

The Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism

The Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) is a program designed to achieve similar or improved environmental outcomes for rivers, wetlands and wildlife using less water. Part of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (Basin Plan), SDLAM can be achieved through supply measures, including constraints, or efficiency measures.

In 2017, the Basin states and the Australian Government agreed a package of 36 SDLAM projects across the southern connected Murray-Darling Basin, which aim to recover 605 GL of water each year for the river system.

Of these, the NSW Government is the lead or co-proponent for 21 projects. These projects are being delivered in collaboration with local communities and key stakeholders, including other Basin states, with funding from the Australian Government.

The SDLAM Acceleration Program

To date, 12 of NSW Government's SDLAM projects are complete or nearly complete and are delivering Basin Plan outcomes. The water recovered through these projects is already having positive impacts for Basin communities.

Building on this progress, the NSW Government is proposing to bring forward \$320 million worth of its remaining SDLAM projects through the NSW SDLAM Acceleration Program (the Acceleration Program). This program will remove barriers and streamline construction funding arrangements to allow the delivery of five projects by June 2024.

The projects being accelerated include the:

- Sustainable Diversion Limit offsets in the Lower Murray: Locks 8 & 9 Project
- Yanco Creek Modernisation Project (Modernising Supply Systems for Effluent Creeks Project)
- Murrumbidgee & Murray National Park Project
- Koondrook-Perricoota Flow Enabling Works Project
- Mid-Murray Anabranes Constraints Demonstration Reach Project.

This Acceleration Program will deliver up to 45 GL of the remaining water savings needed to reach the 605 GL target required by the Basin Plan each year, delivering strong ecological outcomes for the Murray-Darling Basin.

These proposed projects will also play a key role in creating jobs in regional areas, generating an estimated 450 direct and 850 indirect regional jobs, and will provide a much-needed boost to the regional economies where the projects are being delivered.

About the Lower Murray Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL): Locks 8 and 9 Project

Currently in the detailed design phase, the Locks 8 and 9 Project is one of the projects being brought forward through the SDLAM Acceleration Program.

The project delivers sustainable diversion limit offsets in the Lower Murray. Changing operational levels so they reflect a more natural pattern within the weir pools will provide positive outcomes for the natural environment and important social and recreational benefits for locals.

Lower Murray Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL) project: Locks 8 and 9

The Locks 8 and 9 Project also targets improvements in connectivity of environmental assets associated with the floodplain adjacent to the Lake Victoria and Frenchmans Creek waterways. Proposed works will see a re-activation of the Carrs, Capitts and Bunberoo (CCB) Creeks systems in NSW, and will complement works being undertaken in the Mulcra and Wallpolla Island areas on the Victorian floodplain.

The project has three main components including:

- changing operating rule for Weirs 8 and 9 to move away from fixed weir operating levels
- installing waterway structures allowing for flow regulation and fish passage within the CCB Creek system
- constructing of a new fishway at the Lake Victoria inlet regulator on Frenchmans Creek.

Project timelines

The project is currently in the detailed design phase. As a result of the Acceleration Program it is anticipated this project will be complete by mid-2024.

Benefits

By accelerating this package of works, the NSW Government will be able to deliver strong environmental and community benefits including:

- fish growth, breeding and dispersal
- increased habitat use and re-instating seasonal wetting and drying of select wetlands and floodplains
- reduced water loss through evaporation in summer
- restoration of aquatic habitat and food resources
- the promotion of bird breeding.

Consultation

The NSW Government will continue to consult with the project's key stakeholder and agency groups including the Locks 8 and 9 Stakeholder Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Group. Community information sessions will take place mid-2021 and will continue to be held throughout the life of the project.

More information

For more information on the Lower Murray: Locks 8 & 9 Project, and to view a map of the project area, visit dpie.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/lower-murray-sdl-project

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For more information on the SDLAM Acceleration Program call 1300 081 047 or visit dpie.nsw.gov.au/sdlam