

# Basin Plan Water Resource Plan Requirements Position Statement 9B Strategies for addressing risks

<b>POLICY ISSUE</b>	<b>How will MDBA assess the strategies for addressing risks to water resources in a WRP?</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	Basin Plan s4.03(3), 10.43, 10.05, and Ch 10, Parts 4, 5, 7, 9, 13 and 14. The risk assessment also relates to the WRP as a whole. Refer to PS 9A for risk assessment methods.

<b>MDBA POSITION STATEMENT</b>	
1.	<p>The strategies described to meet the requirements of s10.43 will be assessed using the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Are the strategies described commensurate with the level of risk?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Does the strategy result in the level of residual risk being tolerable?</li> <li>ii. Has a consistent approach been used to determine which risks are managed and how (e.g. cost-benefit analysis)?</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Where a strategy commensurate with the level of risk has not been described, has an explanation of why been provided?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Does the WRP adequately explain the limitations managing these risks through the water resource planning framework?</li> <li>ii. Where relevant, does the WRP identify other instruments that contain strategies to manage that risk that are outside of the water resource planning framework (e.g. land management, bushfire prevention)?</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Do the strategies that relate to other parts of Chapter 10 take account of and contribute to meeting the requirements set out in the relevant provisions?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Are links between the outcomes of the risk assessment and the strategies identified that meet other WRP requirements clear?</li> <li>ii. Requirements in Parts 4, 5 and 7 which have direct links to the risks identified during the risk assessment must be taken into account (see rationale).</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Do the strategies take into account the connectivity between water resources?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Are strategies best addressed in a different water resource plan area to the water resource being impacted?</li> <li>ii. If so, or if the impacts of a risk can move between connected water resources in different WRPs, is there coordination between relevant WRPs?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

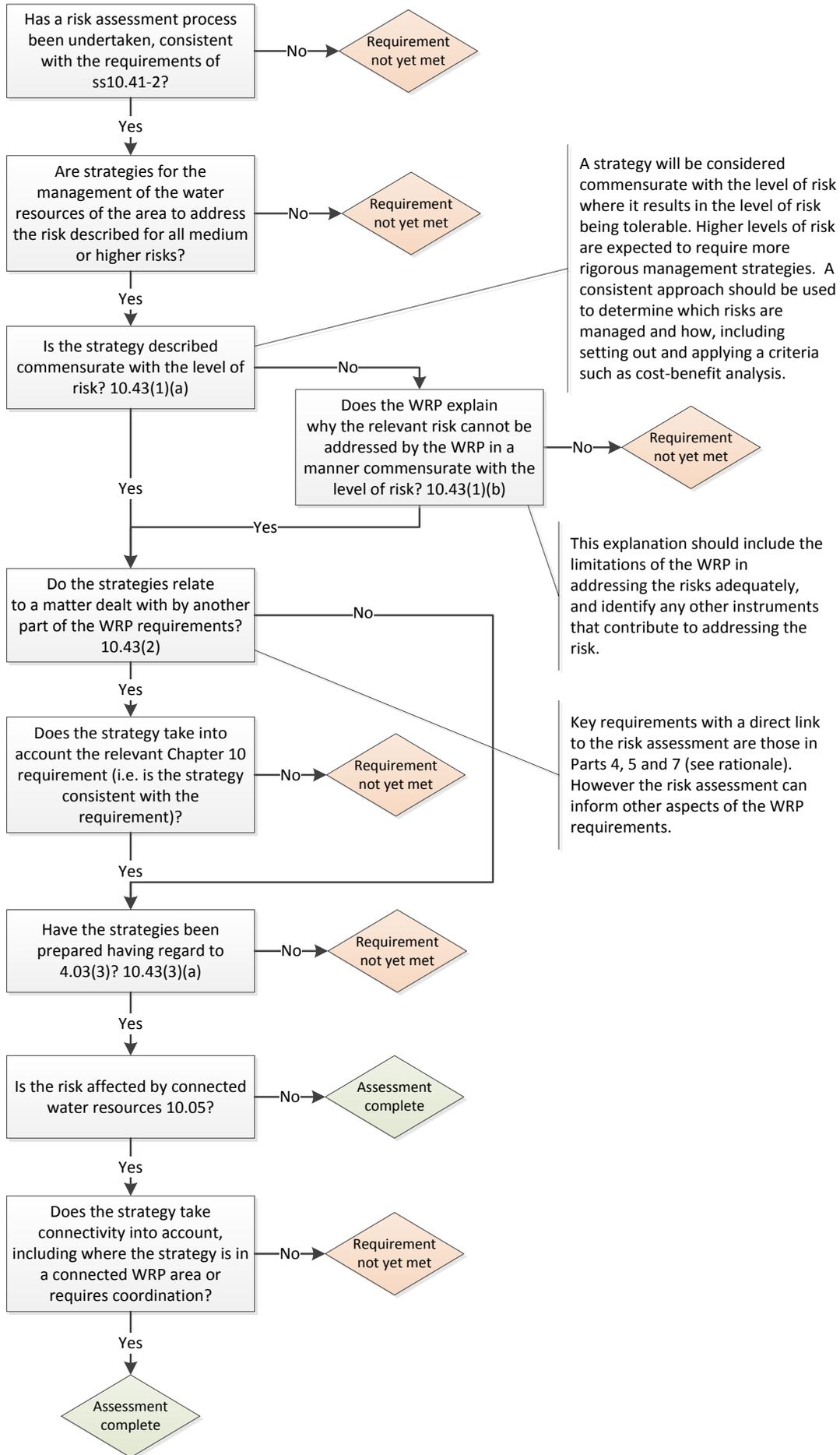
<b>MDBA Reference</b>	D15/56171	<i>Accessed:</i>
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## **Rationale**

2. Risk assessments are critical to informing the development of water resource plans (WRPs) and the approach to different obligations in the Basin Plan. This Position Statement assumes that a robust risk identification and assessment process has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements in ss10.41 and 10.42 (see PS9A for risk assessment methods). Following that process, strategies must be described for each of the medium and higher risks. A Basin State may also choose to describe strategies for low risks. This includes identifying strategies that already exist as part of a Basin State's water management arrangements that have been maintained in order to continue to manage a risk. A flow chart for the MDBA's assessment of the requirements in s10.43 is set out in the Attachment.
3. Strategies for addressing risks may include options such as:
  - a. Avoiding the risk by not doing the activity that gives rise to the risk
  - b. Removing the risk source
  - c. Reducing the likelihood
  - d. Minimising the consequences
  - e. Sharing the risk
  - f. Making an informed decision to accept the risk.
4. The MDBA will consider that a strategy is commensurate with the level of risk if it results in the level of risk being tolerable. Arriving at a tolerable level of risk may require an iterative process of assessing strategies, deciding if the residual risk is tolerable, and if necessary generating a new or additional strategy.
5. The MDBA expects States to reduce risks as much as feasible and cost effective, however in some cases it might not be possible or practical to reduce a risk to low. The Basin State will need to be clear on what they see as a tolerable level of risk and why. This would typically relate the level of risk to the cost and difficulty or other impacts of appropriate risk treatments in a way that supports decision making processes.
6. Decisions about which risks are managed and how should be made using a consistent approach, such as a cost-benefit analysis. In general, more detailed and prescriptive strategies may be required to address higher level risks.
7. The strategy in the WRP may not be able to reduce the level of risk to a tolerable level, and in this case an explanation should be given for why this is the case.
8. In some cases the relevant strategy may be outside the water planning framework. In the case of future risks which are beyond the life of the accredited WRP, appropriate strategies may focus on monitoring and review.
9. Consideration should be given to the specific links with WRP requirements set out below when undertaking the risk identification and assessment, and identifying strategies. Strategies should take account of and support WRP content that fulfils the requirements of those Parts.
10. Part 4 requires a WRP to include management arrangements that account for the local impacts of surface water and groundwater, if and where necessary. The risk assessment undertaken in Part 9 will inform the way these impacts are managed at the local scale. Section 10.22(b) requires an explanation of why rules addressing a risk identified in the risk assessment have or have not been included in the WRP.
11. Part 5 requires that the types of interception activity within the WRP area that have, or may have, a significant impact on relevant water resources are identified. In addition, s10.23 also requires that certain factors must be considered when making this assessment, including the risk identification and assessment undertaken for s10.41.

12. Part 7 includes reference to risks arising from elevated levels of salinity or other types of water quality degradation. Where such risks have been identified, Part 7 requires an explanation as to why measures to address those risks have or have not been included in the WRP (s10.31).
13. In addition to the specific links identified above, a WRP will also be prepared having regard to the current and future risks to the condition and continued availability of the water resources of the WRP area. The risks considered during the s10.41 process should include those relevant to all parts of the WRP requirements, and the outcomes of the risk assessment can also be used to inform the approach taken to meeting those WRP requirements (e.g. those contained in Parts 3, 6, 8, 13 and 14).
14. Subsection 10.43(3)(a) requires a WRP to be prepared having regard to the strategies listed in s4.03(3). The MDBA considers that a brief statement in supporting documentation that links the strategies in s4.03(3) to the content of the WRP will be sufficient to meet this requirement.
15. Section 10.05 requires a WRP to be prepared having regard to the management and use of any water resources with a significant hydrological connection to the water resources of the WRP area. This requirement is relevant to considering appropriate strategies to address risks where the impacts or a risk can move between WRP areas. In these cases there should be some coordination between the relevant WRPs.

**POSITION STATEMENT 9B: Risk assessment strategies**



<b>MDBA Reference</b>	<b>D15/56171</b>
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