1. Under the Commonwealth *Water Act 2007*, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority is required to prepare a Murray–Darling Basin Plan, which seeks to balance consumptive water use and environmental water needs in the Murray–Darling Basin.
2. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority released a Proposed Basin Plan (draft Basin Plan) for public consultation on 28 November 2011.
3. The Queensland Government’s submission to the Murray–Darling Basin Authority raises a number of concerns about:
* the uncertainties in the underlying science which influence the proposed sustainable diversion limits (SDLs);
* the way that the proposed SDLs for Queensland have been identified and described, particularly in relation to the shared reduction component in the northern Basin zone when Queensland catchments are among the healthiest in the Basin. The Queensland Government considers that the magnitude of the proposed reduced entitlements cannot be justified at this stage;
* the extent to which the key regional communities of the Lower Balonne and Lower Border Rivers areas, each with their high economic dependency on irrigated agricultural production, will be impacted by the reduced entitlements proposed;
* the lack of clarity about how the Australian Government will manage the pressures for economic adjustment and support in those communities most impacted by the Basin Plan, including how it will assist displaced job seekers to transition to alternative employment; and
* the increased compliance costs to the Queensland Government in order to meet all the planning, management, monitoring and reporting obligations that are contained in the draft Basin Plan.
1. The submission incorporates the views of stakeholders and emphasises the unique nature of our inland river systems, communities and current water planning processes.
2. The matters raised by the Queensland Government are expected to be considered by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority in developing the final Basin Plan.
3. Cabinet noted the issues for the Queensland Government arising from the draft Basin Plan.
4. Cabinet endorsed the Queensland Government’s submission on the draft Basin Plan to be provided to the Murray–Darling Basin Authority.
5. *Attachments*
* [The Queensland Government submission on the draft Murray–Darling Basin Plan](attachments/Proposed%20Murray-Darling%20Basin%20Plan%20Attachment.pdf)