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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Murray Darling Association calls for stability and certainty under the Basin Plan

The Murray Darling Association recognises that with the current Senate Enquiry into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the recent changes in responsibilities for water, the politics around water management are in a dynamic state.

The MDA is supportive of the transfer of responsibility for water management to the newly created Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR), and is calling on all stakeholders to remain focused on ensuring balanced outcomes for our community and the environment.

The MDA continues to advocate for better balance of social, economic and environmental consideration and accountabilities under the Basin Plan. However, there is growing concern among members that calls to "Pause the Plan" risks giving rise to uncertainty amongst farmers and irrigators, local government and community partners, policy makers and other stakeholders across the basin.

"It is important that we recognise the positive outcomes that can continue to be delivered under this framework, and continue to push for the changes required to achieve balanced outcomes for our farmers and rural producers" CEO Emma Bradbury said. "The scheduled review in 2016 provides the opportunity to assess the progress of the plan."

National President, Cr Greg Toll added "Our members are concerned that a lack of certainty may contribute more to their already escalating problems. Pausing the plan will not necessarily address the critical issue of escalating water prices, and our farmers and local communities are looking for stability and certainty."

The Murray Darling Association backs the reinstatement of The Sustainable Rivers Audit, currently being considered by Barnaby Joyce MP, while continuing to call for more work to be done to quantify the social and economic impacts of the Plan.

[End]

For conservation and sustainable development