

Queensland Border Rivers–Moonie

Formal submission submitted to the MDBA: 28 February 2019

Disclaimer: Queensland (QLD) formally submitted the proposed Queensland Border Rivers – Moonie water resource plan (proposed WRP) package to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the MDBA) under the Water Act 2007 (Cth). At the time of publication, a recommendation on accreditation has not yet been made by the MDBA to the Commonwealth Minister responsible for water. The proposed WRP is not operational. The publication of the proposed WRP on the MDBA's website is to enable transparency.



The Queensland Border Rivers and Moonie WRP area is located in southern Queensland (Qld). The Dumaresq and Macintyre Rivers form a boundary with New South Wales (NSW) before flowing into the Barwon River in north-west NSW and then the Darling River near Bourke.

Water resources: The WRP (excluding the Great Artesian Basin resources) applies to the following water resources within the plan area: surface water and groundwater.

Towns and regions: Goondiwindi, Stanthorpe, Texas, Mungindi, Moonie, Thallon

Water users: Irrigated agriculture, mixed dryland farming (cropping, stock), mining, forestry

Population: ~20,000

For more detailed maps please visit (please note: some plans overlap):

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/maps-spatial-data>

About water resource plans

Water resource plans are an integral part of implementing the Basin Plan.

They set new rules on how much water can be taken from the system, ensuring the sustainable diversion limit is not exceeded over time.

Basin state governments are developing water resource plans. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority is working closely with Basin state governments to ensure water resource plans meet the requirements of the Basin Plan.

There are 33 water resource plans in total, covering groundwater and surface water management across the Basin. Water resource plans to be completed by state include:

- 20 in New South Wales
- five in Victoria
- three in Queensland
- three in South Australia, and
- two in the Australian Capital Territory.

Next steps

The MDBA is currently assessing the Queensland Border Rivers–Moonie WRP for consistency with the Basin Plan. The Authority will then consider the assessment and provide a recommendation to the Commonwealth Minister responsible for water that will inform the decision to accredit the WRP or not.



For more information on water resource plans, visit: www.mdba.gov.au/water-resource-plans

For more information on the Qld Border Rivers–Moonie water resource plan, visit: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water>

How the WRP was developed

Qld has been developing this WRP since 2016. The WRP is being assessed by the MDBA, which includes seeking advice from the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations.

This WRP brings together rules and arrangements used by Qld to manage water in the WRP area. Links to state plans are provided in the supporting information section below.

Public consultation informed the development of these state plans, with consultation underpinning the WRP.

The Qld Government has worked with members of relevant Aboriginal Nations to help improve the cultural context of water management in the WRP area.

Regional details

The WRP has arrangements to help enable protection and compliance with the SDLs, as well as safeguards for both planned and held environmental water.

The Qld Water Plan includes new requirements to improve the measurement of floodplain harvesting and water allocations (surface water and groundwater) take by December 2022.

The Qld Water Plan includes new rules to manage shallow groundwater (to a depth of six metres) within the Stanthorpe Granite Belt Underground Water Management Area as overland flow water. This will enable management of shallow groundwater and overland flow water as a single resource. The WRP sustainable diversion limits accounting arrangements will apportion this take between groundwater and surface water SDL resource units.

Addressing risks

The Qld statutory water planning approach, along with the Basin Plan, both require the assessment of current and future risks to the condition and continued availability of water resources in developing water plans. Consequently, Qld have undertaken a risk assessment which has informed the development of the state water plans and a Healthy

Waters Management Plan, as well as the WRP package submitted for accreditation.

Risks to Aboriginal values and uses of water were identified through engagement with Aboriginal people with a connection to the land and waters in the Border Rivers and Moonie. Management strategies aim to maintain flows that support Aboriginal water needs, build the understanding of cultural flow requirements and make water available to support economic and social aspirations of Aboriginal people.

The risk assessment primarily focuses only on risks related to water resource management, as other risks linked to water resource impacts (such as land use) are outside the scope of the Basin Plan.

Medium and high-risk mitigation strategies are detailed in a separate Risk Management Report. The risk management strategies aim to address the key risks to the condition and continued availability of water resources.

Further information

WRPs complement existing arrangements for water use at the state level. More information about these arrangements: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water>

Water Act 2000 (QLD):
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/2018-10-25/act-2000-034>

Water Plan (Border Rivers and Moonie) 2019:
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2019-0012>

Border Rivers and Moonie Water Management Protocol 2019 Water Connections (Aboriginal people's water needs in the Queensland Murray–Darling Basin), Border Rivers and Moonie Water Plan Consultation Report

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water/catchments-planning/water-plan-areas/border-rivers-moonie>

Healthy Waters Management Plan (Queensland Border Rivers and Moonie River Basins):
https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/water/policy/water_quality_improvement_plans.html

Office locations

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