

21 October 2021

New aquifer access licences

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is making new aquifer access licences available in 47 groundwater sources that have unassigned water. Unassigned water exists in groundwater sources where current water commitments, including basic landholder rights, are safely below limits specified in water sharing plans.

Interested parties can bid for the right to apply for an aquifer access licence during the registration of interest (tender) period. The registration period is open between 1 November 2021 to 30 November 2021. Late applications will not be considered. Participants can register their interest by nominating a groundwater source(s) specified in the [Controlled Allocation Order 2021](#), and the price per share they are willing to pay using the application process provided.

The highest bids above the minimum price will likely be successful, and upon full payment, will be invited to apply for a corresponding aquifer access licence. It should be noted that the licence does not guarantee groundwater of a particular yield or quality from a site. Test drilling should be done to prove a water source.

Successful participants will need to lodge a water access licence application. Once the licence is granted, licence holders will require a water supply work approval to access water. The application for a water supply work approval will be determined in accordance with the relevant water sharing plan and the *Water Management Act 2000*. Water extraction is allowed once a licence is granted, water supply work is approved and a water allocation is made to the licence category.

The Controlled Allocation Order 2021 provides an opportunity for the right to apply for a water access licence where a water source is not fully committed. It provides an alternative for where water trading opportunities are limited.

For more information please visit: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/controlled

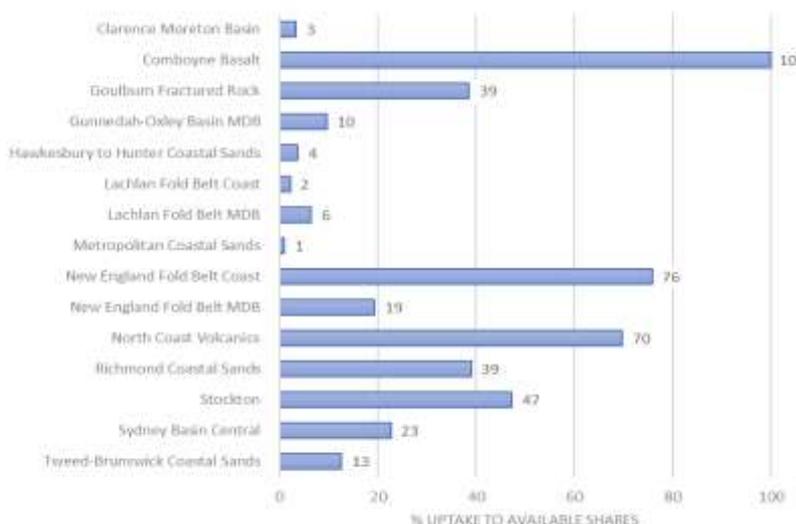
Result of the Controlled Allocation uptake - 2020

Licensed entitlement is comprised of shares of available water in a water source. Available Water Determinations, known as allocations, are expressed in megalitres per share (ML/share) and are made at least annually. Therefore, a licence of 100 shares would have its account credited with 20ML when an allocation of 20% or 0.20ML/share is made, 50ML when an allocation of 50% or 0.50ML/share is made and 100ML when an allocation of 100% or 1.0ML/share is made.

In the 2020 tender, new shares in 43 groundwater sources were available. The greatest percentage of share uptake to available shares were in the following six groundwater sources (numbered from high to low).

1. Comboyne Basalt Groundwater Source
2. New England Fold Belt Coast Groundwater Source
3. North Coast Volcanics Groundwater Source
4. Stockton Groundwater Source
5. Richmond Coastal Sands Groundwater Source
6. Goulburn Fractured Rock Groundwater Source.

Figure 1. Percentage uptake to available released shares in 2020 tender (nil uptakes not listed)



Historical uptake (2013-2020)

A high percentage uptake of water shares more commonly occurs in the groundwater sources where less shares are available in any one year – where there is more competition. Details can be found in the outcomes reports at the controlled allocations website:

www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/controlled

There was greater than 70% annual uptake in the following nine groundwater sources:

- Comboyne Basalt
- Lachlan Fold Belt Coast
- New England Fold Belt Coast
- North Coast Volcanics
- Sydney Basin Cox River
- Sydney Basin MDB
- Sydney Basin Nepean
- Sydney Basin South
- Upper Darling Alluvial

There has been little interest in the fourteen water sources below when offered in previous years:

- Coastal Macleay Floodplain Alluvial
- Coastal Nambucca Floodplain Alluvial
- Coffs Harbour Coastal Sands
- GAB Warrego Shallow
- Great Lakes Coastal Sands
- Hastings Coastal Sands
- Hawkesbury Alluvium
- Kanmantoo Fold Belt North Western

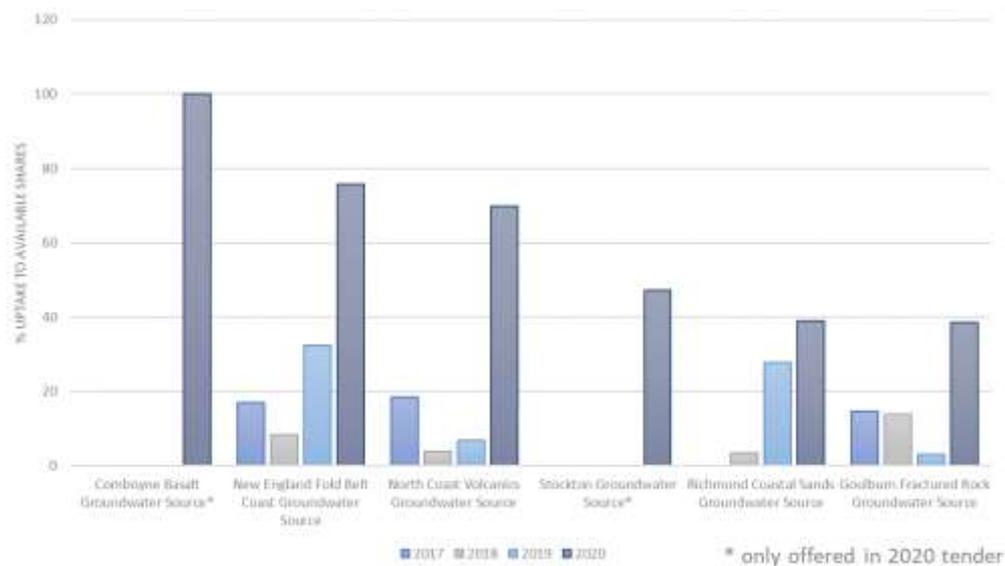
Water Allocation Statement

Controlled Allocation Various groundwater sources



- Macleay Coastal Sands
- Manning-Camden Haven Coastal Sands
- Oxley Basin Coast
- Peel Fractured Rock Water Source
- South East Coastal Sands
- Sydney Basin Blue Mountains

Figure 2. History of percentage uptake of the top six 2020 groundwater sources.



Subscribe [here](#) to receive the Department of Industry's monthly email update on water planning, management and reform in New South Wales.

You can also follow DPIE-Water on Twitter: @NSWDPIE_Water