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## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Councils to deliberate economic neutrality and the 450GL

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LOCAL government representatives from throughout the Murray-Darling Basin will meet in Leeton in late August to look at the future of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Representative from the more than 100 councils located within the Basin will meet when the southern Riverina town hosts the Murray Darling Association's 74<sup>th</sup> National Conference and Annual General Meeting, occurring from Wednesday, August 29 to Friday, August 31 at the Leeton Soldiers Club.

The conference – themed Trust.Unity.Equity.GROWTH - comes at a time of renewed commitment to collaborative water management.

This time of unity follows 12 months of uncertainty in relation to sustainable diversion limits, allegations of water theft and the future of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

The conference will feature a variety of presenters, ranging from the newly appointed New South Wales' Natural Resource Access Regulator Chief Regulatory Officer, Grant Barnes to representatives from some of Australia's largest irrigation sectors, including Cotton Australia, the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia and Webster Limited.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and other statutory agencies will also be represented across two days of presentations and panel sessions.

In a first for the Murray Darling Association, the conference will feature an exhibition hall featuring displays from Snowy Hydro, National Irrigators Council, Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations and others, providing additional opportunities for conference delegates to interact with these groups and organisations.

The conference will also focus on increasing calls for a review of the definition of socio-economic neutrality, and a fair, equitable and agreed framework for assessing it in the context of Basin Plan implementation.

“This is your opportunity to engage with the key policy makers and hear from some of Australia’s biggest irrigators,” Leeton Shire Council mayor and Murray Darling Association Region 9 chair, Cr Paul Maytom said.

“Come along and have your say on the 450-gigalitre water recovery target, Sustainable Diversion Limit projects, how the Basin Plan defines socioeconomic neutrality and other issues that matter to the future of your region.”

Conference delegates will be treated to a Civic Reception Night Glow on the Wednesday night at the Leeton Racecourse and a Murrumbidgee Riverina Region study tour on the Friday, which will see attendees visit a number of industries and irrigation infrastructure assets.

Registrations for the event are now open.

Those wanting to attend the conference can register online at [www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au) or phone the association’s headquarters on (03) 5480 3805.

The Murray Darling Association’s board members are:

Albury City Council	Cr David Thurley	0419 510 274
Moira Shire Council	Cr Peter Mansfield	0428 574 433
Murray River Council	Cr Alan Mathers	0427 209 806
Wentworth Shire Council	Mayor Melisa Hederics	0447 817 871
Renmark Paringa Council	Cr Peter Hunter	0447 177 341
Alexandrina Council	Cr Barry Featherston	0417 808 565
Town of Walkerville	Cr David Shetliffe	0414 631 442
Northern Areas Council	Mayor Denis Clark	0408 148 725
Leeton Shire Council	Mayor Paul Maytom	0447 293 829
Gunnedah Shire Council	Cr John Campbell	0408 421 065
Balonne Shire Council	Mayor Richard Marsh	0409 692 299

ENDS

*For more information, contact Murray Darling Association Chief Executive Officer, Emma Bradbury on 0429 905 017 or Cr David Thurley on 0419 510 274.*