



WATER RESOURCE PLAN

The purpose of a water resource plan is to meet the ACT's commitment to better management of the Murray-Darlin Basin.

The ACT Water Resource Plan sets out how the ACT is managing its surface water and groundwater in order to meet its requirements under the Australian Government's Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

MANAGING ACT'S SURFACE WATER AND GROUNDWATER

The plan comprises an index of the requirements the ACT must meet and how they are met, and a longer explanatory document.

The explanatory document describes the plan in detail. It sets out the state of water resource management of the ACT and region and outlines a coordinated approach to the various components of water resource management. It gives the policy and context that determines water planning in the ACT, including the background, historical, legislative, hydrological, water quality and ecological contexts.

It will cover a period of ten years from the date of accreditation, with a five-year review developed with key stakeholders.



CONSULTATION

The ACT Government consulted stakeholder groups to inform the development of the draft plan, including local Aboriginal organisations, Icon Water, ACT water experts and ACT Government water groups.

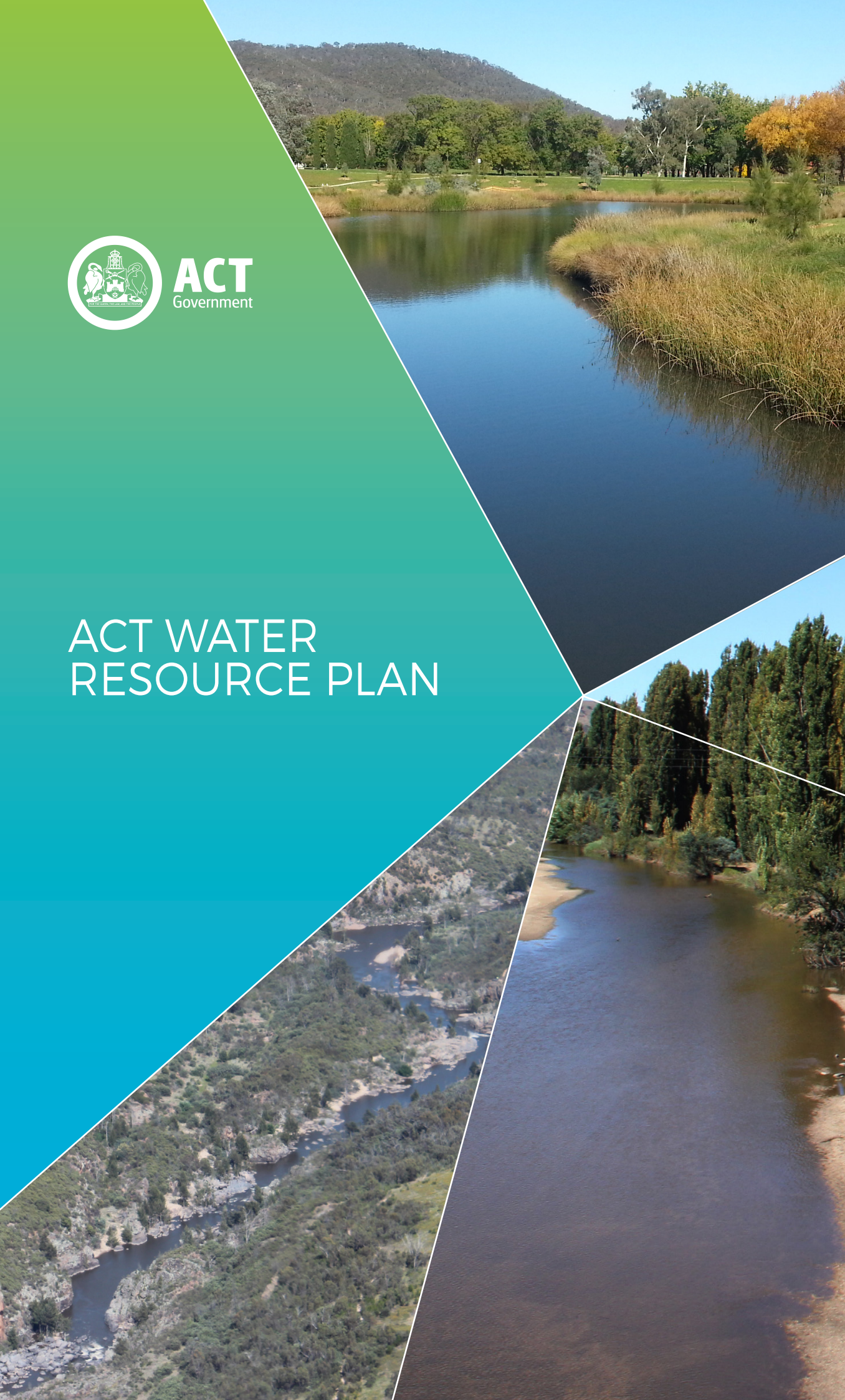
The draft plan was released for public comment. Feedback was incorporated into the final plan for ACT Government endorsement and subsequent lodged with the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and then to the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources for accreditation.

The Water Resource Plan complements other ACT water plans and strategies.

The Murray–Darling Basin



ACT WATER RESOURCE PLAN





THE MAIN COMPONENTS

The main components of the plan are:

- identification of ACT water resources
- management of the ACT’s surface water and groundwater in accordance with the sustainable diversion limits set for the ACT.
 - » sustainable diversion limits refer to the sustainable volume of water that can be taken from the Basin river system for town water supply, agriculture and other human uses while ensuring there is enough for a healthy river.
 - » In the ACT the sustainable diversion limits are 42.7 gigalitres for surface water and 3.16 gigalitres for groundwater. Also to be included is 11 gigalitres for commercial plantations and 1 gigalitre for take by runoff from farm dams.
- a water quality and salinity plan management
- risk assessment process
- identification and consideration of Indigenous water values and uses
- environmental watering requirements
- planning for extreme events such as dry periods.

THE MAIN OUTCOMES

The main outcomes of the plan are:

- to establish a framework to manage the ACT’s water resources within the limits set by the Murray–Darling Basin Plan
- water-dependent ecosystems in the Territory are protected and restored and remain healthy in a variable and changing climate, and that the community becomes better adapted to less available water
- ensure ACT water resources are fit for use
- an Aboriginal Water Assessment Project undertaken to help determine Indigenous water values and uses by local Indigenous people
- to promote indirectly the development of interstate water trading with New South Wales.

The plan draws largely on existing legislation, plans of management and environmental management policies to demonstrate the ACT’s compliance with Basin Plan requirements. It complements the ACT Water Strategy: Striking the Balance (2014) and the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy (2016).

LEGISLATION

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan comes under the *Water Act 2007* (C’wlth). Under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan, all Basin states are required to provide a water resource plan for their main river and ground water systems. Each state’s plan will be accredited as a legislative instrument under the Water Act.

While there will be no requirement for a legislative instrument in the ACT, an amendment to the *Water Resources Act 2007* (ACT) will give recognition to the plan. The relevant disallowable instruments under this Act include the following. They are being updated as necessary.

- 2013–44 Environmental Flow Guidelines
- 2007–191 Water Available From Areas
- 2007–193 Water Resources (Water Management Areas)
- 2007–194 Water Resources—amounts of water for reasonable uses

