

# Queensland – Condamine-Balonne

Formal submission submitted to the MDBA: 28 February 2019

**Disclaimer:** Queensland (QLD) formally submitted the proposed Condamine-Balonne 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 Condamine-Balonne WRP area is located in south-west Queensland. It stretches from the headwaters of the Condamine near Killarney, and headwaters of the Maranoa, near Carnarvon Gorge, into the floodplains of the Lower Balonne.

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

**Towns and regions:** Warwick, Toowoomba, Dalby, Chinchilla, Roma, St George, Surat, Chinchilla, Cecil Plains, Millmerran, Mitchell.

**Water users:** mixed dryland farming (cropping, stock), irrigated agriculture, mining, and urban water use.

**Population:** ~250 000

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 QLD Condamine-Balonne 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](http://www.mdba.gov.au/water-resource-plans)

For more information on the <insert name of WRP> water resource plan, visit <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water>

## How the WRP was developed

Queensland (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 supporting information section below). Public consultation informed the development of these state plans, 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 Basin Plan specifies environmental water recovery for surface water of 100 GL and for groundwater 40 GL. The Commonwealth is finalising the recovery arrangements for both groundwater and surface water in the WRP area.

The WRP includes arrangements that support implementation of the Northern Basin toolkit and WRP accreditation requirements. The arrangements both support compliance with the SDLs and provide safeguards for both planned and held environmental water. This includes the incorporation of rules to improve protection of held environmental water and improvements to existing flow event management rules to support environmental outcomes in the Lower Balonne Floodplain.

Coal seam gas/mining development in the area is largely confined to Great Artesian Basin groundwater resources.

## 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 Healthy Waters Management Plans 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 Condamine-Balonne. 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 takes account of environmental assets across the WRP area and downstream assets such as the Ramsar listed Narran Lakes. The risk assessment primarily focuses only on risks related to water resource management, as other risks (such as land use) are outside the scope of the Basin Plan. Medium and high-risk mitigation strategies are detailed in the Risk Management Report to help demonstrate how certain Basin Plan requirements can be met.

## Further information

WRPs complement existing arrangements for water use at the state level. More information about these arrangements can be found the links below:

<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 (Condamine Balonne) 2019:

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2019-0011>

Condamine Balonne Water Management Protocol 2019  
Water Connections (Aboriginal people's water needs in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin), Condamine & Balonne Water Plan Consultation Report

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

Healthy Waters Management Plan (Condamine River Basin):

[https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/water/policy/water\\_quality\\_improvement\\_plans.html](https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/water/policy/water_quality_improvement_plans.html) Healthy Waters Management Plan (Maranoa and Balonne HWMP River Basin):

[https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/water/policy/water\\_quality\\_improvement\\_plans.html](https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/water/policy/water_quality_improvement_plans.html)

### Office locations

Adelaide, Albury-Wodonga, Canberra, Goondiwindi, Toowoomba

 [mdba.gov.au](https://mdba.gov.au)

 1800 230 067

 [engagement@mdba.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mdba.gov.au)



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