

## 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 Namoi Surface Water Resource Plan, and proposed amendments to the existing water sharing plans, were publically exhibited from 26 September 2019 to 20 November 2019

We held public meetings in Tamworth on the 23 October 2019 with 38 attendees, Gunnedah on the 4 November 2019 with 58 attendees, Narrabri on the 5 November 2019 with 93 attendees and Wee Waa on the 15 November with 300 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 243 submissions on the draft Namoi Surface Water Resource Plan 2019 and associated documents, with 74 separate issues for consideration.

### How submissions were considered

The NSW Government 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 regulated water sharing plans and amended unregulated water sharing plan 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 plans

- 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
- specific licence provisions for floodplain harvesting have been removed and will be added back in after further consultation and when floodplain harvesting licences are ready to be issued
- provisions relating to the implementation of the NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy have been removed and will only be included once floodplain harvesting licences are ready to be issued.
- provisions relating to sustainable diversion limit compliance have been amended to clarify that the compliance process will follow the requirements of the Basin Plan
- amendment clause relating to the access licence dealing rules has been added to provide for the conversion of the regulated river (high security) access licences to unregulated access licences where the regulated system is connected to and downstream of the unregulated system. Further stakeholder engagement will be undertaken to review options prior to development of the dealing rules if they are required.

## Changes in the regulated water sharing plans

- the third definition/component of PEW 'water remaining after water has been taken under basic landholder rights and access licences, in accordance with the rules in Parts 7 and 9' has been removed to reduce potential ambiguity.
- the economic objectives for the plan have been updated to include a targeted objective which states 'maintain and where possible to improve access to water up to the long-term average sustainable diversion limit for agriculture, surface water-dependant businesses and landholders'
- an amendment provision has been included to facilitate total extractions reaching the long-term average annual extractions, or long-term average sustainable diversion limit, when the total extractions are significantly less than those over the long term.
- Minor wording changes to improve clarity and reduce ambiguity

## Changes to Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source Water Sharing Plan

- All references to Long-term Watering Plan (LTWP) and Environmental Water Requirement (EWR) has been removed from the water sharing plan because these are non-statutory documents in NSW.
- The supplementary water is not planned environmental water and Clause 16(1)(a)(ii) and 16(2)(b) have been removed from Part 4 of the Water Sharing Plan.
- The DPIE Water has accepted 50:50 sharing of supplementary water event throughout the year with some modification in threshold flows suggested by water users. These changes have been incorporated in clause 48 (3) of the WSP for Upper and Lower Namoi Regulated Water Source 2020.

## Changes to Peel Regulated River Water Source Water Sharing Plan

- No significant change has been made in the Peel Regulated River Water Sharing Plan. A drafting mistake has been corrected.

## Changes to Namoi and Peel Unregulated Rivers Water Source Water Sharing Plan

- The drafting of the water trading rules (clause 62 and clause 63) have been changed to further clarify the rules.
- Minor wording changes to improve clarity and reduce ambiguity

## Outcomes of preliminary MDBA review

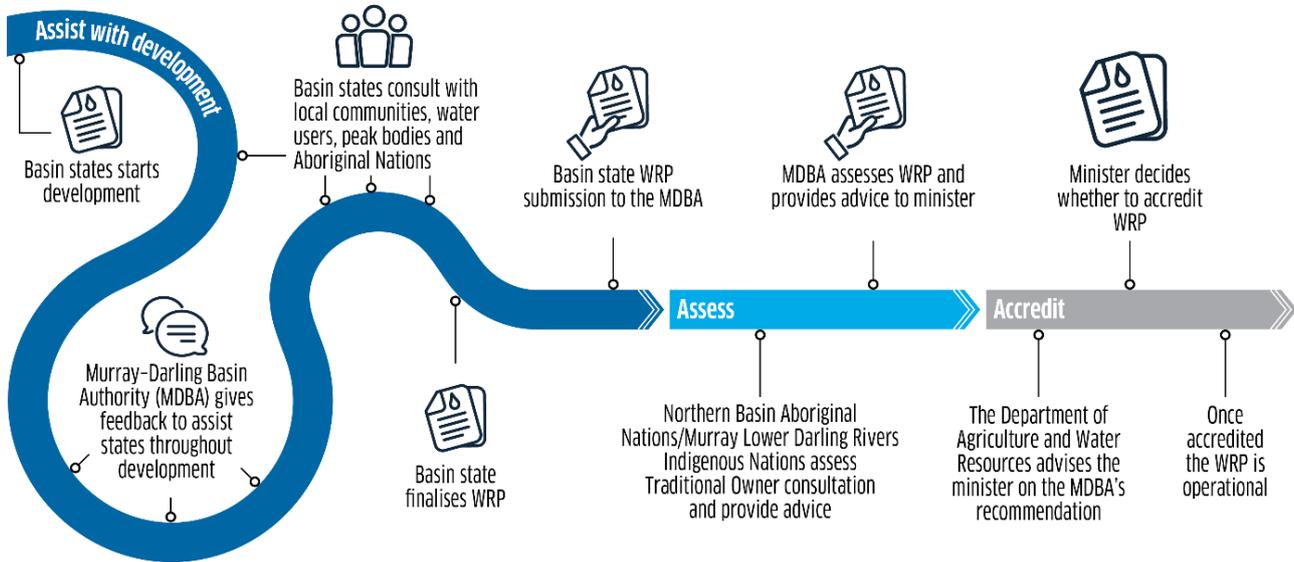
The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) assesses the draft water resource plans as part of the plan development. The assessment informs the federal minister’s decision on whether to accredit the water resource plan.

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 Namoi Surface Water Resource Plan is uploaded to the MDBA’s website. The draft plans can be found on the MDBA’s website

Figure 1. Water resource plan accreditation process



## More information

The draft Namoi Surface Water Resource Plan and fact sheets are available from the department's 'website at ([www.water.nsw.gov.au](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au))

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