

Northern Victoria

Formal submission to the MDBA: 26 April 2019

Disclaimer: Victoria has formally submitted the proposed Goulburn-Murray water resource plan, the Northern Victoria water resource plan and the Victorian Murray water resource plan as a combined package called Victoria's North and Murray Water Resource Plan (proposed WRP) 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 Northern Victoria WRP area extends from the Victorian Alps in the east, around Daylesford in the south west, and to the western boundary of the Loddon River catchment. The area is dominated by northerly flowing river systems including the Ovens, Goulburn, Broken, Campaspe, and Loddon rivers. The majority of the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District lies in the Northern Victoria WRP area.

Water resources: The proposed WRP applies to the surface water of the Northern Victoria WRP area. The groundwater of this area is included in the proposed WRP for the Goulburn-Murray WRP area.

Towns and regions: Bendigo, Benalla, Echuca, Shepparton, Wangaratta

Water users: Irrigated agriculture and horticulture, urban water supply, recreation, environment, domestic and stock use and Traditional Owner use.

Population (2016 census): 407,100

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 proposed 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 proposed WRP or not.



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

For more information on the Northern Victoria water resource plan, visit: <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb/compliance/water-resource-plans>

How the WRP was developed

Victoria's North and Murray WRP is the proposed WRP that Victoria has developed as an integrated package which includes the Northern Victoria WRP area, Victorian Murray WRP area and the Goulburn-Murray WRP area.

Victoria has been developing the proposed WRP since 2017. Public consultation informed and underpinned the proposed WRP package and was conducted by the Victorian Government between 23 January and 18 March 2019.

The Victorian Government has also conducted focused engagement with Traditional Owners of Victoria's North and Murray WRP area.

Regional details

The surface water resources in the Northern Victoria WRP area support a significant amount of agricultural and horticultural activity and commercial operations. This water also provides for urban use and is an essential source for domestic and stock water supply.

The Northern Victoria WRP area covers some of the important irrigation areas of Victoria, with much of the production reliant on surface water resources of the contributing rivers.

Planned environmental water is protected in parts of the Northern Victoria WRP area for specific environmental outcomes. There are a number of environmentally significant sites covered by the Northern Victoria WRP that rely on the surface water resources of the area, including:

- Lindsay, Wallpolla and Mulcra Islands are Living Murray icon sites
- the Lower Ovens River is the only lowland river nominated for environmental values under the *Victorian Heritage Rivers Act 1992*
- the Goulburn River downstream of Lake Eildon is a declared Victorian heritage river.

Many parts of the Northern Victoria WRP area demonstrate high levels of surface water and groundwater connectivity.

Addressing risks

The proposed WRP identifies the role of different types of water that contribute to environmental outcomes from both regulated and unregulated parts of the system. This includes water named in the proposed WRP as above cap water and system water. The MDBA has highlighted assurances in the WRP that this water will be managed and reported on to provide for environmental outcomes.

Victoria has recently developed the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters) that manages surface water and groundwater quality and salinity. This policy will help manage salinity levels in the southern Basin as part of the *Basin Salinity Management Strategy 2030*.

Arrangements to address other risks will be assessed in the proposed WRP package, including arrangements for extreme events, risks to social, recreational and Aboriginal use and water quality. For more information on issues common across many WRPs in the Basin, including water use (measured by baseline diversion limits), climate change and connectivity, visit: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/water-resource-plans>

Further information

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

Water for Victoria:

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/water-for-victoria>

[Water Act 1989](#) (VIC)

State Environment Protection Policy (Waters):

<https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/water-legislation/water-related-policies>

[Environmental Water Management Plans](#) (Victoria)

Victorian Environmental Water Holder:

<http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/>

Victorian Water Register:

<http://waterregister.vic.gov.au/>

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Australian Government

