

---

## Context of the Foundation Report

The Foundation Report was prepared as an important input to the First Step decision in the Living Murray, and the signing of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Addressing Water Overallocation and Achieving Environmental Objectives* in the Murray-Darling Basin by the Council of Australian Governments on 25 June 2004. The Communique from this COAG meeting is at [www.coag.gov.au](http://www.coag.gov.au). This Intergovernmental Agreement provides the framework under which \$500m will be invested by governments over 5 years to begin addressing water overallocation in the Murray-Darling Basin and achieve specific environmental outcomes along the River Murray. As part of this framework, other water users will be considered when making these investments in water recovery (including during periods of drought).

This investment of \$500m will be for water recovery to deliver environmental outcomes at six significant ecological assets first identified by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council in November 2003: the Barmah-Millewa Forest; the Gunbower and Koondrook-Perricoota Forests; the Hattah Lakes, the Chowilla Floodplain and Lindsay-Wallpolla system; the Murray Mouth, Coorong and Lower Lakes; and the River Murray Channel.

Additionally to the \$500m agreed by COAG, a \$150m Environmental Works and Measures Program is being implemented by the Commission to contribute to the delivery of improved environmental outcomes at these significant ecological assets.

This Foundation Report is in many ways an historic document that contains information on each of these significant ecological assets prior to the development of the Intergovernmental Agreement. Detailed management plans for each of the significant ecological assets are being prepared, drawing upon information within this Foundation Report and other sources, and will be the subject of community consultation.