



Australian Government



**Murray–
Darling
Basin
Authority**

Basin Plan Report Card December 2024

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan Report Card provides an overview of progress implementing Basin Plan key activities to 31 December 2024.



December 2024 Report Card

The Basin Plan Report Card provides an overview of progress in implementing key activities under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan in the period from **1 July to 31 December 2024**. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) has a role to monitor progress towards implementing the Basin Plan to achieve a healthy, productive Murray–Darling Basin.

At the time of reporting, 4 of New South Wales' 20 water resource plans are unaccredited. The MDBA understands that these plans are being progressed and is actively working with New South Wales to provide support where appropriate.

It is noted that the long term diversion limit equivalent factors (the LTDLE factors) for these water resource plan areas are also outstanding. These factors are significant as they enable an assessment of volumes required to Bridge the Gap for water recovery and to engage with the complex issue of over or under recovery.

Delivery timeframes for a number of indicators were reset for the [2024 mid-year Basin Plan Report Card](#) following the changes to the [Water Act 2007](#) and the [Basin Plan 2012](#), resulting from the implementation of the [Water Amendment \(Restoring Our Rivers\) Act 2023](#).

The MDBA is progressing our preparations for the 2026 Basin Plan Review. [Read the 6 monthly update on this work on our website.](#)

The MDBA regularly seeks feedback from communities through the Basin Community Committee, the annual River Reflections conference, its network of regional engagement officers, regional community forums, and by leveraging existing stakeholder relationships. Communities continue to press for transparency and express strong interest in the Basin Plan's implementation. First Nations people throughout the Basin are eager to share their traditional knowledge and concerns for Country. The MDBA is committed to maintaining genuine and active engagement, transparency and access to up-to-date information with and for Basin communities.

About the report card

The MDBA is a statutory authority of the Australian Government, established to provide independent, expert advice on Basin Plan implementation. An important part of the MDBA's role is to assess and monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Basin Plan, and to provide accurate and transparent information to the community.

This report card is the 12th in the series, providing a short, timely and accurate update on the progress by Basin governments (state and federal) to implement the Basin Plan. It includes stakeholder insights from a wide range of sources, including the Basin Community Committee, regional engagement activities, peak bodies, Basin governments and the MDBA's [Community Information Lines](#).

The report card does not detail on-ground Basin conditions, environmental, and social trends. These aspects, along with recommendations to strengthen the social, cultural, economic and environmental aims are covered in the 5-yearly [Basin Plan Evaluation](#), last released in December 2020. The [2025 Basin Plan Evaluation Framework and Roadmap](#) will guide the 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation which will inform the 10-yearly review of the Basin Plan in 2026.

This report card describes progress in implementing the Basin Plan from **1 July to 31 December 2024**.

Guide to the ratings

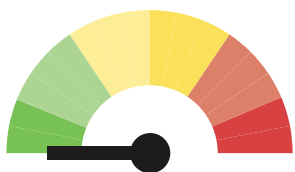


Assessments are made based on progress towards Basin Plan implementation.

The gauges summarise the assessed level of risk to implementation being achieved.

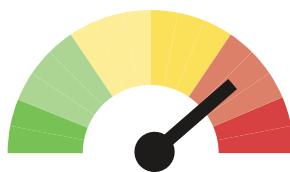
Assessment

The MDBA assesses progress of the Basin Plan implementation activities. These activities are interconnected, and each is necessary to deliver a healthy and sustainable Basin.



Water resource plans

- All plans in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory are accredited and in operation.
- The MDBA has had discussions with some state governments about amending accredited plans, but no proposed amendments have been received to date.
- As of 31 December 2024, New South Wales has 16 of its 20 water resource plans accredited and operational.



New South Wales water resource plans

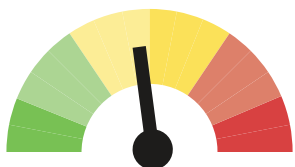
- As of 31 December 2024, 4 New South Wales water resource plans remain outstanding.
- New South Wales continues work on updating their remaining plans for submission to the MDBA.
- The delay in submission of plans is primarily due to the need to finalise engagement with First Nations people on the Indigenous values and uses, and objectives and outcomes content of the 4 WRPs, and update content within the Namoi surface water resource plan in line with regulation of floodplain harvesting arrangements in the Namoi.



Water recovery – Bridging the Gap

- As of 31 December 2024, there is 18.4 GL per year (GL/y) remaining to be recovered under Bridging the Gap.
- Confirmation of the amount of water to be recovered to ‘Bridge the Gap’ will be finalised when all New South Wales water resource plans are accredited and the long-term diversion limit equivalent factors for New South Wales are confirmed.
- As a result of the SDLAM reconciliation in December 2026 we expect there will be an increase in recovery required to meet the Bridging the Gap target.

Assessment



Water recovery – additional 450 GL held environmental water

- As of 31 December 2024, 26 GL/y has been recovered towards the 450 GL target, and 1.54.7 GL/y is contracted for delivery.



Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism (SDLAM) – supply measures

- An independent assessment released in June 2024 found that of the 36 original SDLAM projects, 13 are complete and 14 are likely to be delivered in part or in full.
- Basin governments are currently considering whether they have new projects for notification. They have until June 2025 to notify any new projects and until June 2026 to amend or withdraw projects that will not be completed as originally envisaged. The [Register of Measures](#) contains information about notified measures.
- Sustainable diversion limits will be adjusted after the reconciliation process to reflect the actual volume of offset achieved.



Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism (SDLAM) – constraints measures

- Constraints as supply measures will not be completed by 31 December 2026. The exception is the South Australian Murray constraints measure, which is on track for completion as notified.
- Since the last report card, there has been limited progress in the implementation of constraints projects to enable full completion by 31 December 2026.
- The MDBA published a [Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap](#) on 18 December 2024 to assist Basin governments in the development and implementation of measures to relax constraints.

Assessment



Northern Basin Initiatives

- Of the 6 Northern Basin Toolkit measures:
 - 2 have been completed and have now become embedded as standard practice.
 - 2 have made significant progress and are on track for likely completion by the end of 2025.
 - 2 measures have had their deadlines extended to December 2026.
- The Inspector General of Water Compliance is conducting a Northern Basin Toolkit Inquiry with a final report expected in mid-2025.



Environmental water delivery

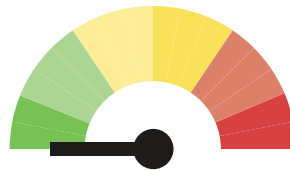
- Winter-spring 2024 has seen a return to drier conditions, particularly for the southern Basin. Environmental water delivery in 2024-25 is aiming to capitalise on the gains achieved over the past 3 years of wet conditions and build resilience for future dry times.
- Environmental water managers are closely monitoring emerging risks into 2025. This includes water quality issues in known hot spots (such as the Edward-Wakool and Lower Darling-Baaka) as well as the possibility of bird flu (H5NI strain) entering Australia.
- A new trial to deliver environmental water into the internationally significant Werai Forest was successfully delivered in October 2024. The trial connected the Edward River with its floodplain and boosted spring flows through into the Lower Murray, supporting a range of environmental outcomes.



Water resource plans

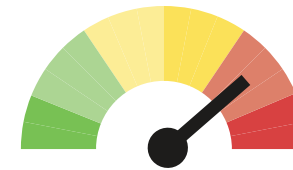
Water resource plans are an integral element of implementing the Basin Plan as they regulate how much water can be taken from the system to ensure sustainable diversion limits in each area. They also ensure state and territory water management rules comply with Basin Plan requirements.

Water resource plans are developed by Basin governments, assessed by the MDBA, and accredited by the Australian Government Minister responsible for water. There are 33 plan areas in total: 14 for surface water, 14 for groundwater and 5 that cover both. The New South Wales Government has withdrawn 4 water resource plans previously submitted to the MDBA for assessment. Once resubmitted and accredited, these plans will be republished on the MDBA website.



Water resource plans

- All plans in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory are accredited and in operation.
- The MDBA has had discussions with some state governments about amending accredited plans, but no proposed amendments have been received to date.
- As of 31 December 2024, New South Wales has 16 of its 20 water resource plans accredited and operational.



New South Wales water resource plans

- As of 31 December, 4 New South Wales water resource plans remain outstanding.
- New South Wales continues work on redrafting their remaining plans for future submission to the MDBA.
- The delay in submission of plans is primarily due to the need to finalise engagement with First Nations people on the Indigenous values and uses, and objectives and outcomes content of the 4 WRPs, and update content within the Namoi surface water resource plan in line with regulation of floodplain harvesting arrangements in the Namoi.



Water resource plans

MDBA assessment

- The Basin Plan required Basin states to develop water resource plans by 1 July 2019 to give effect to the long-term average sustainable diversion limits.
- Since the last Report Card, there have been no additional plans accredited in New South Wales.
- Delays in accreditation of the New South Wales plans has impacted capacity to determine the final long-term equivalent volumes required to Bridge the Gap for water recovery.
- The Inspector-General of Water Compliance's (IGWC) powers of enforcement and compliance with sustainable diversion limits are limited where water resource plans are not accredited.
- Basin states can bring forward amendments as water management evolves over time. Amendments can be minor or major, and the MDBA will tailor the approach for re-assessment based on the significance of the amendments. The MDBA has been providing advice to Basin states about the processes and expectations for amending the currently accredited plans. It is anticipated that Basin governments will work closely with the MDBA before any amendments are submitted for assessment.
- The MDBA will also seek to facilitate consultation between proponent Basin states and the IGWC on substantive amendments.

What we are hearing

- The IGWC has called for New South Wales to submit its remaining water resource plans for MDBA assessment.
- Affected communities expect water resource plans to be delivered, and there is a sense of frustration that this has not already occurred.
- Across the Basin, the MDBA has heard from First Nations peoples their concerns that the current Basin Plan requirements for WRPs relating to Indigenous values and uses and objectives and outcomes are too weak.



Water recovery

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan sets two water recovery targets to bring the Basin back to a sustainable level of environmental health – Bridging the Gap, and the recovery of an additional 450 GL held environmental water.

The Basin-wide water recovery target to Bridge the Gap between historic water use and a sustainable level of use was 2,750 GL. This target was calculated by comparing the difference between the Baseline Diversion Limit (BDL) and the Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL). The Basin Plan was amended in 2018 to reflect several initiatives that would better manage water for local communities, the environment and future generations. The quantity of the Gap will be finalised once all New South Wales water resource plans have been accredited, which is also dependant on SDLAM projects being delivered by 2026.

In line with the [Northern Basin Review](#) (a reduction of 70 GL) and the [Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism](#) (a reduction of 605 GL), the Bridging the Gap

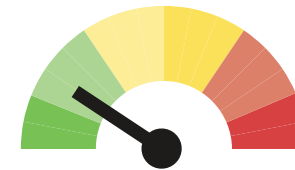
water recovery target was reduced from 2,750 GL to 2,075 GL per year, subject to reconciliation of the 605 SDLAM.

The Water Act provides for the recovery of 450 GL of additional environmental water to achieve enhanced environmental outcomes. The Minister must take all reasonable steps to meet the 450 GL target by 31 December 2027.

The Australian Government has 3 guiding principles for recovering water to meet the 450 GL target:

- enhanced environmental outcomes
- minimising socio-economic impacts
- achieving value for money.

The recovered water will be held by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder or the relevant state environmental water holder and be used to achieve Basin Plan environmental watering objectives.



Water Recovery – Bridging the Gap

- As of 31 December 2024, there is 18.4 GL per year (GL/y) remaining to be recovered under Bridging the Gap.
- The amount of water to be recovered to ‘Bridge the Gap’ will be finalised when all New South Wales water resource plans are accredited and the long-term diversion limit equivalent factors for New South Wales are confirmed.
- As a result of the SDLAM reconciliation in December 2026 we expect there will be an increase in recovery required to meet the Bridging the Gap target.



Water recovery

MDBA assessment

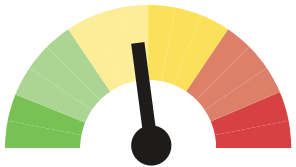
- As of 31 December 2024, the contracted (including registered) surface water recovery is estimated to be 2,135.4 GL/y, and the registered groundwater recovery is estimated to be 35.2 GL/y.
- As of 30 September 2024 31 December 2024, in surface water there is 18.4 GL/y and in groundwater 3.2 GL/y, remaining to Bridge the Gap.
- Water recovery at the Basin scale is at 99% of the Bridging the Gap target for surface water and at 92% for groundwater.
- The total amount of water recovered across the Basin is higher than the overall target of 2,075 GL/y due to excess recovery in some catchments, but local recovery targets must still be met in all catchments.

What we are hearing

- Most Basin communities support full implementation of the Basin Plan. For some, there are concerns about the use of water buybacks to address shortfalls in water recovery, particularly in regions with irrigation networks where there are major concerns about the permanent loss of water from the consumptive pool. For others, delays in water recovery and the significant costs and time taken to recover water through infrastructure projects also continue to be ongoing issues.
- Where there has been excess recovery of water, those communities want the water to be returned to them.



Water recovery



Water recovery – additional 450 GL held environmental water

- As of 31 December 2024, 26 GL/y has been recovered towards the 450 GL target, and 4.7 GL/y contracted for delivery.

MDBA assessment

- While there remains considerable water to recover there has been some progress in recovering the additional 450 GL held environmental water.
- In July 2024 the Commonwealth DCCEEW released the 'Restoring Our Rivers: Framework for delivering the 450 GL of additional environmental

water'. This includes the Resilient Rivers Program, Voluntary Water Purchase Program and the Sustainable Communities Program.

- The Restoring Our Rivers Trading Strategy 2024–25 was released in September 2024.
- A Voluntary Water Purchase Program to purchase up to 70 GL/y of surface water per year across 5 catchments in the southern connected Basin was open from 15 July to 11 September 2024. Responses are being evaluated and offers for purchase will be made by the Commonwealth DCCEEW.
- On 30 September 2024, two expressions of interest processes opened for water right owners who wish to sell water rights in the southern connected basin in 2025. These EOIs closed on 27 November and will guide how the Commonwealth DCCEEW designs and delivers water purchasing programs for 2025.

- The [Resilient Rivers Water Infrastructure Program](#) was established to provide funding of up to \$494 million over 4 years from 2023–24 for Basin states to propose state-led water projects to improve water management, reduce water losses in water for production, and return water to the environment. Applications were accepted for that program throughout 2024 and will be assessed in accordance with the program design.
- The [Sustainable Communities Program](#) provides \$300 million over 4 years from 1 July 2024 to Basin states for communities impacted by water recovery.



Water recovery

What we are hearing

- Basin communities believe that these key elements of the Basin Plan will not be delivered on time and are calling for a clear plan to manage and finalise implementation, preferably without buybacks.
- Many communities are opposed to the recent Voluntary Water Purchase Program, saying it will irreversibly harm their economies. They are calling on the Australian Government to reverse its decision and focus on other mechanisms to achieve the target measures, and those that create opportunities for their communities and Country, for example through land and water partnerships. Others perceive this program as essential to recover water as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- The \$300 million Sustainable Communities Program is considered by many communities and organisations to be insufficient to repair the anticipated impacts from the water purchase program.



Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism

The Basin Plan establishes sustainable diversion limits (SDLs) which set limits on how much water can be used for consumptive purposes (such as towns, communities, farms and industries) in the Murray–Darling Basin, while leaving enough water in the system to sustain natural ecosystems. In 2012, Basin governments agreed on a mechanism to adjust these limits on the basis that there are better ways to manage the system that still achieve equivalent environmental outcomes but with less water.

The SDL adjustment mechanism (SDLAM) involves 2 elements that work together: the ‘supply’ (including constraints as supply) projects that change infrastructure or operating rules to achieve equivalent environmental outcomes with less water recovery, and the ‘efficiency measures’ that modernise water delivery infrastructure for consumptive users, with some of the water savings through efficiency measures transferred to the environment and the balance remaining with the proponent of the measure.

In 2017, southern Basin governments brought forward 36 supply projects. The 2017 SDLAM determination found that these projects, as a package, could deliver a 605 GL/y offset. This meant 605 GL/y less water would need to be recovered from consumptive users, while still achieving equivalent environmental outcomes sought by the Basin Plan. Southern Basin states governments are responsible for the design and implementation of these projects, with funding from the Australian Government.

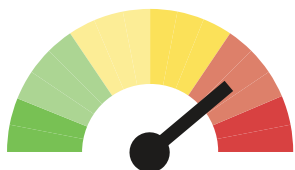
The MDBA is required to assess whether the notified measures have been implemented as proposed and can achieve the adjustment determined in 2017. If it appears to the Authority that notified measures are not implemented or are amended in a way that would impact on the adjustment amounts in the 2017 determination, the MDBA must conduct a reconciliation; the result of which will be a new determination volume. The Authority has been clear that a reconciliation will be required.

Under the Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Act 2023, the MDBA is also required to consider additional Held Environmental Water entitlements and their contribution in conducting the reconciliation.

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Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism



Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism (SDLAM) – supply measures

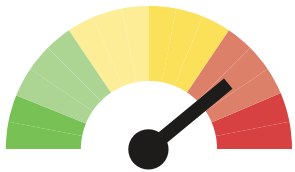
- A recent assessment found that of the 36 original SDLAM projects, 13 are complete and 14 are likely to be delivered in part or in full.
- Basin governments are currently considering whether they will notify any new projects. They have until June 2025 to notify new projects. The Register of Measures contains information about notified measures, it is available on the MDBA website.
- Sustainable diversion limits will be adjusted after the reconciliation process to reflect the actual volume of offset achieved.

MDBA assessment

- The June 2024 [Independent Assessment of the Murray–Darling Basin’s Supply and Constraints Measures](#) found that:
 - 13 are considered complete
 - 1 has been withdrawn
 - 1 was not in scope of the assessment as it does not contribute to an offset
 - 10 are likely to be delivered in full
 - 4 are likely to be delivered in part
 - 7 are unlikely to be delivered by 31 December 2026.
- The independent assessment restated an estimated shortfall of between 190 and 315 gigalitres, consistent with the MDBA’s 2023 Assurance report.
- The sustainable diversion limits will be adjusted after the reconciliation of SDLAM projects by 31 December 2026, to reflect the actual volume of water recovered. The revised supply contribution estimates will not be known until the MDBA has completed the reconciliation process by 31 December 2026.
- The Authority has published on the MDBA website its updated SDLAM reconciliation framework.



Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism



Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism (SDLAM) – constraints measures

- Constraints as supply measures will not be complete by 31 December 2026. The exception is the South Australian Murray constraints measure which is on track for completion as notified.
- Since the last report card, there has been limited progress in the full implementation of constraints projects.
- The MDBA published a [Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap](#) on 18 December 2024 to assist Basin governments in the development and implementation of measures to relax constraints. In the Roadmap, the MDBA

recommended continued support for delivery of existing constraints projects where good progress is being made.

MDBA assessment

- As of 31 December 2024:
 - New South Wales and South Australia are developing full business cases for the Murrumbidgee and SA Lower Murray measures, with both having commenced on-ground early infrastructure works.
 - Victoria released its feasibility study for the Goulburn measure in June 2024.
 - New South Wales continues its community consultation and technical investigations for the Hume to Yarrawonga and Yarrawonga to Wakool Junction measures, and is investigating re-scoping options for the Lower Darling measure.

- The Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Act 2023 provided additional time (until 31 December 2026) for Basin state governments to work with communities to design and implement the constraints measures projects.

What we are hearing

- Over 2024, the MDBA consulted with a wide range of stakeholders about constraints. Many of these stakeholders are seeking a more coordinated and transparent way forward from governments – a way that will see their concerns heard and will ensure constraints projects are delivered over a realistic timeframe with co-benefit opportunities maximised. Communities that have invested their time in the constraints project measures are hopeful that these will be delivered.



Northern Basin Initiatives

The [Northern Basin Toolkit](#) is a package of measures to enhance environmental outcomes by improving water management practices and the passage of flow without depending on additional water.

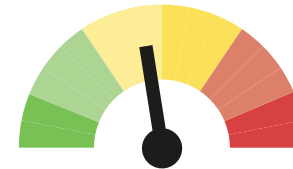
The 6 measures are:

1. arrangements to protect environmental flows
2. targeted recovery of water
3. event-based mechanisms for environmental water delivery
4. improvements to the coordination and delivery of environment water
5. environmental works and measures to promote fish movement and habitat
6. removal of physical constraints in the Gwydir catchment to improve flows to the wetlands

The measures are not an offset for water recovery and do not seek to provide equivalent outcomes to the 70 gigalitre SDL increase that was an outcome of the [Northern Basin Review \(2017\)](#). Instead, these measures are designed to complement and enhance the environmental outcomes being achieved in the northern Basin through the application of water for the environment. The Australian Government is working with the New South Wales and Queensland governments to implement the toolkit measures.

The deadline for delivery of the Northern Basin Toolkit was originally 30 June 2024. The implementation timeline for 2 toolkit measures – Gwydir constraints, and environmental works and measures – has now been extended until 31 December 2026.

The Inspector General of Water Compliance is conducting a Northern Basin Toolkit Inquiry with a final report expected in mid-2025. The MDBA has made a submission to the Inquiry.



Northern Basin Initiatives

Of the 6 Northern Basin Toolkit measures:

- 2 have been completed and have now become embedded as standard practice.
- 2 have made significant progress and are on track for likely completion by the end of 2025.
- 2 measures have had their deadlines extended to December 2026.



Northern Basin Initiatives

MDBA assessment

- Measurable progress has occurred in this reporting period. Of the 6 toolkit measures:
 - 2 measures have been previously completed and have now become embedded as standard practice - the coordinated planning and delivery of water for the environment; and options to support event-based environmental water delivery.
 - 2 measures have made significant progress and are on track for likely completion by the end of 2025 - the protection of water for the environment; and targeted water recovery.
 - 2 measures have had their timeframes extended to December 2026 and projects have been rescope by Basin states to improve the likelihood of delivery - environmental works; and Gwydir constraints.
- The environmental works toolkit measure includes a suite of projects being delivered by the New South Wales and Queensland governments which aim to promote fish movement, reduce fish extraction during pumping and improve environmental water delivery to key ecological assets. There remain some schedule, budget and scope risks to full delivery of this measure by 31 December 2026
- Implementation of the infrastructure based environmental works measures are at varying stages with on-ground works delivery complete for one project and commenced for 3 other projects. One new project to address cold water pollution at Pindari Dam, approved for toolkit funding in June 2024, remains in the planning phase.
- The Gwydir constraints measure is being delivered by New South Wales through the Gywdir Reconnecting Watercourse Country Program. The Australian and NSW governments are working together to rescope this program to ensure tangible outcomes are delivered to relax system constraints in the Gwydir by December 2026. In April 2025, NSW will provide an options assessment report to the Commonwealth identifying the preferred delivery option for a rescope program. Full implementation will likely extend beyond December 2026. In the Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap the MDBA recommended continued support for Gwydir constraints existing project delivery arrangements.



Northern Basin Initiatives

What we are hearing

- Stakeholders have welcomed the inquiry being conducted by the Inspector General of Water Compliance into Northern Basin Toolkit implementation. The MDBA ([MDBA submission](#)) Commonwealth DCCEEW ([DCCEEW submission](#)) and the CEWH ([CEWH submission](#)) have published their submissions to the inquiry. A final report is expected in mid-2025. While there is community support for the protection of environmental flows along the Barwon and Darling rivers, consumptive users are concerned the measures will impact on the times when they can extract water to fill on-farm storage dams.



Environmental water delivery

The health of our rivers is crucial for all Australians. Water for the environment is carefully managed to improve the health of rivers, wetlands and floodplains, which benefits communities and farmers. Water is allocated to environmental water holders across the Basin, who make decisions about when, where, and how much water is released for the environment. Stakeholders and partners across government agencies, advisory bodies, community groups and First Nations groups contribute to environmental watering.

A number of organisations hold water for the environment across the Basin. The [Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder](#) has the largest portfolio of environmental water entitlements and works with other environmental water holders and river operators to manage environmental water across the whole Basin. The MDBA provides advice and guidance to support the planning of when and where to release environmental flows, primarily through the MDBA [Basin-wide Watering Strategy](#) and the [Annual](#)

[Environmental Watering Priorities](#). On behalf of Basin governments, the MDBA also manages water for the environment held by [The Living Murray program](#).



Environmental Water Delivery

- Winter-spring 2024 has seen a return to drier conditions, particularly for the southern Basin. Environmental water delivery in 2024-25 is aiming to capitalise on the gains achieved over the past 3 years of wet conditions and build resilience for future dry times.

- Environmental water managers are closely monitoring emerging risks into 2025. This includes water quality issues in known hot spots (such as the Edward-Wakool and Lower Darling-Baaka) as well as the possibility of bird flu (H5N1 strain) entering Australia.
- A new trial to deliver environmental water into the internationally significant Weraí Forest was successfully delivered in October 2024. The trial connected the Edward River with its floodplain and boosted spring flows through into the Lower Murray, supporting a range of environmental outcomes.



Environmental water delivery

MDBA assessment

- Environmental water delivery is making a difference in the River Murray. There have been strong vegetation responses across much of the floodplain, and large numbers of juvenile waterbirds born after flooding and follow-up environmental water delivery. However, there are challenges that water for the environment has limited impact on, such as the condition of the southern Coorong.
- In the southern Basin, coordinated environmental flows across the Murray, Goulburn, Murrumbidgee, and Lower Darling-Baaka River in spring 2024 improved connectivity and ecological outcomes along the length of the river to the Murray Mouth.
- The first trial undertaken to protect environmental water from the northern to southern Basin in May-June 2024 [has been reviewed](#). The event successfully protected 45 GL of environmental flows from the northern Basin into the Lower Darling-Baaka and onto the Murray, providing improved connectivity and water quality outcomes.
- In the northern Basin, environmental water delivery 2024 occurred in 2024 across multiple catchments to support native fish, wetland vegetation, water quality and improved flow connectivity.
- A range of improvements to support environmental water planning and delivery are underway, including pre-requisite policy measure improvements to protect environmental water from re-regulation; and the [Enhanced Environmental Water Delivery Project](#) to develop new tools and systems for decision making.
- Realising the environmental outcomes will continue to be limited without the relaxation of flow constraints that prevent delivery of environmental water to more parts of the floodplain.

What we are hearing

- First Nations peoples have shared examples of the benefits for Country and community that come from involving them in environmental water planning and delivery. While these opportunities are increasing in some areas, there is a need to do more.
- Local communities largely see the benefits provided by water for the environment and other natural resource management initiatives to improve the health of rivers and floodplains.
- Strong community support was expressed in the Menindee region for the flush flows to improve downstream water quality and river health.
- There was strong community support to improve ecological health and water quality of the Upper Murrumbidgee River, with deep concern about environmental degradation, feral animals and plants (in river and in the riparian zone).



Australian Government



**Murray-
Darling
Basin
Authority**

Office location | *First Nations Country*

Adelaide | *Kurna Country*

Albury | *Wiradjuri Country*

Canberra | *Ngunnawal Country*

Goondiwindi | *Bigambul Country*

Griffith | *Wiradjuri Country*

Mildura | *Latji Latji Country*

Murray Bridge | *Ngarrindjeri Country*

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