

**RIVER MURRAY  
WATER  
ALLOCATION PLAN**

For further info  
please contact:

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## *Developing a Concept Statement for the draft Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse in South Australia*

### **WHAT IS A WATER ALLOCATION PLAN?**

A water allocation plan is a statutory document that sets out the rules on how water resources will be managed in a particular area. It also determines how much water will be allocated to consumptive uses, such as irrigation and domestic use, as well as providing water to the environment. A new draft Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse (draft plan) is being developed which will set out rules around how water can be taken and used from the River Murray in South Australia, including the rules around water allocations and transfers. The South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board (the Board) is responsible for the development of this draft plan.

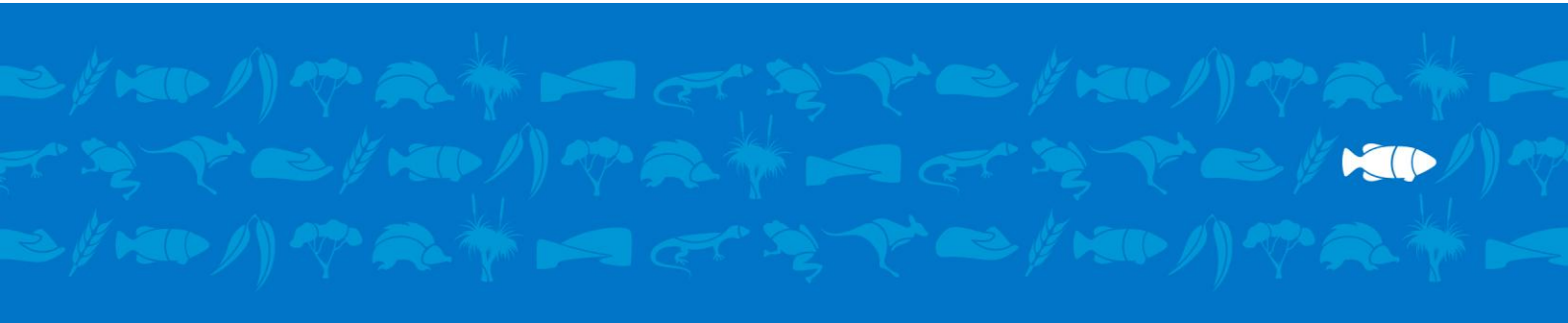
The draft plan will provide for the long-term management of the water resource. It does not address the current drought situation and short-term decisions on allocations. The draft plan will build on lessons learned from the drought response, but its development will remain a separate process.

The River Murray Watercourse currently has a water allocation plan that was approved in 2002. Water allocation plans are developed in line with the criteria in the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (the NRM Act). The Act requires that water allocation plans are reviewed at least once every five years and if required, a new plan can be developed. A review of the current plan was undertaken in 2007, with the review highlighting the need for a new plan. A copy of this review can be found on the Board's website [www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au](http://www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au)

### **HOW IS A WATER ALLOCATION PLAN DEVELOPED?**

The Board develops a water allocation plan with guidance from the community and against criteria specified in legislation. The NRM Act specifies the process that must be followed to develop a water allocation plan, including requirements to consult with the community. The Act also has specific technical requirements that a water allocation plan must meet, including the need for investigations to ensure the resource is sustainably managed.





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There are three main phases in developing a water allocation plan. Phase one is the development of a Concept Statement. Phase two is the development of a draft plan. The third phase is the finalisation of the draft plan following extensive community consultation.

This fact sheet explores in detail the first phase of the plan's development - the Concept Statement. Future fact sheets will explore the other phases and provide further explanation.

**WHAT IS A CONCEPT STATEMENT?**

A Concept Statement sets out the proposed content of a draft water allocation plan, the issues to be investigated and the consultation that will be undertaken in developing that draft plan. A Concept Statement does not explore the issues to be discussed in a draft water allocation plan in detail, nor does it attempt to provide any management options. This level of detail is contained in the draft plan, which will be discussed extensively with the community.

The contents of the Concept Statement have been developed through consultation with the Board's Natural Resource Management Groups, the River Murray Advisory Committee, the River Murray Water Allocation Plan Community Advisory Committees, the Board and its staff, and the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation.

The following table broadly summarises what is contained in the Concept Statement for the draft plan. A list of proposed assessments to be undertaken are detailed in the Concept Statement, including technical, social,

economic and environmental assessments. The information gained through these assessments will be used to assist in making decisions on proposed management options during the development of the draft plan.

<b>Summary of what will be in the draft plan</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What and where are the known water-dependent ecosystems</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An assessment of the effect of River Murray water use in areas outside of the region</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An assessment of the capacity of the water resource to meet current and future demands</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria for the allocation of water to different uses</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria for the taking and use of water</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria for the transfer of water allocations and entitlements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A list of activities that require a permit to proceed and any associated management actions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring requirements for licence holders and for the water resource in general</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments based on technical, social, economic and environmental issues</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed changes to other plans and legislation</li> </ul>



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## HOW CAN I GET A COPY OF THE CONCEPT STATEMENT?

The Concept Statement can be downloaded from the Board's website [www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au](http://www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au) or by calling 08 8532 1432. Copies can also be obtained at the Board's offices.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

If you would like to find out more about the development of the draft plan or make comment on the content of the Concept Statement please see the opportunities listed below.

- Written Submissions

Written submissions on any proposed changes or comments relating to the Concept Statement can be directed to Bianca Lewis at the Board (contact details below). All written submissions received will be considered and the required changes made to the Concept Statement as a result of these submissions. Written submissions need to be received by **October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008**. Please send all written submissions to:

Bianca Lewis  
South Australian Murray Darling Basin  
Natural Resources Management Board  
PO Box 2343  
Murray Bridge SA 5253

- Stakeholder Workshops

Due to the vast number of licence holders and other individuals that are covered by this water allocation plan, targeted workshops will be held with key representative organisations and industries to assist them to inform their members or affiliates about the Concept Statement.

- Public Meetings

A number of public meetings will be held at various locations spanning the length of the River, providing all interested parties with the opportunity to hear more about the draft plan and the Concept Statement, to ask questions of the Board and to make comment on the proposed content of the Concept Statement. Public Meetings to discuss the Concept Statement will be held as follows:

### Blanchetown

11<sup>th</sup> September 7pm – 9pm  
Rural Transaction Centre, 2 Shaw Street.

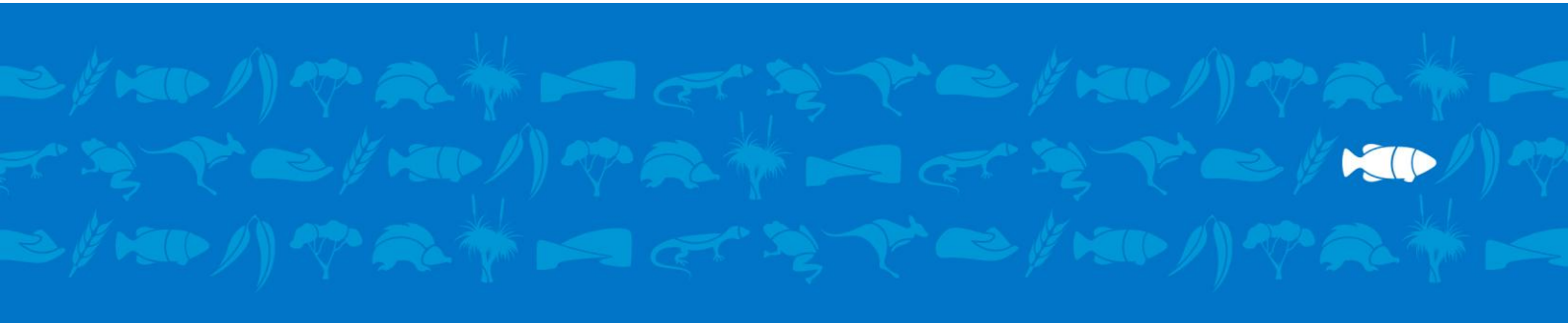
### Murray Bridge

16<sup>th</sup> September 7pm – 9pm  
Dundee's Wildlife Park Conference  
Rooms, Jervois Road.

### Berri

24<sup>th</sup> September 7pm – 9 pm  
Berri Resort Conference Room, Riverview  
Drive.





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**NEXT STEPS**

Following the receipt of submissions on the Concept Statement, all the comments received will be reviewed and changes made as appropriate to the Concept Statement. The Board can then progress with developing the draft plan. To do this, a series of Information and discussion papers will be developed to highlight a range of topics relevant to the draft plan and provide the community with information to make informed decisions about its content. An indicative timeline of the phases to develop the draft plan is presented below.

Regular media and website updates will keep the community informed of where the Board is at in the process.

