

# Information collection template for water year 2023–24 – ACT

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The ACT 2023–24 report to satisfy annual reporting obligations for Basin Plan Schedule 12.

## Reporting context

The matters listed in Schedule 12 of the Basin Plan relate to the objectives and outcomes against which the effectiveness of the Basin Plan will be evaluated (see section 13.05). The matters are also matters on which the MDBA, the Basin States, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, and the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water are required to report. Schedule 12 includes Category A matters which are subject to 5 yearly reporting and Category B matters (see Table 1) which are subject to annual reporting.

This template covers Basin State 2023-24 reporting obligations in relation to Matters 6, 10, 13, 14, 16 and 21. Please refer to the notes for an explanation of why some Matters are not included in this template. The reporting period is the water year, 1 July to 30 June. The Basin Plan sets the reporting day as 31 October in the calendar year that reporting period ends.

Table 1. Schedule 12, Category B matters, annual reporting

#	Schedule 12 Annual Matters	Reporter			
4	The effectiveness of the management of risks to Basin water resources.	MDBA	Basin States		
5	The transition to long term average sustainable diversion limits.				Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
6	The extent to which local knowledge and solutions inform the implementation of the Basin Plan.	MDBA	Basin States	CEWH	
9	The identification of environmental water and the monitoring of its use.	MDBA	Basin States	CEWH	
10	The implementation of the environmental management framework (Part 4 of Chapter 8).	MDBA	Basin States	CEWH	
13	The implementation, where necessary, of the emergency response process for critical human water needs.	MDBA	Basin States		Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
14	The implementation of the water quality and salinity management plan, including the extent to which regard is had to the targets in Chapter 9 when making flow management decisions.	MDBA	Basin States	CEWH	
16	The implementation of water trading rules.	MDBA	Basin States		
19	Compliance with water resource plans.		Basin States		
20	The prioritisation of critical human water needs.		Basin States		
21	The accountability and transparency of arrangements for water sharing.		Basin States		

Notes:

- Reporting for Matter 5 is reported separately by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.
- Reporting for Matter 4 by Basin States is reported through Matter 10, and through the process of water resource plan accreditation.
- Reporting for Matter 9 is reported separately by Basin States, Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and the MDBA, through Water Act s71 reporting, and through the Matter 9.3 reporting template.
- No reporting by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is required for Matter 13, as BOC undertakes this reporting when Tier 2 and 3 water sharing arrangements are in place.
- Reporting for Matter 19 (Compliance with water resource plans) is reported separately by Basin States.
- No reporting by Basin States is required for Matter 20, as confirmation that this Basin Plan requirement has been met will be via the process of water resource plan accreditation.
- Schedule 12 reporting requirements in this template have been informed by the Basin Plan Schedule 12 Reporting Guidelines developed in 2015. The Basin Plan Schedule 12 Reporting Guidelines include reporting indicators which are nested under relevant Schedule 12 matters.
- New guidance can be updated annually to help reporters meet reporting obligations and ensure the reporting requirements are up to date.
- The MDBA assumes everything provided in this template is public, and licensing would allow the information’s re-use unless specifically notified.

The Basin Plan Schedule 12 Guidelines and this information collection template are inconsistent. This template sets out the current reporting requirements.

## Matter 6: The extent to which local knowledge and solutions inform the implementation of the Basin Plan

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
<p><b>Matter 6</b></p> <p>The extent to which local knowledge and solutions inform the implementation of the Basin Plan.</p> <p>Applicable to:</p> <p>Basin Plan Chapters 6, 8 &amp; 10</p>	<p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Provide a summary of how local knowledge and solutions informed implementation of the Basin Plan. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how local knowledge and solutions were used by the reporter</li> <li>how involving communities made a difference to Basin Plan implementation</li> <li>how decisions changed as a result of community involvement.</li> </ul> <p>This may include engagement activities related to water resource planning, First Nations participation in environmental watering, and the SDL Adjustment Mechanism.</p> <p>Holders of held environmental should provide relevant examples of how they involved Indigenous people and considered Indigenous values and Indigenous uses when planning for environmental watering, including how:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental water planning and/or delivery has been influenced by the outcomes desired by First Nations people.</li> <li>First Nations people have been engaged in environmental watering activities in an appropriate and empowering way using free, prior, and informed consent.</li> <li>Outcomes desired by First Nations people have been achieved through environmental watering actions.</li> <li>Capacity to participate in planning and influence outcomes in water management has been built among First Nations people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notes:</b></p> <p>Please provide links where appropriate to existing public information.</p> <p>Reporting on the involvement of involvement of First Nations in environmental water planning and delivery may be included in the Basin Plan Annual Report and/or the report on First Nations participation in environmental watering.</p> <p>Case studies are not required, but may be a useful way to describe how local knowledge and solutions inform implementation of the Basin Plan.</p>	<p>The ACT Office of Water works with established groups and bodies that facilitate ongoing collaboration and input of local knowledge into water resources policy and planning.</p> <p><b><u>Environmental Flow Guidelines Long-term Watering Plan</u></b></p> <p>The ACT Water Resources Environmental Flow Guidelines (2019) (No 2) (Guidelines) set out the operating rules for the management of planned environmental water within the ACT. The Guidelines are a notifiable instrument (DI2019-190), publicly available on the ACT's legislation register. There was no active management of held environmental water during 2023-24.</p> <p><b>2023-2024 update</b></p> <p>Review of the ACT Environmental Flow Guidelines and development of a draft Long-term Watering Plan drew on a broad range of evidence and engagement with scientific experts, utilities, research institutions, government agencies and community organisations. The revised Guidelines and new Plan are expected to undergo public consultation in early 2025.</p> <p><b><u>ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group</u></b></p> <p>The <a href="#">ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group (CMCG)</a> is an interjurisdictional coordination body committed to strengthening governance and catchment management in the ACT and surrounding regions. The CMCG meets quarterly to support water quality and water security issues across the ACT and region, and foster implementation of activities from the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy 2016-2046. The ACT Office of Water provides secretariat support and policy advice.</p> <p><b>2023-2024 update</b></p> <p>The upper Murrumbidgee River is the area of interest for the CMCG. In 2023-24, the Group advocated for actions to improve the condition of the upper Murrumbidgee River through governance and management changes. One key action was the submission of recommendations to shareholder Ministers to inform drafting of the proposed update to Snowy Hydro Limited's (SHL) Statement of Expectations, requiring SHL to embed the principles of ecological and social sustainability within their operating ethos aligning with the Basin reforms. The Group also asked for a review of the Snowy Water Inquiry Outcomes Implementation Deed and implementing the review findings through the Snowy Water Licence.</p> <p>Notably, the appointment process to include a permanent water expert in the Group was also completed this financial year.</p> <p><b><u>Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch</u></b></p> <p><a href="#">Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch (Waterwatch)</a> works with the community to monitor, raise awareness, educate, restore and protect local waterways. Waterwatch has been running in the ACT region since 1995 and covers the Murrumbidgee catchment upstream of Burrinjuck Dam (with the exception of the Goodradigbee catchment). Waterwatch data is used by the ACT for Basin Plan reporting, including in the upcoming 5-yearly matter reports.</p> <p><b>2023-2024 update</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch 2023 Annual Report</a> (Catchment Health Indicator Program report) is based upon 1,946 water quality surveys, 189 waterbug surveys and 132 riparian condition surveys conducted by over 200 volunteers. The report includes a special report on Aboriginal Water Assessments that Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians are undertaking in the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment.</p> <p><b><u>Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach</u></b></p> <p>The <a href="#">Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach (UMDR)</a> is a regional partnership that has been working to improve the health of the upper Murrumbidgee River for the benefit of native fish and community wellbeing since 2010. The key partners of the UMDR are Bush Heritage Australia, the ACT Government, the Australian River Restoration Centre, Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch, the University of Canberra and the Murray Darling-Basin Authority. The focus area of the UMDR is the Murrumbidgee River between Tantangara and Burrinjuck Dams.</p> <p><b>2023-2024 update</b></p> <p>Funded under the Native Fish Recovery Strategy (Joint programs), UMDR are developing an Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach Action Plan to guide investment and on-ground actions. ACT Government officials attended a Stakeholder Workshop in June 2025 to contribute to development of the Action Plan.</p> <p><b><u>Australian River Restoration Centre</u></b></p>

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
		<p>The <a href="#">Australian River Restoration Centre (ARRC)</a> works with community, landholders, government and First Nations People to combine science, experience and a people-first approach to protect and restore Australian rivers, creeks, wetlands and billabongs.</p> <p><b>2023-2024 update</b></p> <p>Across November and December 2023, the Australian River Restoration Centre conducted a wide-ranging community survey to measure the awareness, opinions, desires and values of people across Australia who care about the health of the upper Murrumbidgee River. The outcomes of this survey are being used to inform future works to improve the health of the upper Murrumbidgee River.</p>

## Matter 10: The implementation of the environmental management framework (Part 4 of Chapter 8)

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
<p><b>Indicator 10.1</b></p> <p>Basin-wide environmental watering strategy, long-term watering plans and annual priorities were prepared, with the required content, published, reviewed and updated as obligated under Part 4 of Chapter 8, Divisions 2-5</p> <p>Applicable to:</p> <p>Basin Plan Chapter 8, Part 4</p>	<p><b>Context:</b> Under Part 4 of Chapter 8, Division 2 Basin States are obligated to prepare, review and update long-term watering plans. Under Part 4 of Chapter, Division 3 Basin States are obligated to identify annual watering priorities and provide the annual watering priorities to the MDBA.</p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Confirm that long-term watering plans and annual watering priorities were prepared, with the required content, published, reviewed and updated as obligated under Part 4 of Chapter 8, Divisions 2-4.</p> <p>If unable to confirm, please provide a statement of reasons.</p>	<p>Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Partially met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">ACT Water Resources Environmental Flow Guidelines (2019) (No 2)</a> (Guidelines) set out the operating rules for the management of planned environmental water within the ACT, including setting Annual Watering Priorities for a 5-year period. The Guidelines are a notifiable instrument (DI2019-190), publicly available on the ACT's legislation register.</p> <p>There was no active management of held environmental water during 2023-24.</p> <p>The Guidelines were developed to be consistent with the MDBA Basin-wide Environmental Watering Strategy and to meet the Basin Plan obligations. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify ACT obligations under Territory and National legislation (including under the <i>Water Act 2007</i> (Cth) and the Basin Plan) and international commitments towards sustaining freshwater ecosystems</li> <li>identify environmental assets within the ACT and determine ecological objectives and environmental flows for these ecosystems</li> <li>apply a monitoring and assessment framework to the different ecosystems and flow components to support adaptive management.</li> </ul> <p>Section 1.3.1 of the Guidelines identify and address relevant ACT obligations, including the need for a Long-Term Watering Plan under Division 3, Chapter 8 of the Basin Plan. In 2022, MDBA confirmed its acceptance of the <i>Water Resources Environmental Flow Guidelines 2019 (No. 2)</i> to temporarily serve as the ACT Long Term Watering Plan instrument.</p> <p>In addition to the Guidelines, the ACT Water Resource Plan (WRP) sets out the policies, strategies and guidelines for meeting the environmental water requirements of priority environmental assets and ecosystem functions (s10.17 Basin Plan). The WRP was accredited by the Commonwealth Water Minister on 25 June 2020.</p> <p><b>2023-2024 update</b></p> <p>To meet the ACT's obligations, Guidelines and WRP were prepared consistently with Part 4 of Chapter 8.</p> <p>The ACT completed the review of the Guidelines and development of a Long-term Watering Plan in 2023-24, and both will undergo public consultation in 2024-25.</p> <p><i>See update against indicator 10.2 for further information on review of the Guidelines and development of a Long-term Watering Plan</i></p>
<p><b>Indicator 10.2</b></p> <p>Watering strategies, plans and priorities are prepared consistently with Part 4 of Chapter 8, in relation to coordinating, consulting and cooperating with other reporters and the matters to which regard must be had (Chapter 8, Part 4)</p> <p>Applicable to:</p> <p>Basin Plan Chapter 8, Part 4</p>	<p><b>Context:</b> Part 4 of Chapter 8 places obligations on Basin States that relate to consultation, and other matters (including the Basin-wide watering strategy, consistency with international agreements, identification of possible cooperative arrangements) to which Basin States must have regard to when preparing long-term watering plans and annual watering priorities.</p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Confirm that watering strategies, plans and priorities are prepared consistently with Part 4 of Chapter 8, in relation to coordinating, consulting and cooperating with other reporters, and the matters to which regard must be had.</p> <p>If unable to confirm, provide a statement of reasons.</p>	<p>Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Partially met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Background</b></p> <p><i>See background to indicator 10.1.</i></p> <p><b>2023-2024 update</b></p> <p>The ACT completed its 5-year review of the Guidelines in 2023-24. The review was carried out through assessment of monitoring data from across the ACT's aquatic ecosystems and assessed whether ecological objectives remain appropriate, and whether the implemented environmental flow program is meeting those objectives. The review drew on a broad range of evidence and revised Guidelines have been drafted in consultation with scientific experts, utilities, research institutions, government agencies and community organisations.</p> <p>Complementary to the review process, the ACT also developed a draft Long-term Watering Plan (Plan). The draft Plan reflects the best available information, aligns with the Basin-wide environmental watering strategy and is consistent with the principles to be applied in environmental watering and relevant international agreements. NSW Government staff were consulted in the preparation of the draft Plan. The ACT sought, received and incorporated feedback from the Authority on the Long-Term Watering Plan.</p> <p>The revised Guidelines and new Plan are expected to undergo public consultation in early 2025.</p>



<div>Indicator 10.3</div> <div>Environmental watering accordance with Basin annual watering priorities</div> <div>Applicable to:</div> <div>Basin Plan s8.44</div>	<div><b>Context:</b> <i>Section 8.44 of the Basin Plan requires reporting where annual watering priorities are not followed. This includes providing the MDBA a statement of reasons why environmental watering has not been undertaken in accordance with the priorities.</i></div> <div><b>Reporting requirement:</b></div> <div>Confirm that environmental watering was in accordance with <a href="#">Basin annual watering priorities</a>.</div> <div>Where environmental watering was not in accordance with Basin annual watering priorities, provide a statement of reasons in accordance with s8.44 of the Basin Plan and Principle 1 of Division 6.</div>	<div>Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Partially met <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Not met <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div><b>Background</b></div> <div>Environmental water is managed in the ACT based on rules set out in the ACT’s Environmental Flow Guidelines (2019). Operation of the Guidelines contribute to the outcomes set out in the Basin-wide Environmental Watering Strategy and serve the purpose of the Basin annual watering priorities (over a 5-year timeframe).</div> <div>There was no active management of held environmental water during 2023-24.</div> <div>Environmental flow releases from storages are managed by Icon Water under licence WU67 in line with the Water Resources Act 2007 (ACT).</div> <div>The ACT Environmental Protection Authority annually review Icon Water’s performance in the management of environmental water releases consistent with the Environmental Flow Guidelines. Icon Water achieved compliance with the licence’s targets for all environmental flows in 2022-23.</div> <div><b>2023-2024 update</b></div> <div>Icon Water’s 2023-24 Environmental Flows Annual Compliance Report is not yet available, however initial figures (see below) indicate compliance for 2023-24:</div> <table><tr><th>Outflow (GL)</th><th>Corin (410752)</th><th>Bendora (410747)</th><th>Cotter (410700)</th><th>Googong (410760)</th></tr><tr><td>Actual</td><td>53.5</td><td>36.6</td><td>57.5</td><td>51.1</td></tr><tr><td>Required</td><td>14.1</td><td>20.3</td><td>6.0</td><td>4.0</td></tr></table>	Outflow (GL)	Corin (410752)	Bendora (410747)	Cotter (410700)	Googong (410760)	Actual	53.5	36.6	57.5	51.1	Required	14.1	20.3	6.0	4.0
Outflow (GL)	Corin (410752)	Bendora (410747)	Cotter (410700)	Googong (410760)													
Actual	53.5	36.6	57.5	51.1													
Required	14.1	20.3	6.0	4.0													
<div>Indicator 10.4</div> <div>Demonstration of how the Basin Plan and/or the Environmental Watering Plan has influenced environmental watering outcomes.</div> <div>Applicable to:</div> <div>Basin Plan Chapter 8</div>	<div><b>Optional reporting requirement:</b></div> <div>Provide one or more case studies that demonstrate how the Basin Plan and/or the Environmental Watering Plan (Chapter 8) has influenced environmental watering outcomes. If appropriate, the case study may reference:</div> <div>a) the outcomes achieved</div> <div>b) how environmental watering principles were applied and identify the relevant principles</div> <div>c) environmental watering coordination and consultation process related to the Basin Plan</div> <div>d) opportunities or options to improve the Basin Plan and/or the Environmental Watering Plan (Chapter 8).</div>	<div><i>ACT Matter 12 Report – Case Study 1: Upper Murrumbidgee River in Drought: the regulation of an unregulated system</i></div> <div><b>Introduction</b></div> <div>In 2018 and 2019 a significant drought occurred throughout southeastern Australia. During this period, river flows throughout much of the Murray-Darling Basin were substantially reduced, and considerable ecological impacts were observed (e.g., the Menindee fish death event).</div> <div><b>Method</b></div> <div>River flow modelling was used to predict what the flows would naturally have been during the 2018-2019 drought period in the absence of any dams, water-related infrastructure, and water abstraction (“pre-development flow”). This was compared to the measured flows that were observed over the same time period.</div> <div><b>Outcomes</b></div> <div>As seen in Figure 31 (below), the model predicted that in the absence of any river regulation or water abstraction, moderate flows (e.g., greater than 450 ML/day at Mittagang crossing) would have been generated in the upper Murrumbidgee River (particularly during later winter/early spring in each year), and under natural flow conditions would have flowed down the Murrumbidgee River through the ACT. However, the observed record shows us that these flows never eventuated downstream of Tantangara Dam. During this dry period, minimal flow releases occurred from the dam, with the main objective to ensure Cooma town water supply was met.</div> <div>In general, observed flows in the upper Murrumbidgee River were vastly lower than would have been expected to occur naturally. This includes a cease-to-flow event at the township of Tharwa in late 2019. While the modelling predicts that under natural conditions flows would have gotten very low, there is no suggestion that the river would have stopped flowing.</div> <div>These examples highlight the significant impacts of river regulation, along with water extraction downstream of Tantangara Dam, on the flows in the Upper Murrumbidgee River. In addition, they highlight current dam operations exacerbating drought conditions in the upper Murrumbidgee River.</div> <div>The cumulative effects of these impacts can have consequences for a wide range of values that the Murrumbidgee River provides. For example, the cease-to-flow event meant that Tharwa ran out of non-potable water. This occurred during the ‘black summer’ when bushfire risk was extremely high, and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service trucked water to the township to replenish their supplies. The environmental impacts of extended low-flow conditions can be significant as well. Many aquatic species are dependent on natural changes in flow to provide adequate habitat to complete their life cycles. For example, Macquarie perch, a moderate-sized native fish found in the upper Murrumbidgee River, is dependent on bare rocky rapids for spawning. Long periods without adequate flows may lead to sediment buildup in these critical habitats, which can impact upon breeding.</div> <div><b>Opportunities</b></div>															

Restoring flows to the upper Murrumbidgee River is vital to ensuring the long-term health of the river, the native species that are present, and the wide range of human benefits that are derived from the river. Additional water to provide enhanced environmental flows that are actively managed to facilitate key ecological functions should be a priority. Protecting these environmental flows from abstraction is also critical to protecting and enhancing the health of the river.

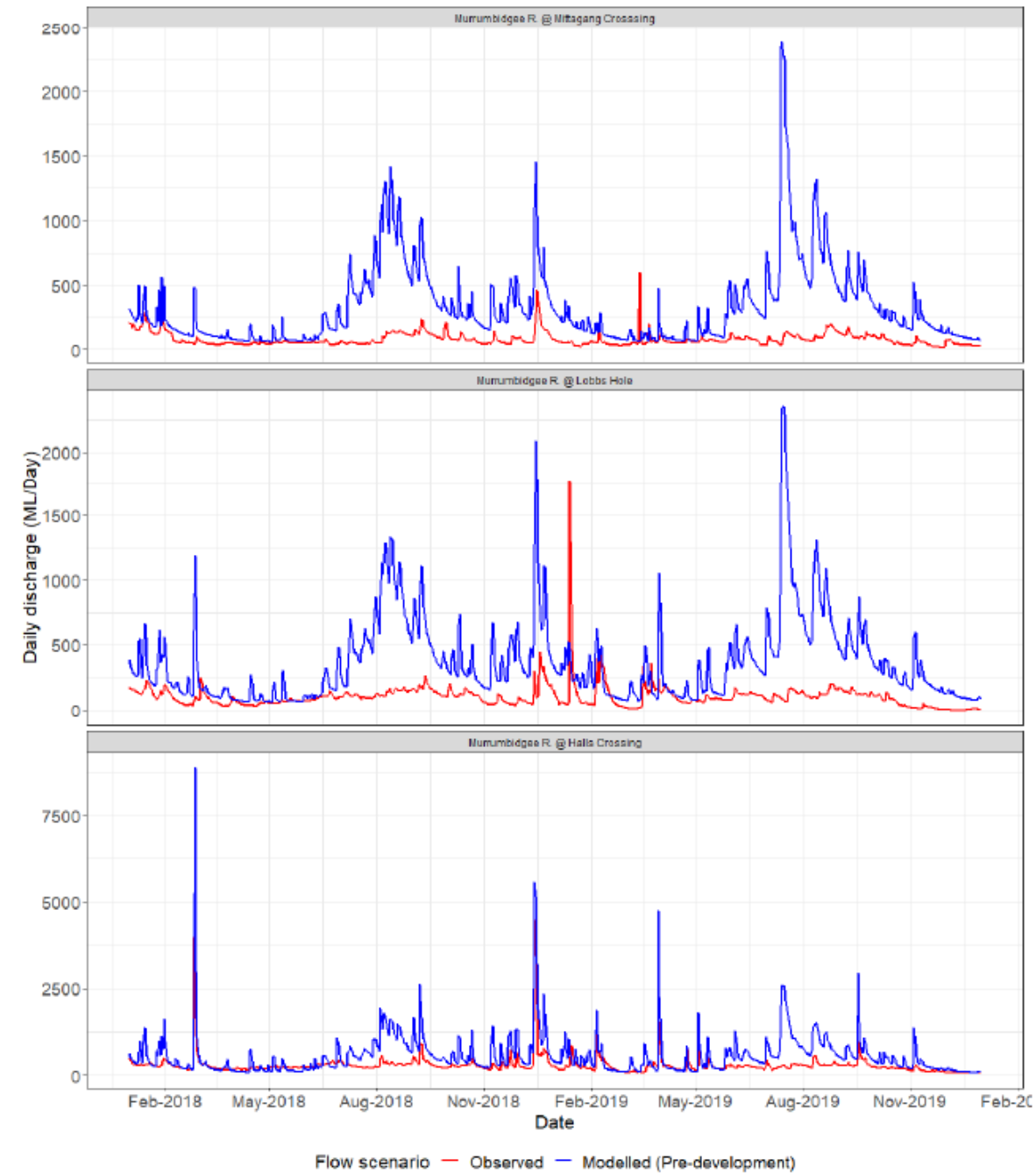


Figure 30. Modelled pre-development daily streamflow and observed daily streamflow (ML/Day) in the Murrumbidgee River at three locations (Murrumbidgee River at Mittagang crossing, near Cooma, Murrumbidgee River at Lobbs Hole, near Tharwa, and Murrumbidgee River at Halls Crossing, near Wallaroo) over the period of 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019. Note the y-axis scale differs between the plots. Streamflow data available from ACT Government and WaterNSW.

Matter 13: The implementation, where necessary, of the emergency response process for critical human water needs.

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
<b>Matter 13</b> Applicable to: Basin Plan s11.05, s11.08(3)	<b>13a</b> <b>Context:</b> Under s11.05 of the Basin Plan BOC members have a role in advising the MDBA if a salinity and water quality trigger is reached <b>Reporting requirement:</b> Indicate if a water quality trigger (as per s11.05 of the Basin Plan) was reached and if so, what action was taken.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>2023-2024 update</b> No water quality trigger (as per s11.05 of the Basin Plan) was reached.
	<b>13b</b> <b>Context:</b> a) The MDBA will provide New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia with Water Resource Assessments, from which the States make decisions about allocations. Assessments will be provided at least monthly, and more frequently if conditions warrant. b) During periods of Tier 3 water sharing arrangements, the MDBA will provide the Ministerial Council with Water Resource Assessments, from which New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia make decisions about allocations when determining if water can be made available for uses other than critical human water. Assessments will be provided at least monthly, and more frequently if conditions warrant. c) A Basin State must have regard to advice from the Authority regarding the volume of water to be made available to it in a particular year, when making decisions about whether water is made available for uses other than meeting critical human water needs (s11.08(3)). d) The MDBA, through the preparation of the Water Resource Assessment will determine if the appropriate conditions apply. If New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia considers the triggers have been reached, its BOC member should advise the Executive Director, River Management, MDBA. The Guideline for triggers and processes for changing water sharing Tiers provides more information on how the MDBA will communicate a change in water sharing arrangements to the Basin States, CEWH and the Department. <b>Reporting requirement:</b> Indicate if a trigger was reached and what action was taken to implement water sharing arrangements.	Have the agreed agreements for Tier 2 and Tier 3 water sharing have been implemented. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>2023-2024 update</b> Not applicable to ACT.

**Matter 14: The implementation of the water quality and salinity management plan, including the extent to which regard is had to the targets in Chapter 9 when making flow management decisions**

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
<p><b>Indicator 14.1</b></p> <p>Regard had to the targets in s9.14 when managing water flows</p> <p><b>Indicator 14.2</b></p> <p>Regard had to the targets in s9.14 when making decisions about the use of environmental water</p> <p>Applicable to:</p> <p>Basin Plan s9.14</p>	<p><b>Context:</b> <i>Basin Plan s9.14 recognises that flow management, in some circumstances, can assist with the management of water quality issues, such as salinity, hypoxic blackwater events and blue green algae outbreaks. The intent of s9.14 is that ‘having regard’ to these risks and opportunities becomes part of business as usual when making decisions about flow management or the use of environmental water. Other actions that can also address water quality issues include coordination and communication about blue green algae outbreaks or hypoxic blackwater events.</i></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Describe how water quality issues were considered, when making decisions about flow management or the use of environmental water, and/or other actions; did this make a difference to these water quality issues, and are there any learnings to inform adaptive management.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 14.1</b></p> <p>Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Partially met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Indicator 14.2 Environmental water management</b></p> <p>Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Partially met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Water quality is managed through a range of regulations, policies and guidelines in the ACT including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ACT’s Environmental Protection Regulations 2005 sets out a range of water quality objectives and criteria related to the protection of each designated environmental and use value as prescribed in the ACT’s Water Use and Catchment General Code. A set of secondary or loading water quality criteria is also identified in the Regulations in respect to the urban lakes, and the Murrumbidgee River.</li><li>• Canberra Urban Lakes and Ponds Land Management Plan provides a framework to guide the management of ACT’s urban waterbodies to maintain a range of environmental and community values</li><li>• The ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality 2014 establish a framework for monitoring and managing blue green algal blooms and high levels of faecal coliforms in Canberra’s lakes and river sites where primary contact recreational activities are permitted.</li><li>• The ACT Water Strategy 2014-44 (Striking the Balance) identifies strategies and actions that support the ACT achieving water quality outcomes.</li><li>• The ACT Water Resources Environmental Flow Guidelines 2019 (No 2) are a statutory document that consider water quality issues in setting environmental flow objectives.</li><li>• The ACT Aquatic and Riparian Conservation Strategy 2018 provides guidance on the conservation of aquatic and riparian areas and component species to maintain and improve the natural integrity of the rivers and riparian zones in the ACT within a regional context.</li></ul> <p><u>ACT Healthy Waterways Program</u></p> <p>In alignment with the above, the ACT Healthy Waterways project began as a joint Australian and ACT Government initiative to improve water quality in the ACT and wider Murray-Darling Basin. The project includes the construction of infrastructure – such as wetlands, ponds and rain gardens – as well as research trials, improvements to water monitoring practices, and a community education campaign.</p> <p><b><u>2023-2024 update</u></b></p> <p><u>Matter 12 Report</u></p> <p>In 2023, the ACT Government procured Alluvium to assess water quality parameters (temperature, turbidity, Dissolved Oxygen, pH, total phosphorus, and nitrate) across the Murrumbidgee, Cotter, Monloglo and Queanbeyan rivers for inclusion in the ACT’s 5-yearly Matter 12 Report. Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compliance with water quality targets across the last five years has varied across ACT rivers, with nitrate in the Cotter and Molonglo Rivers the only parameter assessed as experiencing periods of low compliance.</li><li>• In recent years there have been numerous cases of popular recreational sites being closed to primary contact activities during peak seasons because of unsafe intestinal enterococci concentrations. A case study contained within the report describes the factors that led to unsafe concentrations in January 2019 and the subsequent closure of key recreational sites.</li><li>• Acknowledging climate, bushfire, and land management as key drivers of water quality trends throughout the ACT, the report concludes that the Basin Plan has had limited impact on improving water quality in the ACT, as there has been no discernible</li></ul>



		<p>change in water quality outcomes pre- and post-Basin Plan. Although its impact may become evidenced over time, without control of flows from Tantangara Dam, the influence of the Basin-wide water policy is expected to be limited.</p> <p>Where water quality results are within the ACT’s influence, the findings and recommendations presented in the Matter 12 Report will support adaptive management.</p> <p><u>Salinity</u></p> <p>Salinity issues within the ACT remain a low risk due to the relatively low levels of salinity recorded in ACT waterways. Throughout 2023-24, flow and salinity were monitored at the End-of-Valley Target site in the Murrumbidgee River at Halls Crossing and four reference sites as part of the ACT’s commitment to implementing the objectives of BSM2030. No interventions were identified.</p>
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## Matter 16: The implementation of water trading rules

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
<p><b>Matter 16</b></p> <p>The implementation of water trading rules.</p> <p>Applicable to:</p> <p>Basin Plan s12.37, s12.38, s12.39, s12.43, s12.46, s12.48 s12.50</p>	<p><b>16a</b></p> <p><b>Context:</b> <i>Basin Plan s12.38 requires an approval authority to disclose if it has been party to a trade and publish information about the trade on its website.</i></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Provide website links to the publication of information regarding an approval authority's interest in a trade (s12.38 (2)).</p> <p><b>16b</b></p> <p><b>Context:</b> <i>Basin Plan s12.37 requires an approval authority to disclose interest before a trade occurs.</i></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Provide documentation to support compliance with s12.37 (notice of disclosure)</p> <p><b>16c</b></p> <p><b>Context:</b> <i>If an approval authority decides to restrict a trade proposed trade, it must give notice of the decision and the reason for the decision to each party (Basin Plan s12.39).</i></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Describe how affected parties were notified with the decision to restrict a trade and reasons for the restriction consistent with s12.39.</p> <p><b>16d</b></p> <p><b>Context:</b> <i>A person that makes water announcements must ensure that it is made in a manner that is generally available (Basin Plan s12.50).</i></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b></p> <p>Provide documentation that supports a compliance with s12.50 (water announcements to be made generally available).</p> <p><b>16e</b></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b> Has the Basin State made any changes to the water access rights displayed on the MDBA's Water Market products page? If so what documentation has been provided to the MDBA with the updated information as required under s12.43?</p> <p><b>16f</b></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b> Has the Basin State implemented any new trade rules that regulate the trade of tradable water access</p>	<p><b>16a Provide website links to the publication of information regarding an approval authority's interest in a trade (s12.38 (2)).</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable.</i> Under the <i>Water Resources Act 2007</i>, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is the Approval Authority for water trade and take within the ACT. The EPA is not authorised to be party to a water trade.</p> <p><b>16b Provide documentation to support compliance with s12.37 (notice of disclosure).</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable.</i> The EPA is not authorised to be party to a water trade.</p> <p><b>16c Describe how affected parties were notified with the decision to restrict a trade and reasons for the restriction consistent with s12.39.</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable.</i> No restrictions on trade were imposed. Inter-jurisdictional trading arrangements between the ACT and NSW have not yet been established, however the ACT Government is working with NSW to progress a Basin Plan compliant water trading framework.</p> <p><b>16d Provide documentation that supports a compliance with s12.50 (water announcements to be made generally available).</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable.</i> Water management arrangements within the ACT do not require water announcements.</p> <p><b>16e Has the Basin State made any changes to the water access rights displayed on the MDBA's Water Market products page? If so what documentation has been provided to the MDBA with the updated information as required under s12.43?</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable.</i> Interstate water trading has not been established in the ACT. Consequently, the ACT is not required to display water access rights.</p> <p><b>16f Has the Basin State implemented any new trade rules that regulate the trade of tradable water access rights? If so have they provided these rules to the central information point as required under s12.46?</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable.</i> The ACT has not implemented any new trade rules.</p> <p><b>16g Has the Basin State sold water in the previous year?</b></p> <p>Yes, on 18 March 2024, the Commonwealth of Australia applied for a Water Access Entitlement (WAE) for 6.36 GL/year of ACT surface water to be used for environmental purposes. Following assessment from the ACT Environment Protection Authority, the application was approved and the WAE was granted on 18 April 2024.</p> <p><b>If so, did they notify the approval or registration authority of the price agree for the trade as required under s12.48?</b></p> <p>The water purchased was granted as a new WAE. It was not traded or previously held water in the ACT. Noting this, the approval authority was notified of the price agreed for the sale.</p>

	<p>rights? If so have they provided these rules to the central information point as required under s12.46?</p> <p><b>16g</b></p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b> Has the Basin State sold water in the previous year? If so, did they notify the approval or registration authority of the price agree for the trade as required under s12.48?</p>	
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Matter 21: The accountability and transparency of water sharing arrangements

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
Matter 21	<p><b>Context:</b> Reporting on the accountability and transparency of water sharing arrangements provides stakeholders with access to both foundational and technical information and supports the building of stakeholder capacity to navigate complex water management arrangements</p> <p><b>Reporting requirement:</b> Provide website links to information related to water sharing arrangements within the Basin State (e.g. Basin Plan water resource plans that are operational, state water sharing plans and policies, water planning processes, and water management legislation).</p>	<p>The ACT Water Resource Plan sets out the policies, strategies and guidelines for water 'sharing' arrangements within the Territory. The WRP was accredited by the Commonwealth Water Minister on 25 June 2020 and is published at <a href="#">Australian Capital Territory (surface water) water resource plan   Murray-Darling Basin Authority (mdba.gov.au)</a>.</p>