



The National Water Account

Under the *Commonwealth Water Act (2007)*, the Bureau of Meteorology is responsible for compiling and delivering comprehensive water information across Australia. This includes publishing an annual National Water Account.

As the competition for water resources increases, it is more important than ever to fully account for how water is shared between the economy, critical human needs and the environment.

The National Water Account provides a detailed insight into the management of Australia's water resources at the national and regional scale, highlighting knowledge and identifying information gaps. It supports the National Water Initiative, disclosing the total water resource, the volume of water available for abstraction, the rights to abstract water, and the actual abstraction of water for economic, social, cultural and environmental benefit across Australia.

The National Water Account is produced for a water year from 1 July to 30 June. It focuses on hydrologically defined regions of national significance and is:

- compiled from the best available data
- produced and reviewed using standardised processes
- guided by Australian Water Accounting Standards.

The National Water Account complements the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Water Account, Australia*, which provides information on the supply and use of water within the Australian economy.

Together these accounts inform water resources planning, water market activity, investment and environmental management decisions, as well as research and discussion within governments and the community to improve Australia's water information and knowledge.

The Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) works closely with State and Territory water agencies, as well as other Australian Government agencies and peak water industry bodies, to produce the National Water Account.

Advancing water information

The National Water Account provides information that has previously been difficult to access or unavailable to general users in a standardised form. It highlights gaps and inconsistencies in data and knowledge, allowing improvements to be made to our national water information base.

The information presented in the National Water Account is:

- nationally consistent and comparable
- publicly available
- comprehensive
- useful to governments, the water sector, industry and the general community
- transparent about the source and quality of the data.

The National Water Account provides a national picture of water resources management for the past year. It answers the following questions for each water reporting region:

- What were the changes in water inflows, outflows and storages?
- What water access entitlements existed?
- What water management plans applied to govern water access?
- How much water was allocated for use during the reporting period?
- How much of the total water entitlement was traded?
- How much water was abstracted for use?
- How much water was made available to the environment?

The National Water Account makes a significant contribution to the management of Australia's water resources by informing decision making. The National Water Account's guiding principle of transparency, both in process and reporting, aims to build confidence in and understanding about the information published on volumes of water traded, extracted for use and recovered and managed for economic, public and environmental purposes.

The Bureau's National Water Account contains standardised information about the management of Australia's water resources.





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National Water Account 2011

The National Water Account 2011 (the 2011 Account) reports on the 2010–11 water year and includes the 2009–10 comparison year. The 2011 Account reports on the same regions as the 2010 Account. The water accounting regions for 2010 and 2011 are:

- Adelaide
- Canberra
- Melbourne
- Murray–Darling Basin
- Ord
- Perth
- South East Queensland
- Sydney.

The compilation of the reports for these regions is guided by the *Exposure Draft of Australian Water Accounting Standard 1*, developed by the Water Accounting Standards Board and available at: www.bom.gov.au/water. The standard prescribes the components of a water accounting report along with definitions, recognition criteria, quantification attributes, units of account and disclosure requirements.

Consultation

The Bureau consulted and collaborated with key water agencies and other stakeholders to establish the National Water Account. Partnerships were established with over 30 water agencies across Australia to produce the National Water Account 2011. Contributions were provided by a number of other organisations.

The National Water Account Committee, chaired by the Bureau, advised the Bureau throughout the production of the 2010 and 2011 Accounts. The Committee's membership includes representatives from each State and Territory's lead water agency, urban and rural peak industry bodies and Australian Government agencies.

The Bureau will continue to seek comment from a wide range of users of the product in order to tailor and enhance its value to water managers and policy makers, and to improve its future usefulness.

Looking to the future

Water accounting is a new concept in water resources management, and Australia is leading the world in this discipline. There will be considerable evolution of the National Water Account over time.

The accuracy of the National Water Account will improve as estimation and measurement techniques, and monitoring and reporting systems develop and the Bureau's analytical capacity increases. End user feedback is vital for ongoing development and refinement. All comments and suggestions on the National Water Account are welcome and can be sent to nwa@bom.gov.au.

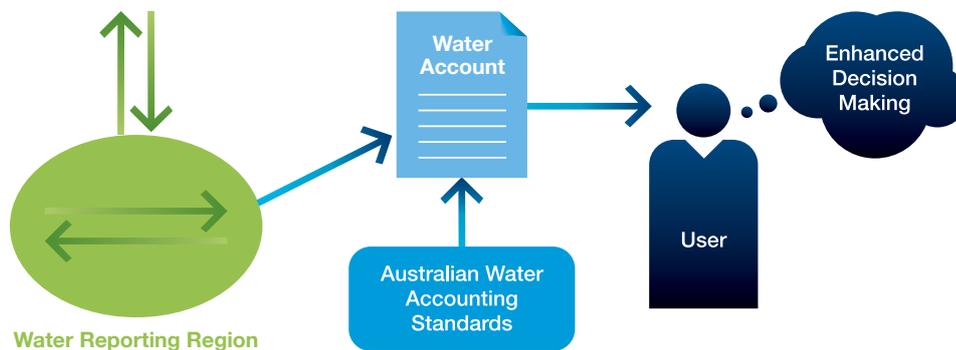


Figure 1. Delivery of a water account to a user

For further information

To access the National Water Account and for further information about the Bureau's water information role, visit our [website](#). [Subscribe](#) to our EnGauge newsletter to receive regular climate and water updates.

