



Presentation by

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- to the
- Murray and Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations
- (MLDRIN)
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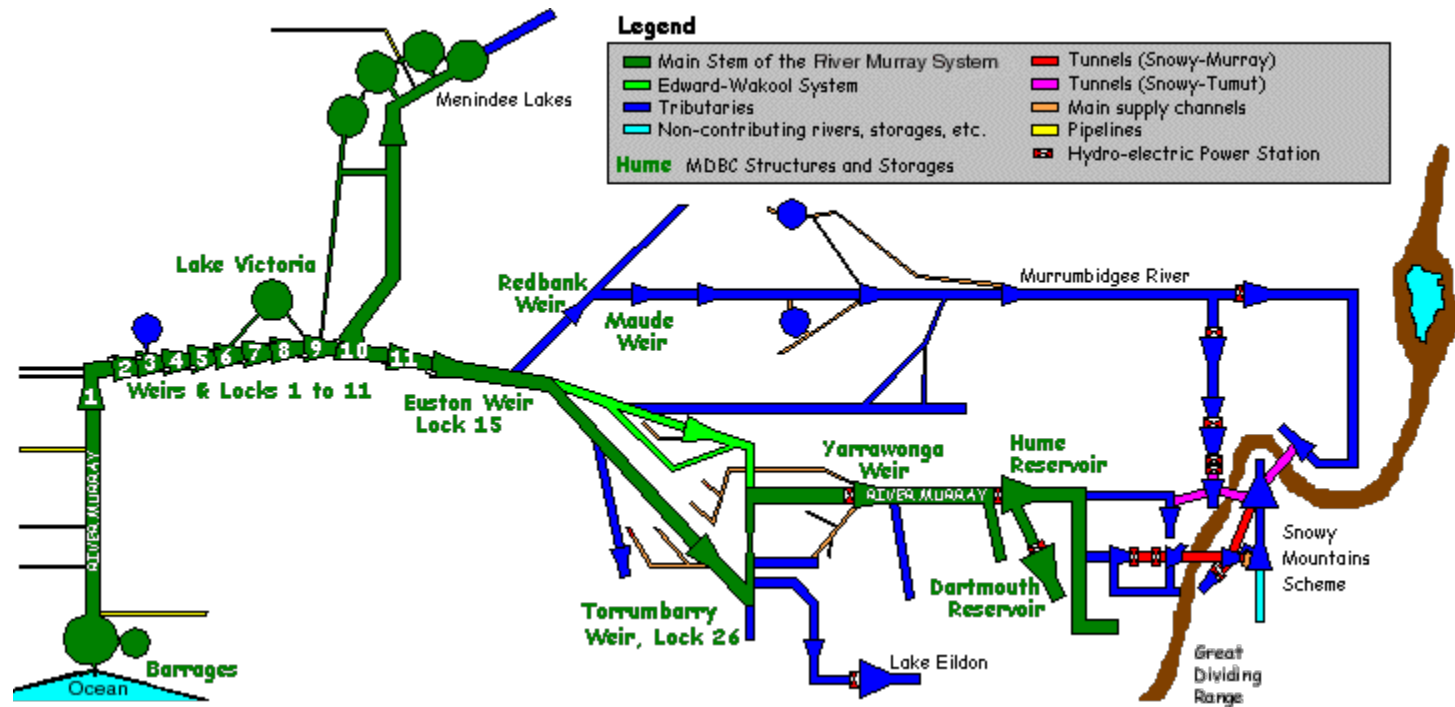


The Murray Darling Basin

- Largest River system in Australia.
- Produces 40-45% of the Nations food.
- Contains all of Australia's major stands of River Redgum Forests.
- 30, 000 Wetlands including 15 Ramsar listed wetlands including Barmah-Millewa Forest and the Coorong and Lower Lakes System.



The River Murray-Plumbing







Murray River: Threats

- Highly regulated
- Over allocation
- Invasive species
- Salinity
- Erosion



Murray Mouth and Coorong, SA



Indigenous and non-Indigenous Estimated Populations of the Murray-Darling Basin, 2001

Population Annual growth rate

• Indigenous	68,656	3.4%	3.3%
• Non-Indigenous	1,960,099	96.6%	0.6%
• Total Basin	2,028,755	100%	0.7%



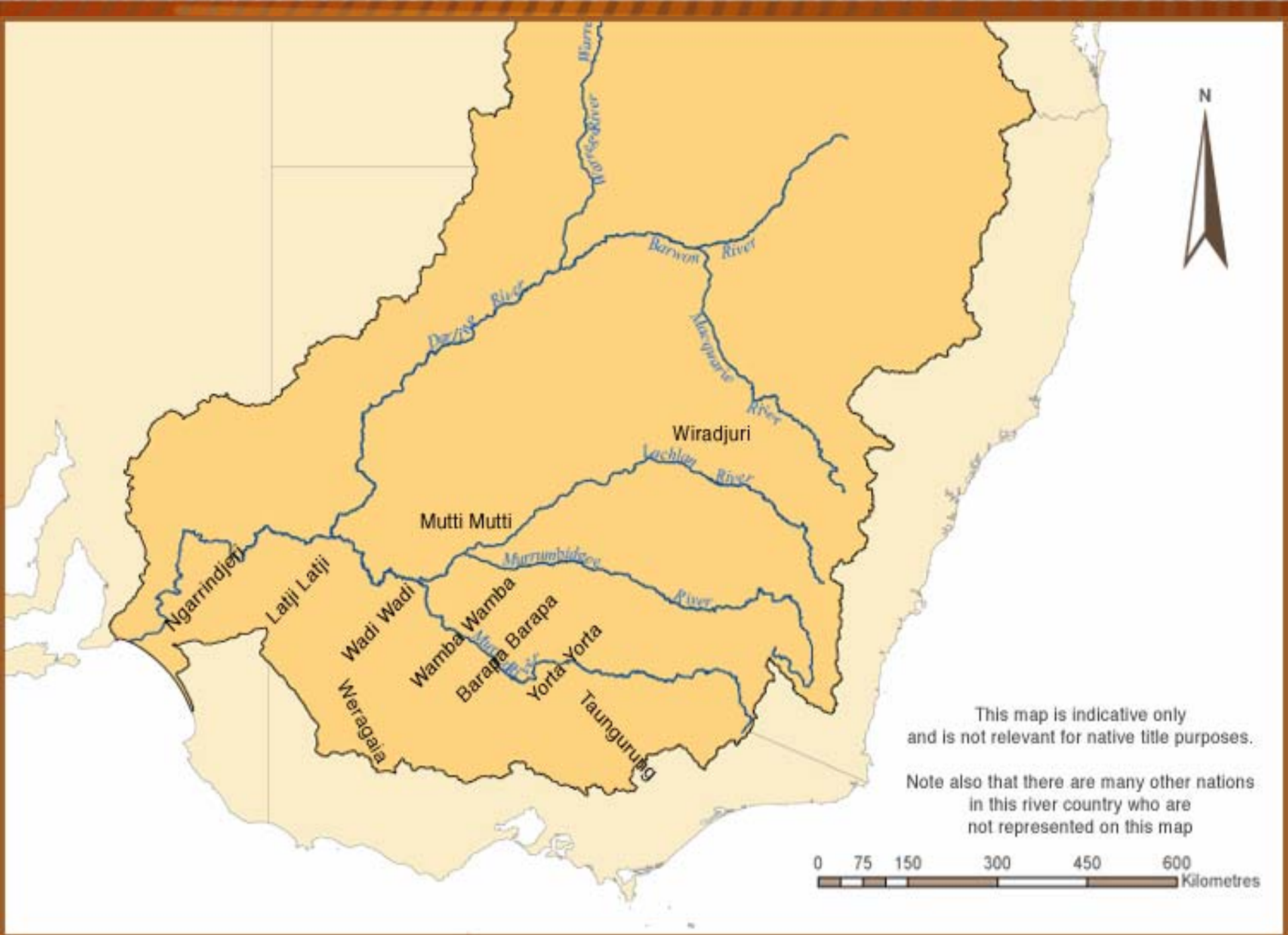
Indigenous Nations

- Approximately 30 autonomous Indigenous Nations, interconnected by a compatible system of kinship law, maintain an on-going social, cultural, economic and spiritual connection to their lands, waters
- Indigenous peoples currently make up 3.4% of the Basin's total population, a figure that represents 15% of the national Indigenous population
- Most of the Indigenous peoples within the Basin live in urban centres such as Albury-Wodonga, Wagga Wagga and Dubbo



MURRAY LOWER DARLING RIVERS INDIGENOUS NATIONS (MLDRIN)

- Confederacy of 10 Indigenous Nations from the Murray and Darling Rivers
- Facilitate and advocates the participation of 10 Indigenous nations within the different levels of government decisions on Natural Resource Management
- Develops response on the cultural, social and economic impacts of development on Indigenous traditional country
- Be a collective united voice for the rights and interests of their traditional country and its people



This map is indicative only and is not relevant for native title purposes.

Note also that there are many other nations in this river country who are not represented on this map





Urban Water Consumption Effects

- Cultural disconnection – many Indigenous people live “off-Country”.
- Access to water for infrastructure is largely equitable.
- The competition from other water users such as town use, irrigation and the environment limits water for cultural purposes.
- All resources in the Murray Darling Basin are allocated to other users – for example 0.2% of land within the Basin is within the Indigenous Estate.



The Coorong

- Water extraction to Adelaide is massive eg. Murray Mouth closed for the first time in history in the 1980s.
- Ecological devastation including acid-sulphate and massive decrease in native flora and fauna.
- More proposed engineering works to supposedly “fix” the damage.



The Coorong

- The Ngarrindjeri maintain a strong connection to Country.
- Large Indigenous communities at Meningie, Murray Bridge, Raukkin and other townships.
- The Ngarrindjeri still use and occupy their Country despite the declining health of land and water.



Effects on the Coorong





Cultural Flows Definition

“Cultural Flows” are water entitlements that are legally and beneficially owned by the Indigenous Nations of a sufficient and adequate quantity and quality to improve the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Indigenous Nations.



Cultural Flow Outcomes

The environmental, social and economic conditions of the Indigenous nations will be improved by the achievement of the *cultural flow outcomes* namely:

- Survival and sustainable health of the rivers and waterways through the restoration of natural flow regimes;



Cultural Flow Outcomes

- Improved and strengthened spiritual, physical and mental health of the Indigenous people whose beliefs, cultures, identities, prosperity and physical wellbeing are inseparable from the environment and whose lifeblood is the waterways;
- To protect and restore ecosystems such that native plants and animals and their habitats are able to be used and managed in accordance with the cultural practices of the Indigenous Nations.



Cultural Flow: Cultural Practices

- Propagation and harvesting of plant species for medicine, timber, food sources, and material for manufacture of tools, clothing and housing;
- Protecting, hunting and killing animal species for food, medicine, clothing and all other cultural uses;
- Use of the water for drinking, hygiene, recreation, spiritual and ceremonial purposes;
- Use of the whole of the environment for educational purposes including the recording and transmission of Indigenous science and knowledge.



Delivery of Cultural Flows Outcomes

- Adhere to the principle that the free and fully informed prior consent of the Indigenous Nations is necessary, desirable and best practice;
- Seek the consent of the Indigenous Nations in respect of the water acquisition for cultural flows;
- Seek the consent of the Indigenous Nations in respect of any proposed restriction on cultural flow outcomes;
- Transfer water entitlements to such incorporated body as the Indigenous Nations may nominate.



Delivery of Cultural Flow Outcomes

- With respect to the management and decision making in respect of releases of cultural flows the Commonwealth and States of Australia, the Murray Darling Basin Authority, the National Water Commission and their successors should ensure that the Indigenous Nations have access to technical and scientific support as and when required and that proposed cultural flow releases are able to be coordinated with other releases and events so as to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness and implementation of cultural flow outcomes



Determining the Quantity of Cultural Flows

- The overriding objective in determining the type and location of water entitlements acquired and transferred to the Indigenous Nations for cultural flows must be sufficient to ensure that the Indigenous Nations, through their legal and beneficial ownership of the water entitlements, can achieve substantial and measurable cultural flow outcomes



Challenges and Issues

- Competition from other users, particularly consumptive users in urban centres such as Adelaide
- Recognition of right to water
- Environmental Flows
- Other water stakeholders



Opportunities

- Social Justice
- Enhanced ecological outcomes
- Strengthening of cultural knowledge
- Protection of People and Country





Resources

- Website

www.mldrin.org.au

- MLDRIN Executive Officer

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