

## Water resource plans in New South Wales

New South Wales (NSW) is preparing 20 water resource plans as part of implementing the Commonwealth's *Basin Plan 2012*. The water resource plans have a fundamental role in ensuring that sustainable diversion limits for our water resources set by the Basin Plan are implemented from 2019 onwards. The water resource plans set out arrangements for sharing water for consumptive use, establish rules to meet environmental and water quality objectives and take into account potential and emerging risks to water resources.

### Application of water resource plans

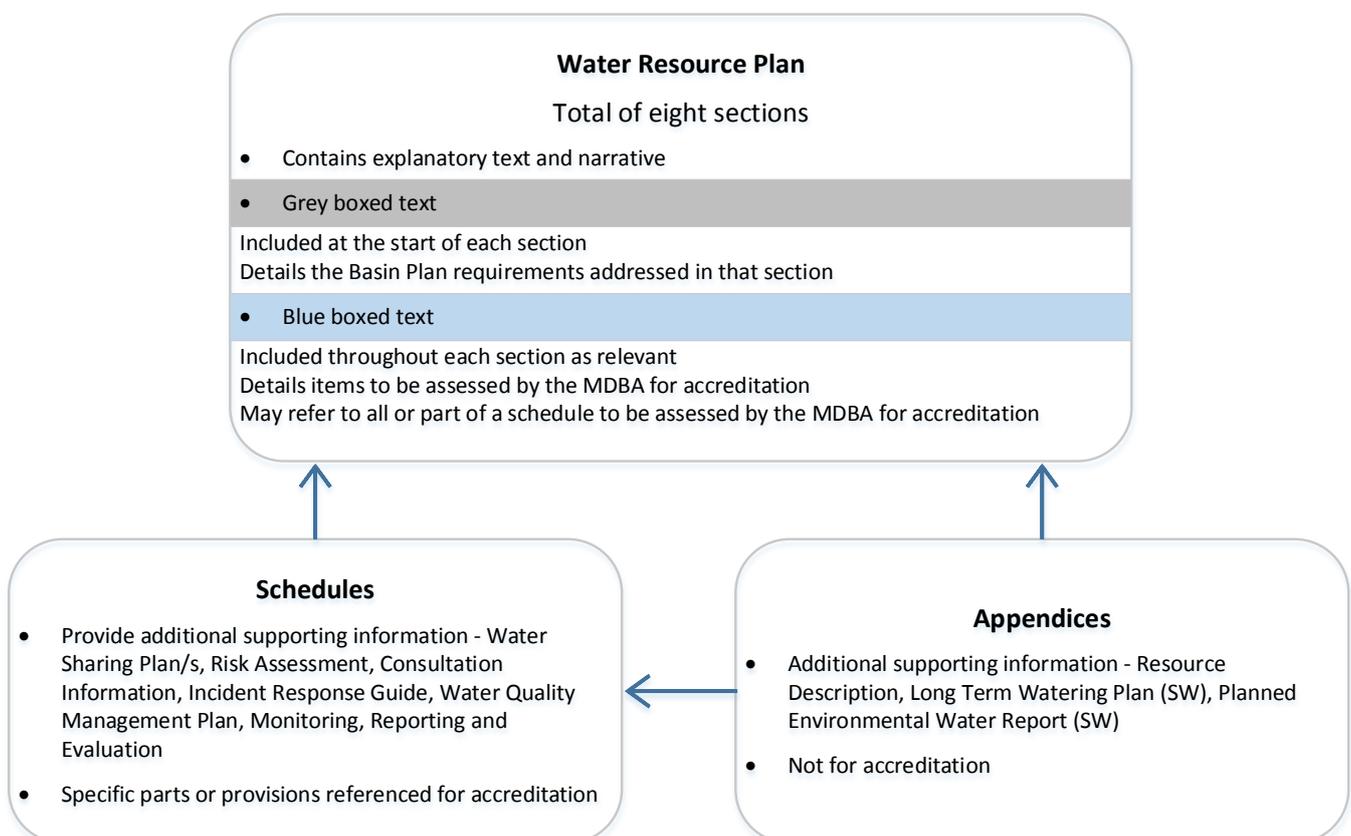
There will be nine plans for surface water resources corresponding to the major valleys in the Murray–Darling Basin of NSW. The valleys are: Border Rivers; Gwydir; Namoi; Macquarie–Castlereagh; Lachlan; Murrumbidgee; NSW Murray and Lower Darling; Barwon–Darling; and Intersecting Streams. The water resource plans will cover both the regulated and unregulated surface water resources in the plan areas.

There will be 11 water resource plans for groundwater resources, with eight of these covering the alluvial groundwater resources associated with the: Border Rivers; Gwydir; Namoi; Macquarie–Castlereagh; Lachlan; Murrumbidgee; Murray; and Darling catchments. Of the remaining three water resource plans, one will cover the alluvial groundwater resources overlying the Great Artesian Basin, and two will cover all porous and fractured rock groundwater sources in the NSW Murray–Darling Basin.

### What a water resource plan looks like

Water resource plans in NSW will be made up of multiple documents as shown in the Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Overview of water resource plan document**



## Relationship to existing NSW water sharing plans

Water resource plans are developed to meet requirements set out by Commonwealth legislation. The entire NSW portion of the Murray–Darling Basin is already covered by statutory water sharing plans made under NSW legislation. The NSW water sharing plans will remain the primary legal framework for how water is accessed and shared. The water resource plans build on these arrangements to deliver requirements under the Basin Plan.

The relevant water sharing plans are listed as Schedule A in the water resource plans. Where the provisions of a water sharing plan meet the requirements of the *Basin Plan 2012*, those provisions are referenced directly in the water resource plan and are adopted. As part of the water resource plan development process, key provisions of water sharing plans are being amended to meet the requirements of the *Basin Plan 2012*.

Fact sheets for each water resource plan explain what changes to water sharing plans are being considered as part of the water resource plan development for that area.

## Consultation

A stakeholder advisory panel is active for most surface water resource plans areas and a single, statewide groundwater stakeholder advisory panel covers all groundwater water resource plan areas. The main role of the panels is to help identify issues, examine options and provide the NSW Department of Industry with feedback and advice throughout the development of water resource plans and the process of amending or re-making water sharing plans.

Stakeholder advisory panel members include local licence holder representatives, environmental representatives, Aboriginal community representatives, local government, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and various NSW government agency representatives. Panel meetings are independently facilitated.

Whilst stakeholder advisory panels are the primary groups informing the development of water resource plans, the department conducts targeted consultation with specific local stakeholders where more detailed discussions are required. This ensures any proposed changes to existing water sharing arrangements are fully considered by those most affected and helps to guide the final recommendations for both the water resource plans and re-made/amended water sharing plans.

We are also consulting with Aboriginal people and organisations as part of the development of each water resource plan.

## Have your say

Community input is an important part of the development of each water resource plan. As part of the consultation process, stakeholders and the broader community will be able to make written submissions on the draft water resource plans. All submissions received will be used to inform each final plan.

Draft water resource plans will be placed on public exhibition and information sessions held at several locations throughout the plan area.

Draft plans will be available on the department's website along with a range of supporting information, details of public exhibition points and stakeholder feedback.

## More information

More information regarding water resource plan development and implementation is available on the department's website: [industry.nsw.gov.au/water-resource-plan-consultation](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/water-resource-plan-consultation)

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