

Proposed changes

Following is a summary of the proposed changes that have been included in the draft Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021 (the Plan).

Water sharing plans are the primary legal framework for managing water access and sharing in NSW. The plans are valid for 10 years from their commencement date.

Near the end of the 10-year term, the Natural Resource Commission (NRC) conducts a formal review to identify any necessary changes to deliver better outcomes for all water users, including the environment.

Under the *Water Management Act 2000*, the Minister may, on the recommendation of the NRC, extend a water sharing plan for another 10 years or replace it with an amended plan.

The NRC completed its review of the *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009* in 2020 and recommended its replacement. This replacement is due by 1 July 2022 at the latest. A copy of the NRC report is available from the NRC website at www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/publications

This factsheet provides a summary of the proposed changes to the Plan, which include both administrative amendments and varied and additional rules.

Scope of the water sharing plan

A new water sharing plan, called the 'draft Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2021' has been drafted. When finalised, this plan will replace the *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009*.

Vision, objectives, strategies and performance indicators

The plan includes updates to the vision, objectives, strategies and performance indicators to enable the monitoring and review of the performance of the plan. The proposed vision, objectives, strategies and performance indicators of the plan deal with matters similar to the current plan, but have been changed to reflect a stronger logical connection to the rules of the plan. There is also a clear distinction between the environmental, economic, social and Aboriginal cultural objectives.

Central Coast Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Water Source

The proposed replacement plan for the Central Coast includes a new water source—the Central Coast Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Water Source.

This new water source includes the alluvial groundwater downstream of the tidal limit within the water sharing plan boundary. A long-term average annual extraction limit of 1,175 megalitres is proposed for this water source. This figure is above current and future anticipated extraction so should not pose a limitation on extraction for licences located in this water source.

Some existing licences in this area will now be located within this new water source.

Additional licence shares in this water source may be granted through a controlled allocation process. Aboriginal Community Development and Aboriginal Cultural specific purpose access licences may be granted in this water source. Trading into the water source is not permitted. Trading within the water source is permitted, subject to assessment.

Estimated water requirements for basic landholder rights and licensed take

We propose to update the estimated water requirements for basic landholder rights to reflect the changes in land use that have occurred since 2009. We will also update the total volumes or unit shares specified in the share components of all access licences to reflect current information.

Water supply works approvals

The draft replacement plan includes rules that are designed to minimise impacts on our important wetlands and instream habitats. The following changes to rules that apply to surface water supply works approvals are proposed:

Table 1. Rule changes for water supply work approvals

Rule change	Where it applies
Construction of in-river dams, that require approval, is prohibited on all order streams.	Jilliby Jilliby Creek water source Ourimbah Creek water source
Water supply works near coastal wetlands listed under the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018</i> (Coastal SEPP wetlands) are prohibited if there will be more than minimal harm to the wetland.	Brisbane Water water source Tuggerah Lakes water source Wyong River water source Central Coast Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater water source

Distance rules relating to the location of groundwater bores in alluvial aquifers

The draft plan proposes new rules that govern the minimum distance that groundwater bores may be located from areas of acid sulphate soils. The plan proposes that water supply works must not be granted or amended within an area classed as having a high probability of the occurrence of acid sulphate soils, based on the Acid Sulphate Soil Risk Map maintained by the department.

Similarly, there are proposed new rules governing the minimum distance that groundwater bores can be located from other bores or sites that require protection. New or amended water supply works will not be approved:

- within 200 metres of an existing water supply work that is located on another land holding and accessing water from the same water source
- within 100m from the boundary of a landholding on which a water supply work is located (unless the owner of the adjoining landholding has given consent)

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- within 500 metres of a local water utility water supply work (unless the local water utility has provided consent)
- within 100 metres of a Government monitoring or observation bore
- within 500 metres of a contamination site identified by the plan
- within 250 metres from the edge of a contamination plume and an onsite sewage system
- between 250 and 500 metres of the edge of a contamination plume where drawdown will occur within 250 metres of the edge of the contamination plume
- within 200 metres of any high priority Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem
- within 200 metres of a groundwater-dependent culturally significant site.

Additions to groundwater-dependent ecosystems map

Recent work by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has identified additional potential high-priority groundwater-dependent ecosystems including some wetlands. We propose to add these groundwater-dependent ecosystems to the High Priority Groundwater-Dependent Ecosystem Map in the replacement plan. The distance restrictions for groundwater dependent ecosystems will apply to these newly identified areas including any Coastal SEPP wetlands identified as high priority groundwater dependent ecosystems. These ecosystems are referred to as groundwater-dependent vegetation ecosystems and are in the following 4 water sources:

- Brisbane Water Water Source
- Central Coast Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Water Source
- Jiliby Jiliby Creek Water Source
- Wyong River Water Source.

Access and trade rules

No changes to flow reference points or flow classes are proposed.

A risk assessment was completed to identify the risk that water extraction poses to ecological values. This risk assessment informed the following changes proposed to access and trade rules:

- Mangrove Creek and Mooney Mooney Creek water sources to have a cease-to-take rule that prohibits access to water when there is no visible flow at the pump site from which water is being taken
- implementing a commence-to-take rule that requires continuous visible flow at the pump site for 24 hours after a cease-to-take event before extraction can commence for the Mangrove Creek and Mooney Mooney Creek water sources
- implementing a commence-to-take rule that requires continuous flow above the Very Low Flow Class at the flow reference point for 24 hours after a cease-to-take event before extraction can commence in the Jiliby Jiliby Creek, Ourimbah Creek and Wyong River water sources.
- removing trading permissions into the Jiliby Jiliby Creek and Ourimbah Creek water sources due to high risks to flows and ecological assets from water extraction
- Total Daily Extraction Limits (TDELs) for local water utility licences have been replaced by specific access rules for the taking of surface water under local water utility licences. TDELs for other licences have been removed and an amendment provision included to apply Individual Daily Extraction Limits (IDELs) if required in the future.

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Inclusion of an amendment provision for trade rules following a state-wide review of trade in unregulated river systems.

More information

The draft Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Alluvial Water Sources 2021, report cards summarising rules for specific water sources and other information is available from www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/central-coast-wsp

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