



## INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE BASIN

**MEDIA RELEASE: 4 September 2020**

### **Minister Releases Final Basin Socio-Economic Assessment Panel Report**

The Final Report by the Independent Panel assessing the social and economic conditions in the Murray Darling Basin has today been released by the Minister for Resources, Water and Regional Australia the Hon. Keith Pitt MP.

Basin communities have been the Independent Panel's focus throughout the review process and their input has strengthened the Final Report and sharpen our recommendations. The Panel has had hundreds of engagement opportunities throughout the report process, including written submissions, public meetings and community small group discussions.

Panel Chair Robbie Sefton said "We were heartened by the depth of engagement with the Panel's review and appreciate the many helpful submissions and comments we have received on our draft report. There were deeply held and diverse views on the current state of play and what is required going forward. The diversity of views reflects the complexity of the issues and the differences in lived experiences in the Basin. All were considered in preparing this final report."

The Panel's review was presented to government and found that a change of approach is needed to better support communities in the Basin and to shift the focus on outcomes towards more adaptive management where communities have a greater say in matters affecting their future.

The Panel's Final Report's 22 recommendations are focused on the future, and call for significant and sustained investment in rural and regional communities by successive Governments.

"We highlight a compelling case for investment in rural and regional communities now—working towards rebuilding resilience and more diverse economies. At the same time, we urge a slowing of the pace of planned water recovery expenditure. This dual approach gives communities both the space and opportunity to address pressing instances of distress, to find and embed positive strategies for economic development, and to take stock of the ecological responses given their lags and the impact of drought in many parts of the Basin." Ms Sefton said.

The recommendations aim to minimise the harm that could come from a business as usual approach to planned water recovery, where set timelines are relentlessly pursued, and address the insufficient attention to distributional impacts particularly on those most vulnerable in the Basin.

The Final Report and all 22 recommendations is available on the Panel website at: <https://www.basin-socio-economic.com.au/>

A summary of the Final Report can be found here: [Summary Report \(Accessible\) 6,413KB.pdf](#)

A summary of work commissioned by the Panel is here <https://www.basin-socio-economic.com.au/resources-for-the-independent-panel> and the full technical reports as well as submissions received on the Draft Report are here <https://www.basin-socio-economic.com.au/draft-report-submission>

Today the Minister for Resources, Water and Regional Australia also released the government's response to the Independent Panel's report and an investment package. The Panel will work through the government's response.

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