

Report card for the Little River Water Source

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Water source context

Water Sharing Plan:	Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources
Extraction Management Unit:	Upper Nepean and Upstream Warragamba
Area:	25,593.4 ha
Inflowing water source:	Nil
Receiving water source:	Little River Water Source

River flows

Low-flow index:	1 ML/day (80 th percentile)
Flow records:	Little River at the Fire Road W41 gauge (2122809)

Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate:	94.9 ML/yr
Native title rights:	0 ML/yr

Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement:	56.6 ML/yr (unregulated river licences)
Local water utilities entitlement:	0 ML/yr
Major utilities entitlement:	0 ML/yr
Proportion of extraction management unit:	<1%

Rules

Managing access licences

Each water access licence has its own share component (volume of the licence) and a water allocation account that acts like a bank account where water is credited or debited.

- Water is credited to an account by an available water determination or if water is traded in (purchased) during the year from other licence holders
- Water is debited from the account when water is extracted or traded out (sold). Total extraction from a work (pump, bore, etc.) will be measured via metering or logbooks.

Carryover and individual account limits

For a major water utility access licence account – carryover is not permitted.

Domestic and stock, unregulated river and aquifer access licence accounts - carryover is permitted up to 1 ML per unit share or 100% of share component (where expressed in ML) at the end of each water year.

Domestic and stock, unregulated river and aquifer access licences - the maximum water account debit in any 3 consecutive water years is the volume of water allocated to the account over those 3 years from available water determinations plus any adjustments made for allocation assignments (trades) or water allocation re-credited into the account.

Table 1. Draft rules for granting access licences

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<p>There are limited purposes for which a new licence will be granted. It is anticipated that most water needs will be sourced from the market. One reason a licence may be granted is for Aboriginal cultural purposes. Other reasons are identified in Clause 10 of the Water Management Act General Regulation 2018.</p>		
Aboriginal cultural access licence	Permitted to a limit of 10 ML/yr.	No change.
Aboriginal community development access licence	Prohibited	No change.

Table 2. Draft surface water access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
	River flow can be viewed on WaterNSW Real-time Data website . Search for a gauge under Rivers and Streams.	
Cease to pump	<p>Cease to pump when no visible flow at the pump site.</p> <p>Cease to pump when flows are in the very low flow class.</p> <p>No take 24 hours after a cease to pump event.</p>	No change.
Flow classes	<p>Very low flow class: ≤ 3 ML/day</p> <p>A class: >3 ML/day</p>	No change.
Extraction from an in-river pool	Must cease pumping if the in-river pool is below full capacity.	No change.
Extraction from an authorised in-river dam pool	Rules specified on the water supply work approval for the in-river dam.	No change
Off-river pools (natural pools, lakes or lagoons)	Extraction from natural pools can only occur if the pool is 100% full.	No change.

Table 3 Exemptions from surface water access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Health and hygiene	<p>For an access licence specified in Schedule 2 of the plan, no more than 20 kl/day for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fruit washing • cleaning of dairy plant and equipment for the purposes of hygiene • poultry watering and misting • cleaning of enclosures used for intensive animal production for the purposes of hygiene. 	Exemption now applies to both fruit and vegetable washing.

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Domestic use	For domestic consumption under a domestic and stock access licence, up to 1 kl/day.	No change.
Harvestable rights	From a run-off harvesting dam.	No change.
Specific purpose	For an access licence specified in Schedule 2 of the plan.	No change.

Table 4 Draft rules for constructing surface water supply works

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
In-river dams	Permitted.	Not permitted on third order streams or higher.
Works near coastal wetlands listed under <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i>	No current rule.	Prohibited within 3km upstream of a Ramsar wetland or 200m of a coastal wetland identified on the Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforest Area Map available on the NSW Planning Portal at www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au

Table 5 Draft water trading (dealing) rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
INTO water source	Permitted, no net gain.	Prohibited
WITHIN water source	Permitted.	No change.
Surface to ground	Prohibited	No change.
Ground to surface	Prohibited	No change.
Convert to high flow	Prohibited	No change.

Trading covers conversion of access licence to a new category (for example from unregulated river to aquifer), assignment of rights dealings (trading of a licence), share component dealings between water sources (trading of entitlement between water sources), water allocation dealings (trading an annual allocation) and water supply works dealings (relocation of an extraction point).

Key factors for decision

- Little River Water Source has very high ecological values and medium likelihood of extraction from low flows impacting the ecological values, with overall high risk to low flows. Ecological values have increased since the commencement of the first plan with overall risk remaining high.
- No change is proposed to the current access rules as the level of overall risk (high) has not changed since the commencement of the first plan
- In-river dams will be prohibited on third order and higher streams due to the very high ecological values of this water source.
- The current water sharing plan allows trade into the Little River Water Source so long as there is no gain of entitlement. It is proposed to further restrict trade into this water source due to the very high ecological values. Trade out of the Little River Water Source is allowed and should help reduce the overall risk.

Public exhibition

The Department of Planning and Environment seeks feedback from the public on the suitability of the proposed rules for this water source.

The draft Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sharing Plan and supporting fact sheets are available from the department's [Public Exhibition website](#).