

Report card for the Mid Nepean River Weirs Water Source

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Water source context

Water Sharing Plan:	Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources
Extraction Management Unit:	Hawkesbury and Lower Nepean Rivers
Management Zones:	Brownlow Hill Weir Management Zone Camden Weir Management Zone Cobbity Weir Management Zone Menangle Weir Management Zone Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone Mount Hunter Rivulet Weir Management Zone Sharpes Weir Management Zone Theresa Park Weir Management Zone Wallacia Weir Management Zone
Area:	50,777.9 ha
Inflowing water source:	Maldon Weir Water Source
Receiving water source:	Lower Nepean River Water Source

River flows

	Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone
Low flow index:	No visible flow
Flow records:	No gauge in this water source
	All other management zones
Low flow index:	Dependent on dam releases from Avon, Cordeaux, Nepean and Cataract dams
Flow records:	Various gauges

Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate: 806.7 ML/yr

Native title rights: 0 ML/yr

Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement: 25,086 ML/yr (362 ML/yr domestic and stock licences,
24,724 ML/yr unregulated river licences)

Local water utilities entitlement: 0 ML/yr

Major utilities entitlement: 0 ML/yr

Proportion of extraction management unit: 18%

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	All management zones Prohibited.	All management zones No change.

Table 2. Draft surface water access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Cease to pump	<p>Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone</p> <p>Cease to pump when no visible flow at the pump site.</p> <p>All other management zones</p> <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>Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone</p> <p>No change.</p> <p>All other management zones</p> <p>No change.</p>
Flow classes	<p>Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone</p> <p>None established.</p> <p>All other management zones</p> <p>Very Low Flow Class: When the sum of releases in the previous 24 hours from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pheasants Nest Weir • Broughtons Pass Weir. <p>is greater than zero and the stage at weir within each respective management zone is less than signal stage.</p> <p>A Class: all times when flows are not in the very low flow class.</p>	<p>Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone</p> <p>None established.</p> <p>All other management zones</p> <p>Very Low Flow Class: 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>Flow classes in this water source are complex and are used to protect the variable daily environmental releases made from Avon, Cataract, Cordeaux and Nepean Dams allowing them to flow through the entire Upper Hawkesbury River Water Source.</p>

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
		A flow class notification system will be used to notify licence holders of daily flow conditions.
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	For an access licence specified in Schedule 2 of the plan, no more than 20 kl/day for the following reasons: <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
Domestic use	For domestic consumption under a domestic and stock access licence, up to 1 kl/day.	No change.
Water Shortage exemption	Can access the very low flow class for any purpose if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there have been several consecutive days in the very low flow class. The number of consecutive days is dependent on the temperature and the month,, or • temperatures are $<4^{\circ}\text{C}$ or $\geq 31^{\circ}\text{C}$ taken from the Bureau of Meteorology forecast at 4 pm or later for the following day at Campbelltown. 	Remove this exemption

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
	Access to the very low flow class is provided for three consecutive days and is subject to any individual daily extraction limits applied to a licence.	
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	<p>Mid Nepean River Weirs Management Zone Prohibited</p> <p>All other management zones Prohibited</p>	<p>Mid Nepean River Weirs Management Zone No change.</p> <p>All other management zones No change.</p>
Lagoons	A water supply work approval must not be granted or amended to take water out of a lagoon	No change
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
<p>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).</p>		
INTO water source	Prohibited	No change

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
WITHIN water source	Permitted from upstream weir management zone with no net gain Trade is prohibited onto a lagoon or off-river pool.	Permitted except for trade in an upstream direction from Wallacia Weir Management Zone or Theresa Park Weir Management Zone or trade onto a lagoon or off-river pool.
Surface water to groundwater	Prohibited	No change
Groundwater to surface water	Prohibited	No change
Convert to high flow	All management zones Prohibited	All management zones No change

Key factors for decisions

- The management zones of the Mid Nepean River Weirs Water Source risk ratings are:
 - Menangle Weir Management Zone, Camden Weir Management Zone, Sharpes Weir Management Zone and Cobbity Weir Management Zone have medium ecologic values and medium likelihood of extraction from low flows impacting the ecological values and a medium risk rating overall.
 - Theresa Park Weir Management Zone and Wallacia Weir Management Zone have medium ecologic values, high likelihood that extraction of water is impacting low flows and a high risk rating overall.
- 9 water management zones are being amalgamated into the single Mid Nepean Weirs Water Source. This includes 8 linear weir management zones and the Mid Nepean River Catchment Management Zone encompassing tributary inflows into those 8 zones. Management zones will remain separate allowing access and trade to be managed separately in each zone.
- The Mid Nepean Weirs Water Source receives variable daily releases made for environmental purposes from Avon, Cataract, Cordeaux and Nepean Dams. As such, this water source is subject to complex access rules used to protect these releases. These rules will be implemented through a system that announces the daily flow class. Licence holders can use the announcement to determine if they can access water. Environmental flow releases are made daily from upstream dams which must be protected through the weirs.
- Six linear, weir water management zones clustered in the upstream part of the water source have reduced in risk since commencement of the first water sharing plan. It is proposed that these six management zones can trade with one another.
- The two furthest downstream weirs (Theresa Park and Wallacia) remain high risk. It is proposed that they can only receive water from upstream.

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](#).