

Better management of environmental water in NSW

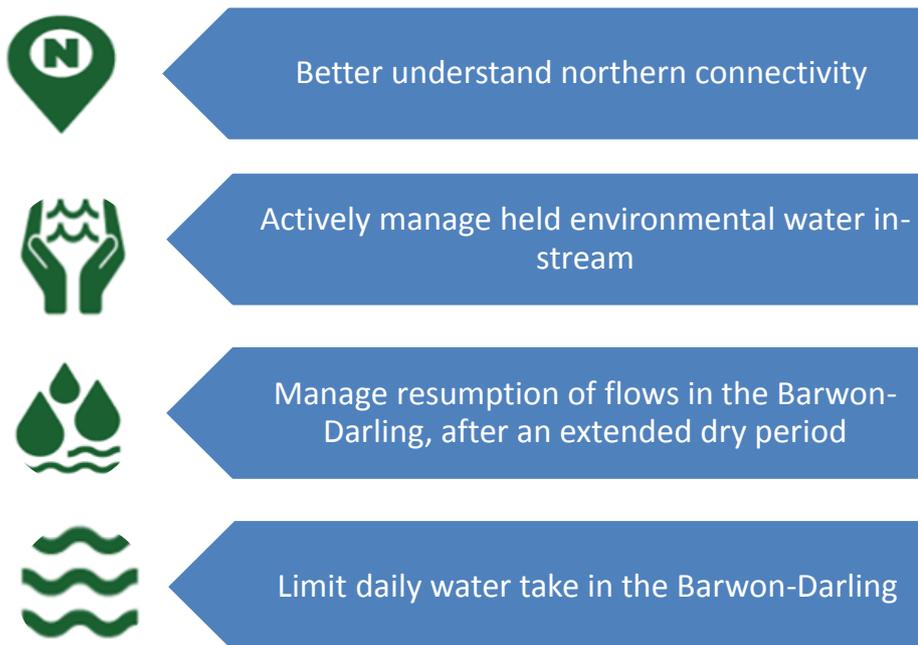
Work plan – updated April 2019



Measures for better management of environmental water

The [Better management of environmental water – Northern Murray-Darling Basin Snapshot brochure \(PDF 9.8 MB\)](#) was released December 2018. It provides information on measures being considered to better manage environmental water in the NSW northern Murray-Darling Basin, progress to date and proposed next steps.

Solutions being considered:



A pathway to progress solutions

To better understand the potential benefits and impacts of the solutions being considered, analysis, including hydrological, economic and ecological analysis is being undertaken. Stakeholder consultation will occur as part of the Water Resource plan development process and exhibition of draft water sharing plans.

This document sets out the pathway to progressing solutions for better managing environmental water in NSW including milestones.

Mechanisms to implement solutions

Where appropriate, new measures will be implemented through amendments to NSW water sharing plans and incorporated into water resource plans required under the Basin Plan. Incorporating the package of solutions into water sharing plans will ensure the solutions are enduring and certain.

Timeframes

The timeframes set out in this document are based on best available information at the time of developing this work plan. There is a document revision log included on Page 6. Revisions will occur as required.

The Department intends to align stakeholder consultation in relation to solutions for better managing environmental water in the Barwon-Darling, lower Gwydir and lower Macquarie with water resource plan consultation activities scheduled for September 2019.

Timeframes are subject to consultation processes for water resource plans.

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) review of the Water Sharing Plan for the Barwon-Darling Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2012 under section 43A of the *Water Management Act 2000* has commenced. The content and timing of the deliverables specified in this work plan are subject to the timing, process and recommendations of the NRC review. Current information indicates the NRC will complete their review in August 2019, prior to the consultation activities scheduled for September

Implementation

The Water Renewal Taskforce is working with partner agencies to ensure measures being considered to better manage environmental water can also be implemented within reasonable and appropriate timeframes.



Better understand northern connectivity

What are we doing

A stocktake of water sharing rules that contribute to connectivity in the NSW northern Basin. This involves documenting current rules in 11 NSW water sharing plans across 6 valleys and how they potentially contribute to hydrological connectivity between the Barwon-Darling River and its tributaries.

How we will do it

By when

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Document water sharing plan rules and <i>Water Management Act 2000</i> requirements that relate to hydrological connectivity▪ Document how the current water sharing plan rules contribute to hydrological connectivity▪ Publish a report on the findings of the northern connectivity stocktake | Q2 2019 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Review northern Basin Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Plans to identify work required to improve our understanding of how water sharing plan rules and the use of held environmental water contributes to improved connectivity in the northern Basin | Q3 2019 |



Actively manage held environmental water in-stream

What are we doing

Investigating options to actively manage access to flows to allow held environmental water to remain in-stream for environmental purposes in the Barwon-Darling, and parts of the lower Gwydir and lower Macquarie.

How we will do it

By when

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Present information to Barwon-Darling, Gwydir and Macquarie-Castlereagh Stakeholder Advisory Panels on the concept of active management | Complete |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft policy positions for active management | Q1 2019 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalise draft policy positions for consultationPrepare case studies to show how active management will work and potential benefitsConsult with Barwon-Darling Stakeholder Advisory Panel, stakeholders interested in the Gwydir and Macquarie-Bogan areas and the Interagency Working Group - Environmental Water (IWG) on proposed active management rules and draft policy positions | Q2 2019 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare draft water sharing plan rules for active managementPublicly consult on proposed active management rules and draft policy positions as part of the WRP public consultationPrepare draft active management protocols for the Barwon-Darling, lower Gwydir and lower Macquarie-Bogan unregulated systems | Q3 2019 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Submit proposed WSP rule changes to the MDBA as part of the WRP package | Q4 2019 |



Limit take in the Barwon-Darling

What are we doing

Investigating options to establish Individual Daily Extraction Limits (IDELs) in the Barwon-Darling including developing a method for distributing IDELs between water access licence holders and developing rules for trade. Also working with agency partners to ensure IDELs can be implemented.

How we will do it

By when

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Options identified and shortlistedHydrological analysis complete on short-listed optionsTargeted consultation with Barwon-Darling Stakeholder Advisory Panel	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete ecological and economic analysis of shortlisted IDEL distribution optionsIdentify preferred package - including IDEL distribution and trade rulesComplete analysis of preferred package	Q2 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consult with Barwon-Darling Stakeholder Advisory Panel and the IWG on proposed IDEL distribution rules and trade rules	Q2 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Publicly consult on proposed IDEL distribution rules and trade rules as part of WRP public consultationReview draft IDEL distribution and trade rules following public consultation	Q3 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Submit proposed WSP rule changes to the MDBA as part of the WRP package	Q4 2019



Manage resumption of flows in the Barwon-Darling, after an extended dry period

What are we doing

Investigating rules in the Barwon-Darling to manage the resumption of flows after an extended dry period.

How we will do it

By when

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Options identified and shortlistedHydrological analysis complete on short-listed optionsTargeted consultation with Barwon-Darling Stakeholder Advisory Panel	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete ecological and economic analysis of optionsIdentify preferred package of optionsComplete analysis of preferred package of optionsConsult with Barwon-Darling Stakeholder Advisory Panel and the IWG on proposed rules	Q2 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Publicly consult on proposed rules as part of WRP public consultationReview draft rules following public consultation	Q3 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Submit proposed WSP rule changes to the MDBA as part of the WRP package	Q4 2019