowering local people to improve their stretch of river and boosting the economic outlook of their towns and businesses,” Mr Littleproud said.

“This investment in our regional and rural communities is about maintaining the momentum, and the cornerstone measure to achieve this is *Healthy Rivers – Healthy Communities*, a \$97 million grant program that will keep delivering real, on-ground benefits to communities while improving the health of our rivers.”

Grants between \$100,000 and \$5 million will be available to community groups, the irrigation industry, LGA’s, Murray-Darling Basin stakeholders, and state governments after 1 July 2022 to build stronger, more vibrant regional economies and communities, improve the health of rivers and wetlands, and enhance environmental outcomes through targeted infrastructure investment.

“This new grant program is a demonstration that water recovery is not the only way to achieve good environmental outcomes,” Mr Littleproud said.

“We’re also expanding the popular On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme with a \$16 million extension, so livestock and horticultural farmers who have been impacted by natural disasters, drought or recurring severe weather events can access it.

“Extending the program for another year means farmers right across Australia who need support to build their resilience can access every last drop of available funding to install pumps, tanks, dams and bores.”

The expanded scheme will be varied to support eligible farmers with assets affected by natural disasters to replace or repair infrastructure.

Additional measures in the 2022 package include:

- ) **Modernising Murray River Systems initiative:** \$2.6 million to 2023-24 to improve water security for all water users by optimising the management of rivers across the southern Basin.
- ) **Progressing Murray–Darling Basin water markets for our future:** \$2.1 million in 2022-23 for detailed development work to implement early actions to improve water markets.

- ) **Building community confidence in water compliance:** putting boots on the ground to strengthen community links with the Inspector General of Water Compliance.
- ) **Reducing infrastructure network system losses within the Murray Irrigation system** measure of \$35.1 million to 2023-24, which will improve existing water delivery infrastructure across the Murray Irrigation network.

“These measures provide the boost Basin communities need to generate jobs, economic activity and improve the health of rivers and wetlands while maintaining our commitment to implementing the Basin Plan,” Mr Littleproud said.

“Hundreds of projects have rolled out across the Basin under the Economic Development Program and Healthy Rivers Programs to the benefit of those who live and rely on the Basin every day.

“It’s this sort of practical, on-ground package that makes a real difference for the thousands of Maranoa locals who have had to deal with the devastating challenges of drought, Covid-19, fires and now floods.

“I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and hitting the road from town to town, supporting Maranoa’s community members to access these initiatives so together we can deliver the best possible outcomes for our region.”

## ENDS

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### MEDIA NOTES:

What are the measures?

- ) **2022 Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package:**
  - **Healthy Rivers – Healthy Communities:** \$97 million to 2023-24 for grants to community groups, the irrigation industry, Basin stakeholders, and state governments to improve local river health, enhance environmental outcomes, and strengthen and diversify regional economies and Basin communities.
  - **Modernising Murray River Systems initiative:** \$2.6 million to 2023-24 to improve water security for all water users by optimising the management of rivers across the southern Basin.
  - **Progressing Murray–Darling Basin water markets for our future:** \$2.1 million in 2022-23 for detailed development work to implement early actions to improve water markets.
  - **Building community confidence in water compliance:** initiatives to enable the Inspector General of Water Compliance to fulfil his legislative functions, including an on-ground field operations team.
- ) **On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme extension:** \$16 million in 2022-23 to allow eligible farmers to claim a rebate towards water resilient infrastructure following natural disasters and severe weather events, not just drought.
- ) **MYEFO measures:**

- **Reducing infrastructure network system losses within the Murray Irrigation system:** \$35.1 million to 2023-24 to improve existing water delivery infrastructure across the Murray Irrigation network.
- **Indigenous River Rangers extension:** \$12.2 million to 2024-25 to deliver real jobs on the ground and support Indigenous people get more involved in river management and waterway health.
- **Critical renewal work for the Hume Dam:** \$6.7 million to 2027-28 will ensure dam safety requirements are met and water entitlement holders continue to receive water allocations through effective management and maintenance of Hume Dam.
- **Improve river modelling:** \$66 million for work to upgrade Murray–Darling Basin river models to help water managers make timelier, more reliable and transparency water management decisions.