

# Report card for the Mid Bega River Sands Water Source

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## Water source context

<b>Water Sharing Plan:</b>	Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023
<b>Extraction Management Unit (EMU):</b>	Bega River Catchment Extraction Management Unit
<b>Area:</b>	4.7 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Inflowing water source:</b>	Upper Bega/Bemboka Rivers, Mid Bega River Tributaries and Wolumla Creek Water Sources
<b>Receiving water source:</b>	Bega and Brogo Regulated Rivers Water Source
<b>Groundwater-dependent ecosystems:</b>	None identified at plan commencement
<b>Approximate average annual rainfall:</b>	850 mm

## Basic landholder rights

<b>Domestic and stock rights estimate:</b>	11 ML/year
<b>Native title rights:</b>	0 ML/year
<b>Harvestable rights:</b>	Not applicable (water source consists of trunk stream and adjacent alluvium)

## Licensed water entitlements

<b>Total surface water entitlement:</b>	23 ML/year for Domestic and Stock access licences 3225 ML/year for Unregulated River access licences
<b>Total groundwater entitlement:</b>	750 ML/year of Aquifer access licences
<b>Local water utilities entitlement:</b>	2640 ML/year

## Rules

### Managing Access Licenses

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

Domestic and stock, local water utility, unregulated river and aquifer access licence accounts:

- Carryover of water remaining in a water allocation account is permitted at the end of each water year up to 1 ML per unit share or 100% of share component (where expressed in ML).
- 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 licenses

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<p>There are limited purposes for which a new licence will be granted. It is anticipated that most additional 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 <i>Water Management Act General Regulation 2018</i>.</p>		
Aboriginal cultural access licence	Permitted up to 10 ML/year per licence, subject to assessment	No change
Aboriginal community development (ACD) access licence	Permitted into C Class, up to a total of 500 ML/year for all ACD access licences in the Lower Tantawangalo Creek Management Zone and the following water sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Bega/Lower Brogo Rivers Tributaries</li> <li>• Mid Bega River Sands</li> <li>• Upper Bega/Bemboka Rivers</li> </ul>	Not permitted
Local water utility (LWU)	Permitted for Bega Valley Shire Council subject to equivalent reduction in LWU shares in Upper Tantawangalo Creek Management Zone	Not permitted

Table 2 Draft surface water access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
River flow can be viewed on <a href="#">WaterNSW Real-time Data website</a> . Search for a gauge under Rivers and Streams.		
<b>Cease to pump</b>	Take is not permitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by accredited* licence holders when the standing water level at <b>Bega Borefield The Ranch (GW 39001)</b> is at or below 4.5 m AHD, or</li> <li>by non-accredited licence holders when the standing water level at GW 39001 is above 4.5 m AHD and below 5.5 m AHD</li> </ul>	For all licence holders, take is not permitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when the standing water level at Bega Borefield @ The Ranch (GW 39001) is at or below 4.5 m AHD,</li> </ul> It is proposed that there will no longer be a differentiation in access rules between accredited and non-accredited licence holders.
<b>Commence to pump</b>	If flows have been less than the cease to pump level for a period of 30 or more consecutive days, water must not be taken for <b>24 hours</b> after flows have risen above the cease to pump level.	No change
<b>Flow classes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Very Low Flow Class:</b> GW level at GW 39001 is at or below 4.5 m AHD</li> <li><b>Low Flow Class:</b> GW level at GW 39001 is above 4.5 m AHD and below or at 5.5 m AHD</li> <li><b>A1 Class:</b> GW level at GW 39001 is above 5.5 m; and flow in Bega River at <b>Kanoona (GS 219032)</b> is at or below 65 ML/d and there is no visible flow in the Bega River d/s of Princes Hwy bridge</li> <li><b>A2 Class:</b> Flow at <b>Kanoona (GS 219032)</b> is at or below 65ML/d and there is visible flow in the Bega River immediately downstream of the Princess Highway bridge</li> <li><b>B Class:</b> flow at <b>Kanoona (GS 219032)</b> is greater than 65 ML/day and equal to or less than 160 ML/d and there is visible flow in the Bega River immediately downstream of the Princess Highway bridge.</li> <li><b>C Class:</b> flow at <b>Kanoona (GS 219032)</b> is greater than 160 ML/day</li> </ul>	No change

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules	
Total daily extraction limits	Very low flow: (local water utility only)	3.5 ML/day	No change
	Low flow & A1 Class:	12 ML/day Consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic and stock access licences 0.15 ML/day</li> <li>Local water utility access licences 4.7 ML/day</li> <li>Unregulated River access licences 5.79 ML/day</li> <li>Aquifer access licences 1.36 ML/day</li> </ul>	No change
	A2 Class:	18.85 ML/day Consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic and stock access licences 0.15 ML/day</li> <li>Local water utility access licences 6.7 ML/day</li> <li>Unregulated River access licences 9.72 ML/day</li> <li>Aquifer access licences 2.28 ML/day</li> </ul>	No change
	B Class:	37.45 ML/day Consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic and stock access licences 0.15 ML/day</li> <li>Local water utility access licences 12.8 ML/day</li> <li>Unregulated River access licences 19.85 ML/day</li> <li>Aquifer access licences 4.65 ML/day</li> </ul>	No change
Take from in-river dams	Take is not permitted when the dam is below full capacity unless otherwise specified on the water supply work approval for the dam.	No change.	
Take from natural in-river pools	Take is not permitted when the pool is below full capacity.	No change.	
Take from natural off-river pools	Take is not permitted when the pool is below 50 % capacity unless otherwise specified on the water supply work approval.	No change.	

\* Licence holders are accredited for undertaking works to improve river health: eg. fencing off waterways, establishing riparian vegetation, improved effluent management.

Table 3 Draft alluvial groundwater access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<b>Take of alluvial groundwater</b>	<p>Take is not permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by accredited* licence holders when the standing water level at GW 39001 is at or below 4.5 m AHD, or</li> <li>by non-accredited licence holders when the standing water level at GW 39001 is above 4.5 m AHD and below 5.5 m AHD, or</li> <li>when there is no visible flow in the river at the location closest to the supply work used for extraction.</li> </ul>	<p>For all licence holders, take is not permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when the standing water level at GW 39001 is at or below 4.5 m AHD, or</li> <li>when there is no visible flow in the river at the location closest to the supply work used for extraction.</li> </ul> <p>It is proposed that there will no longer be a differentiation in access rules between accredited and non-accredited licence holders.</p>

\* Refer to footnote below Table 2

Table 4 Draft exemptions from access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<b>Health and hygiene</b>	<p>For an access licence specified in the plan, no more than 20 kl/day for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fruit washing</li> <li>cleaning of dairy plant and equipment for the purposes of hygiene</li> <li>poultry watering and misting</li> <li>cleaning of enclosures used for intensive animal production for the purposes of hygiene.</li> </ul>	<p>No change to the access rule except for the addition of “vegetable washing” (maximum take of 20 kl/day) as an exempt purpose.</p>
<b>Domestic use</b>	<p>No exemptions beyond year 3 of the plan.</p>	<p>Up to 1 kl/day may be taken for domestic use under a domestic and stock access licence.</p>
<b>Stock use</b>	<p>No exemptions beyond year 3 of the plan.</p>	<p>Take of stock water under an access licence is no longer exempt from the access rules.</p>
<b>Specific purpose</b>	<p>For access licences listed in the schedules of the plan.</p>	<p>For access licences listed in the schedules of the plan.</p>

<b>Aquifer interference activities</b>	Take may occur for an access licence that nominates an aquifer interference approval.	Access rules do not apply to the take of surface water under an access licence for which a planning approval is in force if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the licence holder complies with an approved water management plan, and</li> <li>in the Minister's opinion, the licence holder is not reasonably capable of complying with the access rules.</li> </ul>
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**Note:** Water taken under basic landholder rights (domestic and stock rights, harvestable rights and native title rights) are not subject to the access and trade rules set by water sharing plans and therefore have not been listed in the above table.

Table 5 Draft rules for constructing surface water supply works

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
In-river dams	Permitted, subject to assessment	Not permitted
All surface water works	Permitted, subject to assessment	Not permitted within 200 m upstream of coastal wetlands defined in the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i> or within 3 km upstream of Ramsar wetlands, unless assessed to pose no more than minimal harm.

**Note:** the distance rules for groundwater water supply works are detailed in the [Report Card for the Draft Rules for Groundwater Water Supply Works](#).

Table 6 Draft water trading (dealing) rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
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).		
INTO water source	Prohibited	No change
WITHIN water source	Permitted	No change
Conversion from unregulated river to aquifer access licences	Permitted	No change

Conversion of aquifer to unregulated river access licences	Prohibited	No change
Conversions to high flow access licences	Permitted into C Class flows at a ratio of 1:3 up to a total entitlement for the water source of <b>248 ML</b> , subject to assessment	Permitted into C Class flows at a ratio of 1:3 up to a total entitlement for the water source of <b>1,760ML</b> , subject to assessment

## Key factors for decisions

- A high risk to insufficient water for freshwater riverine ecosystems at low flows has been identified for this water source. Given the current access rules are a combination of groundwater levels and surface water flows, further hydrological and hydrogeological studies are required to determine if there are changes required to current access rules. These studies will form part of the monitoring evaluation and reporting program for this plan.
- Given significant volume of entitlement in the water source (6,638ML) limiting trade into the water source and facilitating trade out of low flows within the water source (by allowing high flow conversion) is considered important.
- The volume of entitlement permitted to be converted has been increased from 248 ML to 1,760 ML to encourage licence holders in these areas to move their extraction out of low flows.

## 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 Water Sharing Plan for the Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 and supporting fact sheets are available from the department's [Public Exhibition website](#).