



Australian Government



# Protection of environmental water in the QLD Warrego

Warrego–Paroo–Nebine Water Resource  
Plan Compliance Audit

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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, the Northern Basin Aboriginal 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.

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# Executive Summary

Water resource plans are an integral part of implementing the *Basin Plan 2012* (Basin Plan), setting out the rules for how water is used at a local or catchment level. The Warrego–Paroo–Nebine (WPN) Water Resource Plan (WRP) was accredited in 2016, making it the first WRP in the Murray–Darling Basin to be accredited. Given that the WPN WRP has been in operation for three years, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) considered it was timely to undertake an audit to determine whether it is operating as intended.

This is the first WRP audit the MDBA has undertaken, and aligns with the MDBA's [2020/21 Compliance Priorities](#) which include WRP compliance and the protection of environmental water.

For this audit, the focus was on the mechanisms used by the Queensland (QLD) *Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water* (DRDMW) (formerly Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) to regulate water take and protect environmental water in the Warrego River, consistent with WPN WRP requirements. The objective of the audit was to assess compliance with the provisions of the WPN WRP relating to section 10.09 of the Basin Plan, which effectively requires WRPs to identify and protect planned environmental water.

With the flow of water in the Warrego River (the Warrego) being ephemeral (periods of low or no flow can last months, even years), water take by water allocations with flow conditions in the Warrego is controlled through the use of ‘announced periods’ of water harvesting. These announced periods specifically dictate when water allocation holders are permitted to extract water in accordance with their individual water allocation conditions (for example, passing flow conditions and volumetric limits). The primary mechanisms used to protect environmental water in the Warrego, as described in the WPN WRP and governed by the *Warrego, Paroo, Bulloo and Nebine Resource Operations Plan* (ROP), are:

- Flow conditions that provide for passing flows to be met and maintained at the point of take or at a departmental gauging station (the reference point); and
- the additional imposition of an embargo period that requires a period of 36 hours to elapse once the peak flow has passed, or a specified volume to have passed the reference point before an ‘announced period’ can commence. This rule applies whenever there has been a period of 6 months or more of flows less than 1,000 ML per day at the reference point.

There are a total of 19 separate water allocations in the Warrego. Of these, 7 are deemed ‘inactive’ (i.e. either there is no infrastructure to extract water, or pre-existing infrastructure has been de-commissioned or is not utilised). Of the remaining 12, 5 are owned by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO), and 7 are owned by private landholders.

Given the small number of allocations, an announced period of water harvesting is specifically determined for each allocation. Each active water allocation holder (including the CEWO) is sent a ‘*Water Harvesting Notice*’ (see example at **Appendix A**) which informs them of the start and end date/time of their announced period (depending on the anticipated length of the period).

This audit used the flow event that took place in the Warrego in February to April 2020 to assess whether:

- DRDMW processes for determining announced periods for water harvesting were made in accordance with the rules governing the calculation of announced periods; and
- DRDMW monitoring and compliance procedures were sufficient to ensure that water users are compliant with their water allocation conditions.

## Conclusion

The audit confirmed that announced periods of water harvesting for the flow event in the Warrego from February to April 2020 were determined in accordance with the rules set out in the ROP. Given that prior to this flow event it had been more than 6 months since a passing flow greater than 1,000 ML had occurred in the Warrego, the rule that 36 hours must pass after the peak flow before an announced period can commence was in effect, and announced periods were determined in compliance with this requirement.

Audit testing identified that DRDMW have a thorough and well documented procedure to guide staff in calculating these announced periods, which saw the 36-hour protected period imposed for all users.

There were however some instances identified where water allocation holders did not comply with their obligations. The most significant of these was a water allocation holder who was found to have exceeded their daily extraction limit during the announced period. This particular instance of non-compliance highlighted that DRDMW have no effective mechanism in place to monitor and enforce compliance with daily extraction limits, or more generally, to monitor extraction during a flow event.

In addition, there were instances identified where water allocation holders reported faulty meters following the cessation of their water extraction. Whilst these occurrences do not represent a breach of the WPN WRP or QLD legislation (water allocation holders are permitted to continue water extraction for up to 60 days after a meter fault is identified), it did show that the data collected from water allocation holders when meters break down is not sufficient to accurately estimate water extracted while the meter is not operating.

Having systems and processes in place to accurately monitor and enforce water allocation conditions is fundamental to effective compliance in the Basin. These systems, coupled with an effective program of audit, will increase community confidence that the outcomes of the Basin Plan are being met.

Accordingly, this audit has made recommendations to achieve more effective monitoring of water allocation holder compliance, as well as improve the accuracy of water take data collected, including when extraction occurs through a faulty meter. Implementing these recommendations would substantially improve the integrity of water take data and provide greater assurance to the community around water compliance in this WRP area.

# Background

## Water Resource Plans

WRPs are an essential feature of the Basin Plan. Each WRP sets out the rules for how water is used at a local or catchment level, including putting in place limits on how much water can be taken from the system; how much water will be made available to the environment; and how water quality standards can be met. Basin state governments are responsible for complying with WRPs and accounting for water taken from the river system.

Section 10.09(1) of the Basin Plan requires that a “*water resource plan must identify the planned environmental water in the water resource plan area and associated rules and arrangements relating to that water*”. Planned environmental water in the WPN WRP area is protected by the use of ‘announced periods’ of water harvesting (explained in more detail below), which aims to limit the extraction by water allocation holders to specifically determined dates and times. Provisions in the *Water Act 2000* (Qld) then create offences for water allocation holders who do not comply with their water allocation conditions, which include annual and daily volumetric limits.

## Warrego River

The Warrego River is located in the top north-west of the Murray–Darling Basin, directly east of the Paroo River catchment. The river source is located in the Carnarvon Range (see map at **Appendix B**). The Warrego catchment takes in (or closely borders) the traditional lands of the Bidjara, Gwamu/Kooma, Gunggari/Kungari, Kunja, Mandandanji, Mardigan and Murrawarri nations.

Within the WPN WRP area, the Warrego River has the most significant level of take<sup>1</sup> and connection to the rest of the Basin, and the WPN WRP contains rules to protect environmental water in the Warrego during major flow events. This audit is therefore focused on the Warrego River.

Most of the Warrego catchment (80%) is located within Queensland (the remainder in New South Wales). Its rivers flow through flat semi-arid plains that are sparsely populated and extensive grazing is the predominant land use. Land in this region is chiefly used for dryland cattle and sheep grazing, with about 2,200 ha of irrigated cotton and horticulture. Rainfall and run-off are highly variable and streamflow mostly occurs as major but infrequent floods.

The Warrego has several major tributaries in its upper reaches, which include the Nive, Langlo and Ward rivers. South of Cunnamulla the river becomes a complex distributary system with flows leaving the river via creeks and anabranches. The Warrego River is ephemeral, and flows vary with the season and rainfall. When not flowing, the Warrego River becomes a chain of permanent waterholes providing critical refuge for fish and waterbirds populations. In wet years, waters of the

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<sup>1</sup>Licensed take from the Warrego is 30GL/yr on average compared with 0.1GL/yr in the Paroo and 0.3GL/yr in the Nebine (<https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/DNRM-2016f-water-accounting-methods-report-Nov2016.pdf>)

Warrego River system may flow through the Cuttaburra Creek to the lower reaches of the Paroo River.

The Warrego River generally ends in large swamps and storages near Louth in NSW, just below Toorale National Park. The Commonwealth purchased Toorale Station water allocations (around 17.8 gigalitres (GL)) in 2008, to increase the volume of water from the Warrego that flows out of Toorale into the Darling River during floods. These holdings, combined with a further 40 GL of entitlements either purchased by the Commonwealth or gifted to the Commonwealth by the Queensland Government are managed by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH).

The Warrego catchment is home to relatively few people — about 0.3% of the population of the Murray–Darling Basin. The catchment is sparsely populated with most people living in the small towns of Charleville and Cunnamulla, or smaller settlements such as Augathella, Morven, Wyandra and Enngonia.

The income of the population is derived directly from grazing of beef cattle and sheep for wool production, or associated employment; and retail and services to the local population. There are very few irrigated crops, with a small amount of cotton and horticultural crops.

## Water for the environment in the WRP area

There are more than 300,000 ha of wetlands in the Warrego catchment including saline lakes, lignum swamps, flood channels, freshwater lakes, claypans and semi-permanent water holes. Twelve wetlands are considered of national significance including the Yantabulla Swamp and the Warrego River waterholes.

Planned environmental water in the WPN WRP area is identified as the remaining share of the water resource that is not in the consumptive water share (i.e. permitted to be taken under the *Water Act 2000* (Qld)). The CEWH holds five separate water allocations in the Warrego. The long term average yield from these allocations is approximately 20 GL<sup>2</sup>.

A significant outcome of environmental water in this region is that it can increase the flows passing through the Warrego system, and subsequently increase connectivity between the Warrego and Darling rivers. According to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office, as a result of the flow event in early 2020, 16.2 GL of Commonwealth Environmental Water (CEW) was activated (in NSW) and added important flows into the Darling from the event<sup>3</sup>.

## Announced periods of water harvesting

The primary rule that water allocations with flow conditions are subject to in the Warrego is that water can only be taken during a formally announced period of water harvesting. These announced periods are determined by DRDMW for each individual water allocation. The announced periods enable DRDMW to protect first flush flows by imposing a 36-hour embargo period after peak flow

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/about/water-holdings>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/publications/northern-basin-2019-20-summary>

has passed. This rule applies whenever there has been a period of 6 months or more of low flow (less than 1,000 ML per day) in the river leading up to the flow event.

A notification is sent to each water allocation holder to advise them of the dates and times of their announced period, during which they are permitted to extract water in accordance with their individual water allocation conditions (for example, maximum rate and volumetric limits).

These announced periods, in combination with offence provisions contained in the *Water Act 2000* (Qld) concerning unauthorised water take, are the mechanisms used by QLD to identify and protect environmental flows in the Warrego, and thus give effect to the section 10.09 requirements of the Basin Plan in the WPN WRP.

## 2020 Flow event

Heavy rainfall in the Warrego catchment in early 2020 resulted in a significant flow event in the Warrego River from February to April, with a total volume of 1,085 GL passing the Cunnamulla gauging station over the period from mid-February to mid-April 2020<sup>4</sup>. DRDMW estimates that of the 39.5 GL of water available to be extracted by water allocation holders or accounted for by the CEWH (in accordance with announced periods), 13.9 GL was extracted by water allocation holders, and 16.1 GL accounted for by the CEWH as CEW.

At the time of this flow event, it had been more than six months since a passing flow of more than 1000 ML had occurred at the specified flow reference point for all water allocations. As such, in accordance with the rules set out in the ROP, the announced period of water harvesting was delayed by 36 hours after the peak flow had passed. According to DRDMW, this 36 hour embargo resulted in a total volume of 2.5 GL (approx.) of planned environmental water that was left in the river to flow downstream.<sup>5</sup>

The first water harvesting announcement for this flow event was made on 19 February 2020. The announced periods ranged in duration from 5.5 days to 40.75 days depending on the flow conditions for the individual water allocation. The final date for water harvesting for this flow event was on 2 April 2020.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/e-water-priorities-2020-21.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [DNRME Warrego, Paroo, Nebine Water Plan Area: Annual Environmental Watering Priorities 2020-21](#)

# Audit approach

## Audit objective and scope

Section 10.09(1) of the Basin Plan requires states to identify the planned environmental water in the area, and the rules and arrangements associated with that water. As a result, the WPN WRP contains provisions that create and protect planned environmental water, including the use of announced periods to manage access to provide additional assurance that first flush flows and passing flows are protected.

The objective of this audit was to assess DRDMW's compliance with the WPN WRP obligations to protect planned environmental water through the use and enforcement of announced periods of water harvesting. The requirements to ensure water is only taken in accordance with announced periods is linked to:

- section 808 of the *Water Act 2000* (Qld), which makes it an offence to take or supply water unless authorised to do so under that Act; and
- section 812 of the *Water Act 2000* (Qld), which creates an offence for a person to contravene the conditions (including the volumetric limits) of their entitlement.

The scope of this audit included reviewing the processes DRDMW have in place to implement and ensure compliance with the rules designed to authorise water take and protect environmental water in the WPN WRP. This included reviewing:

- The process for determining an announced period during which water is permitted to be extracted.
- Measuring and monitoring compliance strategies and activities undertaken for announced periods.
- Water allocation holder meter data collection and data transfer during an announced period.

## Audit methodology

Audit testing consisted of:

- Reviewing DRDMW's process for determining an announced period in accordance with the rules set out in the ROP (per section 30 of the ROP).
- Reviewing DRDMW's process for collecting water take data during an announced period (per section 32 of the ROP).
- Reviewing the compliance monitoring activities for announced periods (*Water Act 2000* (Qld) s.808 & 812), including any issues identified and compliance or enforcement actions undertaken.

# Findings and recommendations

## Background

Section 10.09 of the Basin Plan provides that a “*water resource plan must identify the planned environmental water in the water resource plan area and associated rules and arrangements relating to that water*”. To meet this requirement, the WPN WRP identifies that:

*“Planned environmental water is protected by section 808 of the Water Act 2000 (Qld), which makes it an offence to take or supply water unless authorised to do so under the Act. Section 812 of the Water Act 2000 (Qld) creates an offence for a person to contravene the conditions (including the volumetric limits) of their entitlement.”*

In order to assess water allocation holder compliance with their water allocations, DRDMW collects meter readings from each water user following the end of a flow event. To do this, DRDMW issues water allocation holders with a manual form that requires them to record the start (date/time) and end (date/time) of water extraction, with corresponding meter readings. The water allocation holder is then required (as stipulated in the ROP) to transfer this information to DRDMW within 2 business days following the end of the announced period.

Once DRDMW receives the meter reading sheets from water users, the information is transferred to an internal spreadsheet where it is analysed to assess compliance with water allocation conditions such as volumetric limits.

## Audit Findings

### 1. Inadequate water allocation holder reporting requirements

From the meter reading sheets supplied to the MDBA by DRDMW for testing, it was identified that there was one water allocation holder who had significantly exceeded their maximum daily extraction limit (as stipulated as a condition of their water allocation).

From the data collected on the meter readings sheet, it was impossible to determine how many of those days the water allocation holder in question had exceeded their daily extraction limit, as meter readings are only required to be recorded at the beginning and end of water extraction. The only way to identify that the daily extraction limit had been exceeded was to calculate an average daily rate of extraction over the entire period.

This issue was raised with DRDMW following the conclusion of audit testing. DRDMW confirmed there is no mechanism that allows for accurate monitoring of daily extraction limits. While daily extraction limits are in place to protect water for all users, there is no requirement for water allocation holders to measure or report on daily extraction, which in turn means there is no mechanism for DRDMW to assess compliance with this water allocation condition on a day to day basis.

In addition, self-reporting undermines the integrity of the system as it relies on the accuracy of the information provided by the water allocation holder. There is no requirement for independent verification or supporting evidence of meter readings. As the MDBA has noted in audits elsewhere<sup>6</sup>, a self-reporting system such as this is inherently at risk of misuse.

Pattern approved and AS4747 compliant meters installed with telemetry are the best response to the risk. In the absence of telemetered meters, the risk would be somewhat mitigated through use of accurate meters fitted with data loggers that can capture the times and dates of pumping. These readings could then be downloaded by the water allocation holder and transferred to DRDMW. The MDBA notes that the *DNRME Queensland interim water meter standard for non-urban metering (August 2019)* states that “The Department can require data loggers to be fitted to any meter to facilitate more efficient meter reads.”

## 2. Water allocation holder compliance with announced periods of water harvesting

The audit identified that DRDMW have a thorough internal process to guide staff when determining announced periods of water harvesting, to ensure that the requirements of the ROP (and therefore the WPN WRP) are met. Importantly, this includes the incorporation of the 36-hour window once peak flow has passed before an announced period commences, which is the one of the key mechanisms to protect environmental flows.

However, in terms of determining if these announced periods are adhered to, there is a complete reliance on water allocation holders to self-report the dates and times they extracted water during an announced period. This represents an inherent weakness in the ability of DRDMW to monitor and enforce user compliance with announced periods of water harvesting, and thus their ability to protect environmental flows from unauthorised extraction.

As mentioned above, meters fitted with telemetry are the most effective way of monitoring water extraction. As Queensland are yet to finalise their non-urban metering policy and determine their approach to telemetry, there is no requirement for water allocation holders in the Warrego to have meters with telemetry installed.

In its September 2019 consultation paper titled ‘*Proposals for strengthening non-urban water measurement*’<sup>7</sup>, DRDMW highlighted the benefits of meters fitted with telemetry (our emphasis):

*“Many water entitlements have timing triggers and pumping or water level thresholds that apply to the taking of water. These timing triggers and thresholds underpin the equitable sharing of available water among entitlement holders on a real-time basis and also serve to protect water for the environment and other water users. **Situations like these make the availability of real-time information through telemetry a valuable and important way to give entitlement holders and the***

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/audit-assurance>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/land-water/initiatives/rural-water-futures/projects/rural-water-measurement-proposals>

**community confidence that water is being shared fairly and environmental outcomes are being achieved.**

*It's important that water entitlement holders are able to demonstrate that they're meeting their obligations. Telemetry provides a way to do this in a timely, efficient and transparent manner. **Access to real-time data would also allow the department to more effectively hold entitlement holders that unfairly take water outside of their entitlements to account.** The department is assessing transmission network options for telemetered data to ensure reliable coverage is available."*

In the absence of meters fitted with telemetry, other options are available to increase regulatory confidence that rules are being followed. For example, satellite imagery analysis is a tool that may be used to assist in monitoring the movement, storage and use of water. It is the understanding of the MDBA that whilst satellite imagery analysis is sometimes used during the DRDMW post-event reconciliation process where non-compliance with volumetric limits is suspected, it is not used during an event to detect possible non-compliance with announced periods.

### 3. Reporting take when meters are inoperable

This audit identified that two active water allocation holders experienced faulty meters at some point during this flow event. In each case, it was unclear when the faulty meters were first identified, yet water extraction continued throughout the announced period. DRDMW have developed a specific form for this purpose (see the *DRDMW Water Use Assessment Report* at **Appendix C**), however it appears that using this form is not a requirement for water allocation holders in the Warrego. The *Water Use Assessment Report* asks the licence holder to record both the operating dates/times of pumps, as well as an electricity meter reading. This information can then be used, in the absence of water meter readings, to determine with limited accuracy, how much water was extracted.

A water allocation holder that continues to pump while meters are inoperable should be subject to higher levels of scrutiny to ensure that further compliance risks are mitigated.

# Recommendations

## Recommendation no. 1

DRDMW should implement a system that provides effective monitoring of daily extraction limits for the purpose of compliance and enforcement.

There are a number of potential options for achieving this outcome. Meters fitted with telemetry is likely to be an effective way of achieving this. Requiring licence holders to report on extraction for each 24 hour period may also provide more effective oversight over this licence condition, particularly if the data reported was in the form of a data log file.

### **DRDMW Response:**

DRDMW will engage with water allocation holders regarding implementing a practice to request start, finish, and daily meter readings from active water allocation holders in the Warrego. These readings would be reconciled with entitlements during the event.

Satellite imagery (Planet) is used to identify potential non-compliance and loggers (where fitted) can be used as a further compliance check as necessary.

DRDMW is considering the use of telemetry in developing the non-urban water metering policy with telemetry trials underway to inform the development of the policy.

DRDMW also have a program of field audits that includes validation of meter reads in targeted areas.

## Recommendation no. 2

DRDMW should consider enhancing their self-reporting system by implementing a system that provides effective monitoring of licence holder compliance with announced periods of water harvesting, so that DRDMW can validate when licence holders commence and cease extraction.

There are a number of potential options for achieving this outcome. Meters fitted with telemetry is likely to be an effective way of achieving this. The use of satellite imagery analysis in combination with meters fitted with data loggers would also provide an effective solution.

### **DRDMW Response:**

See response to Recommendation 1.

Where increases in water level in a storage can be determined by the extent of coverage of the base of the storage, Satellite imagery (Planet) may provide an indication of whether diversions into storage have commenced in accordance with announcements.

DRDMW will include this assessment in review of satellite imagery during and following events to monitor compliance with announced periods.

## Recommendation no. 3

DRDMW should ensure that appropriate measurement and reporting of water extraction occurs when meters are inoperable.

One way this could potentially be achieved is by implementing a mandatory requirement for active licence holders to complete the *'Water Use Assessment Report'* for any extraction that occurs through a faulty meter, until such time as the meter has been repaired or replaced and a validation certificate has been provided to DRDMW.

### **DRDMW Response:**

DRDMW will engage with metered entitlement holders to complete the *'Water Use Assessment Report'* for all periods where meters are reported as faulty.

# Appendix A: Water Harvesting Notification



Department of  
Natural Resources, Mines and Energy

## Water Harvesting Notification

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<b>To:</b>	The Registered Water Allocation Holder	<b>Via Fax/Email:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Subject:</b>	Upper Warrego Water Management Area - Water Harvesting Announced Period		
<b>Reference:</b>	Water Year 2019/2020 Flow Event No. 2	<b>Announced Period No. 1</b>	<b>Notification No. 1</b>
<b>From:</b>	Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy		
<b>Phone:</b>	0746253299	<b>Fax:</b>	0746253892
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Waterservices.StGeorge@dnrme.qld.gov.au">Waterservices.StGeorge@dnrme.qld.gov.au</a>		
<b>Date of Notification:</b>	Monday 16 March 2020	<b>Page:</b>	1 of 1

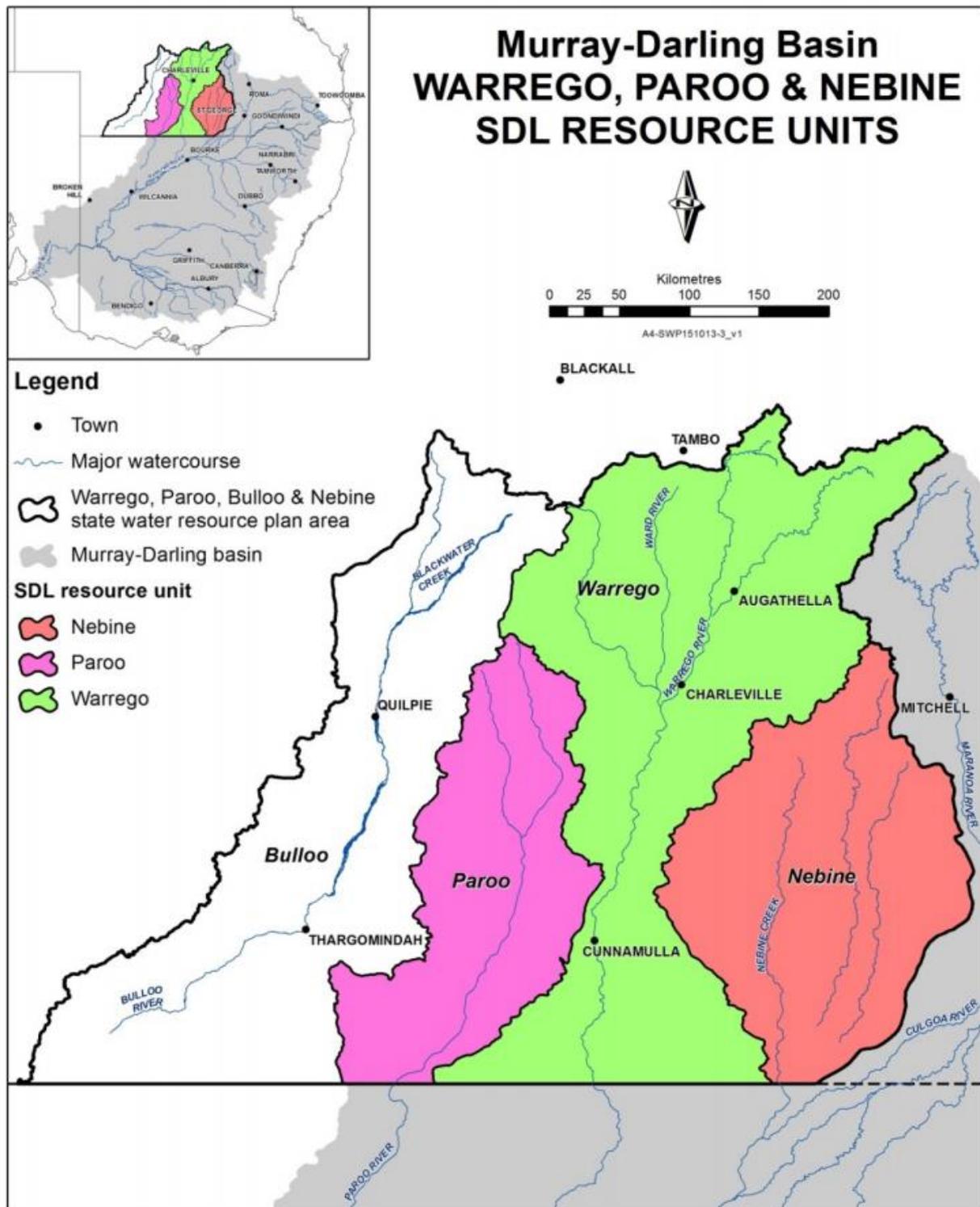
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Dear Sir/Madam,

This notification is given to water allocation holders in the **Upper Warrego** Water Management Area in accordance with the water sharing rules under section 30 of the Warrego, Paroo, Bulloo and Nebine resource operations plan.

- a) This announced period for water harvesting may
- commence from **6:00 pm Saturday 7 March 2020** and
  - ceases from **6:00 am Thursday 12 March 2020**
- b) Water harvesting during this announced period relates to water allocation/s –
- 86 on Crown Plan AP13211**
- c) Water may be taken during this announced period up to the maximum rate of take stated on the water allocation if the volumetric limit stated on the water allocation has not been exceeded during the current water year.

# Appendix B: Map of the WRP area

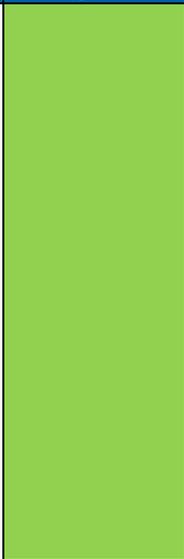
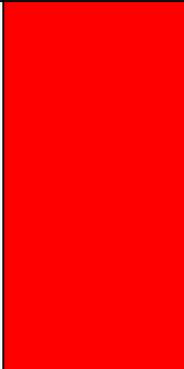




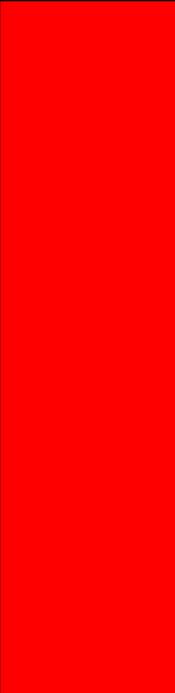
# Appendix D: Test Results

The table below summarises the audit testing performed, and results identified for each of the scope items.

Audit scope item	QLD legislative provision:	Compliance rating	Details of testing, including results
<p><b>Determining water harvesting announced periods</b></p>	<p><b>ROP s.30 (3):</b></p> <p><i>The chief executive will determine the start and end of an announced period having regard to the following:</i></p> <p><i>(a) if more than six months has passed since a passing flow greater than 1,000 megalitres per day has occurred at the flow reference point, an announced period is where:</i></p> <p><i>(i) the passing flow related to the flow reference point is greater than the rate specified in the flow conditions on the water allocation; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) 36 hours has lapsed since the flow peak has passed; or</i></p> <p><i>(iii) the passing flow related to the flow reference point has exceeded the rate specified in the special conditions on the water allocation.</i></p>	<p style="background-color: #92d050;"></p>	<p>Water harvesting announcement notices were obtained for each active user during this flow event.</p> <p>Given that in the Warrego each allocation holder is sent water harvesting notices with specific dates and times for their extraction period, and also given the low number of active users in the catchment, each notice (with the exception of notices issued to the CEWO as they do not extract water) was analysed to determine if the announced periods had been calculated in accordance with the rules set out in the ROP.</p> <p>Audit testing concluded that each announced period was determined in accordance with the rules.</p>

Audit scope item	QLD legislative provision:	Compliance rating	Details of testing, including results
<b>Measuring and monitoring compliance</b>	<b>QLD Water Act 2000; s808A:</b>  <i>(1) “The holder of a water entitlement must not, in a period, take a volume of water more than the volume of water allowed to be taken under the water entitlement in the period.”</i>		<p>To enable testing against these criteria, DRDMW provided MDBA with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of meter read forms for each active user</li> <li>• A spreadsheet detailing the water allocation conditions, including volumetric limits, for each user (active and non-active).</li> </ul> <p>Testing involved cross referencing the information recorded on the meter read forms against the conditions on the water allocation of the relevant allocation holder.</p> <p>There were no instances identified of allocation holders exceeding their annual volumetric limit (i.e. how much water they are permitted to extract in a given year).</p>
	<i>(2) “The holder of a water entitlement must not take water at a rate more than the rate at which water is allowed to be taken under the entitlement.”</i>		

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/home/about-us/regulatory-role>

Audit scope item	QLD legislative provision:	Compliance rating	Details of testing, including results
<b>Allocation holder data collection and transfer</b>	<p><b>ROP Chp 3; Part 1; s. 32:</b></p> <p>(1) The water allocation holder or any assignee must record meter readings, time and date –</p> <p>(a) at the start of taking water; and</p> <p>(b) (b) at the end of taking water.</p> <p>(2) The water allocation holder or any assignee must transfer the data recorded under subsection (1) to the chief executive –</p> <p>(a) within two business days following the event for water taken under a water allocation with flow conditions</p>		<p>As outlined above, copies of meter reading forms were supplied to MDBA.</p> <p>There was one instance identified of an allocation holder who failed to provide their meter readings as per the requirements of the ROP. Following this, DRDMW officers contacted the allocation holder to request the readings. Pump hours were subsequently supplied as the meters on these works did not operate correctly during the announced period.</p> <p>In accordance with their compliance policy, DRDMW advised the MDBA they are following up with this allocation holder to ensure that functional meters are installed and to remind them of their obligations to provide meter readings within two business days following the end of an announced period. This approach seems consistent with the DRDMW risk-based approach to enforcement, where they seek to educate and inform water allocation holders of their obligations in the first instance.</p>

### Compliance Ratings

 The sample tested did not identify any instances of non-compliance

 The sample tested identified instances of non-compliance\*

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**Office locations**

Adelaide  
Albury–Wodonga  
Canberra  
Goondiwindi  
Griffith  
Mildura  
Murray Bridge  
Toowoomba

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