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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Halt to water recovery not the solution

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Local government's peak body in the Murray-Darling Basin has reacted with concern to a new report that calls for a halt to all publicly funded water recovery through irrigation efficiency programs. The Murray Darling Association says that the halt to water recovery is not the solution.

A group of 12 academics met in Adelaide on Monday and signed a document they have branded the Murray-Darling Declaration.

The group is also pushing for an audit of all Basin water recovery and the planned Sustainable Diversion Limit adjustments, and the creation of an independent scientific body to monitor and advise on meeting the targets of the 2007 Water Act.

The academics said the Basin Plan was failing to meet its environmental objectives and that for many water recovery infrastructure projects there was no scientific evidence they had increased stream flows.

Murray-Darling Association National President Cr David Thurley said the declaration highlighted known issues with the Basin Plan, but didn't propose detailed solutions.

"The MDA would be deeply concerned about the economic impact of any halt to publicly funded water recovery associated with irrigation infrastructure subsidies/grants," he said.

"The signatories to the Murray Declaration represent a collective of substantial knowledge across the individual signatories, and significant institutional capacity. We would like to encourage the signatories to collaborate with impacted communities to identify constructive solutions."

Cr Thurley said while the MDA shared the view that some of the projects underpinning the Sustainable Diversion Limit adjustment lacked detail, it was broadly supportive of the suite of supply measure projects.

He said all such projects would need to be developed and implemented in close consultation with local government and communities.

"The MDA represents local government and can provide comprehensive feedback on the impacts in communities, so we would encourage responsible governments and agencies to collaborate more closely with us," he said.

Councils and individuals interested in joining the MDA can contact the office on 03 5480 3805, or go to [www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au)

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*For more information, contact MDA CEO Emma Bradbury on 0429 905 017 or Cr David Thurley on 0419 510 274. All Region Chairs are also available for comment.*

**Contact information for the Chairs of the Murray Darling Association**

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