

Talking Points

- The Australian Government is committed to and has a plan for improving progress towards achievement of the 450 gigalitres to provide enhanced environmental outcomes in the Basin.
- Over \$1.5 billion is available in the Water for the Environment Special Account for the specific purpose of recovering 450 gigalitres.
- The First review of the Water for the Environment Special Account (2020) found that the recovery of 450 GL of additional environmental water was not on track to be achieved by 30 June 2024 without significant intervention.
- The way forward lies in an approach that maximises water recovery for the environment while minimising impacts on farmers and communities.
- That is why the Australian Government is recovering water through investment in off-farm water infrastructure which includes urban and industrial projects, rather than further buybacks that have impacted communities.
- Projects funded under the program will improve the efficiency of water delivery infrastructure and increase the volume of water available for irrigators and communities. They will also help us to reach our river health targets of returning 450 GL by June 2024.
- Minister Pitt has acknowledged that generating 450 gigalitres of water savings by 2024 is a tall order – but the government’s commitment is to push as hard as we can to make our irrigation networks as efficient as possible.
- Minister Pitt has called on Murray–Darling Basin states to nominate infrastructure projects through the Off-farm Efficiency Program (which includes urban and industrial projects), which can generate water savings for the environment without taking water from farmers. The MDB Ministerial Council has committed to and has a strategic focus on implementing the Basin Plan, including delivery of supply and constraints, efficiency (450 GL) and toolkit measures.