

Public Notice

Preliminary public consultation notice – Replacement of the Water Plan (Burdekin Basin) 2007 – s44 of the *Water Act 2000*

1. Proposal to replace the Water Plan (Burdekin Basin) 2007

Notice is given under section 44 of the *Water Act 2000* that the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water proposes to replace the Water Plan (Burdekin Basin) 2007 (the plan).

The plan is due to expire on 1 September 2023. To allow for plan development, the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water may exercise powers under section 55 of the *Water Act 2000* to postpone the expiry of the plan.

2. Water to which the plan will apply

It is proposed that the new water plan continue to manage surface water (including overland flow) in the Burdekin Basin, as currently described in the water plan. To address identified management issues, it is proposed to extend the boundary of the water plan area as shown in **Figure 1**.

Surface water is proposed to be managed in the following additional areas:

- part of the Ross River and Crystal Creek catchments associated with Townsville's water supply:
 - Ross River Water Supply Scheme
 - Paluma-Crystal Water Supply Scheme
- the southernmost part of the Lower Burdekin Water Board area to include part of Don River Basin.

In addition, groundwater is proposed to be managed in the Black River underground water area.

3. Reason for preparing the replacement plan

The existing plan is due to expire on 1 September 2023. Assessments indicate the implementation of the plan has been effective in achieving many of the plan outcomes. However, to ensure the water plan continues to advance the sustainable management of water resources in the Burdekin Basin and the nearby Ross River, Black River and Crystal Creek catchments, the following issues and risks need to be considered:

- effectiveness of water plan outcomes, strategies and performance indicators
- demands for unallocated water and future development use, including water infrastructure proposals
- surface water management in parts of the Ross River and Crystal Creek catchments associated with Townsville's water supply
- groundwater management in the Black River underground water area
- extending the southern boundary of the plan area to include the entirety of Lower Burdekin Water Board area
- rising groundwater in the Lower Burdekin
- provision of flows for existing water users and the environment, including the Great Barrier Reef
- the need to incorporate best-available science and information, including the latest hydrological modelling and improved understanding of water requirements for key environmental assets
- optimisation of water sharing rules and water trading for water allocations
- effectiveness of infrastructure operations and environmental management rules

- the effect of climate change on water availability
- current and emerging interests of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in relation to water resources in the plan area
- future monitoring and assessment to maintain plan performance, and
- requirements under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

To address these issues, I propose to prepare a replacement plan. It is also proposed to amend or develop key documents which implement the plan, including the Water Management Protocol, Resource Operations Licences, Distribution Operations Licences, Operations Manuals and Water Entitlement Notices, as necessary during the plan replacement process.

4. Proposed arrangements for consultation

Submissions are now being sought. I encourage anyone with an interest in the Burdekin Basin, Ross River, Black River or Crystal Creek catchments to put forward their thoughts on water management in the plan area through a submission.

Submissions received and consultation with key stakeholders including water users, water supply scheme operators, Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and other interest groups will inform the development of the draft replacement plan.

There will be further opportunities for consultation through a public submissions process and meetings with key stakeholders following the release of the draft replacement water plan.

5. Enquiries and submission process

Submissions can be made and lodged as follows:

- online at www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au
- by emailing WPBurdekin@rdmw.qld.gov.au
- phoning 1800 822 100
- sending your submission by post to

Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water
Chief Executive
Water Services Northern Region
Attention: Manager Water Planning and Science
PO Box 5318
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

For further information please contact the department by emailing WPBurdekin@rdmw.qld.gov.au or phoning 1800 822 100.

Preliminary consultation submissions will close on 5 May 2023.

This notice is dated 10 March 2023

The Hon. Glenn Butcher MP
Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water

Ingrid Fomiatti Minnesma
Executive Director Northern Region (as the Chief Executive's delegate)

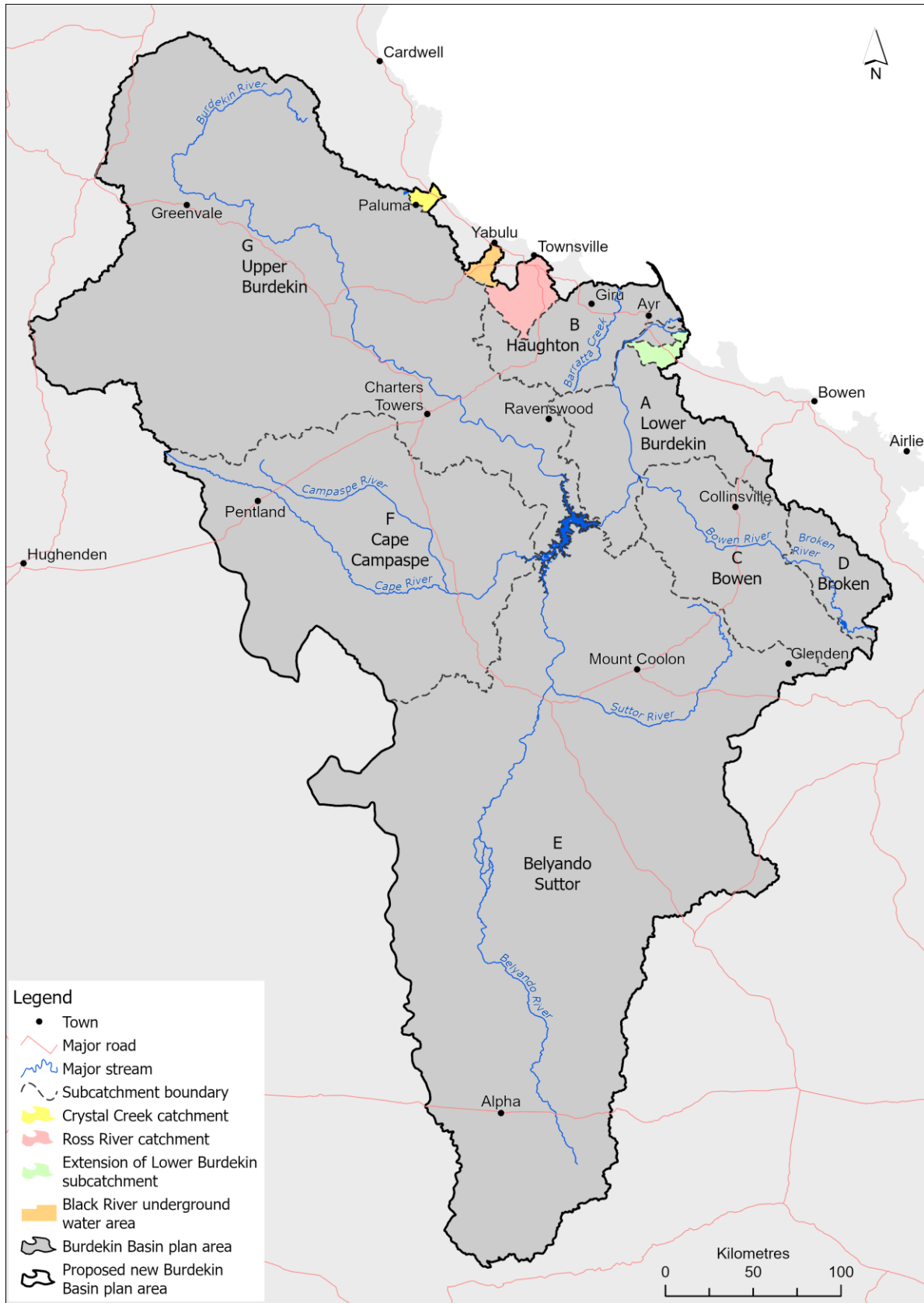


Figure 1: Proposed new water plan area