



Draft Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021

Background and proposed changes

November 2020



Published by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

dpie.nsw.gov.au

Title: Draft Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021

Subtitle: Background and proposed changes

ISBN: 978-1-76058-418-4

First published: November 2020

Department reference number: PUB20/811

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing November 2020 and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
Aquifer	An underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock or unconsolidated materials (gravel, sand, silt or clay) from which groundwater can be usefully extracted. The volume of water stored in an aquifer, the rate at which water can recharge, the volume of water extracted from it, and the rate at which water can move through the aquifer are all controlled by the geologic nature of the aquifer.
BLR	Basic Landholder Right
the department	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water
GDE	groundwater-dependant ecosystem Ecosystems that rely on groundwater for their species composition and their natural ecological processes.
LTAEL	long-term average annual extraction limit The long-term average annual volume of water in a water source available to be lawfully extracted or otherwise taken under access licences and BLR requirements.
NRC	Natural Resources Commission
NSW	New South Wales
Share component	An entitlement to a given number of shares of the available water in a specified water source. The share component on an access licence certificate is expressed as a unit share. The share component of a specific purpose access licence (e.g. local water utility, major water utility and domestic and stock) is expressed in megalitres/year.
WM Act	<i>Water Management Act 2000</i>

Contents

Glossary and abbreviations	i
1. Introduction	1
2. Purpose of water sharing plans	1
3. Legislation, policy and planning framework	2
3.1. Water Management Act 2000.....	2
3.2. Water Sharing Plans.....	2
3.3. NSW Water Policy	3
4. Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021	3
4.1. Overview.....	3
4.2. Current and previous plan(s)	4
4.3. Developing the draft (2021) Plan.....	5
4.3.1. First Nations Consultation	5
5. Refining the provisions in the 2021 water sharing plan	6
5.1. Changes proposed in the draft 2021 plan	6
5.1.1. General layout changes	6
5.1.2. Inclusion of a new alluvial groundwater water source	7
5.1.3. Vision, objectives, strategies and performance indicators	7
5.1.4. Updates to Basic Landholder Rights estimates and Licence Share Components	8
5.1.5. Cease to pump rules	8
5.1.6. Commence to pump rules – 24h delay rule.....	8
5.1.7. Removal of Total Daily Extraction Limits.....	9
5.1.8. Prohibit in river dams in Jilliby Jilliby Creek and Ourimbah Creek water sources	9
5.1.9. Prohibit works approvals near SEPP wetlands and potential acid sulfate soils	9
5.1.10. Protection of High priority GDEs	10
5.1.11. Trade provisions	11
5.1.12. Adaptive management and amendment provisions.....	11
6. Public exhibition phase and making a submission on the draft Plan	12
7. Finalisation of the draft plan	12
8. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	12
Appendix 1 - References and supporting documents	13

1. Introduction

Water sharing plans were developed for rivers and groundwater systems across New South Wales following the introduction of the *Water Management Act 2000* (WM Act). Approximately 99% of the water extracted in NSW is now covered by a water sharing plan and managed under the WM Act. These plans protect the health of our rivers and groundwater while also providing water users with perpetual access licences; sustainable resource management, equitable water sharing arrangements, and increased opportunities to trade water.

The Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009 commenced on 1 August 2010. An extension to the expiry date means that this plan is now due to expire in July 2022.

A draft replacement plan has been developed for public exhibition and consultation. The draft *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021* (the draft Plan) covers eight (8) water sources:

- Brisbane Water Water Source
- Central Coast Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Water Source
- Jiliby Jiliby Creek Water Source
- Mangrove Creek Water Source
- Mooney Mooney Creek Water Source
- Ourimbah Creek Water Source
- Tuggerah Lakes Water Source
- Wyong River Water Source

This document provides high level background information on the planning process as well as details of changes proposed in the draft Plan from the management arrangements in the current plan. It also explains how you can make a submission and have your say in developing and finalising the replacement water sharing plan.

The draft Plan, maps and information about the public exhibition period and how to make a submission can be found on the department's website here:

- [Draft Central Coast Water Sharing Plan 2021](#)

Further details of the draft Plan area, its water resources and resource management background can be found in documents referenced in Appendix 1.

2. Purpose of water sharing plans

Expansion of water extraction across NSW in the 20th century has seen increasing competition between water users (towns, farmers, industries and irrigators) for access to water and placed pressure on the health and biological diversity of our rivers and aquifers.

In December 2000, the NSW parliament passed the WM Act, which has the overall objective to “provide for the sustainable and integrated management of the water sources of the State for the benefit of both present and future generations”. Water sharing plans play a major role in achieving this objective by providing a legal basis for sharing water between the environment and consumptive water users.

Water sharing plans are the primary implementation instrument of the WM Act, they protect the basic rights of landholders to extract water and seek to balance the sustainable use of water for both economic and environmental outcomes.

3. Legislation, policy and planning framework

3.1. Water Management Act 2000

The WM Act is the guiding piece of legislation for water management in NSW. The Act provides for the sustainable and integrated management of water sources with consideration to ecologically sustainable development, the protection and enhancement of the environment, and social and economic benefits.

The WM Act requires that water sharing plans have a maximum initial lifespan of 10 years, at which point they need to be reviewed and replaced or extended. When deciding whether to extend or replace an existing water sharing plan, the Minister must consider:

- the most recent audit of the water sharing plan conducted under section 44 of the WM Act; and
- a report of the Natural Resources Commission that reviews (within the previous 5 years) the extent to which the water sharing provisions have materially contributed to the achievement of, or the failure to achieve, environmental, social and economic outcomes, and whether changes to those provisions are warranted.

Under the WM Act a water sharing plan may be extended for 24 months past the expiry date of the plan to allow for a replacement plan to be prepared.

The WM Act can be found on the NSW Legislation website here:

- [NSW Water Management Act 2000](#)

3.2. Water Sharing Plans

A water sharing plan sets out locally appropriate rules and management arrangements for specific water sources that align with the principles of the WM Act.

Key elements of water sharing plans include:

- providing water for the environment by protecting a proportion of the water available for fundamental ecosystem health
- protecting the water required to meet basic landholder rights
- setting annual limits on water extractions that ensures security for water users and the environment
- providing water users with a clear picture of when and how water will be available for extraction
- providing flexibility for licence holders in the way they can manage their water accounts
- specifying rules in groundwater plans to minimise impacts on other groundwater users, groundwater dependent ecosystems, culturally significant sites, water quality and the stability of the aquifer
- specifying the rules for water trading / dealings
- setting the mandatory conditions that apply to licence holders

The current water sharing plan, The *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009* can be found on the NSW Legislation website here:

- [Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009](#)

3.3. NSW Water Policy

Water related policy and decision making processes that implement the above legislative framework are continuously evolving and improving to ensure effective delivery of our water resource management objectives. In particular, plans are developed in line with the principles of the WM Act and the National Water Initiative.

More information on the National Water Initiative can be found here:

- [National Water Initiative](#)

4. Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021

4.1. Overview

The Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial water sharing plan area (shown in Figure 1) is located to the North of Sydney. The plan area covers more than 156,000 hectares and is bordered to the east by the Pacific Ocean, to the west by the MacDonald River catchment (a Hawkesbury River tributary), to the north west by the Wollombi Brook catchment (a tributary of the Hunter River), to the north east by the Lake Macquarie catchment, and to the south by Broken Bay and the Hawkesbury River.

A high proportion of the fresh water in the Central Coast catchment comes from the headwaters of the major streams situated along the Mangrove Mountain Kulnura ridge (which is often described as an indistinct plateau). The head-water streams coming off the plateau are steep relative to the low-land reaches which are much flatter.

The Central Coast Water Sharing plan area is divided into two sections, one section flows into Tuggerah Lakes and the other flows into the Hawkesbury River. These areas are known as Extraction Management Units. The limits on the volume of water that can be extracted from water sources are set at the Extraction Management Unit scale.

The water sources managed under the current plan include the following:

- Brisbane Water Water Source
- Mooney Mooney Creek Water Source
- Mangrove Creek Water Source
- Wyong River Water Source
- Tuggerah Lakes Water Source
- Jiliby Jiliby Creek Water Source
- Ourimbah Creek Water Source

The current plan manages surface water and alluvial groundwater to the extent of any downstream limit identified on the plan map. The draft Plan proposes to establish a floodplain alluvial water source to manage water in the coastal alluvial resources that are less connected to surface water, in areas located downstream of the tidal limit. More information on this water source can be found in section 5.1.2.

Significant primary industries on the Central Coast include turf growing, fruit (primarily citrus), vegetable production, poultry, and water bottling. Major population centres include Gosford and Wyong which are subject to seasonal population fluxes due to holiday visitors. Away from the coast there are a few small rural towns such as Dooralong and Central Mangrove.

Central Coast Council is the largest extractor of water, owning and operating a number of dams and weirs. These include:

- Mangrove Creek Dam which captures the headwater flows of Mangrove Creek
- Mangrove Creek Weir located downstream of Mangrove Creek Dam at the tidal limit
- Upper Mooney Mooney Creek Dam which is mid-way along the creek’s length
- Upper Ourimbah Creek Weir also mid-way along its length
- Wyong River Weir located at the tidal limit, and
- Mardi Dam located on a small watercourse halfway between the Wyong and Ourimbah Weirs.

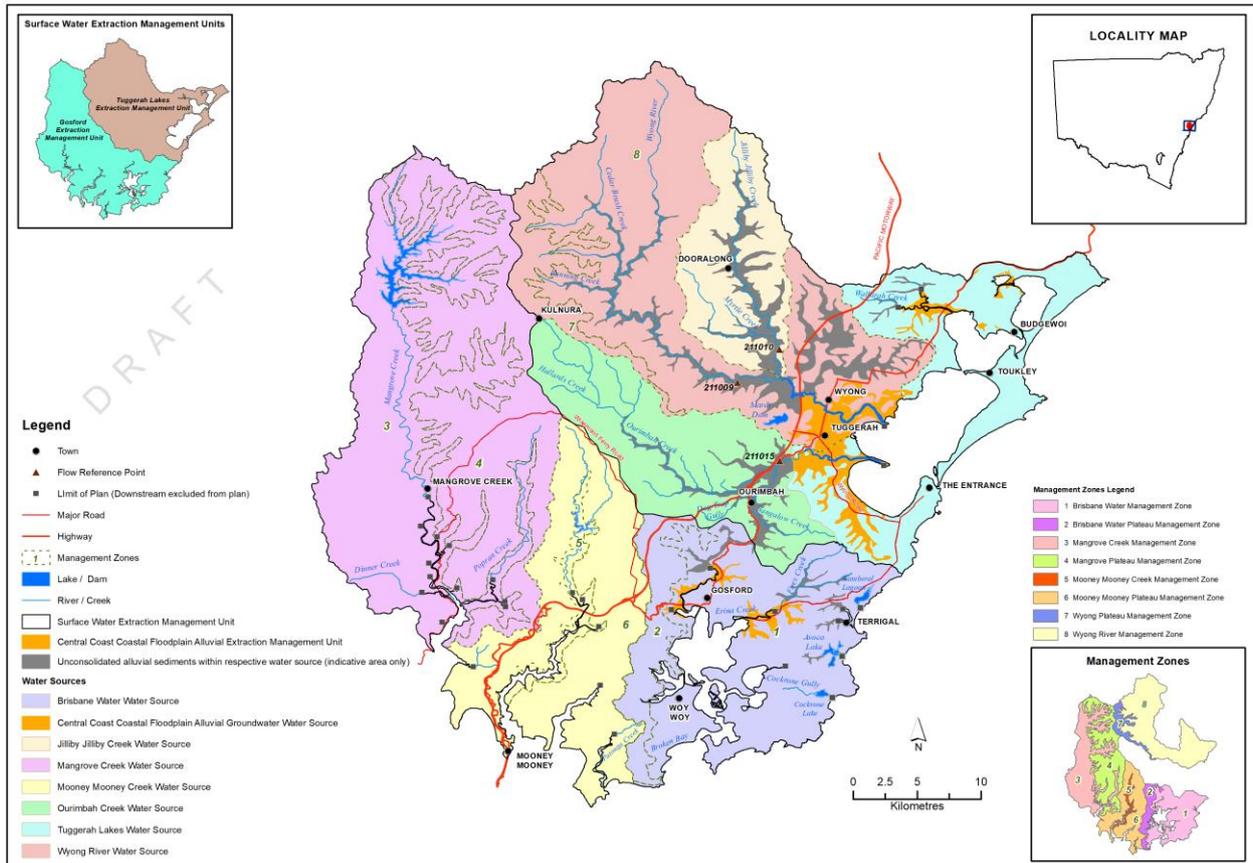


Figure 1 Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial water sharing plan area

4.2. Current and previous plan(s)

The current water sharing plan commenced on 1 August 2010. In 2016 the plan was amended to include the Ourimbah Creek and Jilliby Jilliby Creek water sources and management provisions. These water sources were previously managed under the

- *Water Sharing Plan for the Ourimbah Creek Water Source 2003* and
- *Water Sharing Plan for the Jilliby Jilliby Creek Water Source 2003*

The current water sharing plan can be found on the NSW legislation website here:

- [Current water sharing Plan for the Central Coast 2009](#)

The background document for the current water sharing plan can be found here:

- [Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast 2009- Background document](#)

The previous water sharing plans were developed using the macro approach and included extensive stakeholder and interagency consultation. Details of the macro planning approach can be found here:

- [Macro water sharing plans - approach for unregulated rivers](#)
- [Macro water sharing plans – access and trading rules for pools](#)
- [Macro water sharing plans - the approach for groundwater](#)

4.3. Developing the draft (2021) Plan

The department is responsible for implementing the WM Act, including developing water sharing plans for NSW water resources. The draft replacement water sharing plan was prepared based on consideration of:

- the section 44 audit between 2009 and 2014 of the *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009*
- recommendations from the Natural Resources Commission's (NRC) 2020 review of the *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009*
- updated data, information and science;
- the deliberations across government agencies including: DPIE Water and Biodiversity, Conservation and Science, DPI Agriculture and Fisheries and the Natural Resource Access Regulator (NRAR)
- consultation with Central Coast Council

The draft *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021* can be found here:

- [Draft Central Coast Water Sharing Plan 2021](#)

Details of the changes from the 2009 to the draft 2021 water sharing plan are provided in Section 5.

Information on the public exhibition phase and how to have your say on the proposed changes can be found in section 6

The Natural Resources Commission's review of the current water sharing plan can be found here:

- [NRC Central Coast WSP Review](#)

The Central Coast Unregulated water sharing plan audit 2009-2014 can be found here:

- [Central Coast Unregulated Water Sharing Plan Audit](#)

4.3.1. First Nations Consultation

Local aboriginal land councils were invited to participate in initial consultation during development of the draft Plan. However, due to Covid-19 this has not yet been possible. It is hoped that there will be opportunity for First Nations consultation during public exhibition and prior to finalising the draft Plan. Consultation will be ongoing throughout the life of the plan.

5. Refining the provisions in the 2021 water sharing plan

5.1. Changes proposed in the draft 2021 plan

Key drivers for the changes in the 2021 plan include:

- Natural Resources Commission’s review recommendations.
- Contemporary water resource policy – other changes to the plan include alignment with current policy to help improve efficiency and consistency in achieving water resource management objectives across the state. These changes range from purely administrative to more substantial.
- Updated data and knowledge improvements

In general, the changes to the plan reflect improved understanding and updated data. They aim to modernise and simplify the water sharing plan to make it easier to read while ensuring provisions are implementable and legally accurate.

Changes have been proposed to:

- the general layout of the Plan
- include a new alluvial groundwater water source
- the vision, objectives, strategies, and performance indicators
- the cease to pump rules
- include Commence to pump rules
- update the basic land holder right estimate and access licence share components
- prohibit in river dams in Jilliby Creek and Ourimbah Creek water sources
- prohibit water supply works approvals near SEPP wetlands and Potential Acid Sulfate Soils
- protect High priority Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs)
- Trade provisions
- Adaptive management and amendment provisions
- Remove Total Daily Extraction Limits that apply to all non local water utility water licence holders.

“Report Cards” are available for each water source, they detail the relevant rules and proposed changes that apply to a particular water source. The Report Cards can be found on the public exhibition website [here](#).

- [Central Coast water source Report Cards](#)

5.1.1. General layout changes

There are a number of structural layout changes in the draft Plan. Clauses may have been moved or reworded, however they are not a change of intent. Such changes reflect current template styles that provide a more standard and consistent layout across the state’s water sharing plans as well as making the water sharing plan easier to understand. Examples of such changes include removal of unnecessary notes as well as moving and consolidating amendment provisions to the amendment part of the plan.

5.1.2. Inclusion of a new alluvial groundwater water source

Part 1 of the draft plan describes the area and water to which the plan applies. The current plan comprises 7 surface water sources, which also include groundwater located in alluvial sediments located above the limits shown on the plan map.

The draft Plan proposes to establish a new water source to manage groundwater extractions from alluvial deposits downstream of the tidal limits. The extent of the proposed water source captures alluvial deposits that are less connected to the overlying surface water than upriver alluvial sediments.

The new water source will be named the “Central Coast Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Water Source”. The plan name will also be amended to reflect the fact that it manages alluvial resources.

The boundaries of the proposed water source are shown on the map in Figure 1. A high-resolution map can be found on the public exhibition web page here:

- [Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial water sharing plan area](#)

Any existing WM Act groundwater licences within the proposed alluvial water source will be amended to reflect the new water source. The establishment of the new alluvial water source should not result in tangible changes or impacts to water availability for existing water users taking from the water source area.

Water sources managed under a water sharing plan are subject to long term average annual extraction limits (LTAAELs). An LTAAEL of 1,175 megalitres is proposed for the new alluvial water source. This volume caters for current and estimated future demand and is the equivalent to 25% of the average annual recharge for the water source. For more information on setting the LTAAEL for this water source see the water source report card here:

- [Reports Card for Coastal Floodplain Alluvial water source](#)

The limit was determined in consideration of the principles set out in the *Macro water sharing plans – the approach for groundwater* guide, which can be found here:

- [Macro water sharing plans - the approach for groundwater](#)

Aboriginal Community Development and Aboriginal Cultural Specific Purpose Access Licences may be granted in this water source. Additional licence shares may be granted through a controlled allocation process.

Trading into the water source is not permitted as there are no water sources to trade in from in this instance. Trading within the water source is permitted, subject to assessment.

Available Water Determinations (AWD) are made each year to put water allocations into the water allocation accounts and the draft Plan sets out the rules for how those accounts are to be managed. AWDs are also used to manage extraction in a water source to the LTAAEL should it be exceeded, which is unlikely in this instance due to the proposed extraction limit being significantly higher than combined current entitlement and BLR use.

5.1.3. Vision, objectives, strategies and performance indicators

Part 2 of the draft plan describes the vision and objectives. The plan vision encompasses the overall aim of the plan. The vision of the plan is to provide for:

- the health of the water sources and their dependent ecosystems,
- the continuing productive extraction of water for economic benefit,
- the spiritual, social, customary and economic benefits of water to Aboriginal communities,
- the social and cultural benefits to urban and rural communities that result from water.

The objectives of the plan have been updated to be more defined and to more clearly distinguish between the environmental, economic, social and Aboriginal cultural objectives. The strategies and performance indicators have also been updated and more clearly linked to objectives so that measuring the success of the plan is easier.

The objectives are arranged into four categories; environmental, economic, Aboriginal cultural, and social and cultural. Under each category is:

- a broad objective
- targeted objectives – more specific objectives that should be achieved to reach the broad objective
- strategies – actions for achieving the targeted objectives
- performance indicators – assessment parameters to measure the success of the strategies in reaching the objectives.

The proposed updates to this part of the plan reflect a standard, state-wide approach that is being applied to all water sharing plans when they are replaced. They also address NRC recommendations to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the plan outcomes.

5.1.4. Updates to Basic Landholder Rights estimates and Licence Share Components

The estimate of extraction of water under basic land holder rights in Part 5 Division 2 has been updated. The method used to determine this volume is the same as the method used to determine the volumes in the current plan. Any changes in estimates reflect a change in land use practices and urban development.

The water access licence share components (water entitlements for each water source) are listed in Part 5 Division 3 have been updated to reflect current total share components in each water source.

5.1.5. Cease to pump rules

Part 8 Division 3 of the draft Plan details the rules for taking surface water.

The current plan applies a rule that requires licence holders to cease pumping when there is no visible flow at the pump site in 5 of the 7 surface water sources. The draft plan proposes that these rules are now also applied to the Mangrove Creek Water Source and the Mooney Mooney Creek Water Source.

As well as this if a pump takes from an in-river pool, the pool must not be drawn down. This requirement does not apply if water is being taken from an off-river pool.

This rule improves water quality at critical times and provides connectivity that maintains pools and habitats as long as possible.

Access rules for the take of groundwater within 40m of the river have been included for access from upriver alluvial sediments. Access rules are the same as the surface water access rules for these water sources to recognise the connectivity of surface and groundwater in upriver alluvial sediments.

5.1.6. Commence to pump rules – 24h delay rule

Part 8 Division 3 of the draft Plan also proposes a first flush rule for:

- Mangrove Creek Water Source,
- Mooney Mooney Creek Water Source,
- Jiliby Jiliby Creek Water Source,

- Ourimbah Creek Water Source
- Wyong River Water Source

For Mangrove Creek and Mooney Mooney Creek Water Sources the proposed rule requires that following a cease to pump event, a 24 hour period of continuous visible flow is required at the pump site before take can resume.

For Jilliby Jilliby Creek, Ourimbah Creek and Wyong River Water Sources the proposed rule requires that following a cease to pump event, a 24 hour continuous period of flow is required above the Very Low Flow Class threshold before take can resume.

This rule has been proposed for these water sources as the risk assessment undertaken for these water sources rated them as having high or very high risks to freshwater ecosystems based on water extractions from low or fresh flows.

5.1.7. Removal of Total Daily Extraction Limits

Part 10 Division 3 of the current plan includes a provision that establishes total daily extraction limits (TDELs) for:

- flow classes A, B and C for local water utility and other access licences in the Wyong River Water Source and;
- flow classes A, B, C, D, E for local water utility licences in the Ourimbah Creek Water Source.

For local water utility access licences, the TDEL concept is retained but are now simply referred to as local water utility access rules (found in Part 8 Division 3 of the draft Plan).

The original intent of TDELs was that they could be imposed broadly on a group of access licences. There are many difficulties in implementing this approach and the TDEL concept has now been replaced with using individual daily extraction limits where appropriate and if metering of water extraction occurs.

To align with this change in management approach, it is proposed to remove the TDEL provisions for licences other than local water utility and replace them with future amendment clauses that provide for establishing IDELs if and when appropriate.

5.1.8. Prohibit in river dams in Jilliby Jilliby Creek and Ourimbah Creek water sources

Part 9 Division 2 of the draft plan proposes to prohibit construction of new in-river dams that require an approval in Jilliby Jilliby Creek and Ourimbah Creek water sources. This restriction was previously in place for these water sources, however an administrative error resulted in the provision being missed when the management arrangements for these water sources were merged into the current water sharing plan in 2016. This proposed change provides for the original intended management arrangements for these water sources.

The risk assessment also identified Jilliby Jilliby Creek Water Source and Ourimbah Creek Water Source to have high risk to environmental factors due to licenced extraction.

5.1.9. Prohibit works approvals near SEPP wetlands and potential acid sulfate soils

The *Coastal Management Act 2016* and *State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018* (Coastal SEPP) specifies how developments within the coastal zone should be assessed. The Coastal SEPP identifies wetlands in order to protect their ecological values. There is a need for coastal water sharing plans to recognise these same wetlands to ensure protection and alignment between regulatory objectives.

Part 9 Division 2 and Division 3 of the draft plan proposes to prohibit the granting of approvals for surface water or groundwater works if it would result in more than minimal harm to a wetland mapped under the Coastal SEPP.

Further information about the Coastal SEPP can be found here:

- <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Coastal-management>

Part 9 Division 3 includes rules to prevent the acidification of water sources through drainage of potential acid sulfate soils. The rule prohibits the construction of a water supply work that takes groundwater, such as a bore, from within an area classed as having a high probability of occurrence of acid sulfate soils.

5.1.10. Protection of High priority GDEs

Groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) are those that need access to groundwater to maintain their plant and animal communities and ecological processes. The current plan includes protection for 3 listed (GDEs) by specifying minimum distance rules for new groundwater works (bores) which vary depending on the annual extraction limits to be associated with a groundwater works.

Part 9 Division 3 of the draft plan proposes to simplify the provisions by establishing a single rule that prohibits bores being constructed and used within 200m of a high priority GDE.

In addition to continuing to protect the GDEs in the current plan, the draft plan proposes to expand GDE protection.

The department recently completed a program to identify and prioritise groundwater-dependent ecosystems in NSW. The identification method incorporated existing vegetation community mapping and remote sensing to identify vegetation communities, and analysed monitoring bore data to identify potential groundwater dependence of the vegetation communities. This was followed by field-based verification in sample areas representing different land cover types. Sites were selected from almost all major catchments distributed across the NSW area. This was done to ensure that each area had a representative geographic sample that reflected the diverse environmental conditions and management practices.

More detail can be found in The *High probability GDE method report* which can be viewed here:

- https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/151894/High-Probability-GDE-method-report.pdf.

These vegetation communities are identified terrestrial GDEs that overlie alluvial resources within the Central Coast plan area. These are shown on the map below in **Figure 2**. A high resolution version of the map can be found on the public exhibition web page here:

- [High priority groundwater dependent ecosystem map](#)

The draft Plan proposes that new works to take groundwater must be a minimum of 200m from a high priority GDE identified in Schedule 3 of the plan and for those identified on the map if the high probability of groundwater dependence has been confirmed by the department.

However, the restrictions detailed in this section in relation to both the GDEs in the existing plan as well as the proposed mapped GDEs does not apply if:

- the works is to be used solely for basic landholder rights
- it is a replacement groundwater work
- the work is for monitoring environmental remediation activities or emergency services
- the location of the water supply work at a lesser distance would result in no more than minimal harm to the groundwater-dependent area.

5.1.11. Trade provisions

Part 10 of the draft Plan details the access licence dealing or trade rules. The current plan allows, within limits, trade of water into Jiliby Jiliby Creek and Ourimbah Creek water sources. The draft Plan proposes to prohibit trade into those water sources. This change aims to reduce potential additional extractive stress to high risk freshwater ecosystems as identified in the risk assessment undertaken as part of the draft Plan development process.

5.1.12. Adaptive management and amendment provisions

Adaptive management refers to the practice of change in response to new information that is received during the life of a water sharing plan. This may include data collection and monitoring or some other improvement in understanding. In the case of water sharing plans, such information could include socio-economic studies, hydrological modelling, ecological studies and information about Aboriginal cultural sites.

Adaptive management is a requirement of both the WM Act and the National Water Initiative. The WM Act provides for amendment to be made during the life of a plan if in the public interest. The draft Plan also includes some provisions that allow for amendments for during the life of the plan. Any future changes that impact water users or the environment’s access to water will be subject to public consultation. Part 13 of the draft Plan includes updated amendment provisions relating to:

- water management arrangements for Central Coast Council.
- access rules in Tuggerah Lakes based on the outcomes of the Tuggerah Lakes Expert Panel review
- protect water dependent Aboriginal cultural assets.
- establish individual daily extraction limits
- dealing rules following a Statewide review of trade in unregulated river systems.

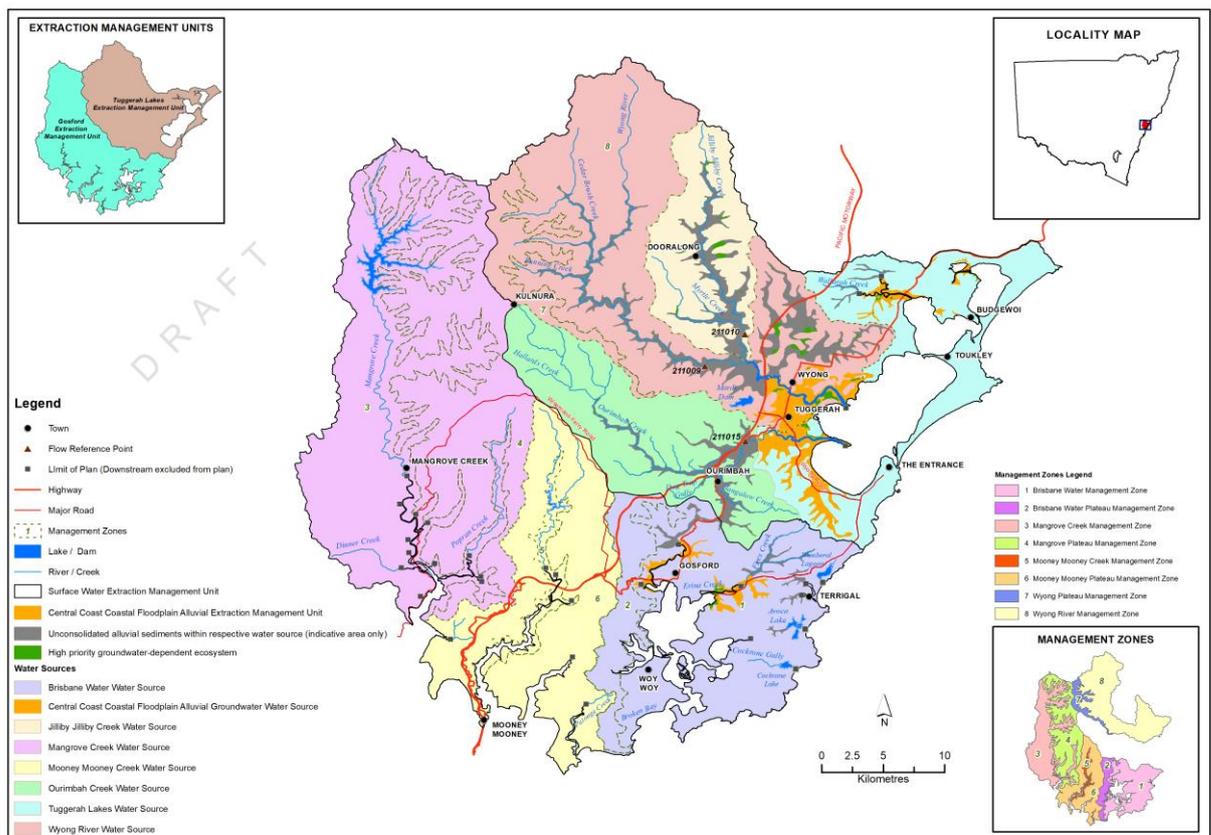


Figure 2 High priority groundwater dependent ecosystem map

6. Public exhibition phase and making a submission on the draft Plan

The *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021* will be on public exhibition from 30 November 2020 until 31 January 2021.

Submissions can be made throughout the public-exhibition period and are encouraged on all aspects of the draft water sharing plan, regardless of whether a change is proposed. Submissions supporting plan provisions as well as raising issues will assist in finalising the draft Plan.

Two public information sessions will be held. These will be held on-line due to COVID-19 restrictions on 3 December 2020 and 8 December 2020.

To find out more about these sessions and for further information on the draft Plan including the draft Plan, fact sheets, water source report cards and additional information on making a submission visit the departments website here:

- [Central Coast Water Sharing Plan Public Exhibition](#)

Appendix 1 of this document also provides links to a number of reference and supporting documents that detail historical Central Coast water planning processes.

7. Finalisation of the draft plan

Following formal public exhibition feedback and issues raised during the consultation process will be considered to inform the final plan.

The final draft water sharing plan must then be approved by both the minister for water as well as the minister for the environment before it can commence.

It is expected that the final plan will come into effect on 1 July 2021.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) are key components to adaptive management and to ensure that water sharing plans are effective in meeting their objectives. Comprehensive MER programs are resource intensive and long term. It is therefore necessary for the department to prioritise areas where there is a high risk of water extraction impacting on environmental assets or where the demand for water is greater than the volume of water available.

The department is undertaking a MER prioritisation project which will prioritise water sources for MER activities based on risk in areas that have high levels of extraction, ecological value, or stakeholder needs.

The prioritisation project is expected to be completed by mid 2021.

Appendix 1 - References and supporting documents

The draft plan, maps and information about the public exhibition period and how to make a submission can be found on the department's website here:

- [Central Coast Water Sharing Plan Public Exhibition](#)

The WM Act can be found on the NSW Legislation website here:

- <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

National Water Initiative can be found here:

- <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/water/policy/nwi>

The current water sharing plan, The *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009* be found on the NSW Legislation website here:

- <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

The background document for the current water sharing plan can be found here:

- https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/166840/central-coast-unreg-background.pdf

Details of the macro planning approach can be found here:

- http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/548153/macro_unreg_manual_web.pdf
- http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/547473/wsp_access_trading_rules_pools_unreg_rivers.pdf
- https://www.water.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/547300/macro-water-sharing-plans-the-approach-for-groundwater.pdf

The Natural Resources Commission's review of the current water sharing plan can be found here:

- <https://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/2019-2020-wsp-reviews>

The Central Coast Unregulated water sharing plan audit 2009-2014 can be found here:

- [Central Coast Unregulated Water Sharing Plan Audit](#)