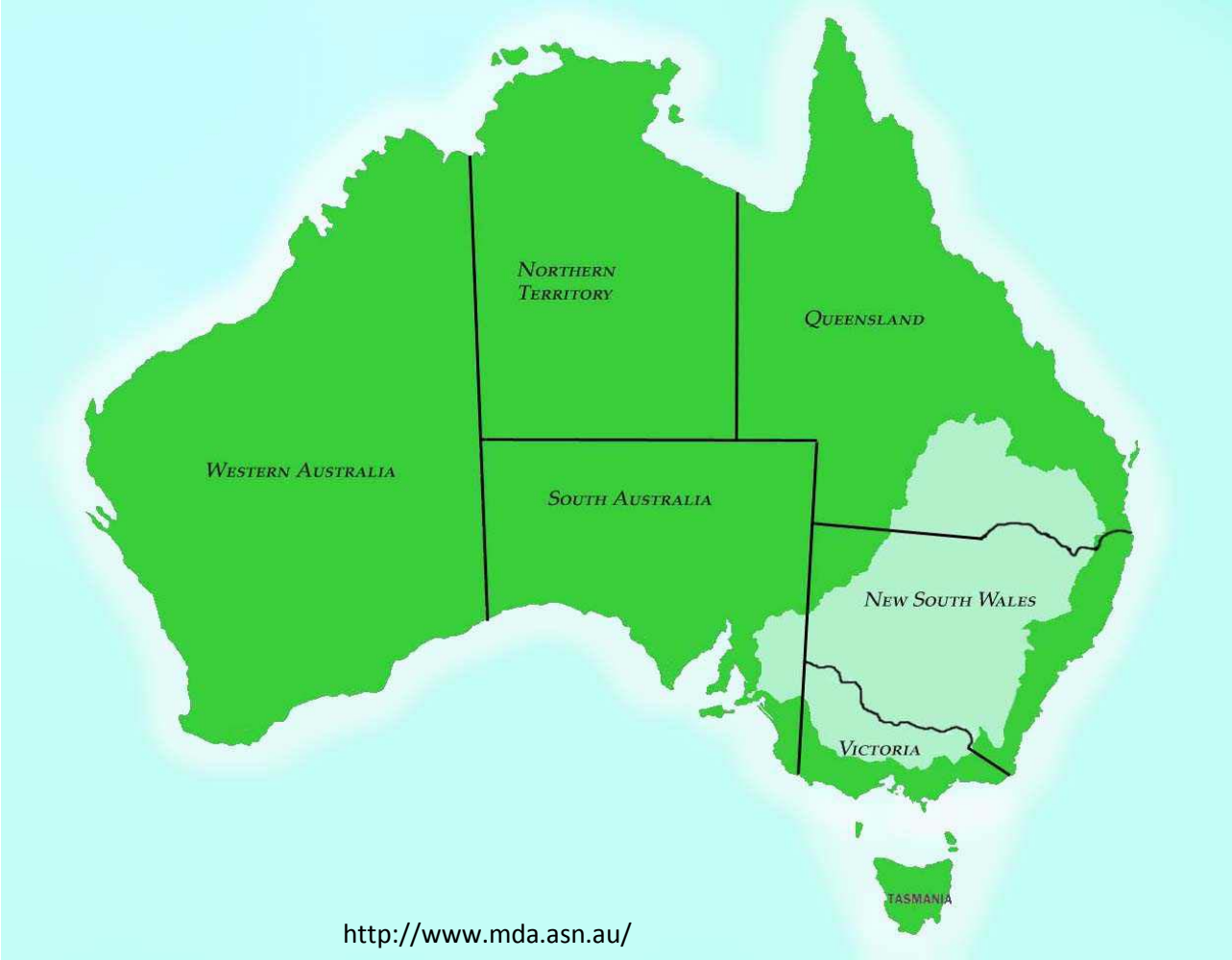
Murray Darling Basin Plan

For RRTI Working Group

Susan Smolnik

January 11, 2013

Australia and MD Basin



http://www.mda.asn.au/

http://www.anao.gov.au/Publications/Audit-Reports/2010-2011/Restoring-the-Balance-in-the-Murray-Darling-Basin/Audit-brochure

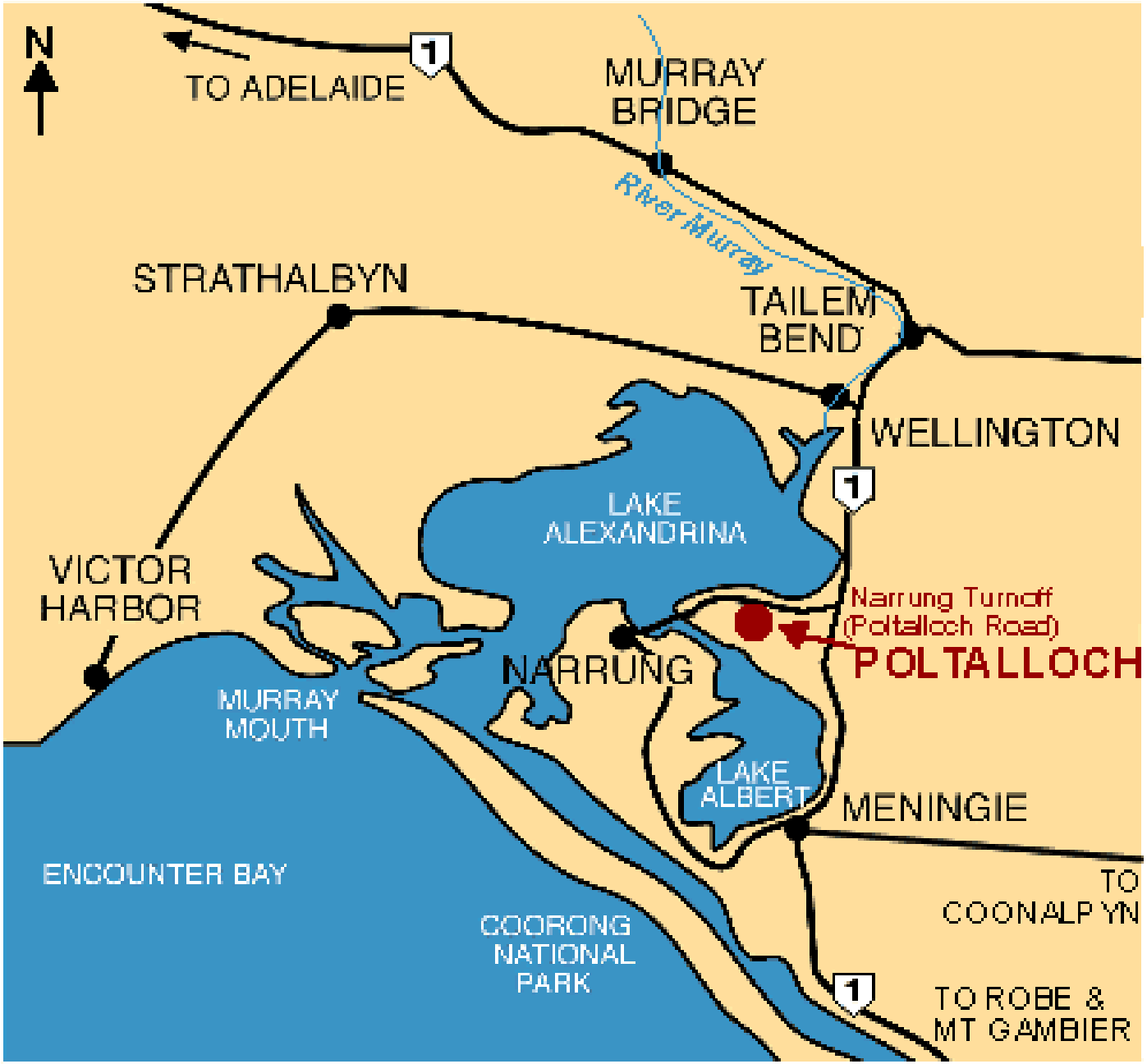
MD Basin Quick Facts

- **Quick Facts**
- Catchment area for the Murray and Darling rivers and their tributaries
- Total of 23 river valleys
- Basin area over 1 million square kilometres
- 14% of total area of Australia
- Annual average rainfall 530,618 gigalitres
- 94% of rainfall evaporates; 2% drains into the ground; 4% ends up as runoff
- Basin generates 39% of the national income derived from agricultural production
- Produces 53% of Australian cereals grown for grain, 95% of oranges, and 54% of apples
- Supports 28% of the nation's cattle herd, 45% of sheep, and 62% of pigs.

http://www.mdba.gov.au/explore-the-basin/about-the-basin

Mouth of the Murray

australiangeographic.com.au



sauer-thompson.com

Birdlife at the Coorong

http://topbirdsandeveryfing.typepad.com

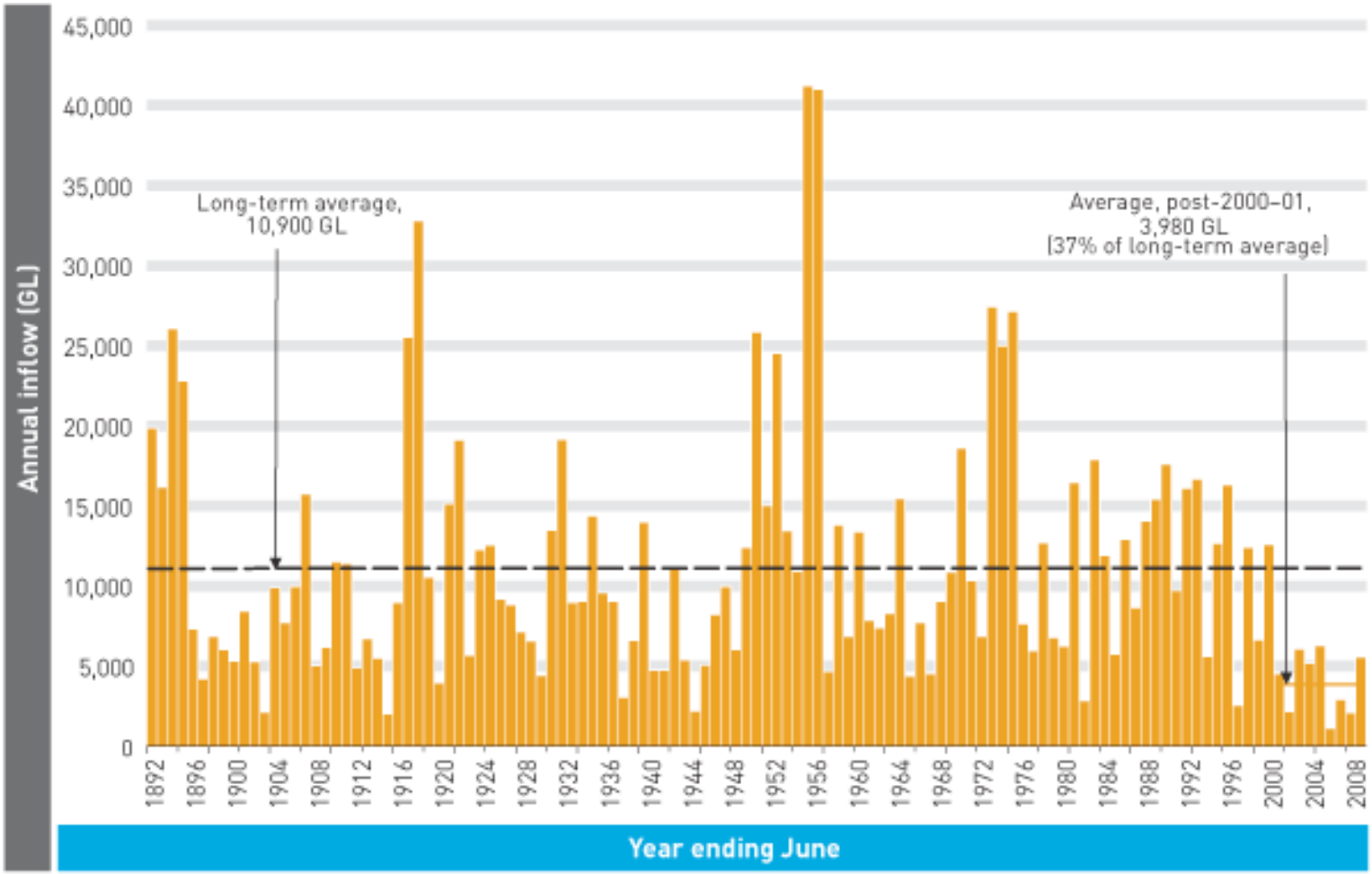
Birdlife at Lake Alexandrina

http://topbirdsandeveryfing.typepad.com

Drought

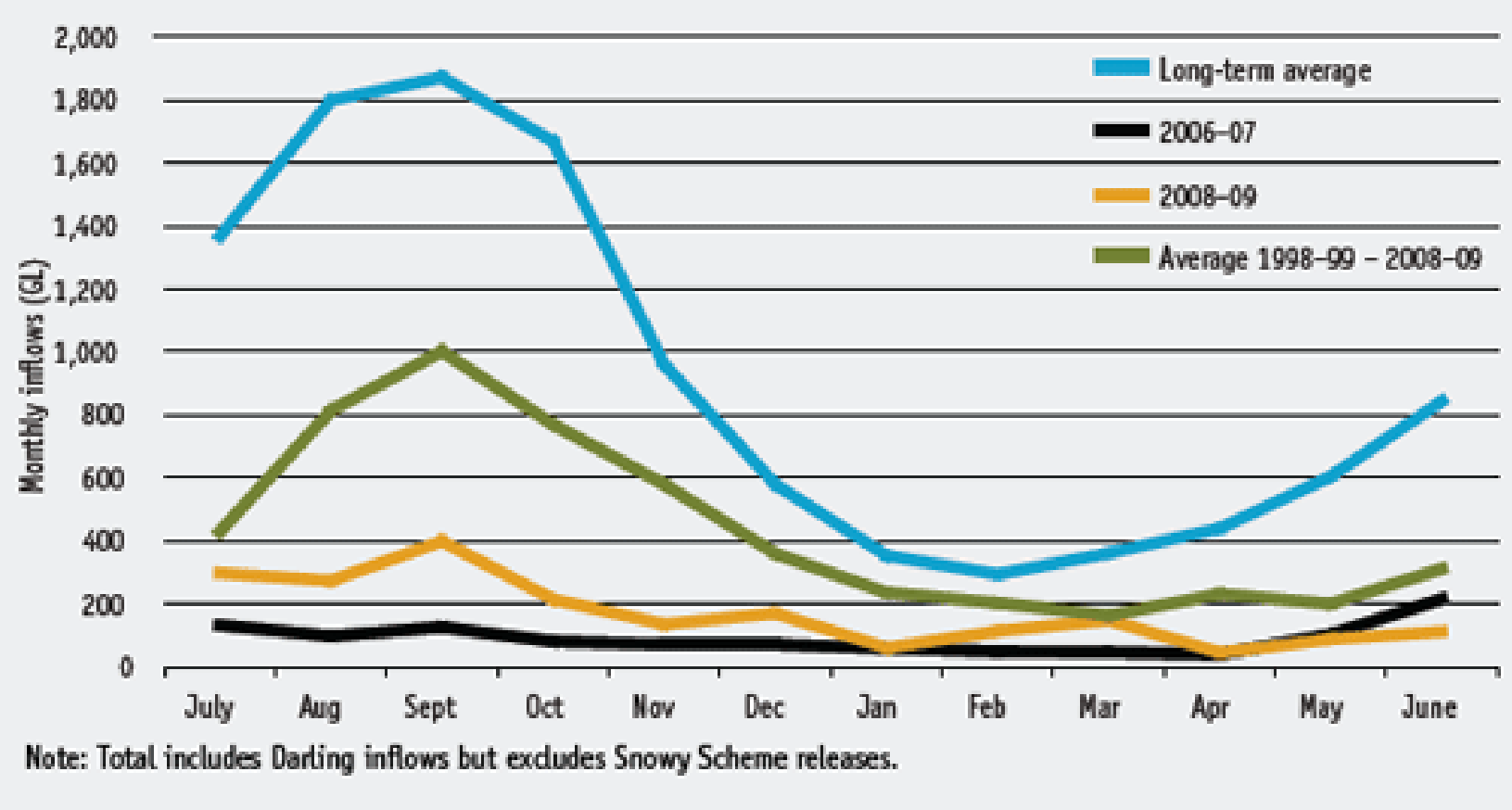
http://www.habitatadvocate.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Decades-of-drought-and-irrigation-excesses-starving-the-Murray-Darling-Photo-by-Anna-Maria.jpg

Decade of Drought



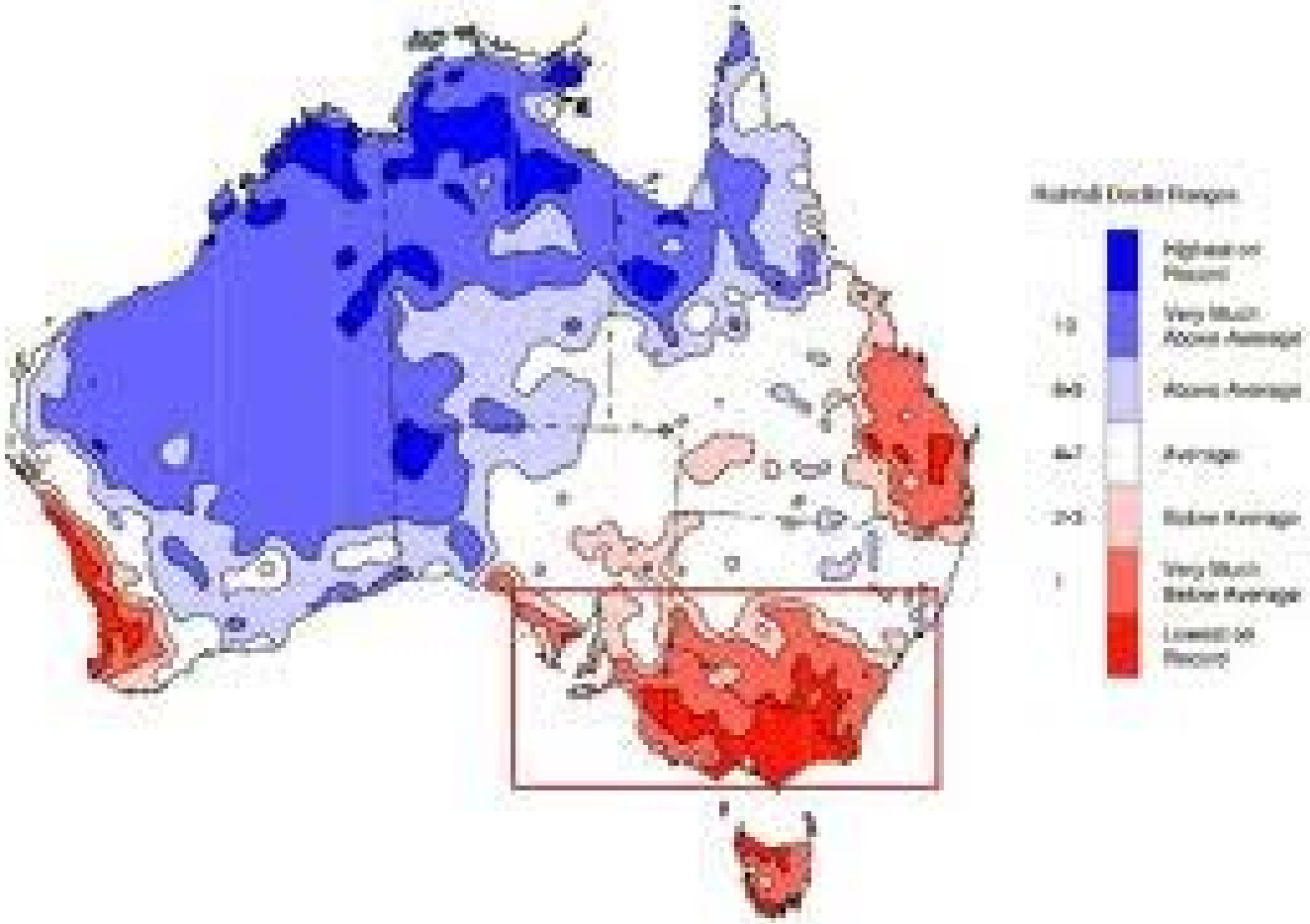
http://www.mdba.gov.au/annualreports/2009-10/chapter3-2.html

Drought



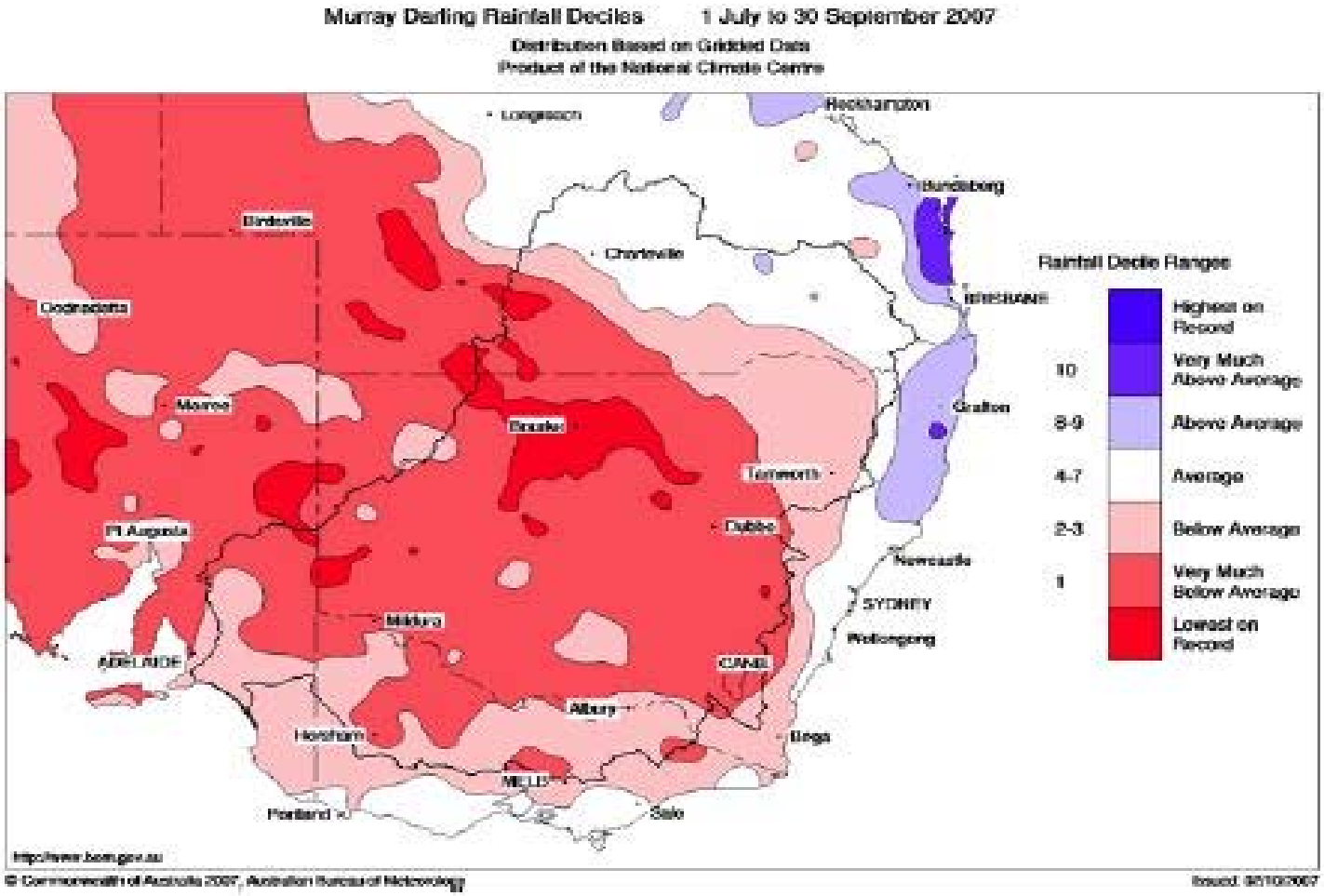
http://www.mdba.gov.au/annualreports/2009-10/chapter3-2.html

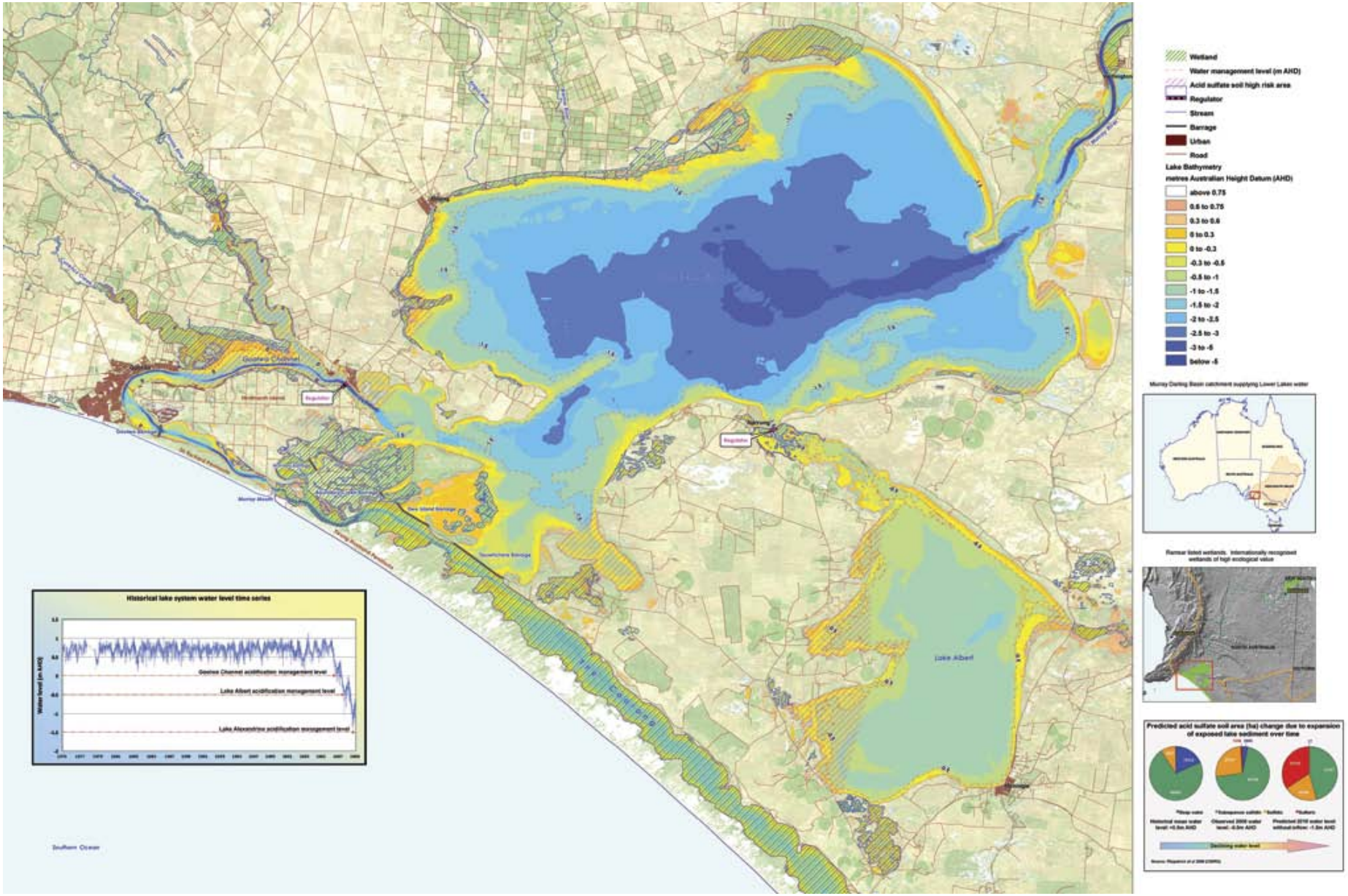
Drought



CSIRO: South East Australia becoming drier, global warming implicated

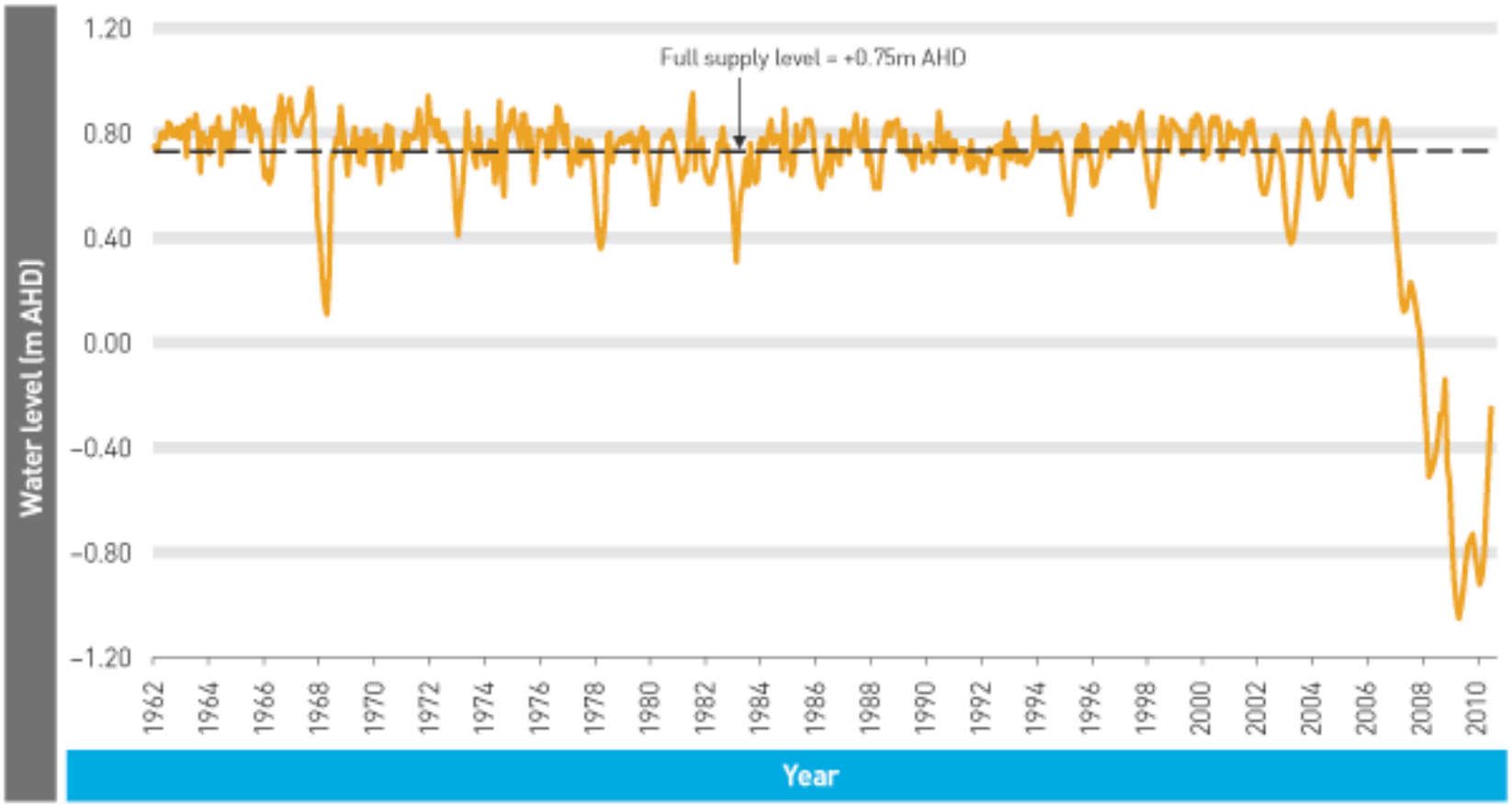
Drought 2007





http://www.esri.com

Lake Alexandrina Water Levels



http://www.mdba.gov.au/annualreports/2009-10/chapter3-2.html

Salinity

http://www.smh.com.au/news/scorchedearth/water-ban-threat-questioned/2007/04/19/1176696970190.html

Drought Effects

10% Reduction in Number of Farmers

http://www.knowledge.allianz.com/

Drought Effects

500 miles of Toxic Blue Green Algae Bloom

http://standeyo.com/NEWS/09_Earth_Changes/090824.drought.cripples.Murray.html

Drought Effects

Adelaide Extreme Water Shortage

http://www.biancoeng.com.au/industrial.html

Drought Effects

Acid Sulfate Soils

Copyright Murray Wetlands Working Group.

Exposed Acid Sulfate Soils

Dead Red Gum Floodplain

Copyright Murray Wetlands Working Group.

Dead Fish and Mussels

ramsar.org

Dead Long-necked Tortoise

ramsar.org

Cleaning Tortoises

http://www.ramsar.org

Sulfate Soils Vegetation

Water Act 2007

- National approach to water management
- Established the Murray Darling Basin Authority
- Authorized creation of Murray Darling Basin Plan

Murray-Darling Basin Plan

The plan:

- Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL)
- Environmental objectives
  - water quality
  - salinity objectives
- Improved water security

Guide to the MD Basin Plan

- Released in October 2010
- Called for reductions in water allotments
- Buy back allotments from willing sellers
- Goal to acquire 3,000-4,000 GL for the environment

MDBA visited rural towns to present the proposed plan at consultation meetings…

Opposition Rural Australia

theaustralian.com.au

Opposition Griffith

econews.com.au

Opposition Griffith

news.com.au

Opposition Griffith

adelaidenow.com.au

Opposition Deniliquin

weeklytimesnow.com.au

Opposition Echuca

abc.net.au

Opposition NFF

Guide to Basin plan 'dead', says NFF
Friday, 17/12/2010
The National Farmers Federation says its careful analysis has found that the Guide to the Murray Darling Basin plan is fatally flawed and should be thrown out.
NFF president Jock Laurie says the Guide in its current form cannot be revived, and there's no prospect of it being a workable basis for the eventual Basin plan.

Opposition

abc.net.au

Support

There was also been support for the draft plan by various groups, including the Australian Conservation Foundation and Environment Victoria

Improving MD Basin Plan

- More modeling
- Incorporated rural concerns (social considerations)
- Incorporated upper basin states' concerns
- Issued revised plan in Nov 2011
- Environmental water down to 2750 GL

Soliciting Opinions

Soliciting Opinions

Counter-Opposition Ecologists

adelaidenow.com.au

Counter-Opposition Ecologists

http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/45994 Members of the River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group

Counter-Opposition South Australia

radioadelaidebreakfast.wordpress.com

Murray Darling Basin
Queensland
Discover Murray
RiverMurray.com
South Australia
New South Wales
Victoria
Tambo
Augathella
Charleville
Morven
Roma
Chinchilla
Tara
Dalby
Toowoomba
Bollon
St George
Cunnamulla
Warwick
BRISBANE
Goondiwindi
Stanthorpe
Hungerford
Tenterfield
Moree
Walgett
Wanaaring
Bourke
Narrabri
White Cliffs
Darling River
Armidale
Coonamble
Gunnedah
Coonabarabran
Tamworth
Wilcannia
Cobar
Broken Hill
Menindee Lakes
Dubbo
Wellington
Ivanhoe
Forbes
Orange
Lachlan River
Lake Victoria
Morgan
Wentworth
Bathurst
Cowra
Renmark
Mildura
MURRAY RIVER
SYDNEY
ADELAIDE
Hay
Griffith
Leeton
Young
Mannum
Balranald
Murrumbidgee River
Narrandera
Murray Bridge
Gundagai
Yass
Goolwa
Swan Hill
Wagga Wagga
Meningie
Deniliquin
Lake Alexandrina
Kerang
Albury
CANBERRA
Echuca
Wodonga
Hume Dam
Cooma
Horsham
Shepparton
Bendigo
Dartmouth Dam
Seymour
Omeo
MELBOURNE
0 km 100 200

Counter-Opposition South Australia

adelaidenow.com.au

Counter-Opposition South Australia

- To:
  Prime Minister Julia Gillard
  Christopher Pyne MP, Sturt MP
  Federal Government, Environment Minister Tony Burke
  Senator Penny Wong, Senator for South Australia

- I just signed the following submission addressed to: Australian Federal Government and South Australian MPs

  ---
  Change the draft Murray-Darling Basin plan so there is more water to keep the river alive

  The Murray is the lifeblood of south-eastern Australia.
  It is vital for our economic prosperity and our environment.
  Water extraction from the Murray has increased by 500 per cent...
- Read More

Counter-Opposition South Australia

- South Australia models too
- Uses science to make case that more environmental water is needed
- Eventually agreement is reached
- 450 GL additional environmental water
- 2750 GL of environmental water by 2019
- 3200 GL of environmental water by 2024

Finally a Plan To Become Law

How did it finally come together?

- Listened to rural communities
- Emphasis on efficiencies instead of buy backs
- Science! Science! Science!
- South Australia studies built support for extra environmental water

How did it finally come together

Money!

$$$

How did it finally come together?

- More than $10 billion in Fed spending
  - $3.1 billion in buy-backs
  - $6.6 billion infrastructure and on-farm improvements

Rather than take money out of rural communities money is going into them

How did it finally come together

"I think the oppositional approach — farmers versus environmentalists, state versus state, urban versus rural — masks the reality that we are all in this together and without a healthy river, we will not have healthy communities and economies. "

Green Left Weekly's **Gemma Weedall**

How did it finally come together?

"People mistrust what they don't understand.

People resist what is forced upon them.
People support what they co-create"

Larry Hicks

From Dec 14,2012 RRTI Working Group Meeting

THANK-YOU