

Claydon Review Recommendations – Implementation Project

Progress update – July 2022

Key points

- As of July 2022, 6 of the 19 key recommendations from the Claydon Review are complete, 11 are substantially progressed and 2 have not yet commenced.
- After the review was delivered in September 2021, DPE-Water commenced the Claydon Review Recommendations Implementation Project (the project).
- DPE-Water has been working closely with the recommendation leads from WaterNSW, Natural Resource Access Regulator (NRAR) and DPE-Environment and Heritage (DPE-EHG) through the project’s steering committee and various working groups.
- The project is on track. Phase 1 (high priority) recommendations are either complete or substantially progressed, and the Phase 2 (remaining Phase 1 and longer-term) recommendations are well underway (Figure 1).
- A summary of the actions to address Phase 1 and Phase 2 recommendations, and responses where no new action is required, is provided in Table 1 and Table 2.

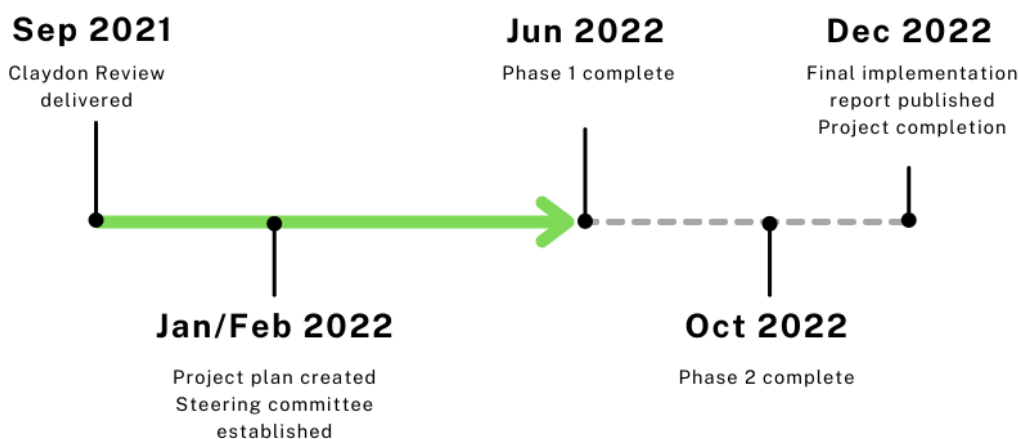


Figure 1. Timeline of the project phases, showing progress to date and key milestones

Project background

In response to the first activation of the new Barwon-Darling ‘resumption of flows’ water sharing plan rule in January 2021, stakeholders (including Roy Butler MP) requested a review of the department’s implementation of the rule. Stakeholders were also interested in two other newly implemented rules in the Barwon-Darling – individual daily extraction components (IDECs) and active management.

DPE-Water subsequently commissioned Greg Claydon to conduct an independent assessment of the extent to which the 3 new rules were implemented according to the water sharing plan, and to provide recommendations for future improvements. Mr Claydon delivered the review in September 2021. The review includes 19 key recommendations (R1 to R19, paraphrased in Table 1 and Table 2) to improve future implementation of the resumption of flows rule, IDECs and active management in the Barwon-Darling. The recommendations are assigned to either DPE-Water or our partner agencies (WaterNSW, NRAR and DPE-EHG).

DPE-Water is project managing delivery of the recommendations in two project phases and according to advice from a steering committee. Each agency responsible for delivering recommendations has appointed a 'lead' for their work and participates in the steering committee.

Phase 1 outcomes

There were several notable successes through Phase 1 of the project, including:

- key water sharing plan changes were progressed through the steering committee and working group discussions, specifically changes and clarifications to the resumption of flows rule (R19a & R19b respectively), sub-daily announcements (R4) and temporary trade IDECs (R6)
- important revisions to Barwon-Darling procedures manual (R3, R8, R11, R19c)
- aligning the recommendations with other recommendations underway in Barwon-Darling, including the first flush independent review and the 2020-21 active management annual review
- continued strong support for the project from partner agencies.

Challenges

While the project has progressed well, there have been some challenges including:

- meeting the 2022 Barwon-Darling water sharing plan deadlines for recommendations requiring plan changes (R4, R6, R19) and progressing work for these considering the uncertain outcome of the plan changes, which are currently on public exhibition
- ensuring actions planned to address each recommendation align with the recommendation's intent and improve the implementation of the 3 reforms.

The challenges for Phase 2 are expected to include:

- progressing implementation work for R4 and R19, since the outcome of the public exhibition process to make those changes is uncertain
- completing all work within the timeframe, including the development of information and communication technology (ICT) systems for R6, and managing unforeseen project risks.

What's next

The five incomplete Phase 1 recommendations will be completed or addressed in Phase 2 (which ends 14 October 2022). In December 2022 DPE-Water will publish a final implementation report explaining all the actions taken to address or complete each recommendation.

Table 1. Phase 1 recommendations

ID	Recommendation (paraphrased)	Status	Description of actions
R3	Further investigate and describe arrangements to manage 'mismatch' in the Barwon-Darling procedures manual (WaterNSW and DPE-Water)	Complete	DPE-Water and WaterNSW have investigated and reviewed the mismatch procedures as part of the active management annual review. The review revealed concerns over the operational feasibility of the procedures. As a result, DPE-Water plan to pause mismatch procedures once sub-daily corrective announcements are implemented. The arrangement has been described in a revised version of the procedures manual. Further stakeholder consultation on these changes will occur through the Barwon-Darling ROSSCo.
R4	Investigate feasibility of sub-daily announcements and amend manual (WaterNSW and DPE-Water)	In progress	The feasibility of sub-daily announcement has been discussed between agencies and water users. The revised Barwon-Darling WSP, currently on public exhibition, includes a new clause allowing sub-daily "corrective" announcements. The procedures manual will be revised accordingly. These procedures will be activated if the revised plan retains the new clause for corrective announcements. WaterNSW are also investigating changes to their online systems to enable implementation of sub-daily announcements.
R5	Review IDECs for errors (DPE-Water)	Complete	A review was completed in 2021. The review found IDECs were calculated according to the method in the 2012 Barwon-Darling water sharing plan. DPE-Water will conduct another review once better information on pump capacities is available.
R6	Develop policies, procedures and systems for temporary trade of IDECs (WaterNSW and DPE-Water)	In progress	The revised Barwon-Darling WSP, currently on public exhibition, includes a clause for temporary trade of IDECs. Procedures have been added to the revised procedures manual and work is underway to build the online systems to implement temporary trades, pending the response to the proposed change through the public exhibition process.
R7	Update the 2021 resumption of flows report with additional flow event data (WaterNSW)	Complete	Additional flow data is available through WaterNSW's WaterInsights portal. WaterNSW's 2021 report is complete and there is more information about flows in the system (including environmental water) in the portal.
R8	Amend manual to require report after every resumption of flows period (DPE-Water)	Complete	Procedure 21 of the revised version of the Barwon-Darling procedures manual now requires WaterNSW to prepare a report within 30 days of the resumption of flows event.

ID	Recommendation (paraphrased)	Status	Description of actions
R10	Revise manual and fact sheets based on lessons from recent event and present to stakeholders (DPE-Water)	In progress	DPE-Water’s fact sheets underwent revisions shortly after the January 2021 resumption of flows event. The procedures manual is undergoing revisions to address both Claydon Review recommendations and recommendations from the annual review of active management. Changes to the procedures manuals will be discussed stakeholders.
R11	Remove reference to “conservative estimate” in manual and replace with “best available information” from policy (DPE-Water)	Complete	Note 2 under Procedure 11 in the Barwon-Darling procedures manual has been revised. It now only refers to “the best available information at the time”.
R13	Consult stakeholders on operational recommendations (1-6) (WaterNSW & DPE-Water)	In progress	Two of the recommendations (R1 & R2) are being addressed through other projects. R1 through the Hydrometric Improvement Plan and R2 as part of R14. Stakeholders will be consulted on mismatch (R3), sub-daily announcements (R4), IDEC calculations and (R5) and temporary trading of IDECs.
R18	Communicate progress of the non-urban metering rollout and how it will affect resumption of flows events	Complete	<p>The non-urban metering rules were introduced in the Barwon-Darling in early 2019. Surface water users in the Barwon-Darling with pumps 500 mm or larger had until 1 December 2020 to have appropriate meters installed, while those with smaller pumps had until 1 December 2021. In December 2021, NRAR reported Barwon-Darling and Western region compliance rates of 86%, up from 48% in July 2021.</p> <p>Metering and telemetry installed under the rules will generate extraction data at individual pump sites. The data will enable improved flow forecasting and compliance monitoring, and therefore improve the implementation of the resumption of flows rule and active management in the Barwon-Darling.</p>
R19	Barwon-Darling WSP changes (DPE-Water)	In progress	Seven water sharing plan changes were proposed under R19. These are listed (a) to (g) below.
(a)	Insufficient flow targets and accounting for volume immediately before resumption of flows rule is triggered	In progress	The resumption of flows rule is not designed to achieve connectivity with the Lower Darling, rather providing for critical needs up to Wilcannia. Proposed Barwon-Darling WSP changes clarify that the 30 GL past Bourke trigger is cumulative during the 90-day period, and that the 90-day trigger can be retriggered within a restriction event.
(b)	Whether HEW contributes to relaxation of resumption of flows rule	Addressed - no new action required	HEW will continue to contribute to the relaxation of the resumption of flows restrictions and will always be protected from extraction, as occurred during the January 2021 restrictions.

ID	Recommendation (paraphrased)	Status	Description of actions
(c)	Definition of a “flow forecast” and “official notification”, and unrealised relaxation flows	Complete	Over-estimated announcements, compared to realised flow are unlikely due to the conservative method used to forecast. Further information on forecasting will be communicated to stakeholders as part of R2 and R14. Definitions for “flow forecast” and “official notification” are currently being drafted and will be included in the revised Barwon-Darling procedures manual.
(d)	Integration with other connectivity flow targets	Addressed - no new action required	As stated in (a), the resumption of flows rule is not designed to achieve connectivity. Several other departmental initiatives aim to improve northern Basin connectivity (e.g. Western Regional Water Strategy).
(e)	Equity of access along Barwon-Darling system	Addressed - no new action required	The resumption of flows rule is triggered based on flows in each river section and was not designed to provide equal access across sections. It is not possible to provide flows in upstream sections if there is only flow in a downstream section.
(f)	Recognise the need for water quality targets with flow rules	Addressed - no new action required	The department supports this recommendation; however, effective water quality targets will need to be supported by a substantial investment in a continuous monitoring network. A water quality management plan is currently underway to manage water quality events, rather than through water sharing plans.
(g)	Protecting active environmental water inflows to Menindee Lakes	Addressed - no new action required	Menindee Lakes are not part of Barwon-Darling WSP. Any protection of active environmental water needs to be in the Murray & Lower Darling WSP

Table 2. Phase 2 recommendations

ID	Recommendation (paraphrased)	Status	Description of actions
R1	Install new meters to fill monitoring gaps (Water NSW & DPE-Water)	In progress	The work is captured by the Hydrometric Improvement Plan project to fill gaps in the real-time or near-real-time flow measurement network within the Barwon-Darling and other water sources.
R2	Improve flow forecasting (WaterNSW)	In progress	<p>The actions for R2 align with some actions that have been progressed for recommendation 8 from the Independent Panel Assessment of the Management of the 2020 Northern Basin First Flush Event, including the addition of tributaries to the model improvements.</p> <p>The non-urban metering rollout will also improve flow forecasting because it will generate more data on extraction locations and volumes.</p>
R9	Publish operational documents in the procedures manual (WaterNSW & DPE-Water)	Not started	
R12	Publish resumption of flows compliance outcomes (NRAR)	Not started	NRAR's investigations are still open.
R14	Co-develop stakeholder education program - flow modelling (WaterNSW)	In progress	WaterNSW has begun working with stakeholders (via ROSCCo meetings) to share information about flow modelling.
R15	Co-develop stakeholder education program – new rules (DPE-Water)	In progress	<p>A communications procedure to guide communications during an event is completed. It outlines the roles and responsibilities for community and stakeholder communications.</p> <p>A separate communications/education strategy is being drafted which identifies target audiences and proposes communications actions that will improve understanding of the rules and real time application of the rules. The draft plan will be tested with the community to seek feedback and ideas on actions. Once finalised, actions such as webinars, updated web pages and/or videos will be delivered.</p>
R16	First Nations engagement on the RoF rules and active management (WaterNSW & DPE-Water)	In progress	Work is underway to establish what information needs to be communicated and how it can be presented in a culturally-appropriate way.
R17	Form Barwon-Darling EWAG (DPE-Water & DPE-EHG)	In progress	DPE-EGH have applied to the Public Service Commissioner for approval to form the committee, which can take more than six months.

Further information

A copy of the Claydon Review (i.e. the *Independent Assessment of the Initial Implementation of the Resumption of Flows Rule, IDECs and Active Management in the Barwon-Darling: 01 December 2020 to 31 March 2021*) is available on the [Environmental Water Hub](#).