Burdekin Basin Plan Unallocated Water Information Sheet

Proposed water products

What products are being considered?

The department is considering releasing 130,000 megalitres (ML) of watercourse water and overland flow water. These are summarised below.

Water product	Product description	Water product attributes	Water product suitability
Watercourse water – low flow	Watercourse water available through water harvesting.	• Low flow threshold (passing flow condition) before water can be taken. • More days of opportunity to take water • Doesn't require off-stream storage – can directly pump from watercourse to field. Considerations: • Low annual and daily volumes – annual volumes up to 500ML • Restricted to certain areas - protection of existing water users.	Would suit direct application of water supporting fodder production or to compliment dryland cropping enterprise.
Watercourse water – medium flow	Watercourse water available through water harvesting.	• Medium flow threshold (passing flow condition) • Lower days of opportunity than low flow product • Require off-stream water storages – water could be pumped or via passive take via channel from watercourse. Considerations: • High total annual and daily volumes available – available volumes to complement expression of interest • Days of opportunity will consider watercourse characteristics and location within the catchment – when water is available • May not be available across all areas – some areas may only have high flow watercourse water – due in part to protecting existing water users.	Would suit new or expanding enterprises seeking to develop a small, medium or large irrigation development.
Watercourse water – high flow	Watercourse water available through water harvesting.	• High flow threshold (passing flow condition). • Lower days of opportunity than medium flow product • Require off-stream water storages – water could be pumped or via passive take via channel from watercourse. Considerations: • High total annual and highest daily volumes available – available volumes to complement expressions of interest • Days of opportunity generally less than medium water product • May not be available across all areas – some areas may have better reliability in obtaining overland flow water – due in part to watercourse profiles. • More relevant to catchment areas with significant watercourses	Would suit new or expanding enterprises seeking to develop a small, medium or large irrigation development.
Overland flow water	Overland flow and over-bank flow from watercourses.	• Storage size will be dependent on upstream/contributing catchment. • Suit development opportunities where large volumes of overland flow occur as overbank flow from watercourses. • Large storages with passive intake – rather than pumping water Considerations: • Provide storage size and catchment area relationships that can assist with determining dam volumes • Available across all catchment areas • Larger volumes can be taken when significant flows are occurring.	Would suit new or expanding enterprises seeking to develop a small, medium or large irrigation development.

Why do watercourse water products require a passing flow?

A flow condition (sometimes referred to as a passing flow condition) on a water licence specifies the flow that must be present before water can be taken. Flow conditions help manage the potential impacts of taking water on existing water users and the environment by ensuring a specified amount of flow remains in the watercourse. Flow conditions have been incorporated into the watercourse water products for this release.

How will I know if I am taking watercourse water or overland flow water?

Your location of take will need to be mapped under the department's watercourse identification map as either a watercourse or a drainage feature (overland flow water). You can request a watercourse determination from the department by contacting waterservicesnorth@dlgwv.qld.gov.au. Supporting information such as property details, photos and flow duration is required. These assessments can take several months, so applicants are encouraged to submit their requests now. Overland flow includes flood water that flows across the land outside the banks of a watercourse, which is referred to as overbank flow.

Release process

How much will the water cost?

The price of water is being considered as part of our release decision and will be made public on the Business Queensland website when the release process commences in late December 2026. You can find information about average water pricing across Queensland on the Market Information page and prices from previous releases on the completed water release processes webpage.

Where can I see previous examples of unallocated water releases?

You can find completed and current unallocated water releases on the Unallocated Water webpage. This will give you a greater understanding of a release process, including the key steps of making an application, assessment of application, making offers and granting new water entitlements.

Has modelling been undertaken to determine reliability and availability of water? And if so, can this information be accessed?

Yes, modelling has been completed using available demand data and hydrological information. The department may provide more specific information for each water product, such as days of opportunity and reliability to assist individual applicants. Applicants are encouraged to undertake their own studies or seek professional guidance in the first instance.

Can applicants apply for multiple water products are part of this release?

Yes, you can apply for multiple water products through this process that are available at your property. Note that some water products have a maximum volume available per parcel (for example low-flow watercourse products), and there are also maximum volume limits placed on each sub-area. These volumes may change depending on the level of interest received via applications, however the total volume granted under this release process can not be greater than 130 000ML. Water will be granted as a water licence for each water source, whether that is overland flow water or watercourse water.

Can different water products be combined in the same storage?

Yes, conjunctive take (for example a storage that captures overland flow that is used to store watercourse water) will be permitted under this release process. Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate the volume of each water source being taken. We encourage applicants to speak with the department about their proposed developments before applying.

If I choose proposed payment Option 1 do all the works need to already be installed?

Yes, to be eligible for proposed payment Option 1, all infrastructure and works required to take and store the full volume of water being applied for must already be completed. This proposed payment option would suit a landholder with existing storages seeking a top-up or additional water to supplement existing take. The full cost of water will be required prior to any new water being taken. If the required works have not been constructed, applicants must select proposed payment Option 2 (see below).

If I choose proposed payment Option 2, how much time do I have to complete the works and when can I take water?
If you choose proposed payment Option 2, you will be required to pay a 25% non-refundable deposit. Following this payment, you will then have three years to obtain any necessary approvals, complete all the infrastructure works required to take and store the full volume of water applied for and pay the remaining balance. Once these requirements have been met, your water licence will be amended allowing you to take the water. Landholders with existing infrastructure already constructed can also choose proposed payment Option 2.

Will the department be available to provide advice to applicants about making an application under a release process?
Yes, the department plans to release a document called a 'Terms of Sale' in late December 2026 which will include an application form and information that applicants will need to provide to participate in this release process. Interested applicants will then have a period of time of peruse the Terms of Sale and determine if it is something they wish to participate in. Applications can be lodged once the application period commences in mid January 2027. Interested applicants can seek further advice from the department by contacting Cameron Venables (Cameron.Venables@dlgwv.qld.gov.au) or UAW.North@dlgwv.gov.au.

Feedback

What elements of the proposed release is the department seeking feedback on?
The department is seeking feedback on all aspects presented to stakeholders during information sessions in September and October 2026. Refer to the supporting document titled "Burdekin Basin – unallocated water release – stakeholder presentation - Sep 2026". The department is specifically seeking feedback on the following to inform how we release unallocated water:

- The proposed timeframes for the application and assessment processes (refer to "Burdekin Basin – unallocated water release – stakeholder presentation - Sep 2026", page 11):
  - Water will be released in late December 2026 and will be supported by a Terms of Sale document which outlines the application and assessment requirements.
  - Applicants will have approximately four weeks to peruse the Terms of Sale, determine whether the water products are suitable to their needs and if they wish to apply for unallocated water.
  - The application period will open in mid-January and close in May 2027.
  - Applications will be assessed in the order in which they are received for each water product and successful applicants being made offers. The department will commence assessments as soon as applications are received and make offers as soon as possible to successful applicants.
  - The department's assessment will conclude in September 2027, with final water licences being offered and granted from October 2027 through to January 2028.
- Proposed payment options (refer to "Burdekin Basin – unallocated water release – stakeholder presentation - Sep 2026", page 12):
  - **Option 1** - Pay the full purchase price up front if you have works to take water currently installed, or
  - **Option 2** – Pay a non-refundable 25% deposit and the remaining balance when works to take water are installed, within three years of the water licence being granted. Applicants who already have works installed may also request this payment option. **Note:** Water cannot be taken under the licence until the works are installed and the full purchase price has been paid.
- Proposed water products (refer to "Burdekin Basin – unallocated water release – stakeholder presentation - Sep 2026", pages 13 – 25):
  - Low flow watercourse water
  - Medium flow watercourse water
  - High flow watercourse water
  - Overland flow water

We ask that you provide us with feedback by email UAW.North@dlgwv.qld.gov.au **by COB 30 October 2026.**

Additional Information

Which layers on Queensland Globe can be used to assist in preparing an application?
We have created a dedicated Queensland Globe map to assist you, which you can access by clicking here (link expires on 18 November 2026 but can be re-issued on request). The map has been preloaded with the following layers:

- Watercourse Identification Map layer – will identify the relevant feature(s) such as a watercourse or a drainage feature that you are seeking to take water from. To apply for water products, you must be taking water from a watercourse or a drainage feature. If the feature is 'undefined', you will need to request a watercourse determination from us.
- Queensland wetlands mapping, Vegetation management wetlands map, MSES high ecological significance wetlands, and Wetlands of high ecological significance layers – to identify if your proposed location to take water is relative to known wetlands.
- Contours and Australian soil classification (ASC) layers – if you intend to irrigate land, you must consider the slope of the land and physical and chemical attributes of the soil. These will be considered as part of assessing an application under the release process.
- QLD waterways for waterway barrier works layer – will help identify if the location where you intend to construct a dam on a drainage feature to take overland flow triggers any approvals under Fisheries legislation.

By clicking the 'Layers' icon on the left-hand display, you can see which layers are active, and you can switch layers on and off by searching the layer(s) underlined.

To locate your property and identify where you are seeking to take water from, click the 'Search' icon on the left-hand side of the display. From this menu you can:

- Find land parcels by clicking 'Lot on plan' – enter in your land parcel details
- Find locations using a street address by clicking 'Street Address' – enter in your street address
- Find a GPS location by clicking 'Latitude and Longitude' – enter in GPS readings.

You can save these locations by clicking the 'Add to Places' icon which will store the location into the 'Places' menu found on the left-hand display. To see layers that overlap with your saved location, click the down arrow ˇ next to the location name and then click the option 'Query layers using this place'.

For help on how to use Queensland Globe, the Help section is available by clicking here.

Who can I contact to assist me with other approvals and material to support my application?
Applicants are encouraged to consider other approvals that may be required for your project. We encourage you to start preparing now and engage with relevant Departments to be ready when the application period opens.

- Watercourse Determinations: To determine whether you can apply for a watercourse or overland flow product, you will need to know if the proposed location of take is a watercourse or drainage feature. If the Watercourse Identification Map does not specify if the feature is a watercourse or drainage feature, you will need to request a Watercourse Determination from us **as soon as possible**. This can be requested at any time by contacting WaterServicesNorth@dlgwv.qld.gov.au.
- Waterway Barrier Works: If you are proposing to construct a dam on a drainage feature, you may trigger an approval under the waterway barrier works legislation. The Department of Primary Industries is responsible for waterway barrier works information, advice, and approval requirements. Contact 13 25 23 or email planningassessment@dpi.qld.gov.au.

- General approvals advice: The State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) can act as a centralised contact to provide free information and advice on relevant legislative requirements specific to your application. We recommend you request pre-lodgement advice from SARA on relevant approvals if these are triggered, SARA's contact details are:
    - North Queensland Regional SARA office in Townsville can be contacted via nqsara@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au or ph 4758 3423
    - Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday (MIW) SARA office in Mackay can be contacted via miwsara@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au or ph 4898 6888
- Local Government Planning and Development Approvals: Please consult with your local Council on local planning matters
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Commonwealth): Consider any approvals required under the Federal Government's ***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999***.