



Background on the ANZG Water Quality Guidelines Improvement Plan and 5-year Strategic plan

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and State and Territory Partners wish to produce, in consultation with stakeholders, a five-year strategic plan to guide the ongoing revision of the Australian and New Zealand Fresh and Marine Water Quality Guidelines (the ANZ WQG) - www.waterquality.gov.au/guidelines/anz-fresh-marine, a component of the National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS).

Key aspects of the strategic plan will address:

1. Evaluation of the Australian and New Zealand Water Quality Guidelines Improvement Program (ANZ WQGIP) (July 2020-June 2023).
2. Outstanding work under the ANZ WQG review.
3. New work to be incorporated into the ANZ WQG review.

The strategic plan is to be developed in a two-stage process:

Stage One

Work with stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses of the current ANZ WQGIP. The program analysis is to be documented in an ANZ WQGIP Status Report, which is to capture these discussions and include recommendations for Stage Two.

Stage Two

Work with stakeholders to draft a five-year strategic plan (covering aspects such as, but not limited to, the vision, objectives, activities and budget) for the ongoing revision of the Guidelines.

The ANZ WQGIP was established in July 2020 by the inter-jurisdictional National Water Reform Committee (NWRC) with an aim to maintain the relevance, currency, functionality and scientific rigour of the NWQMS and its guidelines. The program is funded by the Australian, State and Territory and the New Zealand governments. The ANZ WQGIP was meant to progress the ANZ WQG revision work started in 2009, and not finished by 2018, and to undertake new work. Originally, the ANZ WQGIP had a four-year life, but this has been extended by one year. Much revision work still remains.

The workplan and budget for 2023-24 covers Technical Manager services, Default Guideline Values (DGVs) derivation, revision of guidance documents, web-editing services, completion of shelved priority toxicants, pH 2 methods analysis study, shinyssdtools software transition and strategic planning.

Key activities of the ANZ WQGIP for the 2023-24 financial year include:

- Transition from the use of Burrlioz software to shinyssdtools software for deriving toxicant guideline values.
- Finalisation of priority and third-party Default Guideline Values.



- Finalisation and publishing of guidance documents.
- ANZ WQGIP strategic planning.

The ANZ WQGIP identified 58 toxicant DGVs. Of these, five final DVGs were published, 23 were in the final stages prior to the NWRC's noting and their final publication, 20 were under review, and 10 were under derivation as of 13 April 2023. The ongoing progression of the remaining centrally funded and third-party toxicant DGVs under the work plan for the 2023-24 financial year is considered as one of the priorities.

As mentioned previously, in addition to the derivation of toxicant DGVs, the Guidelines revision encompasses new and revised publications, including regional high-level guidance and advice, and industry specific guidance for managing surface and groundwater quality. Under the revision, eight overarching projects were established, some of which also included sub-projects. This has resulted in 17 new and revised guidance documents, technical briefs, and extensive web content. The documents are at various stages of the approval process, with some ready for jurisdictional approval and technical editing and a number still requiring completion. The finalisation of the guidance documents is a priority for the 2023-24 financial year.