



Australian Government



MURRAY-DARLING
BASIN AUTHORITY

Water resource plans

The Basin Plan aims to achieve a healthy and productive river system. It sets sustainable diversion limits, which limit how much water can be used in the Murray-Darling Basin, to ensure there is enough water to sustain natural ecosystems. Water resource plans ensure sustainable diversion limits are not exceeded over time.

The plans are a starting point for establishing new rules on how much water can be taken from the system, while leaving enough to keep the environment healthy. They aim to strengthen water management at a local level and outline how each region will seek to achieve community, cultural environmental and economic outcomes.

Water resource plans bring state legislation into Commonwealth law and water regulation. The plans cover a wide range of water management subjects, including:

- compliance with sustainable diversion limits and water trade rules
- protection of water for the environment
- water quality and salinity objectives
- Aboriginal values and uses
- measuring and monitoring
- arrangements for extreme weather events.

Managing water is complex and the Basin Plan is a significant reform process. Because water is so crucial to life in the Basin, a large number of governments, authorities and agencies, responsible for many different communities and interests, are involved in managing it. It depends on a partnership between the Australian Government, Basin state governments and Basin communities.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority is working closely with Basin state governments to ensure state water management rules meet Basin Plan objectives and address the local realities of water resource management.

Key facts

Water resource plans set new rules on how much water can be used in the Murray-Darling Basin.



The **sustainable diversion limit** is the amount of water that can be used in the Murray-Darling Basin.



Water resource plans are key to ensuring **sustainable diversion limits are not exceeded over time.**



There are **33 water resource plans** which include groundwater and surface water.



Basin state and territory governments use **local and Aboriginal knowledge** when developing water resource plans.

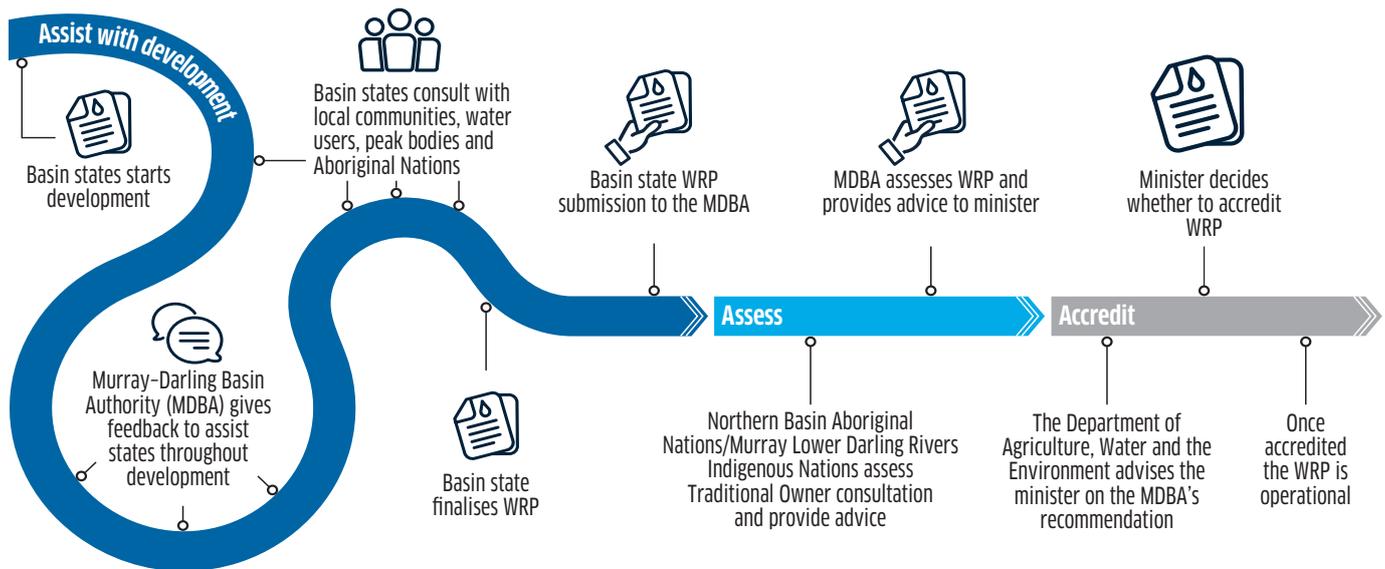


Plans will evolve and be **adapted over time.** They may need to be recredited in the future as they are adjusted and improved.



The plans **complement and strengthen existing arrangements** in each state to manage water.

Process to accredit a new water resource plan (WRP)



Changing water management

The new system, operational from July 2019, creates a fairer way to share water.

Water resource plans outline how Basin state governments will meet the objectives of the Basin Plan. They set out rules for how water resources are managed across the Basin, at a local or catchment level. The plans detail how water will be shared and managed for a sustainable future.

Regions across the Basin are diverse. To ensure the river system is sustainable for future generations, regions must plan for change that meets local needs but also recognises the connected nature of our rivers.

Where necessary bilateral agreements have been updated to ensure that sustainable diversion limits and better management of water for the environment remain in effect from 1 July 2020, even if plans have not been accredited by that date.

These agreements promote transparency and give the MDBA and the community confidence in the consistent application of key Basin Plan elements across all Basin states and territories.

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

Progress

All Basin state governments have submitted plans for accreditation, however delivery of water resource plans is behind schedule.

The timeframe to complete water resource plans was determined in 2012. Basin governments now have a better understanding of the complexities of water management. Plans for each area must consider a range of detailed policy requirements and address the local context of water resource management, on-the-ground - this can be challenging.

In 2019, relevant Basin state and territory governments and the Commonwealth agreed to implement key elements of plans, where accredited plans were not in place. These were put in place through bilateral agreements. These agreements ensure that sustainable diversion limits and measures to protect and better manage environmental water were in place from 1 July 2019.



Connect with us.

The MDBA has offices in Adelaide, Albury-Wodonga, Canberra, Goondiwindi, Griffith, Mildura, Murray-Bridge, Toowoomba, and regional engagement officers around the Basin.

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