



SENATOR MALCOLM ROBERTS
ONE NATION SENATOR

A ONE NATION PLAN FOR THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN.

***“It is time for Australia to once again,
feed and clothe the world”***

April 2022

During my campaign for my return to the Senate in 2019, I learnt of the hardships that farmers all over the Murray Darling Basin were experiencing through the recent drought.

Astonishingly, the water needed to sustain our farming communities through these tough times was reportedly being **wasted** by Federal and State bureaucracies, **on disastrous** environmental projects **at the expense of productive farming**..

Upon being re-elected one of the priorities of my office was to understand the water crisis from the farmers' perspective, **listening to and learning** about how **the MDBA's plan** was working, and **not working**, in practice.

To get the knowledge needed from many perspectives, **I undertook extensive travel** through Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia over five trips. **There is an overwhelmingly consistent message**; the water crisis engulfing our rural regions within the MDB has been **caused by ill-conceived, politically motivated and unscientific government policy**.

The **world food crisis** requires an updated plan which will **restore our productive capacity** allowing Basin farmers to once again **feed and clothe the world**.

OUR PLAN FOR THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN

1. RESTORE THE COORONG

Originally rainfall in South Australia's South East flowed into the Coorong wetland & Lower Lakes, maintaining water quality. From 1864 to 2011 South Australia built drains to divert this flow away from the Coorong into the southern ocean.

This created productive farmland out of swamp land but caused the Coorong to become hypersaline. The South Australian Government has started a project to restore natural environmental flows away from the ocean back into the Coorong and Lower Lakes.

One Nation will provide \$1 billion from existing MDB funding to complete Stage Two of the South East Drains Restoration Project. The 400+GL of surface and aquifer flows created will count towards the remaining MDB Plan acquisition.

2. NO NEW WATER ACQUISITIONS

Projects currently underway when added to the new basin inflow from the South East Drains Restoration Project will complete water acquisition. No further water should be taken from farmers or communities.

3. PROTECT THE MENINDEE LAKES

Menindee Lakes are an internationally significant wetland known as the Kakadu of the South. Fed by Queensland tropical storms, they hold water 8 out of every 10 years. The MDBA has decimated this amazing wetland by draining the lakes twice in a failed attempt to flush the Coorong and keep the Murray mouth open. Menindee water should be used for the wetland, local irrigation and to support South Australian water entitlements.

One Nation will protect the Menindee Lakes, terminate the "new" Menindee plan, restore South Australia's water storage and protect local water use.

4. TRANSPARENCY IS CONFIDENCE

Low quality data on water inflows, outflows and takes in the Basin make it easy to find fault with other valleys who may actually be doing the right thing. This undermines trust in the Plan.

One Nation will restore transparency and confidence in the Plan by measuring all Basin inflows and outflows and publishing the data.

5. END WATER SPECULATION

A transparent register of water trades is mandated by the Water Act. The MDBA spent \$30m in 2012 trying to implement a register, failed and then simply gave up. One Nation introduced an amendment to require the register be created in 2021 and this was voted down by the ALP, Liberals and the Nationals.

One Nation will create a transparent and searchable register of water trades to out the speculators and restore fairness to the water market. Temporary water should only be available to irrigators using the water to cover water requirements for their crop.

6. THE 'WATER FOR LIFE' WEIR PROJECT

Town weirs hold water that is critical to rural towns and to the myriad of wildlife they support. Developing weirs to increase water independence of rural and regional centres will improve rural drought resilience while creating local employment.

One Nation will implement a Water for Life program to raise dam weirs to hold 5 years' supply.

This will include local environmental projects like fish ladders and carp eradication. Funding will be provided from the Infrastructure Fund and be built through the local Council with a strong emphasis on local contractors.

7. MANAGE THE LOWER LAKES AS FRESH EXCEPT IN SEVERE DROUGHT

The "Lower Lakes" – Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert - filled with fresh water from the Snowy in spring and early summer, and also from tropical storms coming down the Darling. During extreme drought the Murray ran dry and sea water filled the Lower Lakes. This preserved the health of the river by keeping the natural sulphur sediment in place.

One Nation believes the Lower Lakes need to be treated as primarily fresh, with periods of sea inundation only during the most extreme droughts.

8. BUILD LOCK ZERO AND PROTECT ADELAIDE'S WATER

Protecting Adelaide's water supply is a high priority. During extreme drought any seawater entry into the lakes must be prevented from moving up the Murray.

This requires a new lock near Wellington. An upgrade to the pipeline around the Lakes is required to ensure continuity of fresh water supply for communities and agriculture.

The barrages use concrete blocks as gates, these can be cheaply upgraded to water tanks to allow for much faster and more effective operation.

One Nation supports building lock zero near Wellington and upgraded water supply around both sides of the Lower Lakes.

9. SHUT DOWN THE COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL WATER OFFICE

Watering state land with federal water has led to terrible environmental damage in State forests. The Murray, Gouburn and Edwards rivers have suffered severe bank erosion and capacity reduction caused by sending environmental and conveyance water through at the wrong times for bank health.

One Nation will shut down the failed Commonwealth Environmental Water Office and return all environmental water to the States.

10. DOWNSIZE THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY

With the work of acquiring environmental flows completed, the Murray Darling Basin Authority is no longer required in it's current form.

Decisions around water allocations between States should be made by the MDB Ministerial Council, meeting as required to make decisions that should rightly be made by Ministers of the Crown and not bureaucrats.

The new Office of the Inspector General of Water Compliance should now take over to ensure compliance with the plan.

The Murray Darling Basin Authority should be downsized to an information gathering and reporting role only.

11. IRRIGATION WATER IS ENVIRONMENTAL WATER

Water acquisitions have turned large areas of formerly watered land into wastelands incapable of harbouring the native wildlife found naturally on watered farms.

During the drought farm dams and irrigation canals provided irreplaceable habitat and a water supply for native flora and fauna.

One Nation recognizes irrigation water has a triple benefit - irrigation, the environment and strengthening local communities.

12. INCREASE WATER ALLOCATIONS TO FEED AND CLOTHE THE WORLD

The global food crisis is getting worse with famine starting to take hold in some countries. Australia has an obligation to use the agricultural gifts we have been given to feed and clothe those in need.

Meanwhile fresh water is being sent out to sea over the barrages at three times the volume necessary to maintain river health. This is a criminal waste.

One Nation will increase water allocations to at least 110% of entitlement to increase production in response to the world food shortage.

13. BUILD MORE DAMS

Dam infrastructure is not keeping pace with Australia's population growth; we now have 10 million more Australians since we built our last major dam.

One Nation will build more dams to drought-proofing Australia.



Want more information?
See more details and our FAQ at
www.onenation.org.au/mdb

SENATOR MALCOLM ROBERTS
ONE NATION SENATOR
senator.roberts@aph.gov.au

WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO LIFE

The Murray Darling Basin supports two million Australians, producing \$25 billion in food and fibre to feed and clothe the world. In a time of a growing world food shortage, basin agriculture must be treated as a resource for the world to benefit from.

Our native flora and fauna have evolved adaptive and resilient strategies to survive during drought. Over-watering under the current negligent application of the plan is causing black water and killing native vegetation and habitat rather than saving it.

Misguided environmentalism has left the Coorong and Menindee Lakes as disaster zones, stripped of their former beauty by the mismanagement of our water resources. One Nation's science-based approach will restore environments without the need for taking any further water from irrigators.

Farmers are environmentalists. Irrigation water is environmental water!



I WANT YOUR THOUGHTS

I would appreciate your feedback on our Murray Darling Basin solutions. Please email me at senator.roberts@aph.gov.au or get in touch on my social media.

✉ GPO Box 228, Brisbane QLD 4001
☎ +61 7 3221 9099

🐦 /MRobertsQLD
📘 /malcolmrobertsonenation