

Progress of water recovery towards
'Bridging the Gap' to sustainable diversion limits (SDLs)
as at 31 December 2023

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) ⁽²⁾	apportioned supply contribution ⁽³⁾ (GL/y)	total target (GL/y)	plus efficiency contribution required to achieve full supply ⁽⁴⁾ (GL/y)	Australian Government ⁽¹⁾				total recovery (GL/y)	plus efficiency contribution registered (GL/y) ⁽⁹⁾	plus additional HEW contribution registered (GL/y) ⁽¹⁰⁾	local recovery remaining (GL/y)	shared recovery remaining (GL/y)	total recovery remaining (GL/y)	plus efficiency contribution remaining ⁽¹¹⁾ (GL/y)
						purchase (GL/y) ⁽⁵⁾	infrastructure (GL/y) ⁽⁶⁾	gifted ⁽⁷⁾ (GL/y)	state government recoveries ^(1,8) (GL/y)							
Condamine-Balonne	100.0	-	-	100.0		78.0	8.0	-	-	86.0	-		14.0	-	14.0	
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		92.5	19.3	15.4	-	127.2	-		14.0	-	14.0	
Barwon-Darling	32.0	-	-	32.0		24.9	3.7	-	1.7	30.4	-		1.6	-	1.6	
Gwydir	42.0	7.6	-	49.6		42.9	5.0	-	6.7	54.6	-		-	-	-	
Intersecting Streams ⁽¹²⁾	-	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		6.1	5.9	-	-	12.0	-		8.0	-	8.0	
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		118.6	55.7	-	34.3	208.6	-		14.7	-	14.7	
northern Basin total	279.0	41.0	-	320.0		211.0	75.1	15.4	34.3	335.8	-		28.7	-	28.7	
Lower Darling	8.0	14.3	-	22.3		21.8	1.4	-	-	23.2	-		-	-	-	
NSW Murrumbidgee ⁽¹³⁾	320.0	277.9	-	162.0		136.6	279.6	-	26.2	442.4	2.6		-	-	-	
NSW Murray	262.0	165.8	-	124.8		195.9	102.7	-	0.1	298.7	-		-	4.3	4.3	
southern Basin NSW zone	590.0	458.0	-	286.8		354.2	383.6	-	26.4	764.2	2.6		-	4.3	4.3	
ACT Murrumbidgee ⁽¹³⁾	-	4.9	-	4.9		-	-	-	-	-	-		-	4.9	4.9	
southern Basin ACT zone	-	4.9	-	4.9		-	-	-	-	-	-		-	4.9	4.9	
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	2.5		-	-	-	
Kiewa ⁽¹⁴⁾	-	1.1	-	1.3		-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	
Loddon	12.0	9.8	-	10.9		1.8	0.4	-	10.2	12.3	-		-	-	-	
Ovens ⁽¹⁴⁾	-	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	4.5		-	-	-	
southern Basin VIC zone	627.0	425.3	-	266.2		529.5	184.5	-	89.3	803.3	7.0		-	-	-	
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	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	
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		971.1	615.4	-	122.0	1,708.5	12.3		-	9.2	9.2	
Lachlan	48.0	N/A	-	48.0		33.9	2.3	-	11.8	48.0	-		0.02	-	0.02	
Wimmera-Mallee	23.0	N/A	-	23.0		23.2	-	-	-	23.2	-		-	-	-	
total Basin	1,668.0	1,012.0	-	605.0	62.0	1,239.2	692.8	15.4	168.0	2,115.5	12.3		28.7	9.2	38.0	49.7

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:

- NSW long-term diversion limit equivalent factors, as updated in 2019 and 2020 and published at <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-programs/water-resource-plans/ltidle-cap-factors>
- Queensland long-term diversion limit equivalent factors, as updated in 2020 and published at https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1517966/qmdb-derivation-ltdle-factors.pdf
- South Australian long-term diversion limit equivalent factors, as updated in 2020 and published at <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray/basin-plan/sustainable-limits-on-water-use>
- Victorian long-term diversion limit equivalent factors, as updated in 2019 and published at <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb/achievements-murray-darling-basin-plan/water-recovery>

Where a Water Resource Plan (WRP) has been accredited by 30 June 2020, the respective planning assumptions and WRPs are used.

When NSW WRPs 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 Basin Plan Amendment Instrument (No.1) 2018 provided additional time for Basin States to request a re-allocation of the shared reduction amount within a Basin zone in their state. Queensland and South Australia made a request to re-allocate the shared reduction amount within their state in June 2018. NSW and Victoria made requests to re-allocate their shared reduction amounts in December 2018 that were agreed by the Authority in March 2019. This table shows the outcome of those re-allocation requests.
3. 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 from the Register of Measures Table A available at <https://www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/sustainable-diversion-limits/sdl-adjustment-proposals-state-projects>
4. Efficiency measures projects with neutral or beneficial socio-economic outcomes aim to provide a total of 450 GL/y of water for the environment. As the first 62 GL/y of efficiency measures is recovered, the supply adjustment will progressively rise from 543 GL/y to the full 605 GL/y.
5. Australian Government water recoveries funded through the Restoring the Balance (RtB) program (includes the repealed 1,500 GL cap on Commonwealth water purchases and its exemptions).
6. 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.
7. Water gifted to the Australian Government by the Queensland Government.
8. State recovery figures are as at 31 December 2023.
9. The efficiency contribution registered are those water entitlements, derived from efficiency measures registered with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder as at 31 December 2023.
10. Additional HEW entitlements are water access entitlements that were previously used for consumptive purposes, but will now be used for environmental purposes, and registered with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder as at 31 December 2023.
11. The remaining efficiency contribution recovery reflects entitlements to be secured under efficiency measures projects and registered with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.
12. 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.

NSW in 2022, published 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.

13. The entitlement that was acquired in 2014 to meet the ACT shared reduction target has been recovered from the NSW Murrumbidgee. At the time of the purchase, it was intended to meet the ACT's shared reduction amount target. Until this entitlement can be formally recognised (by potential Basin Plan amendment) as contributing to the ACT shared reduction target, it will be shown as a recovery in the NSW Murrumbidgee.

14. 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 ⁽¹⁾	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) ⁽²⁾	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. Groundwater recovery does not contribute to the surface water recovery target.
2. 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.