

Barmah Choke trade

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why are these changes being made to Barmah Choke trade application processing?

WaterNSW and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)(Victoria) have been working together to ensure more efficient access to trade opportunities and a more unified experience for customers trading through the Barmah Choke from both New South Wales and Victoria. The two states have committed to collaborating on efforts to enhance operational efficiency and facilitate intervalley trade opportunities.

In July 2023, WaterNSW and DEECA worked to amend Barmah Choke trade application operations to commence at the same time. This work continues in 2025 to provide better access to the trade opportunity for all users regardless of which state the application is lodged. It also ensures that WaterNSW and DEECA continue to collaborate in meeting the recommendations in the final Water Market Reform Roadmap, which was developed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) [Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry](#).

These changes have also been made in such a way as to ensure that customers will experience no change to how they apply via each state's process.

What is the Water Market Reform Roadmap?

Following the release of the ACCC Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry final report, the Federal Government tasked an independent Principal Adviser, Daryl Quinlivan, to work with the Australian Government, Basin states, industry, communities, and other stakeholders to develop a phased, practical, and cost-effective plan for water market reform having regard to the ACCC's findings and recommendations.

This became the final [Water Market Reform Roadmap](#) which was released by the Australian Government Department for Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water in October 2022. The report included 23 recommendations to address the key findings of the ACCC Water Markets Inquiry.

Among these, recommendation 14 of the roadmap cites a need to "improve efficiency and access to intervalley trade opportunities" and that New South Wales and Victoria, in collaboration with Murray-Darling Basin Authority, should consider options to improve equity of access to IVT opportunities" (including the Barmah Trade opportunity).

What is the new protocol aiming to achieve?

This new protocol is one part of the broader water market reform program that Murray-Darling Basin governments have committed to. It aims to achieve the outcome in that differences in each State's processing approach and IT systems will no longer be a factor influencing each state's success in accessing the available Barmah trade opportunity.

How is it decided which state will be the first to begin processing applications?

A tool will be used to create a single randomly ordered queue, which will then determine which state goes first, second, third, and so on. This process will be observed and conducted with the independent assistance of a neutral observer (e.g. in 2024 it was the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)). If this protocol continues beyond 2025, this process will determine, each year, which order the states will process the list of applications.

What happens when one state exhausts their queue first?

Due to the randomized nature of the combined queue, if one state exhausts its pre-combined queue the processing of trade applications doesn't halt. The state which has the remaining applications will continue until their queue is also exhausted.

Both queues are created from applications submitted during the submission window. If applications are received after the submission window has closed, these new applications will not be added to the randomized queue. Once the application processing is completed, if there are any remaining Barmah choke opportunities, they will become available through normal systems processes.

Will this new protocol apply to future Barmah Choke openings?

This protocol will be reviewed following the completion of the **July 2025** trade opportunity period.

Will I have to do anything extra for my application?

No. Customers will submit their application in their state's submission window as usual. Timings will be communicated to users in advance of the July 2025 trade opportunity. The only change from 2024 will be in the processing order between WaterNSW and DEECA. Successful applicants will be notified on their status in the same manner as previous openings. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified as soon as practical.

Where should I direct any feedback regarding this protocol?

If you have feedback relating to the Barmah Trade protocol, please contact your state representatives at water.trade@waterNSW.com.au for NSW and waterregister.support@delwp.vic.gov.au for VIC.

What happens if I have accounts in both states and submit trade applications in each state?

If an applicant chooses to submit Barmah Choke trade opportunity applications in both New South Wales and Victoria, such applications will be assessed as normal with their success determined by the customer's balance in the relevant water account and by availability of the remaining trade limit.

What might an application queue look like under this new protocol?

Please note: The opening balance listed below is an assumed balance, this is not reflective of the opening balance on 1 July 2025.

A trade opening with an opportunity of 100 ML might look like this (all data below is strictly for sample purposes):

State	Status (reason)	Processing order of applications	State order of applications (queue)	Application volume	Barmah Choke opportunity at lodgement
VIC	Approved	01	01	5 ML	100 ML
NSW	Approved	02	01	20 ML	95 ML
NSW	Approved	03	02	25 ML	75 ML
VIC	Refused (due to insufficient account balance)	04	02	9 ML	50 ML
NSW	Refused (due to insufficient opportunity)	05	03	100 ML	50 ML
VIC	Approved	06	04	7 ML	50 ML
VIC	Refused (due to insufficient account balance)	07	03	7 ML	43 ML
VIC	Approved	08	04	30 ML	43 ML
NSW	Approved	09	05	10 ML	13 ML
NSW	Approved	10	05	2 ML	3 ML
VIC	Refused (due to insufficient opportunity)	11	05	5 ML	1 ML
NSW	Approved	12	05	1 ML	1 ML
VIC	Refused (due to insufficient opportunity)	13	06	10 ML	0 ML

Need help?

If you need further assistance, please contact our Customer Service Centre on [1300 662 077](tel:1300662077), Monday to Friday between 8am to 5pm or email Customer.Helpdesk@waternsw.com.au

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