Australian Government

Murray–Darling Basin Authority

Managing Water Scarcity in Australia's largest Basin

Andrew McConville

12th World General Assembly of INBO - 2024

Wednesday 9 October 2024

Covers an area of more than a million square kilometres

7,300 irrigated agriculture businesses

Home to 2.3 million Australians

16 internationally recognised and protected wetlands

Agriculture output worth more than $22 billion each year

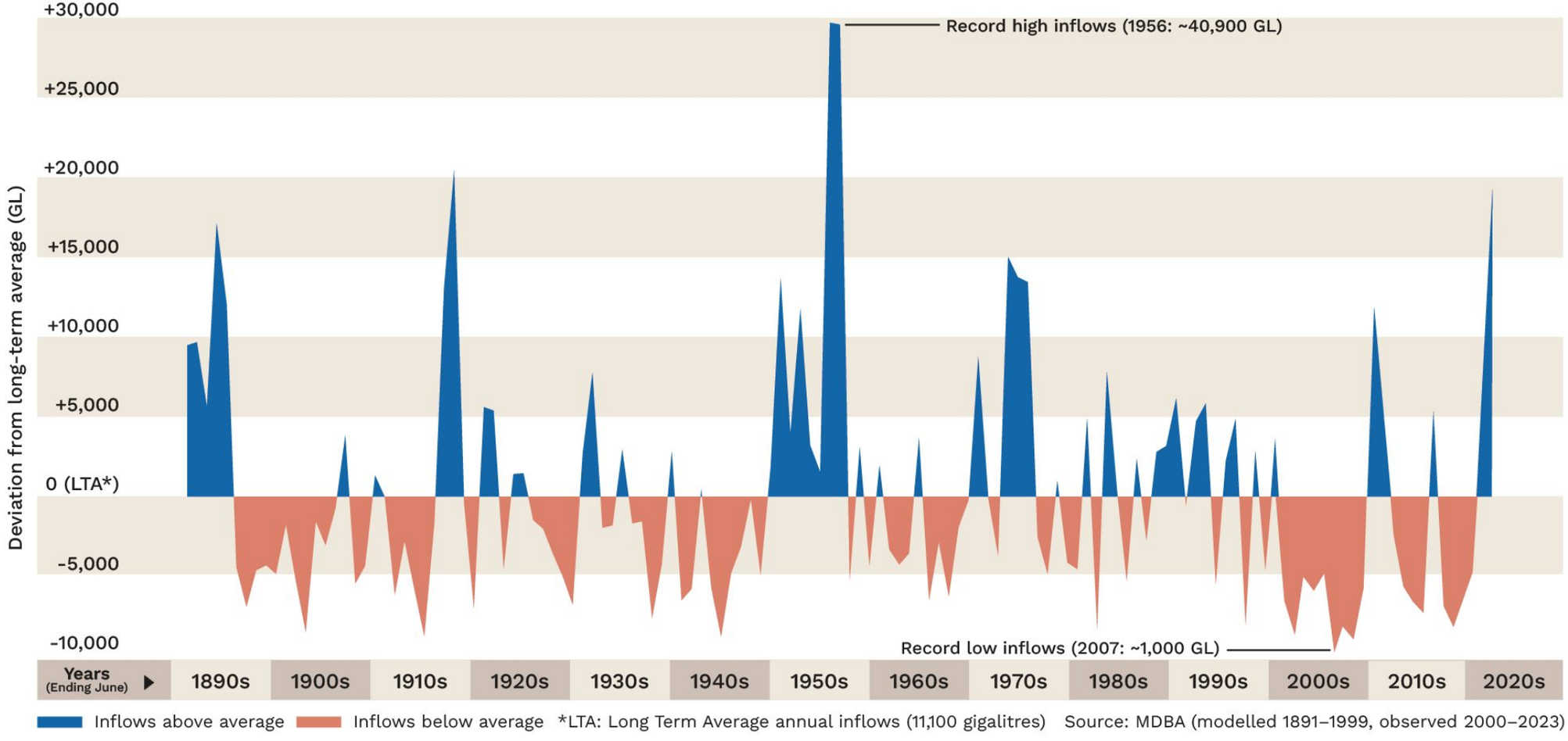
More than 40 First Nations

120 species of native and migratory birds

Tourism industry worth $11 billion each year

More than 50 species of native fish

Murray–Darling Basin inflows



The Basin Plan

The Basin Plan is a package of water management reforms

Governance, compliance and engagement

Water for the environment contributes to improving the health of the Basin's rivers, lakes, wetlands and floodplains

Compliance is essential to ensure water resources are managed sustainably and that all water users meet their water use obligations

Water trade enables the purchase and sale of water through efficient water markets, to enhance productivity while protecting the environment

Monitoring and accounting is ongoing across all water management components. This information is publically accessible

Sustainable diversion limits set how much water can be taken out of the Basin's waterways for use by communities and industries

Water resource plans are developed for catchments across the Basin to outline how water will be managed at a local level

Assessment and monitoring

Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs)

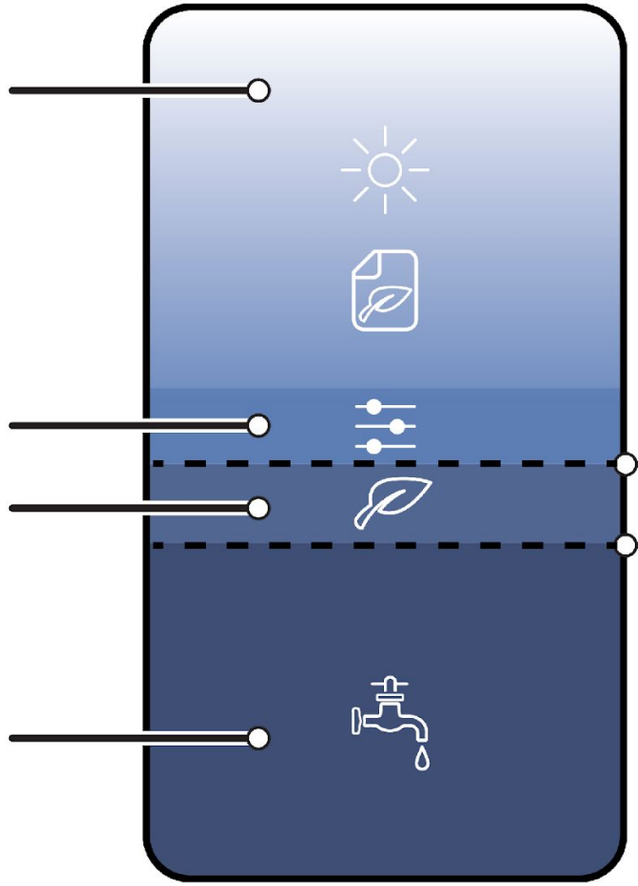
- Limits on consumptive water use
- Apply to surface water and groundwater
- Science-based targets
- Adaptive management

River water – Water in the river system to keep it healthy including pre-existing held environmental water, planned environmental water or water that is lost through evaporation, recharge to groundwater, floodplains or discharged to the sea

Other diversions and losses – Water that has been diverted or lost from the river system and hasn't been accounted for previously

Held environmental water – Water that has been recovered and is used to achieve environmental outcomes

Consumptive water – Used for drinking, irrigation, farming, manufacturing and mining

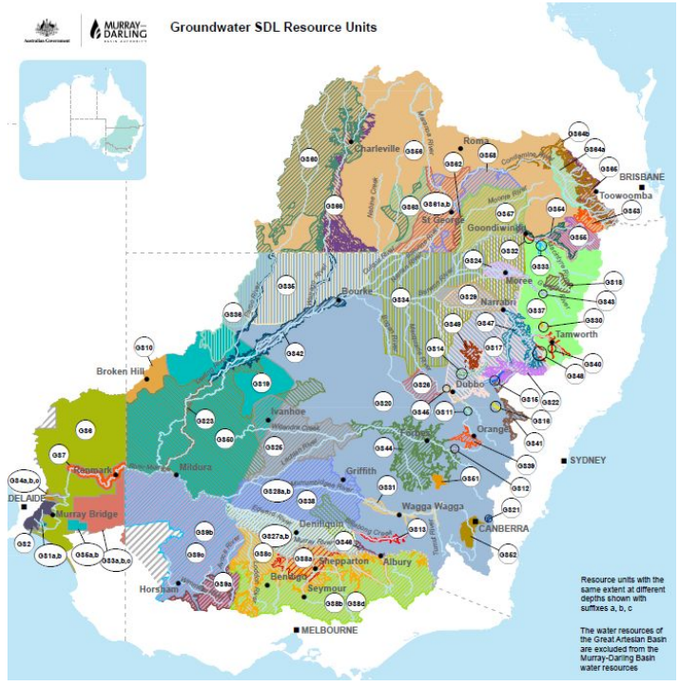


Baseline diversion limit (BDL)

Sustainable diversion limit (SDL) = BDL less water recovery

Sustainable Diversion Limit resource units

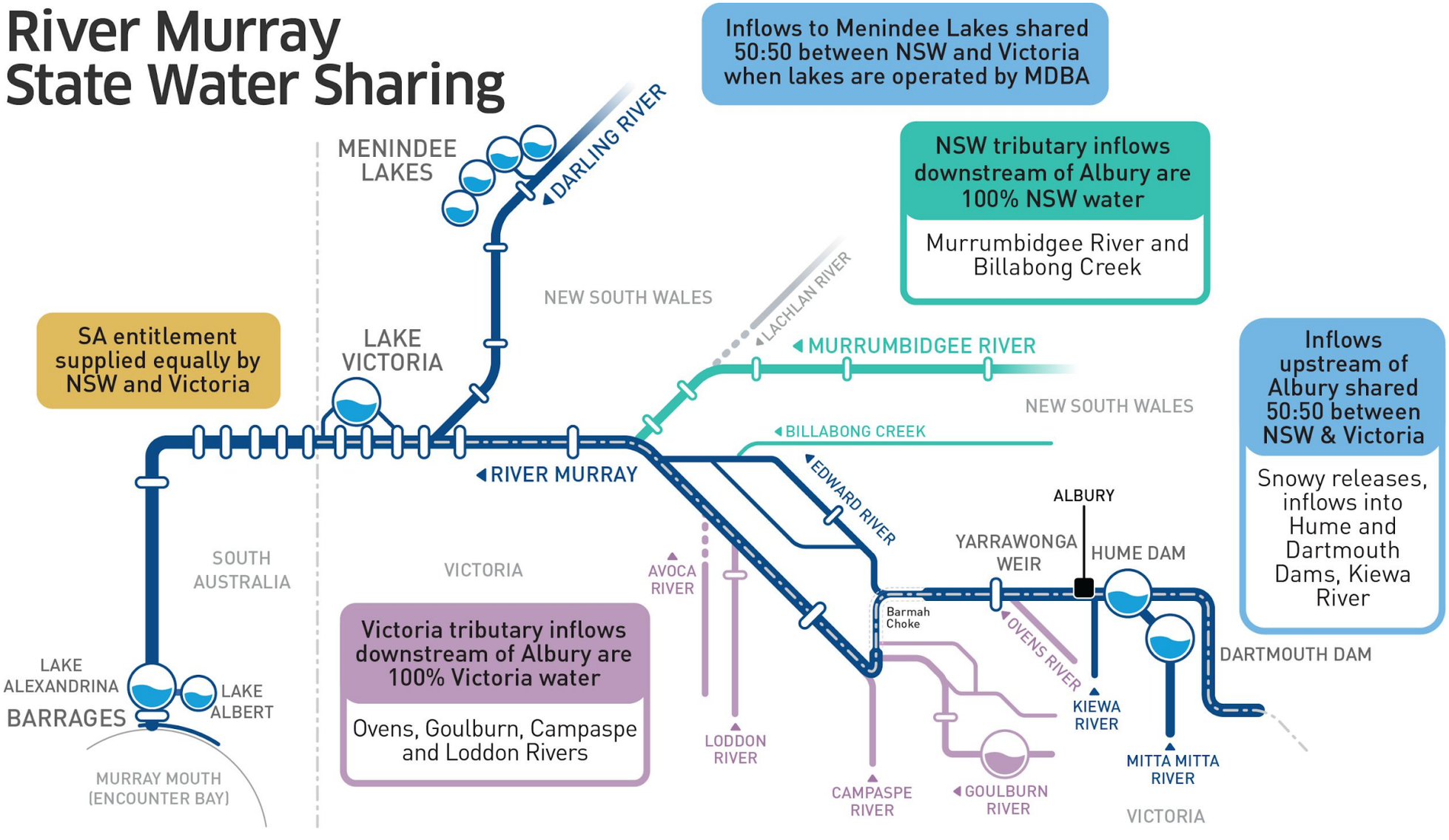
- Water limits apply to catchments
  - 29 surface water
  - 80 groundwater



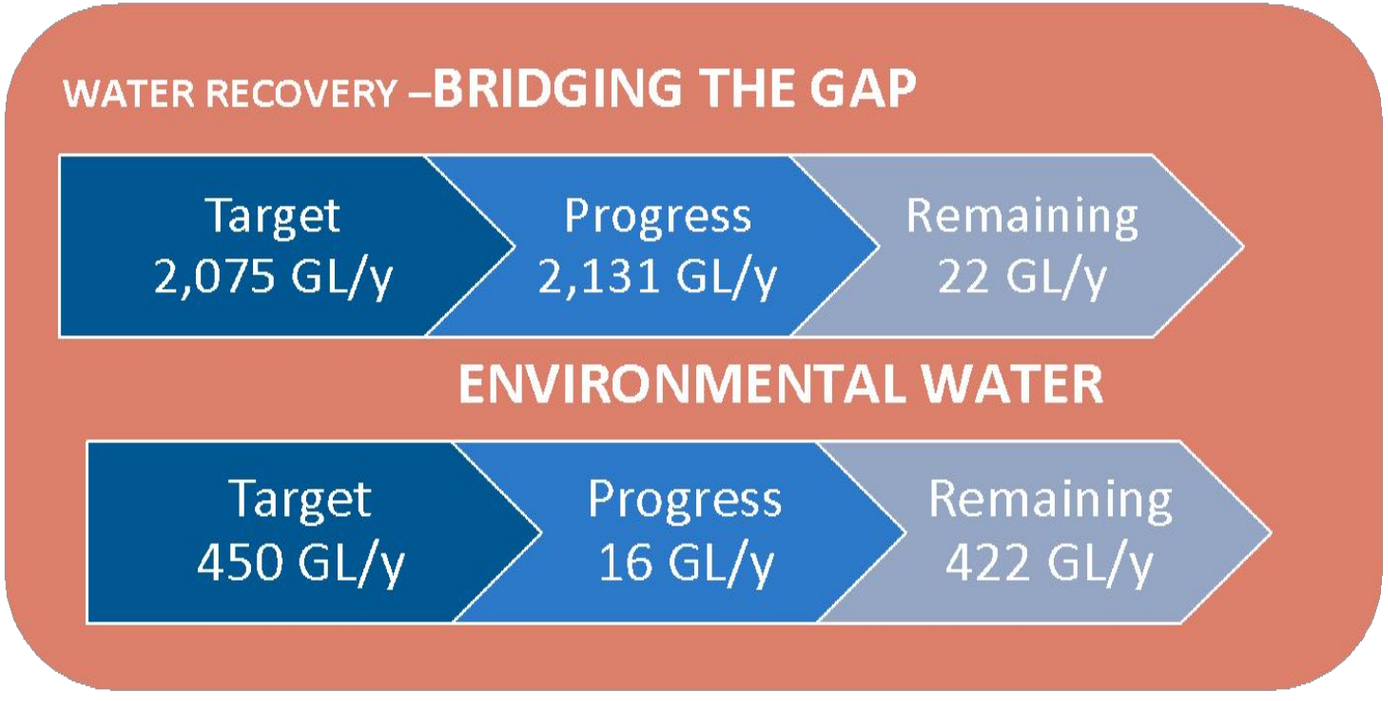
Water resource plans

- Legally binding
- Set out water rules, including sustainable diversion limits (SDLs)
- Local and First Nations knowledge
- 1 July 2019 deadline

River Murray State Water Sharing



Implementation progress - Successes



WATER RESOURCE PLANS

33 TOTAL | 29 in operation
across SA, QLD, VIC, ACT, NSW

4 in NSW still to be accredited

SUPPLY MEASURES (SDLAM)

37 TOTAL | 14 in operation

10 Additional projects expected by 2026.

Environmental Water Outcomes

Pelican breeding

49,500

nests sustained

at Lake Brewster

[eWater used in 2023]

eWater used to encourage

Golden Perch

spawning and migration

in Lower Goulburn River

'winter fresh'

REMINDER

Platypus build nests high on the bank to protect young from drowning

1,800GL

e-Water

delivered in **2023-24**


Rivers, for generations.

Australian Government

Murray–Darling Basin Authority

Thank you!

mdba.gov.au

1800 630 114

engagement@mdba.gov.au

Office locations – *First Nations Country*

Adelaide – *Kaurna Country*
Canberra – *Ngunnawal Country*
Goondiwindi – *Bigambul Country*
Griffith – *Wiradjuri Country*
Mildura – *Latji Latji Country*
Murray Bridge – *Ngarrindjeri Country*
Wodonga – *Dhudhuroa Country*