

# Consultation approach for flood effected areas in the Water Sharing Plans for the Greater Metropolitan Region

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This factsheet describes changes to the public consultation approach for the Greater Metropolitan Region water sharing plans in response to recent flooding

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Consultation is an essential part of the development of the *Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated Water Sources 2023* and the *Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources 2023* (the draft plans). The public exhibition period for the draft plans began 27 July 2022 and was due to close on 7 August 2022.

Public information sessions were planned throughout the public exhibition period, including webinars and face-to-face sessions. Due to the recent flood emergency in the Greater Metropolitan Region a number of information sessions were cancelled or postponed. Details of cancellations and rescheduled dates are shown on the [public exhibition pages of the website](#).

The public exhibition period will be extended by 2 weeks and will now close on 21 August 2022.

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## Approach to consultation on proposed plan changes

The Department of Planning and Environment recognises that residents and businesses in flood affected areas are focussed on how to manage the existing situation, rather than on longer term water allocation and water use planning. We have reviewed the approach to public consultation in consideration of local stakeholders and their capacity to engage during this period.

In effected areas, consultation on some proposed changes will occur in the future when it is more appropriate to engage with the communities. This means some proposed changes will not be brought into effect when the plans commence in 2023, but we will be engaging with stakeholders about these within 5 years of plan commencement. Following this consultation, the plans may be amended to include any changes which were delayed. All other aspects of the draft plan will proceed as normal and we welcome submissions during the public exhibition period closing 21 August 2022.

## Delayed consultation on proposed unregulated water sharing plan changes

We have changed our approach to consultation on some rule changes proposed in the draft Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023. Consultation will be delayed for some specific rules in flood effected water sources as detailed in Table 1. We will come back and consult on these proposed rule changes within the first 5 years of the plan. All other aspects of the draft plan will proceed as normal and we welcome submissions during the public exhibition period closing 21 August 2022.

Table 1 Delayed rule changes in the unregulated water sharing plan

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan rule (current rules)	Proposed rule in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<b>Maldon Weir Water Source</b>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when the volume of water released in the prior 24-hour period from Pheasants Nest Weir is greater than zero and the stage of the Maldon Weir is less than the signal stage.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow is less than or equal to the sum of volume of water required to be released from Nepean Dam, Avon Dam and Cordeaux Dam calculated at 8am multiplied by transmission loss.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when the volume of water released in the prior 24-hour period from Pheasants Nest Weir is greater than zero and the stage of the Maldon Weir is less than the signal stage.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>
<b>Nattai River Water Source</b>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at Nattai River at the Craggs gauge (2122801) is <b>≤2.5 ML/day</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at Nattai River at the Craggs gauge (2122801) is <b>≤2.7 ML/day</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at Nattai River at the Craggs gauge (2122801) is at <b>&lt;2.5 ML/day</b>.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan rule (current rules)	Proposed rule in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<p><b>Stonequarry Creek Water Source</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow at Stonequarry Creek at Picton gauge (212053) is <b>≤0.6 ML/day</b> and cannot start pumping until the river is <b>&gt;0.7 ML/day</b> after a cease to pump event.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow at Stonequarry Creek at Picton gauge (212053) is <b>≤0.8 ML/day</b> and cannot start pumping until the river is <b>&gt;1 ML/day</b> after a cease to pump event.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow at Stonequarry Creek at Picton gauge (212053) is <b>≤0.6 ML/day</b> and cannot start pumping until the river is <b>&gt;0.7 ML/day</b> after a cease to pump event.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>
<p><b>Cattai Creek Water Source</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at Cattai Creek at Cattai Ridge Road gauge (2122951) is <b>≤3 ML/day</b>.</p> <p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted with no net gain.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at Cattai Creek at Cattai Ridge Road gauge (2122951) is at <b>≤5 ML/day</b>.</p> <p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade not permitted.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at Cattai Creek at Cattai Ridge Road gauge (2122951) is at <b>≤3 ML/day</b>.</p> <p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted with no net gain.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan rule (current rules)	Proposed rule in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<p>Wianamatta-South Creek Water Source</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p><b>Upper South Creek Management Zone:</b> Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at South Creek at the Great Western Highway gauge (212048) is at <b>≤0.2 ML/day.</b></p> <p><b>Lower South Creek Management Zone:</b> Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at South Creek at Richmond Road gauge (212297) is at <b>≤3 ML/day.</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p><b>Upper South Creek Management Zone:</b> Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at South Creek at the Great Western Highway gauge (212048) is at <b>≤0.3 ML/day.</b></p> <p><b>Lower South Creek Management Zone:</b> Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at South Creek at Richmond Road gauge (212297) is at <b>≤7.7 ML/day.</b></p> <p><b>Eastern Creek Management Zone</b> Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at Eastern Creek at Riverstone gauge (212296) is at <b>≤10 ML/day.</b></p> <p><b>Note</b> the creation of Eastern Creek is the result of a management zone boundary change.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p><b>Upper South Creek Management Zone:</b> Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at South Creek at the Great Western Highway gauge (212048) is at <b>≤0.2 ML/day.</b></p> <p><b>Lower South Creek Management Zone:</b> Users must cease pumping when flow in the river at South Creek at Richmond Road gauge (212297) is at <b>≤3 ML/day.</b></p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules and management zone boundaries can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan rule (current rules)	Proposed rule in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<p><b>Mid Nepean River Weirs Water Source</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p><b>Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when no visible flow at the pump site.</p> <p><b>All other management zones</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when the sum of releases in the previous 24 hours from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pheasants Nest Weir</li> <li>• Broughtons Pass Weir.</li> </ul> <p>is greater than zero and the stage at weir within each respective management zone is less than signal stage.</p> <p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>Water shortage exemption to the cease to pump rule if there have been several consecutive days in the very low flow class. Number of days dependant on temperature and month.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p><b>Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when no visible flow at the pump site.</p> <p><b>All other management zones</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flows are less than the volume of water required to be released from Nepean, Avon, Cataract and Cordeaux dams calculated at 8am multiplied by transmission loss.</p> <p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>Exemption rules being reviewed.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p><b>Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when no visible flow at the pump site.</p> <p><b>All other management zones</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when the sum of releases in the previous 24 hours from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pheasants Nest Weir</li> <li>• Broughtons Pass Weir.</li> </ul> <p>is greater than zero and the stage at weir within each respective management zone is less than signal stage.</p> <p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>Continue water shortage exemption.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules, including exemptions can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

**Lower Nepean River  
Water Source**

Access rules

The cease to pump rule is based on:

- water released from Wallacia Weir determined by Upper Nepean dams inflows, less a transmission loss factor measured at Yarramundi.
- percentile of total inflows into the Upper Nepean dams converted to a factor
- drinking water releases from Warragamba Dam
- discharges from St Marys wastewater treatment plant
- water savings from the Hawkesbury Nepean River Recovery Program.

For more specific information on this rule, please see the [report card](#) (PDF, 171KB) for this water source.

Trade

Trade permitted from Upper Hawkesbury River Water Source if the total sum of share components in the Lower Nepean Management Zone is not more than 3.65GL greater than at the commencement of the plan.

Access rules

Cease to pump rule based on:

- required environmental flow releases determined by inflows to the Upper Nepean dams and percentage total storage Greater Sydney dams, less a transmission loss factor measured at Yarramundi.
- drinking water releases from Warragamba Dam
- discharges from St Marys wastewater treatment plant – up to 33ML/day
- water savings from the Hawkesbury Nepean River Recovery Program.

For more specific information on this rule, please see the [report card](#) (PDF, 171KB) for this water source.

Trade

Trade permitted only from the Mid Nepean River Weirs Water Source.

Exemptions

Exemption rule being reviewed.

Access rules

The cease to pump rule based on inflows to Upper Nepean dams and water released from Wallacia Weir (2011 plan rule).

Trade

Trade permitted from Upper Hawkesbury River Water Source if the total sum of share components in the Lower Nepean Management Zone is not more than 3.65GL greater than at the commencement of the plan.

Exemptions

Continue the exemption for cropping purposes.

New amendment clause so the rules including exceptions can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan rule (current rules)	Proposed rule in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
	<p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>An exemption to the cease to pump applies for cropping purposes during years 1 to 5 of the Plan. Was to be reviewed at year 5 of the plan.</p>		
<p><b>Upper Hawkesbury River Water Source</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p><b>Upper Hawkesbury River (Grose River to South Creek) Management Zone</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow at 2 upstream gauges is than or equal to the upper limit of the very low flow class for 2 upstream water sources.</p> <p><b>Upper Hawkesbury River (South Creek to Cattai Creek) Management Zone</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow at 3 upstream gauges is than or equal to the upper limit of the very low flow class for 3 upstream water sources.</p> <p><b>Upper Hawkesbury River (Cattai Creek to Colo River) Management Zone</b></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flow at 4 upstream gauges is than or equal</p>	<p>Merged three management zones.</p> <p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>The cease to pump rule for the water source is based on the sum of flows at 6 gauges being less than or equal to the sum of the very low flow class in 4 water sources and one management zone.</p> <p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted from upstream water sources.</p> <p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>Exemption rule being reviewed.</p>	<p>Management zones not merged.</p> <p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Access rule as specified in the 2011 plan.</p> <p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted from upstream water sources.</p> <p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>Continue the exemption for cropping purposes.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules including exemptions can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan rule (current rules)	Proposed rule in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
	<p>to the upper limit of the very low flow class for 4 upstream water sources.</p> <p>For more specific information on this rule, please see the <a href="#">report card (PDF, 171KB)</a> for this water source.</p> <p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted from Lower Nepean River subject to no net gain.</p> <p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>An exemption to the cease to pump applies for cropping purposes during years 1 to 5 of the Plan. This was to be reviewed at year 5 of the plan.</p>		



Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan rule (current rules)	Proposed rule in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<p><b>Lower Hawkesbury River Water Source.</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flows at 5 gauges are less than or equal to the sum of the upper limit of the very low flow class of 5 upstream water sources.</p> <p>For more specific information on this rule, please see the <a href="#">report card</a> (PDF, 162KB) for this water source.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flows at 6 gauges are less than or equal to the sum of the upper limit of the very low flow class of 5 upstream water sources, 3.3 ML/day, the environmental flows released from Upper Nepean (multiplied by 0.7), and the environmental flows from Upper Nepean dams.</p> <p>For more specific information on this rule, please see the <a href="#">report card</a> (PDF, 162KB) for this water source.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users must cease pumping when flows at 5 gauges are less than or equal to the sum of the upper limit of the very low flow class of 5 upstream water sources (2011 rules).</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>
<p><b>Colo River Water Source</b></p>	<p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted with no net gain.</p>	<p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade not permitted.</p>	<p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted with no net gain.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>
<p><b>Macdonald River Water Source</b></p>	<p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted with no net gain.</p>	<p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade not permitted.</p>	<p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Trade permitted with no net gain.</p> <p>New amendment clause so the rules can be reviewed within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

## Delayed consultation on proposed groundwater water sharing plan changes

We have changed our approach to consultation on some proposed rule changes in the draft Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Water Sources 2023. Consultation will be delayed for some specific rules in flood effected water sources as detailed in Table 2. We will come back and consult on these proposed rule changes within the first 5 years of the plan. All other aspects of the draft plan will proceed as normal and we welcome submissions during the public exhibition period closing 21 August 2022.

Table 2 Delayed rule changes in the groundwater water sharing plan

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan (current rules)	Proposed rules in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<b>Hawkesbury Alluvium Groundwater Source</b>	<p><u>Boundary</u></p> <p>The water source boundary excludes some areas of the Hawkesbury River’s alluvial aquifer.</p> <p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users taking groundwater under aquifer access or new local water utility or major utility licences from waterfront land (within 40 metres of the high bank of a river) must cease pumping when unregulated river access from the Upper Hawkesbury (Grose River to South Creek) Management Zone is not permitted.</p>	<p><u>Boundary</u></p> <p>Water source boundary changes to extend the Hawkesbury Alluvium Groundwater Source and include additional areas of alluvium.</p> <p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Rules for take from works within and outside waterfront land continue to apply however access is based on the proposed cease to pump rule for the Upper Hawkesbury River Water Source in Table 1 and only apply to aquifer access licences.</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for proposed surface water access rules.</p>	<p><u>Boundary</u></p> <p>Retain the 2011 boundary for the Hawkesbury River Alluvium Groundwater Source.</p> <p>Include an amendment clause to allow changes to the Hawkesbury Alluvium Groundwater Source boundary and consequential change to Sydney Basin Central Groundwater Source within the first 5 years of the plan.</p> <p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Access rules for aquifer access licences will reflect the surface water access rules for the Upper Hawkesbury (Grose River to South Creek) Management Zone as specified in the 2011 plan.</p> <p>Include an amendment clause to allow changes to the access rules for the Hawkesbury Alluvium within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan (current rules)	Proposed rules in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
	<p>Users taking groundwater under aquifer access licences from outside waterfront land must cease pumping when unregulated river access from the Upper Hawkesbury (Grose River to South Creek) Management Zone has not been permitted for 30 days.</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for surface water access rules.</p>		

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan (current rules)	Proposed rules in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<p><b>Maroota Tertiary Sands Groundwater Source</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users taking groundwater from waterfront land under an aquifer access, or new local water utility or major utility licence must cease pumping when unregulated river access from the Cattai Creek Water Source or Lower Hawkesbury River Water Source (depending on bore location) is not permitted under the 2011 unregulated plan</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for surface water access rules.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users taking groundwater from waterfront land under an aquifer access licences are subject to the <u>proposed</u> surface water access rules for the Cattai Creek Water Source or Lower Hawkesbury River Water Source (depending on bore location).</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for proposed surface water access rules.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Access rules for aquifer access licences taking groundwater from waterfront land located in the Cattai Creek or Lower Hawkesbury River water sources will reflect the 2011 unregulated plan access rules. Refer to Table 1 for proposed approach for final plan.</p> <p>Include an amendment clause to allow change the access rules within the first 5 years of the plan.</p>

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan (current rules)	Proposed rules in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<p><b>Metropolitan Coastal Sands Groundwater Source</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users taking groundwater from waterfront land under an aquifer access, or new local water utility or major utility licence must cease to pump when unregulated river access is not permitted in the Jaspers Brush Creek and Tributaries Water Source, Lower Hawkesbury, River Water Source, Lower Wingecarribee River Water Source, or Minnamurra River Water Source (depending on bore location).</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for surface water access rules.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users taking groundwater from waterfront land under an aquifer access licences are subject to the <u>proposed</u> surface water access rules for the relevant unregulated river water source.</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for proposed surface water access rules.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Access rules for aquifer access licences taking from waterfront land located in the Lower Hawkesbury River Water Source will reflect the 2011 unregulated plan access rules. Refer to Table 1 for proposed approach for final plan for Lower Hawkesbury River Water Source.</p> <p>Include an amendment clause to allow changes to access rules for take from the Metropolitan Coastal Sands Groundwater Source within the Lower Hawkesbury River Water Source within the first 5 years of the plan.</p> <p>Note – the department is continuing to consult on the proposed access rules for aquifer access licences from waterfront land located in the other river water sources during public exhibition.</p>

Flood effected Water Source	2011 plan (current rules)	Proposed rules in draft plan (on public exhibition)	Proposed approach for final plan (to commence 1 July 2023)
<p><b>Sydney Basin Central, Nepean and West Groundwater Sources</b></p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users taking groundwater from waterfront land under an aquifer access licence, new local water utility or major utility must cease to pump when unregulated river access is not permitted under the 2011 unregulated plan for the relevant unregulated river water source or management zone.</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for surface water access rules.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Users taking groundwater from waterfront land under an aquifer access licences are subject to the <u>proposed</u> surface water access rules for the relevant unregulated river water source or management zone.</p> <p>Refer to Table 1 for proposed surface water access rules.</p> <p>Cease to pump conditions are not stated in the groundwater plan. The rules in the groundwater plan refer to the access rules in the Unregulated river plan.</p>	<p><u>Access rules</u></p> <p>Access rules for aquifer access licences taking from waterfront land within the water sources listed below will reflect the 2011 unregulated plan access rules outlined in Table 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maldon Weir Water Source</li> <li>• Nattai River Water Source</li> <li>• Stonequarry Creek Water Source</li> <li>• Cattai Creek Water Source</li> <li>• Wianamatta-South Creek Water Source</li> <li>• Mid Nepean River Weirs Water Source</li> <li>• Lower Nepean River Water Source</li> <li>• Upper Hawkesbury River Water Source</li> <li>• Lower Hawkesbury River Water Source.</li> <li>• Colo River Water Source</li> <li>• Macdonald River Water Source</li> </ul> <p>Include an amendment clause to allow changes to access rules within the first 5 years of the plan for the Sydney Basin Central, Nepean and West Groundwater Sources within the surface water sources listed above</p> <p>Note – The department is continuing to consult on the proposed access rules for aquifer access licences taking from waterfront land located in the other unregulated water sources during public exhibition.</p>