



Sustainable Diversion Limit Compliance Statement for 2022-2023

July 2024

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Foreword

The Sustainable Diversion Limit Compliance Statement for this year is my third and reflects my ongoing commitment to upholding the principles of the Basin Plan. I was appointed to provide independent assessment of compliance, and enforcement if necessary. My vision remains to ensure water management and use within the Murray-Darling Basin is lawful, transparent and accountable, and the Australian public is confident in the integrity of Basin Plan delivery.

I am pleased to report that the Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Act 2023 has provided further clarity to my role in relation to SDL compliance and strengthened accountability, through the content and reporting provisions for action plans. Action plans will be required by Basin States if any SDL excesses are identified. In addition to this I now have the power to develop guidelines to ensure actions plans and reporting on progress are fit-for-purpose.

In October 2023, I published a **Sustainable Diversion Limit Compliance Framework**, to make my expectations in this task clear to all. In line with the Framework, I have reviewed the 2022-23 Registers of Take report and I find that all 55 SDL resource units on the registers were found to be compliant. This covers Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Wetter than normal climatic conditions in 2022 - 2023 has meant that water use across the Basin was generally lower than permitted levels. This notably resulted in increasing cumulative balance credits on the Registers of Take. As we experience drier conditions in future years, the increased cumulative balance credits will provide Basin States with some buffer and water security to be able to manage within SDL compliance thresholds.

SDL compliance is for Basin State agencies to manage all forms of consumptive water and not a compliance assessment of individual water users.

New South Wales surface water take accounts for 60% of the total take in 2022 - 2023.

I note New South Wales' self-assessment of 'compliant', and their ongoing compliance assessments under long term average annual extraction limits and actions under New South Wales water sharing plans to manage water take.

Again, I am unable to determine SDL compliance in New South Wales for the 2022 - 2023 year. It cannot yet be assessed under the Basin Plan, due to a lack of water resource plans operating in 2022-2023. These inconsistencies in approach, mean New South Wales is not subject to the same level of accountability under the Basin Plan as Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Ternitory. This was a concern highlighted in my first SDL Compliance Statement in August 2022.

Whilst I cannot find compliance for the New South Wales 2022 - 2023 water accounts, I also cannot find noncompliance.

The Barwon-Darling watercourse and Gwydir surface water area cumulative balances have seen a swing from -71.1 GL and -111.8 GL debit respectively and are now 77 GL and 142.4 GL in credit. The Murrumbidgee also has significant model adjustments each year, while the SDL method is yet to be finalised through an accredited water resource plan. These major movements in the interim accounts can create mistrust in the process and I refer readers to Part B of this Statement for an explanation of these issues.

The prolonged reliance on bilateral arrangements between the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and New South Wales risks corrosion of confidence in the integrity of Basin Plan delivery. These are administrative arrangements, in lieu of legislative compliance through the Basin Plan and accredited water resource plans. A recent review of the Inspector-General of Water Compliance, conducted by Mr Peter Harris AO considered this issue and made the following statement:

"The more that unenforceable arrangements are developed that enable the impression to be created that NSW is delivering on its commitments under the Basin Plan without having to meet the same burden of proof and reform of historical anomalies in water take as other jurisdictions, the less incentive there is to complete water resource plans at all."

I am pleased to see an end to this arrangement on the horizon, as 16 New South Wales water resource plans are accredited at the time of this Statement. There is however a time lag which will see several water resource plan areas not appear on the Registers of Take for a couple of years to come.

While Basin States continue to work towards ensuring all significant water extractions are metered accurately, the uncertainties associated with modelled surface water take remain a concern for the community. I am not just listening to communities, I am hearing them and independently acting on their areas of concern on their behalf. I have recently commissioned research to increase the understanding of modelled surface water values, identify levels of confidence in modelling figures, and clarify growth in use in the modelled proportion of water use. This will support in-depth understanding of the implications of these sources of uncertainty and risk when I determine compliance with the SDLs.

As the Inspector-General of Water Compliance I remain dedicated to transparency, rigorous oversight, and building confidence in SDL compliance among all stakeholders. I am committed to advocating for greater public visibility of state and commonwealth decision making, publishing our findings, conducting thorough assessments, and engaging with the community to ensure that the outcomes of the Basin Plan are met. This Compliance Statement is a testament to our ongoing efforts and the collective responsibility we share in safeguarding our water resources for future generations.

I am encouraged that we continue to make significant strides towards sustainable water management across the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Hon. Troy Grant Inspector-General of Water Compliance



Part A - Compliance with the Sustainable Diversion Limits

Ensure it's lawful

Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs) and compliance with the limits are essential to the implementation and operation of the *Basin Plan 2012* (Basin Plan). Under the Commonwealth *Water Act 2007*, SDLs provide for 'the establishment and enforcement of environmentally sustainable limits on the quantities of surface water and groundwater that may be taken from the Basin water resources.¹

Compliance with the SDLs by Basin States has been required since 1 July 2019.² Only when a water resource plan is operating for a full water accounting year (1 July – 30 June)³ can SDL compliance apply.

SDL compliance is determined from the accredited accounting methods and application of obligations within the water resource plan. It is the responsibility of the Basin States to report on and ensure compliance with the SDLs, on an annual basis.

Non-compliance with SDLs considers more than one water user group taking too much water. Non-compliance is when the combined water use across all consumptive uses exceeds the SDL compliance threshold and there is no deemed reasonable excuse for the excess.

As an independent regulator, the Inspector-General has a responsibility to undertake an annual assessment and respond to SDL compliance. The Inspector-General has legislative powers to conduct an inquiry, audit, and investigation.

Ensure it's visible

With increasing public scrutiny in relation to water management across the Murray-Darling Basin, the role of the Inspector-General was established in August 2021. Through this role, the Inspector-General has committed to:

- · Deliver trust and transparency around the management of Murray-Darling Basin water resources.
- Ensure the highest standard of accountability for all involved in the use and management of Basin resources, including State and Commonwealth agencies.
- · Engage with the community on management of Basin resources.

The **Sustainable Diversion Limit Compliance Framework** (the SDL Framework) has been developed to articulate the Inspector-General's expectations and approach to exercising statutory powers and functions in relation to SDL compliance.

This annual compliance statement is published to provide the community with information on the status of SDL compliance and transparency of water management in the Murray-Darling Basin.

¹ Water Act 2007 (Cth) s 20(b).

² Basin Plan 2012 (Cth) s 6.08(5).

³ Basin Plan 2012 (Cth) s 6.08(5).

Assessment Process

As described in the **SDL Framework**, the SDL compliance assessment is informed by water accounts and reports provided by Basin States and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority).

The annual SDL compliance assessments are informed by.

- Basin State reports as required by Section 71 of the Act. The Section 71 reports include detailed water accounts, including water taken and managed during the water accounting year, including Basin States assessment of compliance and actions to achieve compliance with SDLs.
- Registers of Take as prepared by the Authority, which includes SDL resource units managed under an accredited water resource plan.
- Prior years SDL compliance assessment information⁴
- Other information provided to the Inspector-General, or gained publicly, for the purposes of undertaking a compliance assessment.
- · Bilateral discussions and additional information provided by the Basin States.

The Registers of Take report was provided by the Authority to the Inspector-General on 5 April 2024.

The Registers of Take report collates the Section 71 reports water accounts and indicates the impact of the water taken through a cumulative balance (credits or debits) in relation to the SDL for each SDL resource unit.

Where the amount of water taken leads to an exceedance above the SDL, but the cumulative balance remains below the SDL compliance threshold, the Basin State is compliant with the SDL.

Where the amount of water taken leads to an excess above the SDL and the cumulative balance is equal to or above the SDL compliance threshold, the Basin State is non-compliant unless they have a reasonable excuse.

The SDL compliance assessment recognises that incomplete water recovery by the Commonwealth, are for reasons beyond the Basin State's control, and are adjusted for in the registers of take.

⁴ Sustainable Diversion Limit compliance statement for 2020-2021 (igwc.gov.au) and Murray–Darling Basin Sustainable Diversion Limit Compliance outcomes 2019–20 (mdba.gov.au)

Assessment Findings

There are 55 SDL resource units (19 surface water and 36 groundwater) on the Registers of Take for the 2022-2023 water accounting year. The 55 SDL resource units are managed through the 13 water resource plans across Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory.

There were no SDL exceedances in 2022-2023 from the 55 SDL resource units. All 55 SDL resource units were found to be compliant.

As there were no SDL resource units in excess of the SDL compliance threshold, there were no claims of a reasonable excuse or action plans provided by Basin States to the Inspector-General.

The 2022-2023 assessment was based on the information in the Registers of Take, as prepared by the Authority for surface water SDL resource units and for groundwater SDL resource units, at the time of the assessment.

Data from the Registers of Take is represented in Table 1 (Surface water) and Table 2 (Groundwater).

The SDL compliance assessment has observed a trend of increasing cumulative balance credits across all Basin States. This is due to less water actually being taken than the SDL methods calculated permitted take, on average across SDL resource units. Many Basin States have reported above average rainfall conditions in the previous 3 years and consistent with La Nina conditions. It is presumed the favourable conditions have contributed to a higher permitted take, particularly in the northern basin, and lower demand for water use across the Basin.

Cumulative balance credits in the current year usually become the opening balance for the next year. The Water Amendment (Restoring our River) Act 2023 introduced a "one-off adjustment" to cumulative balances for surface water SDL resource units, to retrospectively apply the cumulative balance credits and/or debits from 2019-2020 until the year the water resource plans came into operation. This means the cumulative balance from 2022-2023 will be adjusted for most SDL resource units going forward onto the 2023-2024 Registers of Take. The SDL Compliance outcomes of the "one-off adjustment" will not be known until the 2023-2024 Register of Take are prepared by the Authority.

A final observation, information provided through Section 71 narrative reports has been consistent throughout previous years and is often a statement of water resource plan arrangements, where they exist.

Basin States are encouraged to use the narrative reports to offer further relevant details, where possible, that provide clarity and disclosure to the Inspector-General and the general public on annual decision-making that contributes to enabling trade, managing allocations, water take limits and SDLs in general. This would help to explain outcomes and trends of the Registers of take, and in turn build trust and confidence in compliance with the SDLs.



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State	SDL resource unit	SDL resource unit code	SDL	Annual Permitted Take	Annual Actual Take	Annual Balance	Cumulative Balance, Start of Year	Cumulative Balance, End of Yean	HEW Adjust- ments	Adjusted Cumulative Balance, End of yean	SDL Compliance Threshold (-20% of SDL)	SDL Excess
OLD	Queensland Bonden Rivens	SS24	363.6	424.8	178.9	245.9	335.2	581.1	0	581.1	-72.7	No
QLD	Moonie	SS25	89.9	111.5	51.5	59.9	125.6	185.5	0	185.5	-18	No
OLD	Condamine- Balonne	SS26	919	859.4	599.9	259.5	263.6	523.1	55.5	578.6	-183.8	No
QLD	Nebine	SS27	17.1	16.9	11.1	5.78	12.4	18.2	0	18.2	-3,41	No
QLD	Wannego	SS28	55.5	59.1	23	36.1	08	104	0	104	-11.1	No
QLD	Paroo	SS29	11.8	10.9	10.9	0.08	0.23	0 [.] 3	0	O.O	-2.36	No
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	SS1	53.4	29.5	17.6	11.9	29.7	41.6	2.13	43.7	7.01-	No
VIC	Victorian Murray	SS2	1319.8	1145.4	909.8	235.6	230	465.6	32.4	498	-264	No
VIC	Kiewa	SSS	27.7	25.3	21.8	3.46	12.4	15.9	0	15.9	-5.54	No
VIC	Ovens	SS4	85.8	82.9	71	11.9	25.2	37.14	-0.09	37.04	-17.2	No
VIC	Broken	SSD	49	42.4	40.7	1.69	3.54	5.23	-0.6	4.63	0. 0-	No
VIC	Goulburn	SSG	1278	1327.6	800.9	526.7	598.4	1125	1142.5	17.4	-255.6	No
VIC	Campaspe	SS7	111.7	86.2	51.5	34.7	25.3	59.9	0.66	60.6	-22.3	No
VIC	Loddon	SSS	127.7	132	97.6	34.4	37.2	71.6	0	71.6	-25.5	No
VIC	Wimmena-Mallee	SSO	76.1	76.6	45.5	31.1	47.9	78.9	0	78.9	-15.2	No
SA	South Australian Murray	SS11	542.06	505.96	478.68	27.28	17.07	44.35	-13.6	30.75	-108.41	No
SA	South Australian Non-Prescribed Areas	OISS	55.2	55.2	23.34	31.86	63.72	95.57	0	95.57	-11.04	No
SA	Marne-Saunders	SS12	C	3.7	2.06	1.65	1.31	2.96	0	2.96	-0.6	No
SA	Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges	SS13	28.3	21.38	12.01	9.37	24.23	33.6	0	33.6	-5.66	No
Total			5214.7	5016.74	3447.8	1568.9	1921	3489.55	1218.9	2458.35		
VIC	Goulburn-Broken- Campaspe-Loddon ⁵		1566.4	1588.1	990.7	597.4	664.4	1261.8	17.5	1279.3	-313.3	No
VIC	Victorian Murray- Kiewa-Ovens		1433.3	1253.5	1002.6	251	267.6	518.6	32.3	550.9	-286.7	No

TABLE 1: 2022-2023 SURFACE WATER ACCOUNTS FROM REGISTERS OF TAKE

5. Goulburn-Broken-Campaspe-Loddon' and 'Victorian Murray-Kiewa-Ovens' SDL resource units may be treated as a single SDL resource unit for the purposes of the compliance assessment (Basin Plan (s. 6.12(2) (a) & (b))).

State	SDL resource unit code	SDL resource unit	SDL	Cumulative Permitted Take at end of 2021-2022	Cumulative Actual Take at end of 2021-2022	Annual Permitted Take	Annual Actual Take	Cumulative Permitted Take end of 2022-2023	Cumulative Actual Take end of 2022-2023	20% of SDL	SDL Compliance Threshold	SDL Excess (Yes/No)
OLD	GS54	Queensland Bonden Rivers Alluvium	14.0	42	33.6	14	9.61	20	43.2	.00 50	58.8	No
OLD	GS55	Queensland Bonden Rivers Fractured Rock	10.5	31.5	26.6	10.5	0 .D	42	36.1	2.1	44.1	No
OLD	GS57	Sediments above the Great Artesian Basin: Border Rivers-Moonie	46.9	140.7	1.54	46.9	0.52	187.6	2.06	9.38	197	S
OLD	GS62	St George Alluvium: Moonie	0.69	2.07	0.06	0.69	0.02	2.76	0.08	0.14	0. Ci	No
OLD	GS53	Condamine Fractured Rock	1.48	4.44	1.96	1.48	0.76	5.92	2.72	O.O	6.22	No
OLD	GS56	Queensland MDB: deep	100.0	300	0	100	0	400	0	20	420	No
OLD	GS58	Sediments above the Great Artesian Basin: Condamine-Balonne	18.1	54.3	1.33	18.1	0.49	72.4	<u>1</u> .82	3.62	76	°Z
OLD	GS61a	St Geonge Alluvium: Condamine-Balonne (shallow)	27.7	83.1	1.22	27.7	0.34	110.8	1.56	5.54	116.3	S
OLD	GS61b	St George Alluvium: Condamine-Balonne (deep)	12.6	37.8	34.9	42.0	11.7	50.4	46.6	2.52	52.9	S
OLD	GS64a	Upper Condamine Alluvium (Central Condamine Alluvium)	46.0	138	111.6	46	0 0 0	184	145.5	0.0	194.4	S
OLD	GS64b	Upper Condamine Alluvium (Tributaries)	40.5	121.5	80.4	40.5	29.9	162	110.4	Ъ.	179	No
OLD	GS65	Upper Condamine Basalts	79.0	237	146.5	62	67	316	213.5	15.8	331.8	No
OLD	0 8 8 9	Sediments above the Great Artesian Basin: Warrego-Paroo-Nebine	99.2	2.21	2.21	0.74	0.74	2.94	2.94	19.8	22.8	S
OLD	GS63	St George Alluvium: Warrego-Panoo-Nebine	24.6	0.25	0.25	0.08	0.08	0.33	0.33	4.92	5.25	No
OLD	GS66	Warnego Alluvium	10.2	2.3	0.0	0.77	0.77	3.07	3.07	2.04	5.11	No
ACT	GS52	Austnalian Capital Tennitory (groundwaten)	3.16	9.48	1.28	3.16	0.46	12.6	1.74	0.63	13.3	No

TABLE 2: 2022 - 2023 GROUNDWATER ACCOUNTS FROM THE REGISTERS OF TAKE

State	SDL resource unit code	SDL resource unit	SDL	Cumulative Permitted Take at end of 2021-2022	Cumulative Actual Take at end of 2021-2022	Annual Permitted Take	Annual (Actual Take ⁻	Cumulative Permitted Take end of 2022-2023	Cumulative Actual Take end of 2022-2023	20% of SDL	SDL Compliance Threshold	SDL Excess (Yes/No)
VIC	GS8a	Goulburn-Murray: Shepparton Irrigation Region	244.1	732.3	244.7	244.±	13.32	976.4	247.5	48.8	1025.2	0 Z
VIC	GS8b	Goulburn-Murray: Highlands	68.7	206.1	42.7	68.7	12.9	274.8	55.6	13.7	288.5	No
VIC	GS8c	Goulburn-Murray: Sedimentary Plain	223	669	303.8	223	50.7	892	354.5	44.6	936.6	No
VIC	GS8d	Goulburn-Murray: deep	20	60	3.39	20	1.31	80	4.7	4	84	No
VIC	GS9a	Wimmena-Mallee: Highlands	2.75	8.25	3.03	2.76	0.8	11	3.83	0.55	11.6	No
VIC	GS9b	Wimmena-Mallee: Sedimentany Plain	186.9	560.7	22.2	186.9	6.46	747.6	28.7	37.4	785	No
VIC	GS9c	Wimmera-Mallee: deep	20	60	0.83	20	0.28	80	1.11	4	84	No
SA	GS3a	Mallee (Pliocene Sands)	41.4	124.2	0	41.4	0	165.6	0	8.28	173.9	No
SA	GS3b	Mallee (Murray Group Limestone)	03.0 03	190.8	106.9	63.6	29.7	254.4	136.5	12.7	267.1	No
SA	GS3c	Mallee (Benmark Group)	CV	Q	0	CI	0	00	0	0.4	8.4	No
SA	GS5a	Peake-Roby-Shenlock (unconfined)	3.41	10.2	0.57	9.41 1	0.19	13.6	0.76	0.68	14.3	No
SA	GS5b	Peake-Roby-Sherlock (confined)	2.58	7.74	2.91	2.58	0.75	10.3	3.66	0.52	10.8	No
SA	GS6	SA Murnay	64.8	194.4	5.4	64.8	1.8	259.2	7.2	13	272.2	No
SA	GS7	SA Murnay Salt Interception Schemes	28.6	85.8	40.6	28.6	10.6	114.4	51.3	5.72	120.1	No
SA	GS1a	Angas Bremer (Quaternary Sediments)	1.09	0.75	0	0.25	0		0	0.22	1.22	No
SA	GS1b	Angas Bremer (Murray Group Limestone)	6.57	19.7	3.52	6.57	0.74	26.3	4.26	1.31	27.6	No
SA	GS2	Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges	38.5	115.5	31.6	38.5	8.29	154	39.9	7.7	161.7	No
SA	GS4a	Marne Saunders (Fractured Rock)	2.09	6.27	1.53	2.09	0.32	8,36	1.84	0.42	8.78	No
SA	GS4b	Marne Saunders (Murray Group Limestone)	2.38	7.02	3.69	2.34	1.15	9.36	4.85	0.48	9.84	No
SA	GS4c	Marne Saunders (Renmark Group)	0.5	1.5	0	0.5	0	CI	0	0.1	2.1	No

Part B – NSW Management of SDLs

The Inspector-General has not assessed the 54 SDL resource units in New South Wales, for SDL compliance, as there were no water resource plans operating for the full 2022-2023 water accounting year.

There were five groundwater resource plans (including 23 SDL resource units) accredited during the 2022-2023 water year, which can be assessed for SDL compliance for the 2023-2024 water year. Refer to Appendix 1 for the list of accredited water resource plans and the year SDL compliance will commence.

Each year until the water resource plan is accredited, a new temporary water accounting method is agreed upon by the New South Wales Basin State agency and the Authonity. The bilateral methods in 2022-2023 are retrospectively applied to previous years from 1 July 2019. The total effect is presented as a one-off adjustment to the cumulative balance (debit or credit) for each SDL resource unit, on the interim Registers of Take.

The SDL accounting and compliance methods within the Basin Plan are complex but are designed to consider long-term sustainable diversion limits which allow for variations in climate, water availability and trends in consumptive use.

The bilateral methods add another depth of complexity, as they are a blend of proposed water resource plans (even if withdrawn) and various modifications from the proposed water resource plan. The modifications can include changes to model inputs, baseline estimates, type of model, various scaling factors applied to permitted take, and other inclusions and exclusions for annual actual take.

The modifications have significantly affected the cumulative balance for the water accounts for the Barwon-Darling watercourse and Gwydir SDL resource units from previous years to the 2022-2023 interim Registers of Take. There have been "model refreshes"⁶ for the previous four years, creating a cumulative effect and a one-off adjustment made. Refer Appendix 2.

The New South Wales bilateral methods change annually, unlike Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory which have applied the same methods from the 2019-2020 interim Registers of Take, through to the accredited water resource plans.

The bilateral methods approach and the one-off adjustments create a lack of transparency and mask trends on NSW water management, including baseline diversions, water availability, the State's decision-making practices and annual water take by consumptive use.

It is a welcomed achievement for New South Wales to have shifted from 7 to 14 accredited water resource plans (out of 20) since the release of the **Sustainable Diversion Limit Compliance Statement for 2021-22**. This will lead to the methods for determining SDL compliance to be traceable and a constant.

New South Wales are encouraged to ensure comprehensible (in preference to being referred to highly technical report) and factual details of water accounts are provided for the public to access. This could be enhanced going forward through Section 71 narrative reports, including modifications to bilateral methods, to build trust and confidence in compliance with the SDLs.

⁶ Refer to Table 9, 2022-2023 Sustainable Diversion Limit Accounts – Registers of take and interim Registers of take

Appendix 1 – Compliance year for NSW

Water Resource Plan	Date accredited	SDL resource units	SDL Compliance
NSW Border Rivers	19 September 2022	NSW Border Rivers Alluvium (GS32)	2023-2024
Alluvium (GW18)		NSW Border Rivers Tributary Alluvium (GS33)	
NSW MDB Fractured	15 November 2022	Adelaide Fold Belt MDB (GS10)	2023-2024
ROCK (GWII)		Kanmantoo Fold Belt MDB (GS19)	
		Lachlan Fold Belt MDB (GS20)	
		Orange Basalt (GS39)	
		Young Granite (GS51)	
		Inverell Basalt (GS18)	
		Liverpool Ranges Basalt MDB (GS22)	
		New England Fold Belt MDB (GS37)	
		Warrumbungle Basalt (GS49)	
Macquarie-	21 December 2022	Bell Valley Alluvium (GS11)	2023-2024
(GW12)		Castlereagh Alluvium (GS14)	
		Coolaburragundy–Talbragar Alluvium (GS15)	
		Cudgegong Alluvium (GS16)	
		Lower Macquarie Alluvium (GS26)	
		Upper Macquarie Alluvium (GS45)	
NSW MDB Porous	21 December 2022	Western Porous Rock (GS50)	2023-2024
HOCK (GWO)		GunnedahOxley Basin MDB (GS17)	
		Sydney Basin MDB (GS41)	
		Oaklands Basin (GS38)	
Darling Alluvium	22 June 2023	Upper Darling Alluvium (GS42)	2023-2024
(GWV7)		Lower Darling Alluvium (GS23)	
Murray Alluvium	21 August 2023	Billabong Creek Alluvium (GS13)	2024-2025
		Lower Murray Shallow Alluvium (GS27a)	
Lachlan Alluvium	22 August 2023	Lower Lachlan Alluvium (GS25)	2024-2025
(0,1110)		Upper Lachlan Alluvium (GS44)	
		Belubula Alluvium (GS12)	

Water Resource Plan	Date accredited	SDL resource units	SDL Compliance
Murrumbidgee	9 November 2023	Lake George Alluvium (GS21)	2024-2025
Alluvium (GW9)		Mid Murrumbidgee Alluvium (GS31)	
		Lower Murrumbidgee Shallow Alluvium (GS28a)	
		Lower Murrumbidgee Deep Alluvium (GS28b)	
NSW Great Artesian	9 December 2023	NSW GAB Surat Shallow (GS34)	2024-2025
Basin Shallow (GW13)		NSW GAB Warrego Shallow (GS35)	
		NSW GAB Central Shallow (GS36)	
Intersecting Streams (SW13)	9 November 2023	Intersecting streams (S17)	2024-2025
Murrumbidgee (SW09)	29 February 2024	Murrumbidgee (SS15)	2024-2025
NSW Border Rivers (SW16)	2 May 2024	NSW Border Rivers (SS23)	2024-2025
Lachlan (SW10)	18 May 2024	Lachlan (SS16)	2024-2025
NSW Murray and	18 May 2024	NSW Murray (SS14)	2024-2025
Lower Darling (SW08)		Lower Darling (SS18)	

Appendix 2 – Barwon-Darling and Gwydir adjustments

SDL Resource unit	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Barwon-Darling	-57.7 GL	-66.9 GL	-71.1 GL	77 GL
	(-32.7%)	(-38%)	(-40%)	(+38%)

Section 71, Narrative report explanation:

In the Barwon Darling, the 2022-2023 Annual Permitted Take (APT) was much larger than the Annual Actual Take (AAT) resulting in an annual balance of +80GL. In addition, there was a credit of 66GL due to updated modelling (correction for meter error).

Gwydin	-5.19 GL	-61.1 GL	-111.8 GL	142.4 GL
	(-1 %)	(-12%)	(-21%)	(+26%)

Section 71, Narrative report explanation:

In the Gwydin, the 2022-2023 APT was much larger than the AAT resulting in an annual balance of +214.5GL. In addition, there was a credit of 39.7GL due to updated modelling (inclusion of floodplain harvesting licences, lead to higher estimates for regulated river permitted take).

Appendix 2 – Receival of data

The SDL Compliance Framework states the SDL compliance assessment process is informed by the Registers of Take. In practice, the Registers of take are informed by Basin State SDL accounts and the SDL accounts are informed by the water resource plan permitted take and actual take SDL methods.

It has become regular practice of the Basin States to provide draft SDL accounts and subsequent corrected version provided after the legislated due date, noting the MDBA is able to provide extensions if required. The SDL compliance assessment can view draft data as an early indication of compliance, although the data is not able to be assessed for compliance until the registers of take are finalised.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 highlights the dates when the Inspector-General receives versions of water accounts. when information is due and when the Inspector-General receives the data.



FIGURE 3: TIMING OF RECEIVAL FOR SDL COMPLIANCE INFORMATION - SURFACE WATER



FIGURE 4: TIMING OF RECEIVAL FOR SDL COMPLIANCE INFORMATION - GROUNDWATER

Glossary

Act

Water Act 2007 (Commonwealth)

Basin Plan

Basin Plan 2012 (Commonwealth)

Basin State

Basin State is defined in the Water Act and means New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory.⁷ Basin States have obligations relating to SDL compliance reporting and action plans under s 71 of the Water Act and Chapter 6 of the Basin Plan.

Cumulative balance

For surface water SDL resource units, each year the actual take is subtracted from the permitted take to generate a debit (where actual take is more than permitted take) or a credit (where actual take is less than permitted take). Over time, these debits and credits generate a **cumulative balance**. The **surface water SDL compliance threshold** is when the cumulative balance for an SDL resource unit is a debit equal to or greater than 20% of the SDL.

Exceedance

The term 'exceedance' to refer to circumstances where the Registers of Take records actual take that exceeds permitted take (cumulatively) but has not reached the SDL compliance threshold of 'excess'.

Excess

The term 'excess' has a specific meaning in the Basin Plan:⁸

For **surface water** SDL resource units, an excess occurs when the **cumulative balance** on the relevant Register is a debit amount equal to or greater than 20% of the SDL.

For **groundwater** SDL resource units, in any accounting period up to 2028, an excess occurs when the sum of actual take for all years since 2019 is greater than the sum of permitted take for those years, plus 20% of the SDL. For accounting periods after 2028, an excess occurs if the average annual take over the previous 10 years exceeds the average permitted take over that period.

Incomplete water recovery

The water recovery targets are for the purpose of 'bridging the gap' and recover water for the environment. Any unrecovered water (incomplete water recovery) remains in the consumptive entitlements and may be available and used as annual actual take (AAT). Therefore, the Registers of take are adjusted to credit the surface water cumulative balance and added to the compliance trigger for groundwater, to not affect the States compliance with the SDLs due to incomplete water recovery.

SDL compliance threshold

The point at which the Register for an SDL resource unit records an 'excess' (see definition of excess above). Once the SDL compliance threshold is reached, certain obligations and actions under the Water Act and Basin Plan are triggered.⁹

9 Water Act 2007 (Cth) section 71; Basin Plan 2012 section 6.12(3), (5) (surface water); section 6.12C(3), (5) (ground water)

⁷ Water Act 2007 (Cth) section 4

⁸ Basin Plan 2012 section 6.12(1) (for surface water); section 6.12C(2) (for groundwater)

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