

Outcomes from the public exhibition of the plan

The NSW Government has agreed to develop water resource plans as part of the implementation of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan 2012.

Water resource plans demonstrate how the Basin states of NSW, the ACT, Queensland and Victoria coordinate their water management with the federal government's Basin Plan, including how the sustainable diversion limits set in the Basin Plan will be met.

As part of the planning process, the draft Intersecting Streams Surface Water Resource Plan, and proposed amendments to the existing water sharing plan, were publically exhibited from 22 July 2019 to 31 August 2019.

We held public meetings in Bourke on the 6 August 2019 with 30 attendees, in Lightning Ridge on the 7 August 2019 with 14 attendees and Goodooga on the 15 August 2019 with 25 attendees.

Stakeholders provided valuable feedback that helped us develop the final versions of water resource plan and water sharing plans. This factsheet outlines the main changes since public exhibition.

Submissions

We received a total of four submissions on the draft Intersecting Streams Surface Water Resource Plan and associated documents, with 15 separate issues for consideration.

How submissions were considered

We examined the nature of the issues raised, or suggestions made in the submission, and considered them in relation to the:

- scope of water resource planning
- principles outlined in the Basin Plan and their consistency with the plan's requirements
- principles set by the NSW Government for water resource planning and any statutory, technical or administrative constraints.

In particular, we considered the following questions for each issue or suggestion:

- Is it likely to have an impact on water availability or how water is distributed to access licences of different categories or within a category, and if so, how?
- Is it likely to result in a net reduction in planned environmental water?
- Can current statutory mechanisms enable the change, or is legislative change required?
- Is it consistent with current policy settings, and if not, is development of robust alternative policies feasible within the timeframe to develop the water resource plan?
- Are there additional costs for the NSW Government?
- Is it cost neutral for NSW water licence holders and if not, what is the cost implication?
- Does it relate to water charges, costs, operational activities or licensing matters outside of the scope of the water resource plan?
- Are there existing programs/processes or other departments addressing the issue?
- Is its full investigation feasible within the timeframe of developing the water resource plan?

- Does it set a precedent for other water resource plans?

Changes since public consultation

- the water resource plan, water sharing plan and supporting documents have been aligned to ensure consistency between the documents, in particular licensed entitlements
- a fact sheet will be prepared to accompany the remade amended unregulated water sharing plans in mid 2020 that provides information on the principles applied to ensuring compliance with the long-term annual average extraction limits and sustainable diversion limits

General changes to the water sharing plan

- the water sharing plan objectives were revised to address comments raised in submissions and to better align with strategies and performance indicators. This included removal of the references to the Long Term Water Plans in the notes to the plan objectives

Changes to Intersecting Streams Unregulated Water Sharing Plan

- The water sharing plan was amended to allow for interstate trade between NSW-Qld if demand from water users is determined and appropriate administrative arrangements are in place.
- An amendment provision has been added to enable active management of environmental water in the future, should NSW determine this is feasible.
- Minor wording changes to improve clarity and reduce ambiguity

Outcomes of preliminary MDBA review

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) assesses the draft water resource plans as part of the plan development. The assessment informs the federal minister’s decision on whether to accredit the water resource plan.

While the official assessment won’t happen until we formally submit the water resource plan to the MDBA, the MDBA has undertaken a preliminary review of the public exhibition version of the plan. This early feedback has been valuable for informing additional changes to the documents, primarily the water resource plan, water quality management plan and risk assessment. Changes generally relate to clarifying and justifying matters to ensure Basin Plan requirements are met.

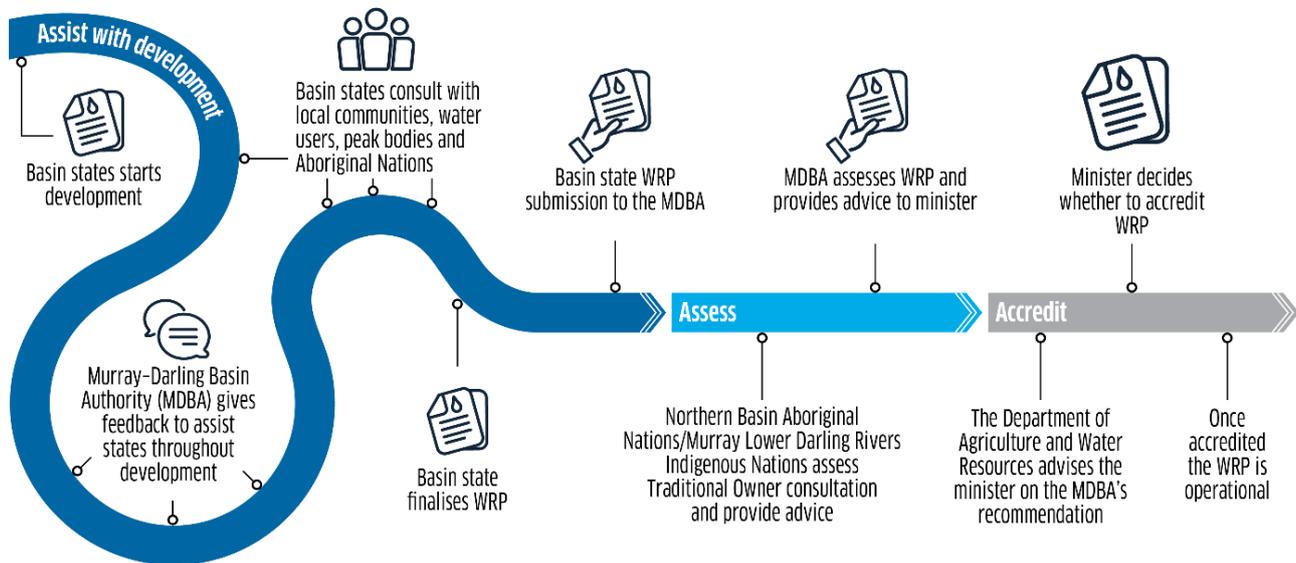
Following the official assessment by the MDBA, the federal minister responsible for water will review the plan and determine whether it meets the Basin Plan objectives and can be accredited.

Once accredited, the final Intersecting Streams Water Resource Plan is uploaded to the MDBA’s website. The draft plans can be found on the MDBA’s website

Intersecting Streams Surface Water Resource Plan

Fact sheet

Figure 1. Water resource plan accreditation process



More information

The draft Intersecting Streams Water Resource Plan and fact sheets are available from the department's 'website at (www.water.nsw.gov.au)

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (December 2019). The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing December 2019. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate departmental officer or the user's independent adviser.