

## Murray Irrigation to work with new Albanese Government

Murray Irrigation has emphasised the need for ongoing collaboration with rural communities by the new Australian Government as we enter a critical phase in water reform.

Acting chair Noel Baxter has congratulated new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Labor colleagues on their success in Saturday's federal election, saying Murray Irrigation looks forward to working with their Government on the continuing implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan as we rapidly approach the 2024 review period.

“Under the Basin Plan, significant volumes of water have been returned to the environment, and our company has continually supported efforts to ensure we have a healthy working basin.

“During this next vital period in the reform process we must ensure everyone works together so we achieve a balance where the environment and our rural communities are protected. Getting this right is essential,” Mr Baxter said.

He added when the Albanese Cabinet are sworn in, Murray Irrigation will invite the new Water Minister to the NSW Murray region to help the Minister gain an understanding of our unique issues.

“Through our Regional Recovery Prospectus, Murray Irrigation has ‘shovel ready’ projects that can provide environmental water, while at the same time protecting our rural communities. That should be the ultimate aim in the reform process, and we want to play a role in ensuring it is delivered,” Mr Baxter said.

He highlighted that when the Basin Plan was legislated by the Labor Government in 2012, there was the promise of flexibility and adaptability throughout its implementation.

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Murray Irrigation

“We have not seen the level of adaptability that can be achieved, and this will be part of our discussions with the new Minister.

“Amid increasing global concerns around food shortages and the frightening implications for some developing nations, as well as our domestic cost of living pressures, it is important that Australia continues to grow food for our own needs and to boost international supply. Our region’s farmers can play a vital role if we effectively manage existing water supplies. And with growing climate change concerns, effective management becomes even more imperative,” he said.

Mr Baxter said Murray Irrigation would also be discussing with the new Government the \$35.1 million funding that was promised for the Murray Reconnected Floodplains project, stating “we will be keen to secure this funding so the project can proceed”.

He also reinforced Murray Irrigation’s position on water buybacks.

“We reiterate our firm position that buybacks should not be part of any future policy. The social and economic damage from previous buybacks must not be repeated; and do not need to be repeated. We look forward to ongoing support on this stance from the New South Wales and Victorian Governments.

“When the Board of Murray Irrigation has the opportunity to discuss the Basin Plan and water management with the new Minister, we will outline how recovery targets can be achieved with projects such as those included in our Regional Recovery Prospectus, without further damaging our farming and rural communities,” Mr Baxter concluded.