

Report card for the Cattai Creek 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
Area:	28,603.5 ha
Inflowing water source:	Nil
Receiving water source:	Upper Hawkesbury River Water Source

River flows

Low-flow index:	7.5 ML/day (80 th percentile flow)
Flow records:	Cattai Creek at Cattai Ridge Road gauge (2122951)

Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate:	704.5 ML/yr
Native title rights:	0 ML/yr

Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement:	1,420.5 ML/yr (42 ML/yr domestic and stock licences, 1,378.5 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 and unregulated river 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 and unregulated river 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	Permitted to a combined limit of 81 ML/yr.	Prohibited

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: $>3 - \leq 15$ ML/day</p> <p>B Class: >15 ML/day</p>	<p>Very Low Flow Class: ≤ 5 ML/day</p> <p>A Class: $>5 - \leq 15$ ML/day</p> <p>B Class: >15 ML/day</p>
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.
Domestic use	For domestic consumption under a domestic and stock access licence, up to 1 kl/day.	No change.

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
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.	Prohibited on third order or larger streams.
Works near coastal wetlands listed under the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i>	No rule in current plan.	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
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	Permitted with no net gain.	Prohibited.
WITHIN water source	Permitted except to a work taking for a lagoon.	No change.
Surface water to groundwater	Prohibited.	No change.
Groundwater to surface water	Prohibited.	No change.
Convert to high flow	Permitted	Prohibited.

Key factors for decisions

- Cattai Creek Water Source has high ecological values and there is a high likelihood that extraction of water is impacting on low flows with an overall high risk to low flows.
- We propose to change the flow class in the Cattai Creek Water Source due to the high risk rating. The very low flow class has been increased from 3 ML/day (97th percentile) to 5 ML/day (91st percentile). Unregulated river licence holders will only be able to take water when flows are above these levels, approximately 91% of the time. This change has been proposed to help mitigate risks to the environment.
- Flows measured at Cattai Creek at Cattai Ridge Road gauge (2122951) are not currently on the Water NSW Real-time Data website. The gauge is currently managed by Sydney Water. Flow data will be made available to licence holders so that they can confirm the flow class.
- In-river dams will be prohibited on third order and higher streams due to the high ecological values of this water source.
- The current water sharing plan allows trade into the Cattai Creek Water Source as long as there is no net gain of entitlement. It is proposed to further restrict trade in this water source due to the increase in ecological values. Trade out of the Cattai Creek Water Source is allowed and should help reduce the overall risk.
- High flows in this water source are less than 20 ML/yr. This volume is not large enough to sustain high flow extraction. As such it is proposed that high flow conversions and the granting of Aboriginal Community Development Licences (which take from high flows) is no longer allowed.

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](#).