

Information collection template for water year 2023–24 – Basin State

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The New South Wales 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>Matter 6</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 & 10</p>	<p>Reporting requirement:</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">• how local knowledge and solutions were used by the reporter• how involving communities made a difference to Basin Plan implementation• how decisions changed as a result of community involvement. <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">• Environmental water planning and/or delivery has been influenced by the outcomes desired by First Nations people.• First Nations people have been engaged in environmental watering activities in an appropriate and empowering way using free, prior, and informed consent.• Outcomes desired by First Nations people have been achieved through environmental watering actions.• Capacity to participate in planning and influence outcomes in water management has been built among First Nations people. <p>Notes:</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 NSW Government’s implementation of the Basin Plan is informed by engagement across a wide range of people and organisations including First Nations, councils, landowners, asset owners and the broader community. These stakeholder engagement activities are described in the paragraphs below for this 2023-24 reporting period across areas including water resource planning, First Nations participation, environmental watering, the Reconnecting River Country Program and the SDL Adjustment Mechanism.</p> <p>Establishing meaningful relationships with First Nations people and organisations across the Basin</p> <p>The NSW Government established 12 Regional Aboriginal Water Committees (RAWCs) across NSW who have been meeting since late 2023. The committees support facilitation of meaningful partnerships between Aboriginal communities and peoples and the NSW Government to inform water management in NSW.</p> <p>Committee members in each region are key representatives from local Nations providing input and feedback on the range of programs and projects being delivered under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (basin plan) and the NSW Aboriginal Water Strategy. The committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• build existing and new relationships across water• ensure Aboriginal cultural values are considered in water planning, programs and projects and intellectual property is respected• enable exchange of water knowledge in regional communities• assist the department staff to identify key stakeholders from local Aboriginal communities to be engaged and consulted where required• share appropriate knowledge to benefit water management planning• work in partnership with the department and other water agencies, Aboriginal stakeholders to contribute to water policy review and development. <p>Water resource planning</p> <p>The NSW Government has worked with a wide range of stakeholders, including First Nations, councils, landowners, asset owners and the broader community since 2017 to develop draft Water Resource Plans (WRPs) and to update or replace the associated NSW Water Sharing Plans (WSPs). As the timeframe for WRP submission has extended, ongoing updates to associated WSPs have (where appropriate) been guided by consultation on proposed rule changes (e.g. changes to rules to incorporate relevant elements of NSW’s floodplain harvesting policy).</p> <p>NSW is focused on work to finalise four outstanding WRPs. This includes follow up First Nation engagement with the Gomeroi Nation (detailed further below) and consultation on floodplain harvesting in the Namoi valley completed in prior years informing updates to the WRP.</p> <p>The development of NSW WRPs is undertaken by a largely regional based workforce who have both local knowledge of the water resources, as well as extensive water planning expertise.</p> <p>First Nations follow up engagement for Water Resource Planning</p> <p>First Nation consultation recommenced in late 2023 and has occurred primarily through the relevant RAWCs, in the lead up to specific Nation consultation that will occur after this reporting period. As noted above, focus in 2023-24 has been engagement with the Gomeroi Nation. This has included several meetings with the Namoi, Gwydir and Border Rivers RAWCs between November 2023 and June 2024. A nation workshop was also conducted in June 2024. Reengagement has also commenced with the Barkandji Nation. Initial conversations during the reporting period have set the groundwork for On Country engagement and wider, Nation-based consultation across the Basin in 2024-25.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the NSW Government also committed to further consultation within WRP areas within 12 months of a plan being accredited. The NSW Government will seek to engage with First Nation groups that did not previously participate and re-engage with groups who withdrew their permission to use the Nation reports developed during engagement on the original draft WRPs to address limitations identified in the initial consultation to develop the WRPs. The consultation approach has been mapped out to align with the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department’s) Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol and the future work program of the Aboriginal Water Program.</p>

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		<p>This was done as part of longer-term ongoing engagement with these groups delivered through On Country nation-based meetings to support the WSP review and WRP development, as well as development of NSW Regional Water Strategies and the NSW Groundwater Strategy. Ongoing Aboriginal community engagement will ultimately be supported by and delivered through arrangements currently being put in place by the Aboriginal Water Program as part of the delivery of the NSW Water Strategy, and to support current development of the NSW Aboriginal Water Strategy.</p> <p>Northern Basin Toolkit</p> <p><u>Macquarie Marshes enhanced watering project</u></p> <p>This project has carried out direct and regular engagement with First Nations and affected property owners as well as a range of local interested groups. This engagement contributes towards assessing options to strengthen and restore the structure of the Oxley Break channel, as well as options to complete works and address challenges accessing some of the sites.</p> <p><u>Fish for the Future, Reconnecting the Northern Basin project</u></p> <p>An extensive program of engagement has taken place since early 2023 to assess the vocational, recreational and cultural uses of proposed fish passage sites. This engagement has occurred across a wide range of people and organisations including First Nations, councils, landowners, asset owners and the broader community. This has shaped the proposed designs for the sites and currently the NSW Government is preparing redesign options for several sites based on community feedback.</p> <p><u>Gwydir Reconnecting Watercourse Country Program</u></p> <p>The <u>Gwydir Reconnecting Watercourse Country</u> Program aims to relax system constraints and achieve desired flows to reconnect rivers, floodplains and wetlands in the west of the Gwydir valley. The aim is to implement a suite of measures for each of the Program's three project areas. Measures for each project include a range of physical works and non-physical actions. It is critical to the long-term success of the program that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local knowledge and community concerns are integrated into the planning process • landholder agreements consist of measures that provide improved confidence for all parties • key project aspects such as the Water Management Framework are co-designed • third-party impacts are acknowledged, mitigated and resolved. <p>Building on extensive program engagement in the 2021-23 period, the department has continued vital engagements throughout 2023-24, with a focus on First Nations engagement. The project established a First Nations environmental water advisory/reference group – and been working with the group to develop Terms of References and to provide important input into the Gwydir Reconnecting Watercourse Country Program.</p> <p>The department continues to engage on the Program with local communities and stakeholders, including watercourse landholders, First Nations communities, Moree Plain Shire Council, industry and NSW and Commonwealth agencies. Initial stakeholder focus group meetings have been held.</p> <p>Reconnecting River Country Program</p> <p>The NSW Government is committed to working with stakeholders to design and implement the Reconnecting River Country Program (RRC Program). In 2023-24, the program conducted extensive engagement with private landholders, First Nations communities, public land managers and regional community members to inform program development. During the reporting period, broad program engagement was paused in the Murray region to allow for the development and outcomes of the MDBA Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap. Focus, including stakeholder engagement shifted to the Murrumbidgee region to continue the development of a final business case.</p> <p><u>Landholder engagement</u></p> <p>In 2023-24 the RRC Program engaged with over 200 landholders within the Murrumbidgee River flow corridor to increase awareness and seek feedback on the program. This information has been used to develop program positions which will inform the final business case.</p> <p>The RRC program also engaged with three private landholder reference groups (2 x Murray, 1 x Murrumbidgee), a single First Nations reference group, and a program Advisory Committee in more than 10 meetings. Engagement with these groups focused on seeking program-wide advice and feedback on draft policy positions and program methodologies.</p>

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		<p>The program also engaged with over 20 public authorities including local councils, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Crown Lands on potential mitigations to inform the program’s final business case.</p> <p><u>First Nations engagement</u></p> <p>Engagement during the reporting period focused on progressing On Country assessments in the RRC Program area. On Country assessments provide valuable insights into First Nations peoples’ visions for Country and their views of the impacts and benefits of the program. The program has received feedback on flow option preferences in relation to Healthy Country and Healthy Community, and potential mitigation measures for First Nations outcomes.</p> <p>The program has engaged with the broader community and targeted special interest groups in the Murrumbidgee region to inform the development of the Options Evaluation Framework. Over 100 surveys were submitted providing valuable insights on the broader community views on the health and values of the Murrumbidgee River and its tributaries.</p> <p><u>RRC Program early works projects</u></p> <p>During the reporting period, the program has sought to secure project funding to progress 3 early works projects to deliver outcomes by December 2026. These include the Werai Forrest regulator replacements, Mundarlo Bridge replacement, Mundowry Lane road raising and Niemur-Colligen flow mitigations.</p> <p>The program has established local working groups with landowners, local councils and the traditional Aboriginal owners of the forest. These working groups are using local knowledge to inform the design of the proposed infrastructure and future water managements plans (where applicable).</p> <p>Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM Acceleration Program)</p> <p>The successful delivery of the NSW SDLAM Acceleration Program remains anchored in meaningful community consultation. Although the focus during the reporting period shifted from collaboration to informing most key stakeholders, due to the program progressing towards the delivery phase, the department remains committed to open and transparent communication. Targeted collaboration continues, particularly with landholders as part of the Landholder Agreements process.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the department maintained a strong focus on the Stakeholder Advisory Groups (SAGs) and Design Focus Groups (DFGs), ensuring consistent messaging across projects, programs, and portfolios.</p> <p>Workshops were held with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) to discuss Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments, construction methods, and the relocation of certain Aboriginal artifacts. These sessions also explored opportunities for skill development on construction sites, with an emphasis on upskilling local communities.</p> <p><u>Murrumbidgee Area – Yanco Creek Modernisation and Yanga National Park projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing efforts to engage with the Yanco SAG continued through meetings and workshops. The SAG represents a broad cross-section of community organisations, First Nations groups, government bodies, and the tourism sector. • Design Focus Groups have consulted with both internal and external stakeholders for Murrumbidgee projects. Direct engagement with directly affected landholders to ensure access for site surveys and field visits is ongoing, and communication remains open with project-specific RAPs. <p><u>Lower Murray – Locks 8 & 9:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with stakeholders continued throughout 2023-24, with a focus on site access negotiations with a private landholder. Further consultations with the Taru Local Land Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service have progressed towards a tripartite agreement. South Australia Water were engaged and a negotiated Delivery Deed executed. <p><u>Central Murray – Mid Murray Anabranches, Koondrook-Perricoota Forest, and Millewa National Parks projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with private landholders for site surveys, field access and agreements is ongoing, and communication with project-specific RAPs remains open. Engagement with the community has made significant progress, and there is broad support for moving forward with the projects.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuppal Creek Landholder Works Agreements and designs were circulated to landholders, with all agreements signed. Detailed designs were shared with Bullatale Creek landholders and agreement negotiations are ongoing. <p>NSW Water for the Environment</p> <p><u>The Water for the Environment Branch First Nations program team</u></p> <p>Since 2022, and throughout the reporting period, the department’s Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Group continues to support the Water for the Environment (WfTE) First Nations Program team to do important work to build meaningful relationships. There are 4 Identified First Nations staff in this team that support the implementation of the Basin Plan and environmental watering in NSW. The team has been working closely with partner agencies, First Nations communities and Traditional Owners across the NSW Basin to empower and enable First Nations to partake in environmental water planning and programs across the NSW Basin. This includes in annual water planning, long term water planning and programs.</p> <p>Partner agencies NSW BCS has been working with include: NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) - Fisheries, NSW DCCEEW Water Group’s Aboriginal Water Program, Local Land Services, and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.</p> <p>A focus of this work has been to establish meaningful relationships with First Nations people and organisations across the NSW portion of the Basin.</p> <p>Recent work, projects and engagement within the reporting year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater Cumbung Water Management Plan – Working Together Plan. The department facilitated On Country days including fishing monitoring, and carp harvesting days. This project includes Traditional Owners from the Mutthi Mutthi, Yita Yita, Nari Nari, and Wiradjuri Nations. Box Creek – First Nations peoples and Landholders have been working together to support the health of Box Creek. This involved working collaboratively with First Nations on identifying water dependant cultural and environmental values along Box Creek to help inform a first flow down the creek in over 10 years. Murrumbidgee Cultural Access Licence (CAL) – the NSW Government is supporting First Nations participation in the Murrumbidgee by improving the use of the CAL and enhancing cultural and environmental co-benefits. Relevant NSW agencies include the department’s BCS and Water Groups, Riverina Local Land Services, WaterNSW, and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. Koonadan historic site – work has been done to initiate a collaborative project with the Leeton LALC and the local Aboriginal community to support cultural-environmental watering at Koonadan historic site, a significant cultural site for Wiradjuri People. The department’s WfTE’s north-west regional team provided support and presented to the Gomeroi Water Committee, supported Dhariwaa Elders Group to complete a Tea-tree mapping project around Walgett, supported Murrawarri Nation representatives to survey for the Darling River Snail and supported the department’s cultural watering plan processes at Toorale National Park and at Brewarrina. The department’s WfTE’s First Nations team and the Murray-Darling Wetlands Working Group have been working to complete a watering plan for Barkandji Maurara Environmental Elders team for Fletcher's Lake. The plan will identify improved cultural and environmental watering outcomes. Continuing engagement with Bangerang, Wolgalu and Barkindji Aboriginal organisations in how we can work together in the environmental water program. Working closely with the south-west regional water managers and Wiradjuri to maximise outcomes of water for the environment by eliminating exotic fish and promoting vegetation within Coonancoocabil Swamp. Attending several of the NSW Aboriginal Water Program’s Regional Advisory Water Committee (RAWC) meetings to present on the Water for the Environment program and opportunities for First Nations peoples. This includes the Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Western and Lower Murray, Macquarie, Gwydir RAWCs. Continuing engagement with the Murray-Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Network (MLDRIN) via monthly meetings to keep the group up-to-date with First Nations watering activities and outcomes, and to discuss partnership opportunities. The WfTE First Nations team participated in the MLDRIN & Commonwealth Environmental Water Office regional-focused forums to support ongoing input of First Nations to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder’s annual planning process. this will feed into consideration of how the department can continue this approach in the Murrumbidgee Long Term Water Plan update in 2024-25. The WfTE First Nations team ran a workshop with First Nations representatives from NSW Environmental Water Advisory Groups (EWAGs) to

Reporting Matter	Reporting Requirement (Supporting evidence to be provided by Basin States)	Response
		<p>listen and learn how to better support First Nations reps and improve the cultural safety of EWAG meetings. This resulted in a report containing recommendations to improve the EWAG model for First Nations participation.</p> <p>NSW DPIRD – Fisheries is progressing work on the ‘Culture, Fish and Flows’ project in the Peel valley with local Aboriginal community representatives. The project establishes First Nations eco-cultural knowledges, experience, and perspectives as additional lines of evidence within the Fish and Flows Framework currently being used to inform the management of water for the environment. The project will socialise the model and ensure it is culturally fit for purpose. Once complete, the project will establish flow-related cultural objectives for native fish and river health maintenance, conservation, and recovery in the Peel River in consultation with First Nations representatives. Work done during the reporting period will contribute to a joint workshop on long term water planning in late 2024 with BCS WftE team, DPIRD Fisheries and First Nations project participants to continue progress on this important project.</p> <p>NSW Long Term Water Plans</p> <p>NSW completed the First Nations review of the 2019/20 NSW Long Term Water Plans (LTWPs) with MLDRIN and a consortium of experts in 2023. The review provided advice and methods to the department about how best to update the plans with First Nations involvement in 2024/25. The review included interviews and workshops with First Nations representatives across the NSW Basin. The Review has been used to underpin the development of the LTWP First Nations Engagement Strategy during 2024.</p> <p>Throughout 2024, the department’s Water for the Environment (WftE) team has been working with Nations and supporting Nation-led projects to develop content for the update of the LTWPs. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macquarie Long Term Water Planning – to improve the First Nations content in the 5-year update we have been working with Trangie Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), Tubba-Gah Wiradjuri Maing Aboriginal Corporation, Mudgee LALC with Mowgee Traditional Owners and have initiated contact with Wailwan Traditional Owners. • Working with the Toorale Joint Management Committee (representing the Kurnu-Baarkandji/Paakandji community) and 2rog consulting to develop content and input into the Intersecting Streams Long Term Water Plan. • Healthy Billabongs project – which includes Traditional Owners from the Murrawarri, Ngiyampaa, Gomeroi, Ngemba and Euahlayi Nations. The environmental water managers from the department’s north-west wetlands and floodplains teams and the WftE First Nations team working with First Nations representatives as part of the Barwon-Darling Healthy Billabong project, to better understand cultural values associated with this area and investigate opportunities for co-cultural and environmental water outcomes. • Condobolin Aboriginal community – Murie Creek. NSW WftE’s First Nations Programs team co-designed a workshop with Condobolin Local Land Council members and the Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation. The project’s purpose is to seek input from the local Aboriginal community on restoring and healing the Country along the Lachlan River, focusing on the culturally significant site of Murie Creek.

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
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<p>Indicator 10.1</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>Context: <i>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.</i></p> <p>Reporting requirement:</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>Where obligations have not been met with or partially met, provide a statement of reasons.</p> <p>NSW have met all obligations under indicator 10.1 and provide the following additional comments on the NSW Water for the Environment Program and NSW Long-term Water Plans.</p> <p>NSW Water for the Environment Program</p> <p>Annual Environmental Watering Priorities and Outcomes Reports for the nine NSW Basin valleys in which NSW actively manages water for the environment were published on the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water’s (the department’s) water for the environment webpage. The plans are developed based on climatic factors, expected water availability, current health of plants and animals and advice from NSW Environmental Water Advisory Groups. The plans also align with the Basin annual watering priorities for 2023-24 (i.e. flows and connectivity, native vegetation, waterbirds and native fish).</p> <p>NSW Long Term Water Plans (LTWPs)</p> <p>The department’s Water for the Environment team has continued the 5-year review and update of the LTWPs supported by the Federation Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth and Basin States. The review and update has been arranged into two streams – the broad content stream is detailed below (details on the First Nations stream being used to update the Long Term Water Plans are provided in commentary at Matter 6).</p> <p>The department’s Biodiversity Conservation and Science Group (BCS) has identified and prioritised key tasks for the broad content LTWP review, incorporating the information collected from LTWP user survey engagement. These tasks are currently being actioned and updated. Key areas of review and update include identified priority environmental water requirements, risk, constraint and strategies and climate change. DPIRD - Fisheries are assisting BCS to incorporate the updated fish and flows framework into the revised LTWPs. Where possible, BCS is providing draft information from the LTWP as requested by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to allow access to the most current information where required. BCS continues to provide support for LTWP implementation, including through the NSW LTWP prototype environmental water requirements (EWR) dashboard that draws upon the EWR tool previously worked upon with the MDBA. BCS published the NSW long-term water plans EWR assessment code description that supports the use of the EWR tool hosted by the MDBA for NSW environmental water requirements. Guidance and environmental water requirement analysis support has also been provided for projects both internal to BCS and external where requested, such as Matter 8 reporting.</p>
<p>Indicator 10.2</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>Context: <i>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.</i></p> <p>Reporting requirement:</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>Where obligations have not been met with or partially met, provide a statement of reasons.</p> <p>Obligations have been met. We wish to add that NSW provided representatives for both the theme level and state level working groups for the Basin-wide environmental watering strategy (BWS) review. Comments were also provided on the draft reviewed BWS through the environmental water committee. This has also allowed NSW to ensure that the Long-term watering plans review and update continues to have regard to the BWS as required in the Basin Plan.</p>
<p>Indicator 10.3</p> <p>Environmental watering accordance with Basin annual watering priorities</p>	<p>Context: <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</i></p>	<p>Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Partially met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not met <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<p>Applicable to: Basin Plan s8.44</p>	<p><i>undertaken in accordance with the priorities.</i></p> <p>Reporting requirement:</p> <p>Confirm that environmental watering was in accordance with Basin annual watering priorities.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Where environmental watering was not in accordance with Basin annual watering priorities, provide a statement of reasons</p> <p>All events were in accordance with Basin annual watering priorities.</p>
<p>Indicator 10.4</p> <p>Demonstration of how the Basin Plan and/or the Environmental Watering Plan has influenced environmental watering outcomes.</p> <p>Applicable to: Basin Plan Chapter 8</p>	<p>Optional reporting requirement:</p> <p>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:</p> <p>a) the outcomes achieved</p> <p>b) how environmental watering principles were applied and identify the relevant principles</p> <p>c) environmental watering coordination and consultation process related to the Basin Plan</p> <p>d) opportunities or options to improve the Basin Plan and/or the Environmental Watering Plan (Chapter 8).</p>	<p>In the Murrumbidgee there was a planned watering priority for the 2023-24 water year to provide environmental water to support key waterbird habitat within the Murrumbidgee irrigation area wetlands targeting the Ramsar listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil Swamps, as well as Turkey Flats Swamp, McCaughey's Lagoon, and Campbells and Nericon Swamps. These wetlands provided habitat for several threatened species including Australasian bitterns and brolgas. The water action was endorsed in the NSW 2023-24 Murrumbidgee Annual Environmental Water Priority Statement. This water action demonstrates that it applied the environmental watering Principle 9-Relevant international agreements because water was prioritised for and delivered to the Ramsar listed wetlands.</p> <p>The water action delivered environmental water via irrigation infrastructure to wetlands in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) from September 2023 to May 2024. This was achieved in partnership with Murrumbidgee Irrigation, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, and the Murray–Darling Wetland Working Group as well as National Parks and Wildlife Services and NSW Crown Lands. Commonwealth Environmental Water was used initially and then the Murray-Darling Wetland Working Group contributed further environmental water later in the water year (March to May 2024) when conditions became suitable. This water action demonstrates that several environmental watering principles were applied because environmental benefits were maximised through coordinating environmental watering between all holders and managers of environmental water (Principle 3) and through the adaptive management of environmental water (Principle 8)</p> <p>The outcomes of this event were observed within days of environmental flows inundating the Tuckerbil Swamp Ramsar Wetland where local bird watchers reported that 25 brolgas had moved into the wetland and several months later the numbers peaked to 30. This flocking event is an example of when many birds of the same species assemble in a location for many weeks or months, eventually to pair up and disperse into surrounding breeding areas for nesting if the conditions are right.</p>

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
<p>Matter 13</p> <p>Applicable to: Basin Plan s11.05, s11.08(3)</p>	<p>13a</p> <p>Context: 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</p> <p>Reporting requirement:</p> <p>Indicate if a water quality trigger (as per s11.05 of the Basin Plan) was reached and if so, what action was taken.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please indicate if a water quality trigger was reached, and what action was taken</p> <p>Due to continuing run of 3 wet years and higher flows, no water quality (salinity) trigger (as per s11.05 of the Basin Plan) was reached in the Murray in 2023-24.</p>
	<p>13b</p> <p>Context:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(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,</p>	<p>Have the agreed agreements for Tier 2 and Tier 3 water sharing have been implemented.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes provide evidence of process and action/s taken in response to a Tier 2 or 3 event. This may include links to information on websites.</p> <p>If no, provide a statement of reasons.</p>

	<p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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)).</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Reporting requirement:</p> <p>Indicate if a trigger was reached and what action was taken to implement water sharing arrangements.</p>	<p>Wet conditions and full storages mean Tier 2 or Tier 3 arrangements have not been required. NSW has been able to meet all obligations in 2023/24, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full obligation to South Australia • full obligation to the minimum reserve • full obligation to operational requirements • full allocations to high priority needs and • full allocations to general security water access licences.
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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
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<p>Indicator 14.1 Regard had to the targets in s9.14 when managing water flows</p> <p>Indicator 14.2 Regard had to the targets in s9.14 when making decisions about the use of environmental water</p> <p>Applicable to: Basin Plan s9.14</p>	<p>Context: <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>Reporting requirement: 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>Indicator 14.1 Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Not met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Indicator 14.2 Environmental water management Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Not met <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>During the 2023-24 water year, NSW’s environmental water managers ensured environmental water did not have detrimental impacts on water quality by assessing risks and implementing mitigation strategies prior to the delivery of environmental flows.</p> <p>On completion of a watering event any issues relating to water quality are identified and documented for internal review and reporting. This information is used to inform adaptive management of environmental water delivery. Basin State agencies must have regard to the following targets in s9.14(5) when managing flows.</p> <p>s9.14 (5) a) to maintain dissolved oxygen at a target value of at least 50% saturation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2023-24, NSW operated a network of dissolved oxygen early warning sensors in the Murray, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan and Barwon-Darling regions. Information from these sensors was disseminated during high-risk times and management options agreed and implemented by multi-agency river operation groups when a warning for a potential low dissolved oxygen or blackwater event was triggered. Further dissolved oxygen sensors are currently being deployed to provide additional data to water managers. Physical monitoring of dissolved oxygen occurred routinely in all NSW Basin catchments during 2023-24 and additional monitoring was carried out as required during high-risk events. <p>s9.14 (5) b) the targets for recreational water quality in s9.18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2023-24, the response to the risk of algal blooms was managed by the regional algal coordinating committees. This included a state-wide algal monitoring program and the release of public notifications. Algal warning levels are for recreational water use as set out in the Australian Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water. <p>s9.14 (5) c) the levels of salinity at the reporting sites set out in the following table should not exceed the values set out in the table, 95% of the time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2023-24, NSW continuously monitored river salinity at key locations within the Basin. Modelling tools support salinity management by enabling salinity regimes to be assessed under a ‘stationary’ water management regime. This enables different management options to be explored and evaluated and allows salinity to be extrapolated into the future or into geographic areas where there is little data available. <p>The MDBA, Basin Officials Committee and Basin States undertake long-term salinity planning and management functions in accordance with the targets in Appendix 1 of Schedule B, including the Basin Salinity Management Procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW adheres to its obligations under the Basin Salinity Management 2030 Strategy by remaining in a positive balance on the salinity registers and maintaining the Basin salinity targets in the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement for salinity planning and management. Adoption of a new Departmental procedure to assess salinity impacts for major projects, including Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism (SDLAM) projects. Maintaining strong community and agency engagement and training utilising the Hydrogeological Landscapes frameworks developed for NSW salinity management. <p>Higher salinity was detected at Burtundy in April 2024 following increased inflows to Menindee Lakes. There was also an increase in salinity readings in the Darling River above the lakes that corresponded to the higher flows. It is possible that the front of this flow mobilised material on the floodplain resulting in increases in salinity in the river. There were no short-term management options available to provide mitigation.</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>Matter 16</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>16a</p> <p><i>Context: 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>Reporting requirement:</p> <p>Provide website links to the publication of information regarding an approval authority's interest in a trade (s12.38 (2)).</p> <p>16b</p> <p><i>Context: Basin Plan s12.37 requires an approval authority to disclose interest before a trade occurs.</i></p> <p>Reporting requirement:</p> <p>Provide documentation to support compliance with s12.37 (notice of disclosure).</p> <p>16c</p>	<p>M16a) s 12.38(2)</p> <p>No relevant trades were undertaken by the approval authority, WaterNSW. If WaterNSW did have an interest in a trade, it would publish its interest here: https://waterregister.waternsw.com.au/water-register-frame .</p> <p>M16b) s 12.37</p> <p>Trades in NSW are approved by WaterNSW. WaterNSW has not undertaken trades that are subject to the requirements of Basin Plan s 12.37.</p> <p>M16c) s 12.39</p> <p>There were 62 Regulated water, zero Unregulated water and six Groundwater Allocation Assignment applications refused in 2022-23. Refusing a trade is performed by following the WaterNSW Allocation Assignment Procedure, by emailing the customer and/or by using the WaterNSW Allocation Assignment Checklist. The latter is completed and sent to the customer to outline the reason(s) for WaterNSW’s decision.</p> <p>M16d) s 12.50</p> <p>The statewide opening allocations for all NSW water sources was publicly released on 1 July through statements, orders, and media releases. https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/allocations-availability/allocations/water-allocation-statements and https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/allocations-availability/allocations/available-water-determinations . In addition, periodic assessments and statements throughout the year are prepared confidentially (market sensitive) and made publicly available on the department’s website as indicated, along with the corresponding</p>

	<p>Context: <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>Reporting requirement:</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>16d</p> <p>Context: <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>Reporting requirement:</p> <p>Provide documentation that supports a compliance with s12.50 (water announcements to be made generally available).</p> <p>16e</p> <p>Reporting requirement: 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>16f</p> <p>Reporting requirement: 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?</p> <p>16g</p> <p>Reporting requirement: 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>	<p>statutory Available Water Determination Order.</p> <p>Water announcements are also generally available through electronic distribution lists and on the WaterInsights portal waterinsights.waternsw.com.au.</p> <p>The NSW Environmental Water Holder did not make any water announcements in 23/24. If an announcement were to be made, it will be published on the department's website: https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/water-for-the-environment/about-water-for-the-environment/understanding-water-trade/water-trade-announcements-and-reporting</p> <p>M16e)</p> <p>No changes have been made to the water access rights displayed on the MDBA's Water Market products page.</p> <p>M16f)</p> <p>The department imposed a temporary trade restriction on interstate water trades into the NSW Murray, Lower-Darling and Murrumbidgee regulated river water sources from 1 July to August 2023 which was extended to 30 September 2023. The department informed the MDBA, which is the central information point, through the intergovernmental Trade Working Group. The office of the Inspector General of Water Compliance was also provided details regarding these restrictions by letter.</p> <p>M16g)</p> <p>Yes, the NSW Government has sold water during the previous year, being the sale of environmental water. Price information was provided to the approval authority, as is required with all trades. Details on environmental water allocation trades, including price and volume is published here: https://waterregister.waternsw.com.au/water-register-frame. The publicly available NSW Water Register contains information on all trades, including the NSW Government trades.</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	Context: <i>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</i>	<p>The NSW Government is committed to transparency, trusted and accessible information on our water sharing arrangements. The following are website links to information on water sharing arrangements within NSW:</p> <p>NSW has a webpage dedicated to water related information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">https://water.dppe.nsw.gov.au/home

	<p><i>management arrangements</i></p> <p>Reporting requirement: 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>Water resource plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/plans-and-strategies/water-resource-plans <p>Water sharing plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/our-work/plans-and-strategies/water-sharing-plans• https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/plans-and-strategies/water-sharing-plans/status <p>Water planning processes</p> <p>https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-and-programs/water-sharing-plans/planning-and-evaluation</p> <p>Water plan review process</p> <p>https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-and-programs/water-sharing-plans/audits-and-reviews</p> <p>Water management legislation</p> <p>Our pages have direct links to the NSW legislation webpage for water sharing plans and other relevant legislation such as the Basin Plan, and intergovernmental agreements relating to water management in NSW.</p> <p>NSW Water Registers - water entitlements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The NSW Water Register provides public access to information about water licences, approvals, water trading, water dealings, environmental water and other matters related to water entitlements in NSW.• The NSW Water Register is complemented by the Water Access Licence Register which provides more detailed information about every water access licence in NSW. <p>Other supporting water related information for the NSW Basin:</p> <p>State and Regional Water Strategies</p> <p>The NSW Water Strategy takes a strategic and integrated approach to looking after the state’s water. This strategy is the first 20-year water strategy for all of NSW to improve the security, reliability, quality and resilience of our water resources over the long term. It sets the priorities and outlines the implementation plan to delivering on these outcomes. The NSW Water Strategy sets the overarching vision for 12 regional and two metropolitan water strategies, tailored to the individual needs of each region in NSW. Together, the strategies will improve the resilience of NSW’s water services and resources. See:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/plans-and-programs/nsw-water-strategy• https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/plans-and-programs/regional-water-strategies <p>Healthy Floodplains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reforming floodplain water management in northern NSW: https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/floodplain-management <p>Floodplain management plans providing a framework for coordinating the development of flood works: https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/floodplain-management/plans</p>
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