



LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

**Submission to the Australian Government Productivity Commission
Murray-Darling Basin Plan Five-year assessment
Productivity Commission Draft Report Overview and Recommendations
Submitted online by Leeton Shire Council 10 October 2018**

Leeton Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Australian Government's Productivity Commission on its 'Draft Report on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Five-Year Assessment'.

Leeton Shire Council overall supports the direction of the Productivity Commission's Draft Report. Good principles of working towards a healthy and productive river system that aims to balance the needs of Basin communities and the environment, the need for better governance and transparency, stronger community engagement and avoidance of any additional costs to tax payers through future improved management are inherent throughout the Report.

The comments contained in our submission focuses on two particular topics – these are supply measures and water resource planning.

1) Supply Measures

Leeton Shire Council supports the use of supply measure projects which has determined a proposed SDL adjustment increase of 605GL.

It is important that there is an integrated management plan for these projects to ensure that social, economic and environmental aspects are safeguarded during every project phase. This includes a process to assess if the individual supply measures offer 'value for money' and ensuring that any additional costs to tax payers are not incurred through implementation of the Basin Plan.

In achieving a balanced outcome, extensive and ongoing community, landholder, and industry and expert input through a range of consultation, communication and engagement methods (where feasible) is also critical. This will assist governments to further understand the benefits and potential risks and implications of the projects and ensure that any third party impacts are identified and appropriately mitigated before the projects are fully implemented.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of projects is required throughout every project stage to ensure the integrity of the projects is maintained and that balanced social, economic and environmental outcomes are achieved.

2) Water Resource Planning

Where there are outstanding issues, we would support the negotiation of a pathway for granting extensions to the timelines for accrediting Water Resource Plans to give sufficient time for adequate community engagement and ensure quality of the Plans.

Again Leeton Shire Council would like to thank the Productivity Commission for the opportunity to provide input on its Draft Report through the public consultation session and through this submission process. Overall, the recommendations contained in the Draft Report are based on good principles and provides an opportunity for Basin governments to ensure balanced outcomes are achieved throughout implementation of the Basin Plan whilst restoring confidence in our communities.

Leeton Shire Council urges Basin governments and authorities to ensure strong engagement with local governments and our communities throughout implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. We look forward to receiving a copy of the Productivity Commission's final Report when it is released.

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