

# Basin Plan Water Resource Plan Requirements Position Statement 6C: Enabling environmental watering between connected water resources

<b>POLICY ISSUE</b>	<b>How a WRP enables environmental watering between connected water resources.</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<i>Basin Plan 2012 (Cwth) (Basin Plan) s10.27</i>

<b>MDBA POSITION STATEMENT</b>
<p>To give effect to the Environmental Watering Plan (Chapter 8 of the Basin Plan) and the Basin-wide environmental watering strategy as required by s10.26, the delivery of environmental water will need to be coordinated across water resource plan (WRP) areas. Section 10.27 reinforces this need and requires a WRP to provide for this need to be met.</p> <p>This position statement applies if there are two WRP areas that contain surface water and there is a surface water connection between the two areas. This includes where the surface water connection between the two areas crosses a state border.</p> <p>A WRP must make it possible for coordinated environmental watering (the delivery or use of environmental water to achieve environmental outcomes) between connected WRP areas to occur.</p> <p>The Authority will assess whether the WRP provides for the coordination of environmental watering (the delivery or use of environmental water to achieve environmental outcomes) between it and any connected WRP areas. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared or coordinated governance or decision making structures</li> <li>• Information sharing pathways</li> <li>• Shared or coordinated environmental water planning processes, or</li> <li>• New rules relating to the delivery or use of environmental water.</li> </ul> <p>At a minimum a WRP should not include any new rule that creates any barriers to environmental watering between connected WRP areas. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inhibiting the movement of environmental water from one WRP area to another</li> <li>• Constraining the ability of water managers to coordinate and adaptively respond to natural flow events and biological cues</li> </ul> <p>Where there is no significant hydrological connection between two WRP areas (refer Position Statement 2B Interpreting ‘significant hydrological connection’) a statement and supporting evidence on why there are no opportunities to coordinate environmental watering will be sufficient.</p> <p>In enabling environmental watering between connected WRP areas regard should also be had to Position Statements 4A Consistency with s10.17 on priority environmental assets and priority ecosystem functions, 6A Change in PEW protection, 6B Consistency with</p>

<b>MDBA Reference</b>	D15/79350	<i>Accessed:</i>
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planning for environmental watering, 1H Changing Reliability and 2B Interpreting 'significant hydrological connection'.
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## **Rationale**

Section 10.27 of the Basin Plan enables the integrated management of the Basin water resources in a way that promotes the objectives of the *Water Act 2007* (Cth). Without coordinated environmental watering across WRP areas, the environmental objectives and outcomes of the Basin Plan are unlikely to be achieved. This includes both where environmental water can be actively managed and where it is unregulated or passively managed, noting that arrangements for coordination may differ depending on how actively environmental water can be managed.

Section 10.27 requires that a WRP provides for the coordination of environmental watering between connected WRP areas. This can be achieved through active planning for environmental watering and by not having rules that limit or prevent the coordination of environmental watering.

The Authority will assess whether a WRP enables coordinated environmental watering between connected WRP areas. This will include by determining if the operation of the WRP will create barriers to environmental watering between WRP areas. Barriers to environmental watering could include:

1. Inhibiting the movement of environmental water from one WRP area to another, for example by:
  - not accounting for and transferring environmental water allocations as they cross from one WRP area to another, or
  - delaying or holding an environmental water order which has originated from another WRP area, or
  - allowing this water to be used for an unintended purpose.
2. Constraining the ability of water managers to coordinate across WRP areas and adaptively respond to natural flow events and biological cues, for example by:
  - inhibiting the ability of river operators to vary operations based on activities occurring upstream or downstream of the WRP area, or
  - limiting the conditions under which environmental water allocations can be used, such that the environmental watering requirements of shared assets (assets which require water from multiple WRP areas) cannot be met.

The most appropriate mechanisms to achieve coordinated environmental watering (the delivery or use of environmental water to achieve environmental outcomes) will vary from one WRP to another. Accordingly, the MDBA will assess of how a WRP 'provides for' or 'enables' environmental watering between connected water resources relative to how effectively the WRP contributes to the achievement of the objectives in Part 2 of Chapter 8 of the Basin Plan and the outcomes in the Basin-wide environmental watering strategy.