



30 November 2022

### **AWBA calls for extension to SDL Adjustment Mechanism Deadline**

The Australian Water Brokers Association ('AWBA') notes the release of the Murray Darling Basin Authority ('MDBA') 2022 SDLAM Assurance Report. The report assesses progress of proposed measures to achieve water recovery targets for the environment without reducing the consumptive pool available to irrigators. The MDBA report estimates a shortfall in supply measures of 190 to 315 GL per year against the 605GL per year target by 30 June 2024.

It appears that the shortfall essentially arises from the anticipated completion date of the proposed measures. Some measures have been delayed by factors such as construction delays and others by the need to formalise operational agreements.

The AWBA welcomes the MDBA's recognition that an extension to the 2024 deadline could allow for the delivery of all measures as proposed.

The AWBA is of the view that it's vital to focus on getting the right outcome rather than achieving an arbitrary deadline. There is nothing magical about 30 June 2024. Current arrangements allow for potential water buybacks if the 30 June 2024 deadline is not achieved.

It seems obvious that the optimal outcome is to achieve environmental targets while minimising the amount of water removed from the consumptive pool. As such it's vital to minimise any water buybacks that might arise from the failure to achieve the current 30 June 2024 deadline, given the impact this would have on basin communities.

Once water is removed from the consumptive pool it's difficult to see it being returned. As such the AWBA strongly advocates for a delay to the current 30 June 2024 deadline for assessment of the SDL Adjustment Mechanism in the interests of achieving a win-win outcome for irrigators and the environment.

The AWBA is an apolitical body representing the interests of water brokers and the efficient allocation of consumptive water across the broader irrigation industry via market mechanisms. We seek to get the best outcomes for our members and the communities and constituents that they serve through professional standards, advocacy and education. AWBA members live and work in regional areas and are part of the communities affected by buy backs and the resulting reduction of water for agricultural production and the consequential social and economic impact to the community.

Authorised by: Executive Committee, AWBA

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*The Associations primary role is to set and maintain the highest standards of professional practice, education, ethics and professional conduct for its members and the broader water broking industry.*