



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

WHAT ARE THE SDLAM PROJECTS AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

In the interests of protecting our communities, Coleambally Irrigation Co-operative Limited, Murray Irrigation Limited, and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited have come together to push for action on the implementation of the approved NSW Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) projects. in the wake of the NSW Government suspending consultation on a key project.

The SDLAM projects were created as a part of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan to protect communities and agricultural production while still delivering outcomes for the environment . Under legislation, at least 605GL can be saved via the projects and if they fail to deliver the required savings the onus will fall back to communities to offer up more productive water.

Which projects affect our region?

The projects need to be viewed as a package; they all need to be completed in order for the 605GL saving to be achieved. Just because a project is not in our region doesn't mean its failure won't affect us.

Why is it so important that the SDLAM projects are finished?

The SDL projects were created to protect the community and agricultural production outcomes whilst still delivering the environmental outcomes. The projects avoid the need for buyback which would have severe social and economic impacts on our communities.

What happens if they are not completed on time?

Should the approved SDL projects not be completed on time any shortfall may lead to further water purchases by the Commonwealth that are likely to come from the irrigators in our districts, which is completely unacceptable to our customers and the communities reliant on irrigation.

For instance, the NSW Murray Valley share of the 605GL is approximately 124 GL and the Murrumbidgee's is 162 GL. The loss of this amount of water from productive use would have dire consequences.

2024 is a long way off, why do we need to worry now?

These are major projects that have a very long lead time to completion, so action is needed now. The MDBA recently stated that it is "increasingly unlikely that the SDL adjustment program will be fully delivered by June 2024, putting the overall SDL adjustment at risk".

What about the community concerns about the projects?

We understand the concerns of affected stakeholders but view the potential long-term damage to the broader irrigation sector and flow on effects to communities to be very significant and therefore advocate the balancing of these competing needs.



What needs to happen?

We can't afford for Governments to 'kick the can down the road' by not pushing for the implementation of the projects. If we do nothing, our irrigators, regional economies, towns and communities will be left to carry their burden in 2024 when the MDBA reconciles progress and any shortfall reducing the sustainable diversion limits in the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys will be recovered through buybacks.

The NSW Government needs to:

- Engage with communities and implement without delay all approved SDL projects.
- Identify and implement alternate projects should existing projects be unachievable.
- Remove or amend legislation so that the timeframe is extended and/or the risk of buybacks does not occur.

What can you I do?

We call on everyone with an interest in the economy and community of our irrigation areas to engage with their government representatives to support them to act now to address this issue. For more information and details on how to support our communities, visit our websites:

- colyirr.com.au
- murrayirrigation.com.au
- mirrigation.com.au

