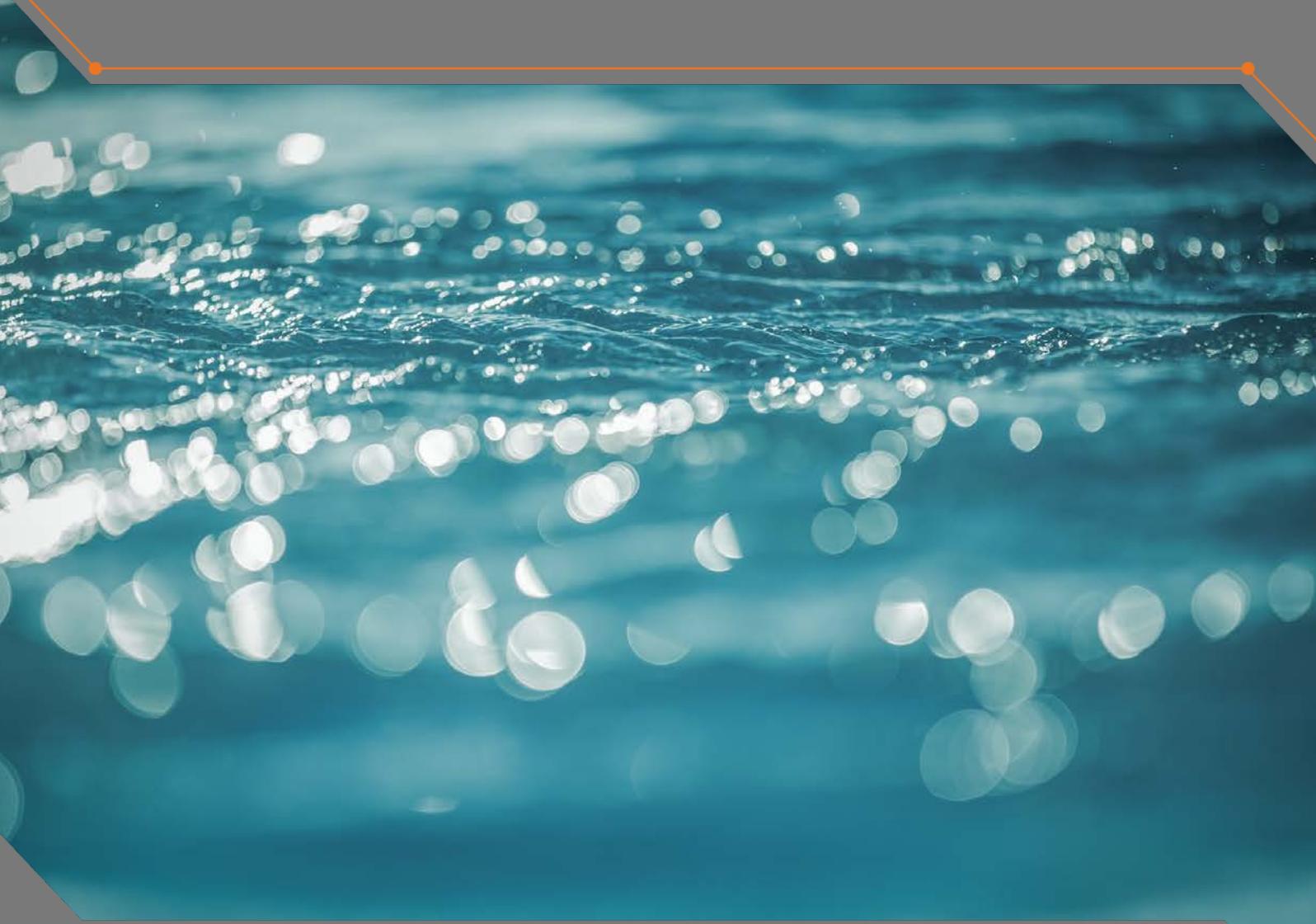


# Queensland Murray- Darling Basin

Compliance and enforcement actions 2020-2021



This publication has been compiled by Harriet Backstrom and Andrew Eggleton of the Compliance Operational Support Team in Water, Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water.

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# Compliance and enforcement actions in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin

The Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water’s (department) role as a regulator is to ensure that Queensland’s water resources are managed fairly and sustainably. The department’s compliance approach and principles are published on our [website](#).

Each year the Queensland Government reports on compliance and enforcement actions undertaken in the Queensland Murray–Darling Basin area detailing actions taken during 2020–2021 including auditing activities, incidents investigated, compliance actions undertaken and timeliness of investigations.

It is a requirement under 1.2c of the MDB Compliance Compact that we publicly report on compliance and enforcement actions by location and timeliness in which they are addressed.

The map in Figure 1 below shows the number of audits and incidents investigated in the 2020–2021 period within the three Murray–Darling Basin water plan areas:

- Warrego, Paroo and Nebine
- Condamine and Balonne
- Border Rivers and Moonie

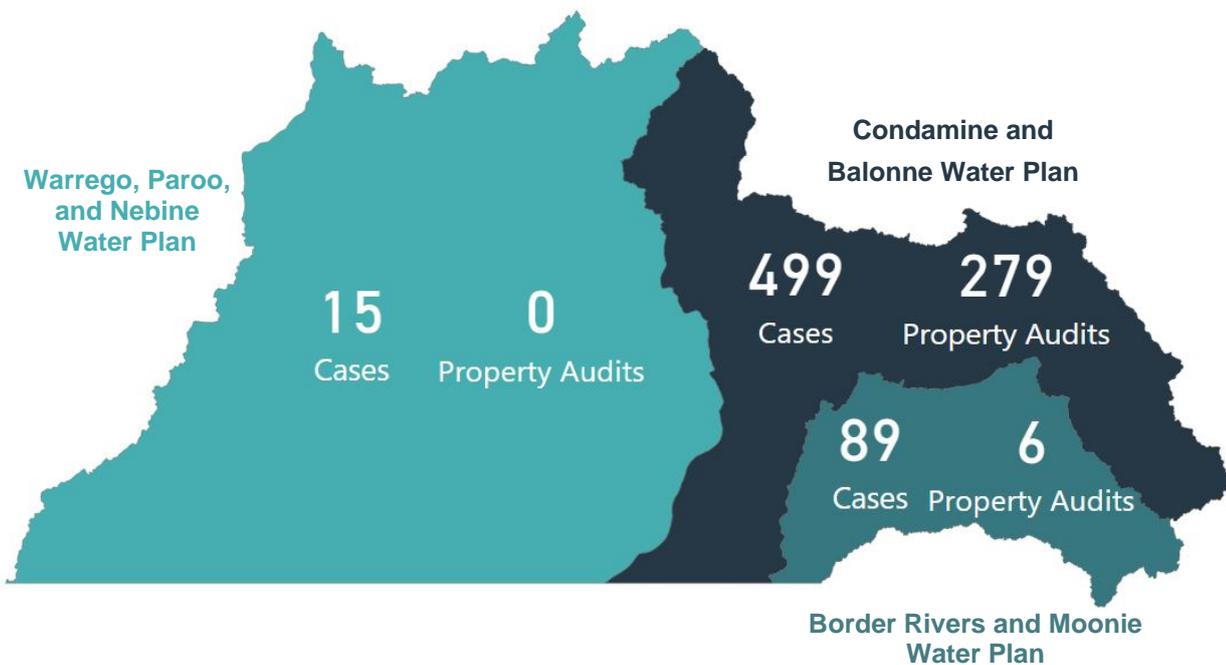


Figure 1: Cases and property audits conducted in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin 2020–2021

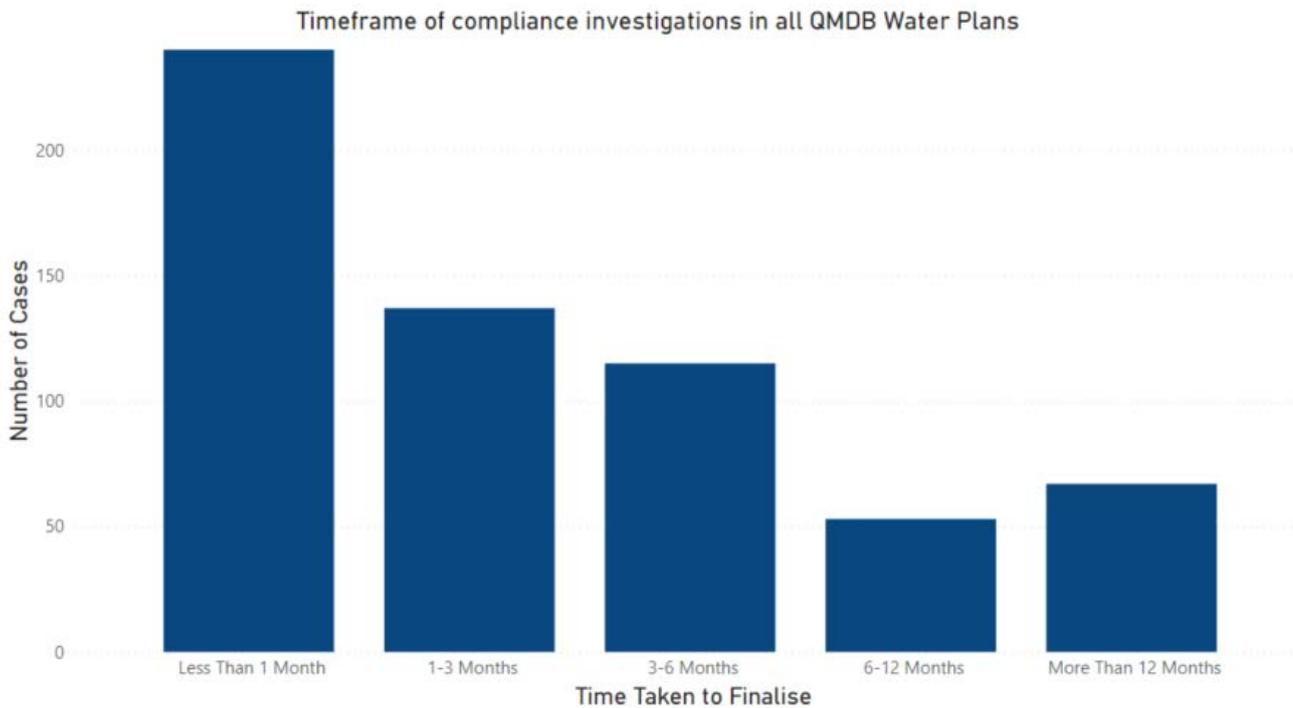
It details the number of property audits conducted, and the number of compliance cases investigated by the department between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

A key principle in the department’s compliance approach is to ensure we are timely in how we communicate about compliance and in responding to non-compliance.

In the Warrego, Paroo and Nebine, the department utilises satellite imagery and desktop auditing of reported use from metered entitlement holders to ensure compliance. Where a possible non-compliance

is found, further investigation (which may include a property audit) will be undertaken. This allows a targeted and prioritised approach to monitoring compliance.

Figure 2 details the time taken to complete investigations that were finalised between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021. While all cases are dealt with in a timely manner, more complex cases that require a significant amount of engagement may take longer to resolve. This includes cases that are likely to proceed to prosecution.



**Figure 2: Time taken to finalise investigations**

When compliance breaches are detected, the department takes a risk-based and proportionate approach to decide how to best respond and a range of tools are used to achieve the required outcome for a non-compliance. In some cases, we utilise a number of tools to achieve the desired outcome, for example issuing a penalty infringement notice in combination with a statutory show cause notice.

Table 1 details the types of audits and enforcement actions that the department undertook between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021. The data includes metering, overuse, interference, contravention of authorisation conditions, water bore and drilling-related offences.

Where an incident was investigated and no enforcement undertaken, Table 2 outlines the reasons found for no further action.

Table 1: Compliance and enforcement actions in the Queensland Murray–Darling Basin 2020–2021

Compliance Actions	Condamine and Balonne Water Plan	Border Rivers and Moonie Water Plan	Warrego, Paroo, Bulloo and Nebine Water Plan
Property audits	279	6	0
Self-read audits against entitlements	1567	154	13
Verbal education	19	5	0
Advisory letter	43	24	6
Warning notices	57	22	0
Penalty infringement notices	19	1	1
Compliance notices	3	0	0
Prosecution	1	0	0
<b>Total actions taken in Water Plan</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total actions taken in the Murray–Darling Basin</b>	<b>2223</b>		

Table 2: No further action reasons 2020–2021

Reasons for no Action	Condamine and Balonne Water Plan	Border Rivers and Moonie Water Plan	Warrego, Paroo, Bulloo and Nebine Water Plan
Applicable exemption exists	13	1	1
No offence found after further investigation	92	10	1
Insufficient evidence	19	6	0
Limitation period expired	2	2	3
Authorisation produced/sighted	88	13	2
<b>Total in Water Plan</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total for the Murray–Darling Basin</b>	<b>253</b>		



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