

New water sharing plan rules for active management in the Gwydir

This fact sheet has information about the new active management rules being introduced in the Gwydir.

From 1 July 2020, the water sharing plan for unregulated water sources in the Gwydir will include new rules for active management. Active management will ensure that releases of held environmental water remain in the river to achieve intended environmental outcomes.

Active management changes when and how much licence holders can pump when held environmental water is present in the river system. It also changes how licence holders find out if, when and how much they can pump during an environmental water release.

Active management rules in the Gwydir apply in the Gingham Watercourse Water Source and the Mallowa Creek management zone. Licence holders in these areas must note that:

- when held environmental water is present in the Upper Gingham Watercourse management zone and flows are above the commence-to-pump threshold, the threshold will be adjusted by the amount needed to protect the environmental flow
- adjustments will be announced by WaterNSW
- pumping in the Lower Gingham Watercourse and the Mallowa Creek management zones may be prohibited or limited when held environmental water is present
- WaterNSW will make announcements to let licence holders know if pumping is limited or prohibited, and whether commence-to-pump thresholds are adjusted in the Upper Gingham
- licence holders must monitor announcements from WaterNSW.

The new active management rules clarify when pumping is restricted for licence holders. They will also reduce the need for temporary water restrictions to protect environmental flows. You can read more in the [Active management fact sheet](#).

Starting dates for new rules

Although the changed water sharing plans will come into effect from 1 July 2020, the active management rules will start on 1 December 2020.

Licences will be issued with new mandatory conditions that reflect these rules. Affected licence holders in the Gingham Watercourse and Mallowa Creek must comply with the new rules from the date their new licence and works approval is issued.

Some conditions will stay the same

Some licence conditions will stay the same, including:

- the requirement to enter details about water take (such as dates, duration, volume, supply works approval number and actual take versus permitted take) into log books
- the volume of entitlements
- access rules when held environmental water is **not** present.

Purpose of active management

The Gwydir is an important river system with its own unique environment and wetlands. The NSW Government is committed to protecting the environment and improving river connectivity in the Gwydir.

We need active management because until now, access rules for licence holders in the unregulated rivers have not differentiated between flows from rainfall and releases that benefit the environment. Without active management, licence holders can pump when flows reach the commence-to-pump threshold, even if part of the flow was released to benefit the environment. This has resulted in held environmental water being extracted before it can benefit the environment as it was meant to.

Parts of a flow protected from extraction

Held environmental water will be protected from extraction in the Upper Gingham Watercourse, Lower Gingham Watercourse and Mallowa Creek Management Zone.

Held environmental water is water that is allocated to a water access licence to achieve environmental outcomes, such as improving the health of rivers, wetlands and floodplains. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment keeps a public register of water access licences held for environmental purposes. The register is available from the [Environmental Water Hub](#).

The environmental water manager decides when to order a release of held environmental water. In the Gwydir, the intended environmental improvements from held environmental water are documented in an annual environmental water plan, which is on [the department's website](#). WaterNSW acts on requests by the environmental water manager to deliver held environmental water.

Only the portion of flow made up by held environmental water will be protected from extraction. This means that access will be prohibited when **only** held environmental water is present. Some access may be permitted if there has been local rainfall or inflows arising from sources other than held environmental water that add to flows exceeding commence-to-pump thresholds.

More information

You can find more information about how to comply with the new rules in our 'How to comply' fact sheets for Gwydir, Macquarie and Barwon-Darling. You can also read our fact sheet 'How to find out more'. Fact sheets are available on the department's [Environmental Water Hub](#).

Fact sheets in this series

What's new in the Gwydir (fact sheet 1)	What's new in the Macquarie (fact sheet 2)	What's new in the Barwon-Darling (fact sheet 3)
How to comply in the Gwydir (fact sheet 4)	How to comply in the Macquarie (fact sheet 5)	How to comply in the Barwon-Darling (fact sheet 6)
How to find out more (fact sheet 7)	Worked examples (fact sheet 8)	FAQ (fact sheet 9)

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