



# Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission Report

***The South Australian Government welcomes the report and thanks the Commissioner and his staff.***

31 January 2019

The health of the Murray-Darling Basin is of crucial importance to South Australians. The South Australian government will continue to be a strong advocate and partner to ensure that all Basin Plan governments work together to deliver the Murray-Darling Basin Plan including recovery of the full 3200 gigalitres as agreed by the plan.

The Commission's report stretches to some 700 pages, makes 44 recommendations and 111 findings and contains complex legal and water policy issues. It will require a comprehensive analysis before the government can issue a response in the best interests of all South Australians.

The government welcomes the Commissioner's confirmation that he does not doubt the constitutional validity of the *Water Act 2007 (Commonwealth)*. The government notes the findings and recommendations which relate to the scientific basis of the Plan and the operations of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. The government welcomes the focus on increased compliance and transparency and on Aboriginal engagement in water management.

Unlike other independent reports to government, very few of the recommendations are within South Australia's remit to implement alone. Rather, the recommendations are targeted at basin governments either collectively or individually, the Commonwealth, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and other bodies such as the Commonwealth Auditor-General.

The response to the report's findings cannot be developed in isolation from those bodies.

Most recommendations will require collective agreement by the Basin States and the Commonwealth Government. Many propose amendments to the *Water Act* and the Basin Plan and involve complex legal issues and will take some time to work through.

The Premier, the Hon Steven Marshall, has therefore written to the Prime Minister, and has called for a meeting of the COAG Murray-Darling Basin First Ministers, to consider findings in the Royal Commission and Productivity Commission reports regarding the governance and implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. The government has also provided copies of the report to all basin governments and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

While in discussion with basin governments and other relevant bodies, the South Australian Government will develop its own response to all recommendations which will be made publicly available.

The Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission Report is available at: [www.mdbrc.sa.gov.au](http://www.mdbrc.sa.gov.au)