22nd International RIVER SYMPOSIUM
EXCELLENCE – COLLABORATION – INTEGRATION

INTERNATIONAL RiverFoundation

Native Fish Management & Recovery Strategy

5 November 2019

Australian Government

MURRAY–DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY

Spirit of strengthening partnerships
Memories, knowledge and traditions of a living Aboriginal culture
Deep appreciation and respect for Aboriginal peoples' continued guardianship of the land and waters of the Basin

Process to date

- On 14 January Minister Littleproud committed $5 million to the development and initial implementation of the Native Fish Management & Recovery Strategy
- The objective of the strategy is to protect and restore native fish populations of the Murray-Darling Basin over the long-term, including Aboriginal and community involvement.
- Before the strategy could be developed Basin Officials requested the development of a business case to support the investment in a NFMRS.
- To guide the development of the business case a **Steering Group** was formed including nominated representatives from each of the States as well as MLDRIN, NBAN and the BCC. In addition an **expert workshop** was held in April to scope the strategy.
- On 4 August the Ministerial Council agreed to the NFMRS project plan put forward the Steering Group.

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Timeframe for delivery

- Timeframes in the project plan
  - Emergency Response Plan for 2019-20 for release October 2019
  - Native Fish management and recovery strategy delivered end April 2020
  - Lower Darling project to continue to end June 2020

April workshop findings

- gained consensus on the need for a well-resourced, long term (minimum 10 year), Basin-wide NFMRS that complements existing native fish activity and is co-designed with Basin stakeholders over an appropriate timeframe
- agreed the NFMRS should build and improve on the 2003-2013 Native Fish Strategy in key areas such as connection to management, advances in native fish science, Aboriginal engagement, community ownership and climate change
- agreed the NFMRS needed to complement, coordinate and leverage existing native fish and water quality activities in the Basin
- developed an agreed high level scientific architecture on which to develop the NFMRS, including a native fish threats framework and NFMRS development principles
- endorsed the overarching NFMRS development process to proceed over a sufficient timeframe, centring around stakeholder workshops and a public consultation process.

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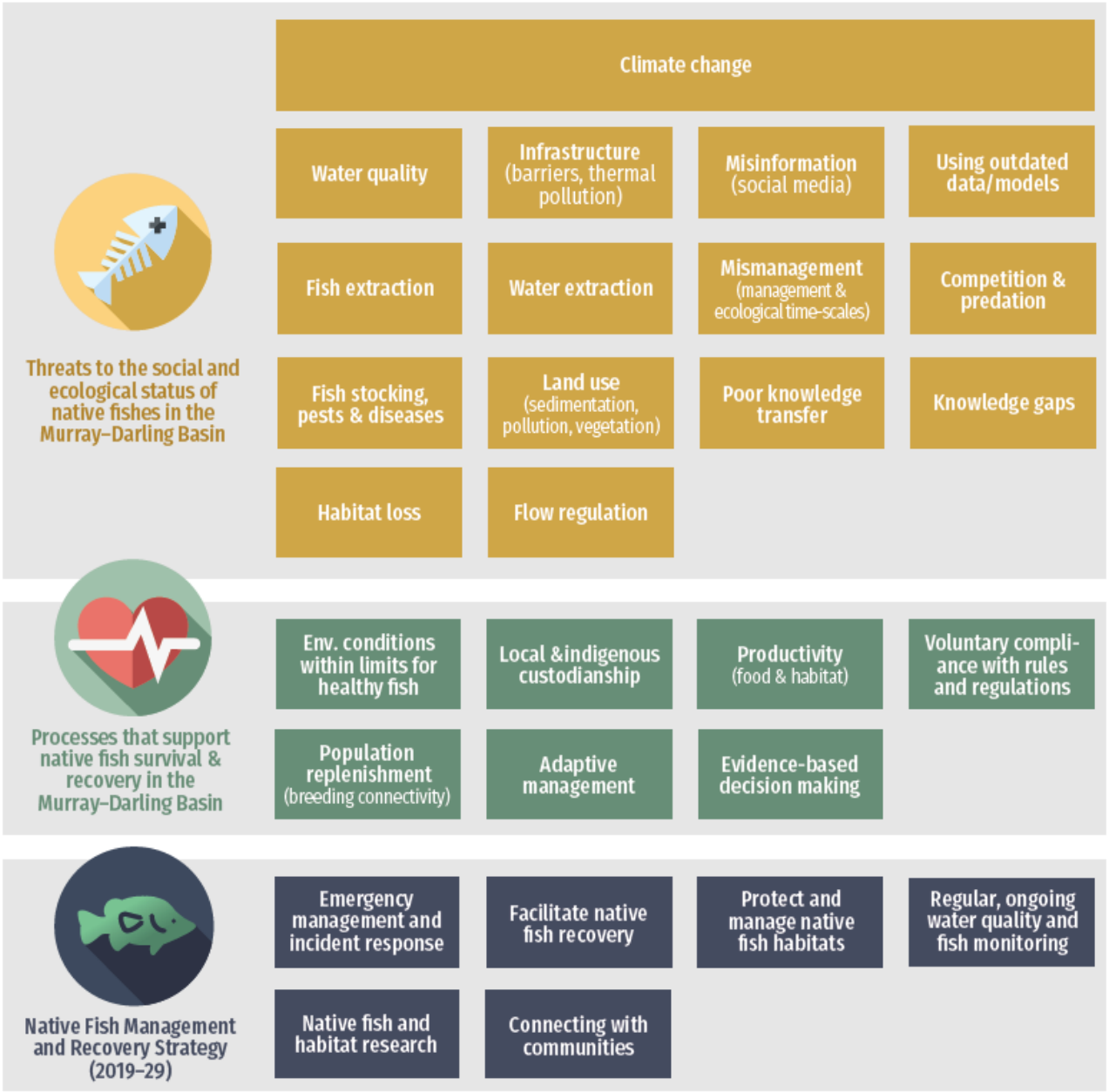
High-level architecture:
Objectives of the strategy

The strategy will ensure:

- healthy and diverse native fish populations are supported and are resilient to extreme events
- flows are managed to mitigate extreme events
- critical native fish habitats are protected and effectively managed
- native fish research and activities are resourced to develop Basin-scale knowledge
- monitoring is complementary and provides long-term insights and supports decision-making
- commitments by Basin governments to restore native fish populations are well coordinated
- communities are engaged and able to take an active role in supporting fish recovery.

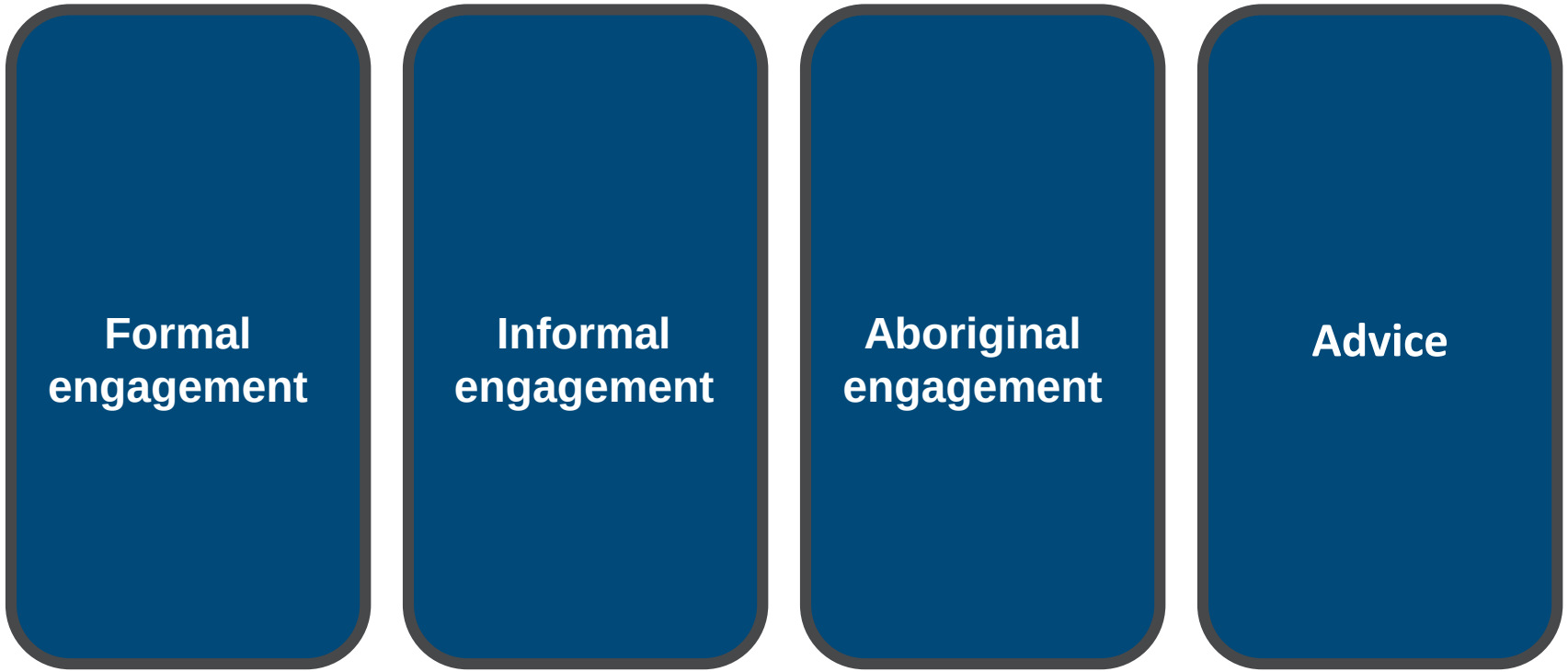
High-level architecture:
Threats framework



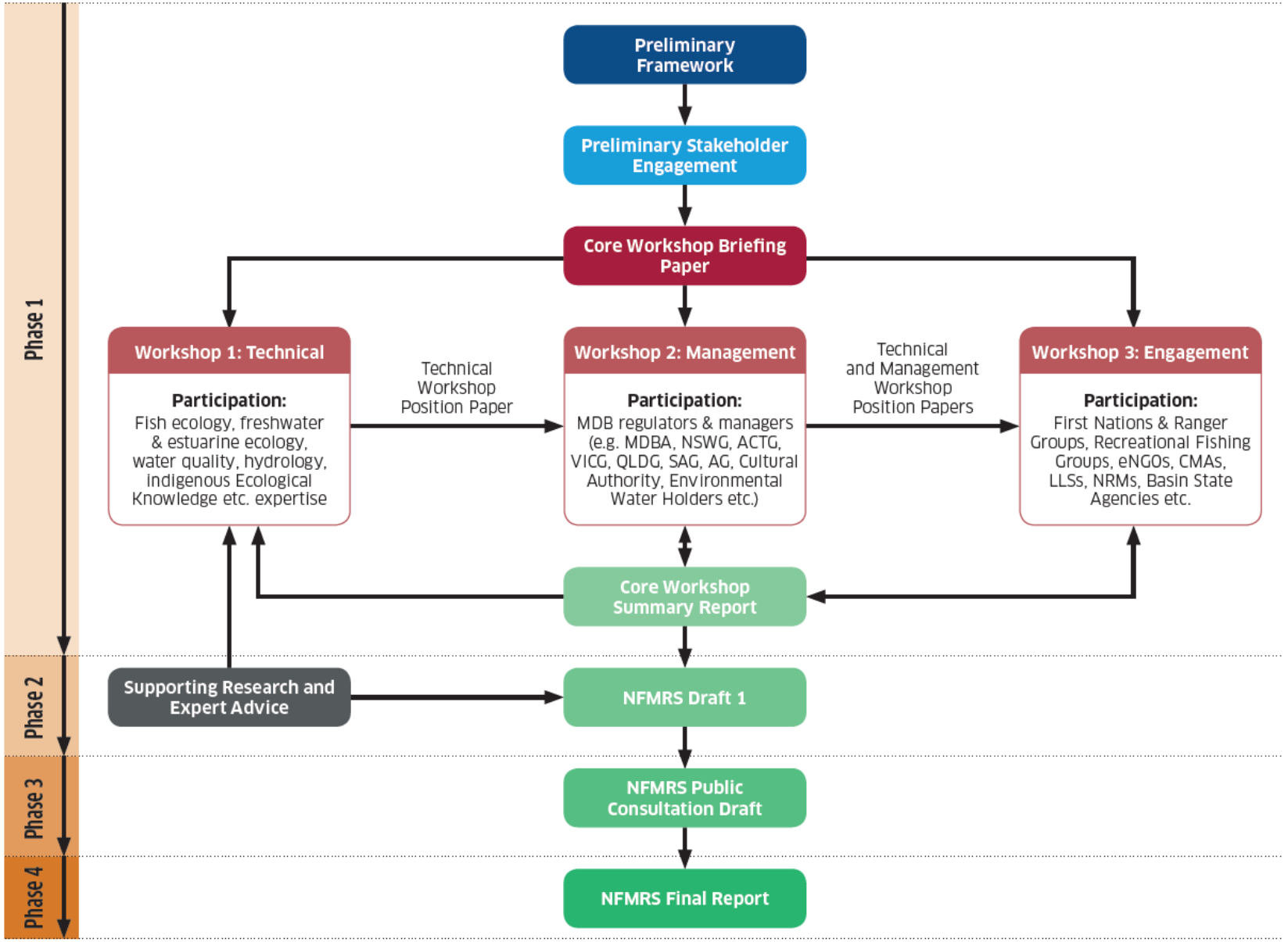
High-level architecture:
Draft framework

Engagement Plan

- The engagement plan has four key components



Formal engagement process



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Informal engagement

- Conferences
- Existing State and Commonwealth meetings
- One on one consultation with key stakeholders
- Targeted meetings in particular regions
- GetInvolved feedback
- Further identified stakeholder ‘gaps’

Aboriginal engagement

- Representation on NFMRS Steering Group
- Regular updates to NBAN and MLDRIN
- Cultural advisory group
- On country engagement program – consultant led

Advice

- Cultural advisory group
  - Approx. five members
  - Nominated by NBAN/MLDRIN

- Technical advisory group
  - 5-10 members
  - Mix of disciplines

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Emergency Response Plan

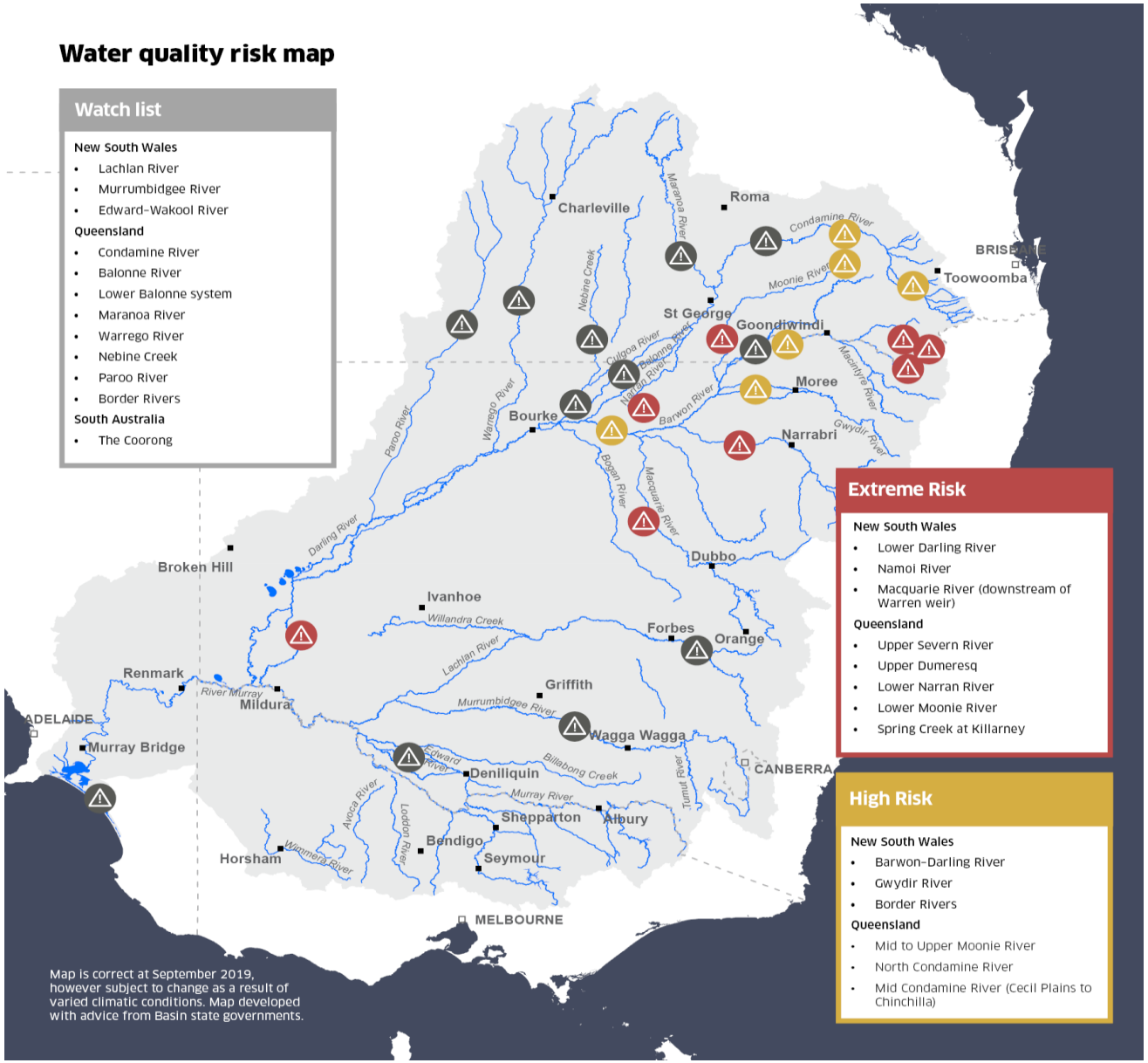
- The Australian Government has a role in coordinating and supplementing Basin State efforts to avoid the significant ecological loss of species
- The Emergency Response Plan provides a streamlined approach for States to access the Emergency Contingency Fund to mitigate significant fish death events
- The ERP sets out clear roles and responsibilities to facilitate a coordinated response and an effective communications process

Emergency Response Plan

- Background & Context
- Roles & Responsibilities – Government & Community
- Coordination – Risk Management Forum
- Water Quality risk mapping
- Intervention Options
- Emergency Response Protocol
  - Triggers
  - Response pathways
  - Decision support
  - Crisis communications
- Recovery

MDB Water Quality risk map

- Historical knowledge of water quality issues
- Flow conditions
- Expert insight



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Links to State planning

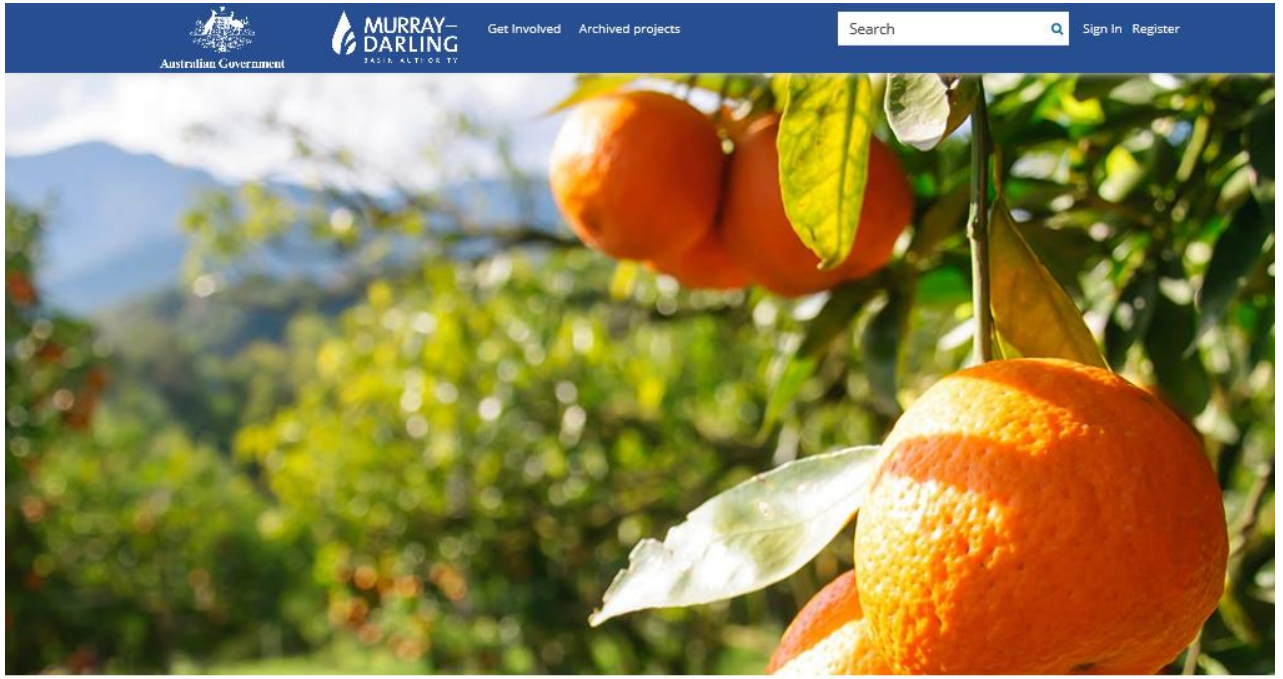
- Designed to be a high level response from Joint Government
- About ensuring we are prepared at a Basin-scale to respond to Emergency events where States require support
- Detail around on-ground actions, preparedness, prevention, response and recovery options will be set out in State documents

Next steps

- Literature review to develop a core briefing paper
- Formalise advisory groups
- Collate responses from GetInvolved
- Organise core workshops

Get Involved

- Follow progress, post questions & provide feedback



Welcome to Get Involved@MDBA, the online space for us to hear from you
Share ideas and have your say to contribute to our common goal:
to achieve a healthy working Basin for the benefit of the Australian community.
You can contact us by phone on 1800 230 067 or by email.

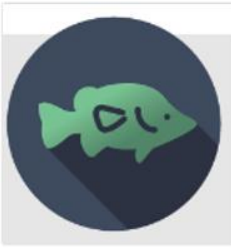
Current Projects

Seasonal outlook in the southern Murray-Darling Basin

24 September 2019

Find out about what the upcoming season may be like in terms of weather, climate and how the water

Attend an information session



Native Fish Management and Recovery Strategy

09 September 2019

The proposed Native Fish Management and Recovery Strategy aims to protect native fish populations of the Basin over the

Read more

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Thank you.

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5 November 2019

Australian Government

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