

Water resource plans – November 2022 quarterly report

December 2022

Published by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority
[MDBA publication no: 27/22
ISBN (online): 978-1-922699-12-1



GPO Box 1801, Canberra ACT 2601

engagement@mdba.gov.au



1800 230 067



mdba.gov.au

© Murray–Darling Basin Authority 2022

Ownership of intellectual property rights



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the MDBA logo, trademarks and any exempt photographs and graphics (these are identified), this publication is provided under a *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0* licence. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)

The Australian Government acting through the Murray–Darling Basin Authority has exercised due care and skill in preparing and compiling the information and data in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence and for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying upon any of the information or data in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by law.

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority's preference is that you attribute this publication (and any Murray–Darling Basin Authority material sourced from it) using the following wording within your work:

Cataloguing data

Title: Water resource plans – November 2022 quarterly report, Murray–Darling Basin Authority Canberra, 2022. CC BY 4.0

Accessibility

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority makes its documents and information available in accessible formats. On some occasions the highly technical nature of the document means that we cannot make some sections fully accessible. If you encounter accessibility problems or the document is in a format that you cannot access, please contact us.

Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the Murray–Darling Basin

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority pays respect to the Traditional Owners and their Nations of the Murray–Darling Basin. We acknowledge their deep cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to their lands and waters.

The guidance and support received from the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations and our many Traditional Owner friends and colleagues is very much valued and appreciated.

Aboriginal people should be aware that this publication may contain images, names or quotations of deceased persons.

Water Resource plan progress

Water resource plans are an integral part of implementing the Basin Plan as they set new rules on how much water can be taken from the system, ensuring sustainable diversion limits are not exceeded over time. They also protect water for the environment, cultural values and uses and water quality.

Basin state governments are responsible for developing water resource plans (WRPs). The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) assists states in developing this material and is responsible for assessing WRPs and making an accreditation recommendation to the Commonwealth Minister responsible for water (the Minister). Ultimately the Minister will make the final decision on WRP accreditation.

The MDBA applies a consistent framework to assess each WRP against Basin Plan requirements and has ensured resources are dedicated to the water planning and assessment task. The MDBA is required to apply and follow the processes set out in the *Water Act 2007* (Cth) (the Act) in undertaking this task.

The MDBA uses a WRP assessment framework that includes a range of policy and guidance materials to support the preparation and accreditation of WRPs. The [WRP assessment framework](#) was published in October 2018 on the MDBA website. In addition, an external provider has been contracted to undertake a process review aimed at providing confidence that due diligence arrangements have been followed and that the assessment recommendation is justified.

Bilateral agreements were established to ensure key elements of WRPs were given effect from 1 July 2019 for states where WRPs were not accredited. In the case of NSW, a renewed [bilateral agreement](#) was agreed with MDBA in June 2021, to ensure new or improved information, methods or models can be applied, through agreement, in particular WRP areas. A second deed of amendment to the bilateral agreement was signed in September 2022 to reflect the changes to the roles of the MDBA with the commencement of the office of the Inspector-General of Water Compliance.

Adapting to future change

Water management will continue to evolve and change over time. The MDBA anticipates amendments to accredited WRPs as a result of new information coming to hand, reviews and changes to state legislation.

The MDBA has established processes to support the assessment and re-accreditation of WRPs consistent with the requirements of the Act. This involves a tailored assessment approach that is suited to the scale and complexity of the amendment. [WRP amendment guidelines](#) have been developed to guide Basin states in the development of amendments and are available on the MDBA website. Regulations are also in place to enable the streamlined accreditation of minor or non-substantive amendments to WRPs. A minor or non-substantive amendment is an amendment that

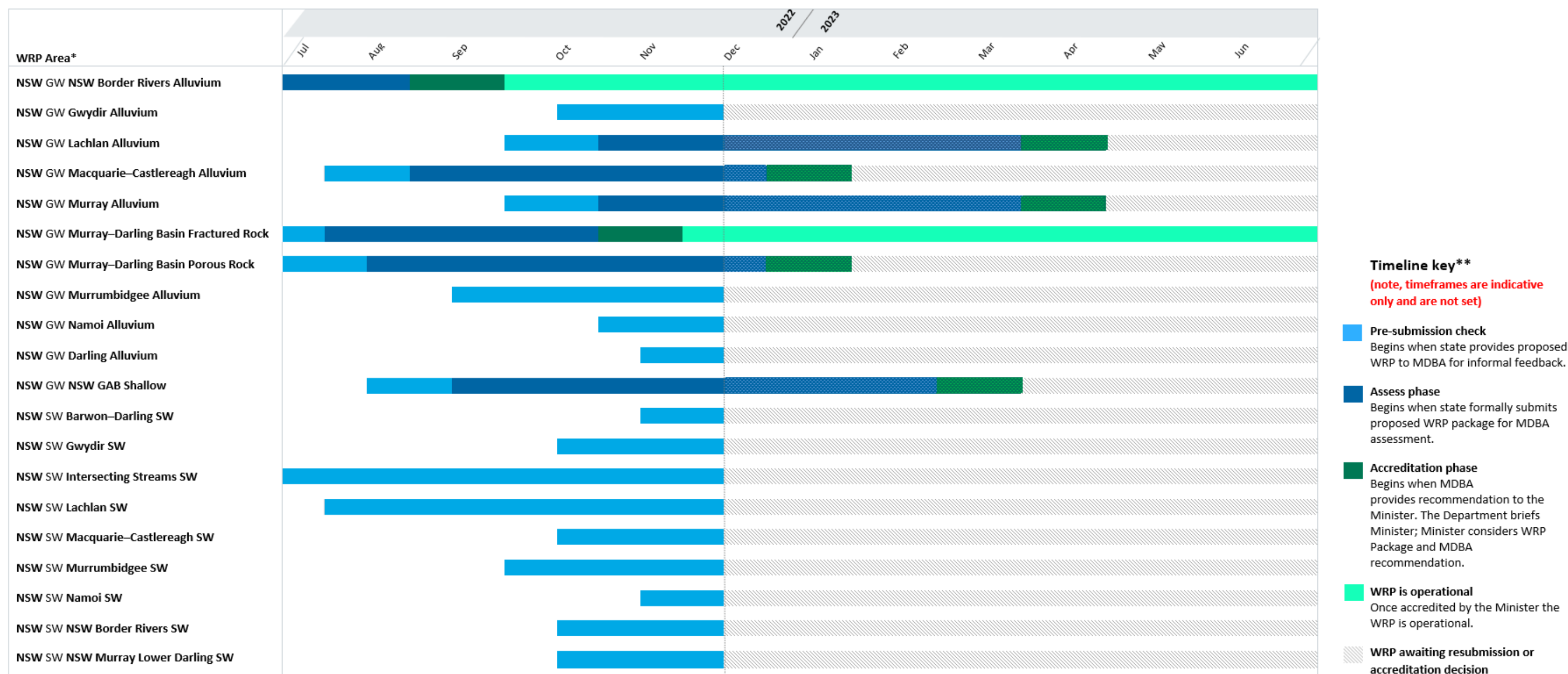
does not alter the substance of the WRP or affect rights or obligations and can include correcting errors of spelling, punctuation, or grammar; or updating references to a law.

It is anticipated that Basin states will work closely with the MDBA prior to any amendment being submitted for assessment.

This quarterly report reflects state-by-state progress as at 30 November 2022.

Water resource plan timeframes

Water resource plan timeframes, as at 30 November 2022



SW = surface water GW = groundwater

* All other state WRPs are accredited and operational. For accreditation timelines see previous quarterly reports.

** NSW resubmission timeframes are subject to agreement between ministers

Timeline key**

(note, timeframes are indicative only and are not set)

- **Pre-submission check**
Begins when state provides proposed WRP to MDBA for informal feedback.
- **Assess phase**
Begins when state formally submits proposed WRP package for MDBA assessment.
- **Accreditation phase**
Begins when MDBA provides recommendation to the Minister. The Department briefs Minister; Minister considers WRP Package and MDBA recommendation.
- **WRP is operational**
Once accredited by the Minister the WRP is operational.
- **WRP awaiting resubmission or accreditation decision**

New South Wales progress update

Resubmission underway

NSW submitted 20 WRPs to MDBA for assessment by 30 June 2020.

The initial assessment of all NSW WRPs was completed by September 2021. The assessment of these plans identified inconsistencies with Basin Plan requirements. As a result, NSW withdrew all 20 WRPs and advised they will consider the MDBA's assessment feedback.

This is not unexpected. All other Basin States went through a similar process where inconsistencies with Basin Plan requirements were identified by the MDBA, and adjustments were made to the formally submitted WRPs.

The MDBA is working with NSW to undertake pre-submission reviews of WRPs prior to WRPs being formally submitted. This step helps to resolve issues with the WRPs prior to formal submission and assessment.

Pre-submission reviews have been completed, or are underway, for a number of WRPs and informal feedback is being provided to NSW.

Following informal feedback the following WRPs have been submitted for assessment and accreditation:

- NSW Border Rivers Alluvium (groundwater) – submitted 17 February 2022
- Murray–Darling Basin Fractured Rock (groundwater) – submitted 14 July 2022
- Murray–Darling Basin Porous Rock (groundwater) – submitted 28 July 2022
- Macquarie–Castlereagh Alluvium (groundwater) – submitted 18 August 2022
- New South Wales Great Artesian Basin Shallow (groundwater) submitted 1 September 2022
- Lachlan Alluvium (groundwater) – submitted 19 October 2022
- Murray Alluvium (groundwater) – submitted 20 October 2022

The Lachlan (surface water) WRP was previously submitted on the 31 March 2022 and subsequently withdrawn on 30 June 2022 to undergo revisions. The MDBA continues to work with NSW in the pre-submission review phase.

Resubmitted WRP packages can be viewed on the MDBA website at

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan/water-resource-plans/state-water-resource-plans>

Accredited NSW Water Resource Plans

The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water has accredited the following NSW WRPs:

- NSW Border Rivers Alluvium (groundwater) – accredited 24 September 2022
- Murray–Darling Basin Fractured Rock (groundwater) – accredited 18 November 2022

These plans were accredited by the Commonwealth Minister following assessment by the MDBA which found that the plans met all of the requirements of the Basin Plan. The MDBA is assessing formally submitted WRPs with the same assessment framework used for all other states.

Operational and accredited water resource plans

There are 33 WRP areas in total, 14 for surface water, 14 for groundwater, as well as 5 that cover both. Fifteen WRPs have been accredited and are operational, including all Queensland, Victorian, ACT and South Australian WRPs, and two from New South Wales. Accredited water resource plans can be viewed on the [MDBA's website](#).

Water resource plan area	Commencement date
Australian Capital Territory	
Australian Capital Territory (surface water)	June 2020
Australian Capital Territory (groundwater)	June 2020
New South Wales	
New South Wales Border Rivers Alluvium	September 2022
New South Wales Murray–Darling Basin Fractured Rock	November 2022
Queensland	
Border Rivers–Moonie (groundwater/surface water)	September 2019
Condamine–Balonne (groundwater/surface water)	September 2019
Warrego–Paroo–Nebine (groundwater/surface water)	June 2017
South Australia	
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges (groundwater/surface water)	November 2019
South Australian Murray Region (groundwater/surface water)	August 2019
South Australian River Murray (surface water)	November 2019
Victoria	
Goulburn–Murray (groundwater)	June 2020
Northern Victoria (surface water)	June 2020
Victorian Murray (surface water)	June 2020
Wimmera–Mallee (groundwater)	September 2019
Wimmera–Mallee (surface water)	September 2019

Office locations – First Nations Country

Adelaide – *Kurna*

Canberra – *Ngunnawal*

Goondiwindi – *Bigambul*


Griffith – *Wiradjuri*


Mildura – *Latji Latji*

Murray Bridge – *Ngarrindjeri*

Toowoomba – *Jarowair and Wakka Wakka*

Wodonga – *Dhudhuroa*

 mdba.gov.au

 1800 630 114

 engagement@mdba.gov.au