

Majority oppose Murray-Darling takeover

Lauren Wilson | July 31, 2007

THE majority of Victorians are against the proposed Murray-Darling Basin takeover, according to a new poll.

Surprisingly, 55.6% of people surveyed from New South Wales also support Victoria's position, according to the poll conducted by *The Australian's* website.

Victoria has remained trenchant in its resistance to the Federal Government's radical plan since January, believing over-allocation remains the problem of other states.

As Premier, Steve Bracks continued to express concerns that the proposed legislation would siphon water from Victoria for use in New South Wales or South Australia.

This concern is shared by 58.3% of people surveyed from Victoria, who agree with the position taken by the State Labor Government.

Only 39.1% of Victorians were against the State Government's refusal to review its position on the Murray-Darling Basin takeover.

Mr Brumby yesterday called the takeover an "appalling proposal" and reaffirmed his Government's continued rejection of the bid, quashing any hopes Mr Howard held in a leadership change heralding a change of heart.

While outspoken Queensland Senator Barnaby Joyce rallies support to resist the takeover, unless safeguards for farmers are bolstered, surveyed Queenslanders were relatively split in their response.

48.4% of Queensland respondents supported Victoria's opposition, whilst 48.2% believed the state should back the Federal Government's takeover bid.

Of all the Murray-Darling states, South Australia was most critical of Victoria's opposition, with 60.3% of surveyed South Australians condemning the state's position.

As the amount of water trickling down the Murray-Darling to South Australia dwindles, this statistic is not unexpected.

The results, collated by *The Australian's* website, also analysed responses according to gender. Women over all states were 13% more likely to support Victoria's resistance to the Federal Government proposal than surveyed men.

The ongoing dispute over the Murray-Darling continues as the Victorian Government contemplates a High Court challenge to the Federal Government takeover.

The findings of *The Australian's* exclusive survey suggest that 52.3% of respondents from around the country would support this move.