

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Water



Wednesday, 27 April 2022

LOCAL LEADERS GUIDE DISCUSSION ON MURRAY DARLING PROJECT

The Andrews Labor Government is engaging community leaders in the state's north ensuring local priorities inform improvements to the health of floodplains along the Murray and Goulburn rivers as part of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Minister for Water Lisa Neville today announced a Consultative Committee ensuring communities plays a key role in the proposed Victorian Constraints Measures Program.

The committee, to be chaired by Patrick McNamara, will include members from environment, farming and Traditional Owner groups, who will oversee the development of a study exploring benefits and risks of the program.

Across the Murray-Darling Basin, dam and weir construction has reduced natural flooding events resulting in river channels becoming disconnected from the floodplain.

While ecological benefits of re-instating environmental water to lower floodplains and wetland habitats could be significant, there are concerns about the impacts to public and private assets such as roads, bridges, fences, pumps and private land.

The Committee will examine the feasibility of allowing higher environmental water flows in the Goulburn River from Lake Eildon to the River Murray, and in the River Murray downstream of Lake Hume.

This work is expected to be completed by December 2022 and funded by the Australian Government as part of the Basin Plan. Constraints programs are also underway in New South Wales and South Australia.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"Victoria's position has always been that we won't flood private land without consent, or compulsorily acquire land or easements – and that position won't be changing".

"We've said that any constraints measures need comprehensive and detailed community input – and this will take time."

"Before any measures are put in place communities need to be appropriately engaged, cost and benefits clear and any risks to communities or river health managed."