

Progress on water recovery towards
'Bridging the Gap' to sustainable diversion limits (SDLs)
as at 31 December 2024

Table 1: Surface water

Surface water	Basin Plan recovery targets					Recovery Progress							Remaining				
SDL resource unit (or Shared Zone)	local target (GL/y)	shared target (GL/y)	apportioned supply contribution ⁽²⁾ (GL/y)	total target (GL/y)	plus efficiency contribution required to achieve full supply ⁽³⁾ (GL/y)	Australian Government ⁽¹⁾				total recovery (GL/y)	plus efficiency contribution registered (GL/y) ⁽⁷⁾	plus additional HEW contribution registered (GL/y) ⁽⁸⁾	local recovery remaining (GL/y)	shared recovery remaining (GL/y)	total recovery remaining (GL/y)	plus efficiency and/or additional HEW contribution remaining ⁽⁹⁾ (GL/y)	
						purchase (GL/y) ⁽⁴⁾	infrastructure (GL/y) ⁽⁵⁾	gifted (GL/y) ⁽⁶⁾	state government recoveries ⁽¹⁾ (GL/y)								
Condamine-Balonne	100.0	-	-	100.0		79.1	8.0	1.5	-	88.6	-	-	11.4	-	11.4		
Moonie	-	2.1	-	2.1		-	1.6	1.2	-	2.8	-	-	-	-	-		
Nebine	1.0	2.8	-	3.8		-	-	3.8	-	3.8	-	-	-	-	-		
Paroo	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
QLD Border Rivers	14.0	-	-	14.0		4.4	9.3	0.8	-	14.4	-	-	-	-	-		
Warrego	8.0	12.1	-	20.1		10.1	0.4	9.5	-	20.1	-	-	-	-	-		
northern Basin QLD zone	123.0	17.0	-	140.0		93.6	19.3	16.9	-	129.8	-	-	11.4	-	11.4		
Barwon-Darling ⁽¹⁰⁾	32.0	-	-	32.0		25.2	3.7	-	1.7	30.7	-	-	1.3	-	1.3		
Gwydir	42.0	7.6	-	49.6		42.9	5.0	-	6.7	54.6	-	-	-	-	-		
Intersecting Streams ⁽¹¹⁾	-	13.8	-	13.8		13.8	-	-	-	13.8	-	-	-	-	-		
Macquarie-Castlereagh	55.0	2.6	-	57.6		30.8	39.2	-	25.8	95.8	-	-	-	-	-		
Namoi	20.0	-	-	20.0		13.5	5.9	-	-	19.4	-	-	0.6	-	0.6		
NSW Border Rivers	7.0	-	-	7.0		0.01	1.9	-	-	2.0	-	-	5.0	-	5.0		
northern Basin NSW zone	156.0	24.0	-	180.0		126.3	55.7	-	34.3	216.3	-	-	7.0	-	7.0		
northern Basin total	279.0	41.0	-	320.0		219.9	75.1	16.9	34.3	346.1	-	-	18.4	-	18.4		
Lower Darling	8.0	14.3	-	22.3		21.8	1.4	-	-	23.2	-	-	-	-	-		
Murrumbidgee	320.0	277.9	-	162.0		136.6	279.6	-	26.2	442.4	5.6	-	-	-	-		
NSW Murray	262.0	165.8	-	124.8		200.6	102.7	-	0.1	303.3	-	-	-	-	-		
southern Basin NSW zone	590.0	458.0	-	286.8		358.9	383.6	-	26.4	768.9	5.6	-	-	-	-		
ACT ⁽¹²⁾	-	4.9	-	4.9		4.9	-	-	-	4.9	-	1.5	-	-	-		
southern Basin ACT zone	-	4.9	-	4.9		4.9	-	-	-	4.9	-	1.5	-	-	-		
Broken	-	1.3	-	1.1		0.0	0.3	-	0.1	0.4	-	-	-	-	-		
Campaspe	18.0	13.2	-	2.6		6.3	0.2	-	22.4	28.9	-	-	-	-	-		
Goulburn	344.0	186.4	-	174.5		240.5	92.3	-	36.0	368.8	6.8	-	-	-	-		
Kiewa ⁽¹³⁾	-	1.1	-	1.3		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Loddon	12.0	9.8	-	10.9		1.8	0.4	-	10.2	12.3	-	-	-	-	-		
Ovens ⁽¹³⁾	-	2.7	-	3.0		0.0	0.0	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-		
VIC Murray	253.0	210.8	-	72.8		280.9	91.3	-	20.7	392.9	9.4	-	-	-	-		
southern Basin VIC zone	627.0	425.3	-	266.2		529.5	184.5	-	89.4	803.3	16.2	-	-	-	-		
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Marne Saunders	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
SA Murray	101.0	82.8	-	52.0	87.4	47.3	-	6.3	141.0	2.7	-	-	-	-			
SA Non-Prescribed Areas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
southern Basin SA zone	101.0	82.8	-	52.0	87.4	47.3	-	6.3	141.0	2.7	-	-	-	-			
southern Basin total	1,318.0	971.0	-	605.0	1,684.0	980.7	615.4	-	122.0	1,718.1	24.5	1.5	-	-	-		
Lachlan	48.0	N/A	-	48.0		33.9	2.3	-	11.8	48.0	-	-	0.0	-	0.0		
Wimmera-Mallee	23.0	N/A	-	23.0		23.2	-	-	-	23.2	-	-	-	-	-		
total Basin	1,668.0	1,012.0	-	605.0	2,075.0	62.0	1,257.7	692.8	16.9	168.1	2,135.4	24.5	1.5	18.4	-	18.4	36.0

Notes on the above Table

Allow for minor rounding in total values.

All water recovery figures are expressed in long-term diversion limit equivalent (LTDLE) terms. Water recovery amounts are calculated using independently reviewed planning assumptions for each state. These reviews, and links to each state’s respective report, are available at: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-environment/water-recovery/factors-water-recovery>

When NSW WRP’s are accredited this may affect the final volume of entitlements needed to complete water recovery.

1. Water recovery is reported at the point at which water savings or purchase have been received, estimated or agreed in signed contracts. Until water transfer contracts have been exchanged however, these figures may be subject to change over time.
2. The MDBA’s assessment of the package of supply measures nominated by State Governments, found that Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL) in the southern Murray-Darling Basin can be adjusted upwards by 605 GL/y, reducing environmental water recovery by this amount. More information about supply measures projects is available at: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan/sustainable-diversion-limit-adjustment-mechanism/sustainable-0>
3. Additional water recovery projects aim to provide a total of 450 GL/y of water for the environment. As the first 62 GL/y of efficiency measures and/or additional Held Environmental Water (HEW) is recovered, the supply adjustment will progressively rise from 543 GL/y to the full 605 GL/y.
4. Includes Australian Government water recoveries funded through the Restoring the Balance (RtB) program, and the ACT purchased entitlements established to be held by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder within their state water management framework.
5. Includes Australian Government water recoveries funded through the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program (SRWUIP) infrastructure projects, the South Australian River Murray Sustainability Program (SARMSP) and the Water Smart Australia Program. Programs include entitlements recovered through co-funded Commonwealth/State projects.
6. Water gifted and voluntary contributions to the Australian Government.
7. The efficiency contribution are those water entitlements derived from efficiency measures and registered with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder as at the end of the reporting period.
8. Additional HEW entitlements are water access entitlements registered with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and nominated by the water Minister as Additional HEW as per Basin Plan s7.08B as at the end of the reporting period.
9. The efficiency and/or additional HEW contribution remaining reflects entitlements to be secured under efficiency measures projects and/or additional HEW and registered with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder to contribute toward the initial 62 GL/y of the 450 GL/y.
10. Historical floodplain harvesting (FPH) water rights in the Barwon-Darling Watercourse have now been converted to volumetric licences, including a 3.812 GL water right associated with the Toorale station acquisition. This volume will not be included in the recovery table until NSW proposes an LTDLE factor for that entitlement and it can be independently reviewed.
11. As part of the NSW updated LTDLE factors work in 2018, the Intersecting Streams SDL resource unit BDL was re-estimated and a factor determined for the former Toorale station unregulated river special additional high flow entitlement of 9.720GL. From March 2019, this recovery is now included in this table. For this Table the factor for this entitlement is 1.00. In 2022, NSW published a revised LTDLE factor for the Intersecting Streams unregulated licences, however this has not yet been adopted for the purposes of these accounts. The reported volume will not change in the recovery estimates until the independent review has been completed and the MDBA and NSW agree on any revised factors.
12. A 6.36 GL/y entitlement was contracted on 14 March 2024 to satisfy the ACT’s shared reduction target; on 30 May 2024, 1.46 GL/y of this entitlement was nominated by the water Minister as additional HEW as per Basin Plan s7.08B.
13. Basin Plan recovery targets: The Victorian shared reduction request (as agreed by the Authority) produces small negative amounts in two valleys totalling 0.5 GL/y (Kiewa 0.2 GL/y and Ovens 0.3 GL/y) for the required reduction from the BDL to the SDL when applied in conjunction with the apportioned supply contribution; which assumes at least 62 GL/y of efficiency measures is achieved. The Victorian shared reduction request meets all of the requirements set out in the Basin Plan at s6.05. Resolution of any anomalies will be considered as further recoveries are secured and / or at the 2026 reconciliation of the SDLAM.

Table 2 - Groundwater

Groundwater	Sustainable Diversion Limit Reduction Amount			Recovery Progress		Remaining
SDL Resource Unit (or Shared Zone)	Local Target (GL/y)	Shared Target (GL/y)	Total Target (GL/y)	Purchase (GL/y)	Total Recovery (GL/y)	Total recovery remaining (GL/y)
Upper Condamine Alluvium (Central Condamine Alluvium) (GS64a)	35.4	N/A	35.4	35.2	35.2	0.2
Upper Condamine Alluvium (Tributaries) (GS64b) ⁽¹⁾	3.1	N/A	3.1	0.1	0.1	3.0
Total Basin	38.5	N/A	38.5	35.2	35.2	3.2

Notes on the above Table

Allow for minor rounding in total values.

All water recovery figures are expressed in long term diversion limit equivalent (LTDLE) terms.

1. Queensland has reviewed how the BDL was set in 2012, where the figure included water licences that were authorised to take water from three groundwater resources - namely the Tributaries, the Upper Condamine Basalts and the Great Artesian Basin. Since that time, Queensland has amended these licences so they may take water from one resource only. As a result, the maximum allowable take in the Tributaries has effectively decreased by 1,950 ML/y (from 5,000 ML/y to 3,050 ML/y). With a reduction in the BDL and the SDL remaining the same, the water recovery target in this SDL resource unit decreases by 1,950 ML/y to 3,050 ML/y.