

MEDIA RELEASE

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Response to release of the Guide to the Murray Darling Basin Plan

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia says the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) report released today is an important step towards the aim of achieving whole-of-basin sustainable water management.

"Quantifying for the first time the environmental water needs of the system is important, but we must also recognise the needs of the communities and families whose livelihoods are tied to the Basin," said chief executive Stephen Strachan.

"The reductions in sustainable diversion limits are particularly high. We need time to assess the report and determine both the accuracy of the analysis and the potential impact on our sector.

"But we cannot shy away from the need for dramatic and widespread reform. Environmental sustainability is vital to the wine sector's reputation and prosperity and we need to back a system that safeguards the essential environmental needs of our river system alongside the legitimate activities of high-value irrigators."

Mr Strachan said the Government now needed to guarantee that:

- water would only be sourced from willing sellers
- it would take full account of likely community impacts
- the system of water buy-back would be simple, equitable and long-standing, to provide certainty.

A more detailed initial response can be found at www.wfa.org.au/Industry_updates.aspx. WFA will make a further response once it has digested the report and consulted with members.

Media enquiries: Nick Carne 0404 850 859 or nick@wfa.org.au