

# Annual Water Sharing Plan Implementation Report 2022-2023

A report on the status of water sharing plan implementation activities

## About the Water Sharing Implementation Program

The Department of Planning and Environment is delivering a new Water Sharing Plan Implementation Program. The program coordinates information and reporting that supports accountability and decision-making to improve water sharing plan implementation. The department delivers the program in partnership with NSW water management agencies responsible for implementing water sharing plans.

The program takes a theme-based approach to describe, monitor and report on the implementation of water sharing plans. It collates similar rules and activities from common plan parts of water sharing plans into 12 implementation themes. Read more about each theme below.

Table 1 Description of Water Sharing Plan Implementation Program implementation themes.

Implementation theme	Theme description
Access licences	Defines the circumstances under which access licences are granted and managed
Basic landholder rights	Protects and provides water required to meet basic landholder rights needs
Environmental water	Protects and provides water for environmental needs
Event-based extraction	Defines how and when event based extraction may occur
Limits to the availability of water	Establishes limits on water use to provide equitable access to water
Monitoring, evaluation & reporting	Defines requirements to monitor and evaluate plan performance
System operations	Defines how infrastructure is operated to manage water
Water dealings	Defines the circumstances under which water can be traded

Implementation theme	Theme description
Licence & approval conditions	Imposes mandatory conditions on licences and approvals to give effect to plan rules
Water supply work approvals	Defines the circumstances within which works can be constructed to extract water
Town water requirements	Provides security of water supply for town water needs
Amendments & associated studies	Changes to water sharing plans through amendment provisions and associated studies

## Understanding the status of water sharing plan implementation

The Water Sharing Implementation Program is designed to provide information and insights on implementation activities to improve performance and operational transparency. The program is currently in a foundational phase and is focusing on collecting baseline data to inform status of implementation as at the end of 2022-23 water year. This includes understanding key implementation information such as,

- Do implementation processes have documented processes in place?
- Are roles and responsibilities of NSW water agencies clear?
- Are there any current gaps in implementation?
- Are there any current implementation improvement programs in place?

In 2023-24 the *Water Sharing Plan Implementation Program* will move into a new phase. Collection of more detailed information on the extent, efficiency and consistency of implementation activities will commence. These insights include progress on addressing implementation gaps and will be reported by theme.

Table 2 Description of implementation status categories

Symbol	Implementation status	Description
✓	Implemented	<p>Processes are in place most or all theme provisions are implemented within this plan area.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in implementation are clear and agreed.</p> <p>There may be opportunities to improve the processes (for example, by improving efficiency or filling gaps in process documentation).</p>
○	Partially implemented	<p>Processes are in place to implement only some theme provisions within this plan area.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in implementation are at times not clear or have not been agreed.</p> <p>Priorities for further implementation development are currently being scoped.</p>
✗	Not implemented.	<p>Very few or no processes are in place to implement theme provisions within this plan area, or there are delays in commencing implementation due to an external factor (e.g. data unavailable)</p> <p>Processes are not documented, and roles and responsibilities are not agreed.</p> <p>Priorities for further implementation development are currently being scoped.</p>
-	Not applicable	The plan doesn't include this provision.

## 2022-23 Water sharing implementation status by theme

Table 3. Details of implementation status by Implementation Program theme.

Theme	2022-23 implementation status
Access licences	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>✓ Assessment procedures exist. Ongoing improvements are occurring to demonstrate account management rules are consistent with plans.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">WaterNSW – Water licensing</a></p>
Water dealings	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>✓ There are clear processes in place to process dealing applications. Processing times on dealing applications are monitored and reported.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">Water in NSW - Trade</a> or <a href="#">WaterNSW - Trading water</a></p>
Water supply work approvals	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>✓ Assessment procedures are in place to ensure rules and possible impacts are considered. Processing times on applications requiring these types of assessments are monitored and reported.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">WaterNSW – Water Supply work and use approvals</a> or the <a href="#">NSW Water Register</a></p>
Event-based extraction	<p>✓ Improved documentation on the decision-making process has been identified.</p> <p>○ Further development needed to ensure decision making process is consistent across agencies.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit the <a href="#">Water in NSW – Supplementary water</a></p>
Licence and approval conditions	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>✓ There are clear processes in place to develop and apply mandatory conditions on access licences and work approvals at the commencement of a new or amended water sharing plan. The roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved are agreed.</p> <p>NSW water agencies have made significant improvements in applying licence conditions within reasonable timeframes to allow effective implementation. This includes short term targets to ensure mandatory conditions are developed, and licence / approval holders are notified in a timely manner.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">Water in NSW – Licences</a> or <a href="#">WaterNSW – Licensing</a></p>

Theme	2022-23 implementation status
Limits to the availability of water	<p>The implementation status of this theme varies between plan areas and theme provisions.</p> <p><b>Inland regulated surface water plans and Barwon-Darling plan</b></p> <p>✓ The long-term average annual extraction limit (LTAAEL) is being managed as per plan provisions.</p> <p><b>Inland unregulated and coastal surface water plans</b></p> <p>✗ The long-term average annual extraction limit (LTAAEL) is not being managed as per plan provisions as there is no broad scale metering data available. The non-urban water metering roll out will provide some information in future assessments. The department is also currently developing an interim LTAAEL assessment method for unregulated water sources.</p> <p>○ The long-term average annual extraction limit (LTAAEL) is partly being completed. Six out of the twelve LTAAEL assessments were completed. This includes the six WaterNSW LTAAEL's.</p> <p><b>Groundwater plans</b></p> <p>✓ The long-term average annual extraction limit (LTAAEL) is being managed as per plan provisions.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">Water in NSW – Extraction limits</a></p>
Environmental water	<p><b>Regulated surface water plans</b></p> <p>✓ Implementation of planned environmental water, held environmental water and active management is occurring.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">Water in NSW – Environmental water management</a></p>
System operation rules	<p><b>Regulated surface water plans</b></p> <p>✓ Approvals to operate infrastructure, such as dams, are conditioned. A review of the conditions is occurring to demonstrate consistency with Plans.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">WaterNSW – Water operations</a></p>
Amendments and associated studies	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>✓ Implementation is occurring. Improvements in processes to track the progress of amendments have commenced development.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">Water in NSW – Water sharing plan status</a></p>

Theme	2022-23 implementation status
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>🟡 This theme is assessed as partially implemented. The department is currently developing a new Water Sharing Plan Evaluation Framework that will improve monitoring and evaluation across all water sharing plans.</p> <p>There are many monitoring programs currently operating within NSW that provide key information to measure the outcomes of water sharing plans. Some of these are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groundwater level monitoring program in aquifers with high levels of water take, with management action taken where long term declines are observed</li> <li>• Statewide water quality monitoring network</li> <li>• Fish movement tracking in the Barwon Darling</li> <li>• Applying the High Ecological Value Aquatic Ecosystem framework to water management</li> <li>• The role of cease to pump rules in protecting macroinvertebrates</li> </ul> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">Water in NSW – Science, data, modelling and maps</a> or <a href="#">WaterNSW – Real-time data</a></p>
Basic landholder rights	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>This theme depends on provisions in the following themes to be implemented: System operations, Licence and approval conditions, Water supply work approval, Limits to the availability of water.</p> <p>✓ The dependant themes are being implemented. (System operations, Licence and approval conditions, Water supply work approval, Limits to the availability of water.)</p> <p>🟡 The dependant themes are being implemented except for the Limits to the availability of water theme.</p> <p><b>Want to know more?</b> Visit <a href="#">Water in NSW – Basic landholder rights</a></p>
Town water requirements	<p><b>All plans</b></p> <p>✓ Implementation is occurring. However there are known legacy issues which require addressing.</p>

## 2022-23 Water sharing implementation status by plan

Table 4. Current status of theme implementation across 58 water sharing plans. See Table 2 for details of the assessment of status, including an explanation of symbols used. More information about the implementation status of each theme is provided in Table 3.

Water Sharing Plan	Access licences	Water dealings	Water supply work approvals	Event based extraction	Licence and approval conditions	Limits to the availability of water	Environmental water	System operations	Amendment and associated studies	Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	Basic landholder rights	Town water requirements
Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2012	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	✓	✓
Bega Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓
Bellinger River Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Belubula Regulated River Water Source 2012	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
Brunswick Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Castlereagh Unregulated River Water Sources 2011	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓
Clarence River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Clyde River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Coffs Harbour Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2009	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Darling Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Deua River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources 2023	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓

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Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources 2023	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	○	✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓
Gwydir Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
Gwydir Unregulated River Water Sources 2012	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Hastings Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2019	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓
Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2009	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Intersecting Streams Unregulated River Water Sources 2011	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Lachlan Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	✓	✓
Lachlan Regulated River Water Source 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
Lachlan Unregulated Water Sources 2012	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Lower Murray–Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2011	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Lower North Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2009	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Macleay Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
Macquarie Bogan Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2012	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓

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Macquarie-Castlereagh Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	✓	✓
Murray Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Murray Unregulated River Water Sources 2011	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Murrumbidgee Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	✓	✓
Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
Murrumbidgee Unregulated River Water Sources 2012	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Nambucca Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Namoi Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	✓	✓
Namoi and Peel Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2012	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
NSW Border Rivers Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	✓	✓
NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water Source 2021	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
NSW Border Rivers Unregulated River Water Sources 2012	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
NSW Great Artesian Basin Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	✓	✓
NSW Great Artesian Basin Shallow Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
New South Wales Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
NSW Murray-Darling Basin Fractured Rock Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓

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NSW Murray-Darling Basin Porous Rock Groundwater Sources 2020	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
North Coast Coastal Sands Groundwater Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
North Coast Fractured and Porous Rock Groundwater Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
North Western Unregulated and Fractured Rock 2011	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Paterson Regulated River Source 2019	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓
Peel Regulated Water Source 2010	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓
South Coast Groundwater Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Snowy Genoa Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Tuross River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Tweed River Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✗	-	-	✓	○	○	✓
Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓