

LTAAEL compliance assessment for Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources

Background and purpose

The water sharing plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources requires an assessment of compliance with Long-term Average Annual Extraction Limits (LTAAEL).

Each water sharing plan defines the LTAAEL, how the compliance assessment is to be completed, triggers for non-compliance and subsequent compliance action. The water sharing plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources establishes a LTAAEL in each Extraction Management Unit (EMU). For each EMU there are two separate limits:

- (a) a LTAAEL for domestic and stock rights and native title rights and access licences excluding major utility access licences held by WaterNSW, and
- (b) a LTAAEL for major utility access licences held by WaterNSW.

There is currently only sufficient data to complete a compliance assessment for the latter. This report details this assessment for each EMU and will inform the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) review and replacement of the water sharing plan.

Method

The major utility access licence LTAAELs are specified in the water sharing plan, as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Major utility access licence entitlements held by WaterNSW and LTAAEL

EMU	Entitlement (ML)	LTAAEL (ML/year)
Shoalhaven River	329,000	36,000
Illawarra Rivers	0	0
Upper Nepean and Upstream Warragamba	620,000	581,000
Hawkesbury and Lower Nepean	6,000	6,000
Southern Sydney	32,000	13,000
Northern Sydney	0	0

For each EMU, the following data is required for the previous 10 water years:

- (a) all water taken under major utility access licences held by WaterNSW in the extraction management unit, and

(b) water allocations assigned to a major utility access licence that is not held by WaterNSW in the extraction management unit from a major utility access licence held by WaterNSW in the extraction management unit under section 71T of the Act.

These are added to give an annual time series for each EMU. The average of the 10-year period is then equal to the average annual extraction for each EMU.

The following data sources have been used:

- All available records extracted from the NSW water accounting system database.
- WaterNSW directly supplied data where possible to fill gaps.

The period from 2011/2012 to 2020/2021 has been used. There is insufficient data available to complete the 10-year average for the following EMUs: Shoalhaven River, Upper Nepean and Upstream Warragamba and Hawkesbury and Lower Nepean. For these EMUs, there is no data for 2011/12. We have adopted a risk-based assessment by assuming the maximum historic annual usage also occurred in that year.

LTAEL compliance results

Table 2 compares the average annual extraction to the LTAEL for each EMU. The Southern Sydney EMU exceeded the LTAEL. All other EMUs complied.

Where the average annual extraction exceeds the LTAEL, the water sharing plan requires that a review is undertaken by the Minister. The department establishing how this review will be completed for the Southern Sydney EMU.

Table 2: Comparison of LTAEL and the average annual extraction from 2011/2012 to 2020/2021

EMU	LTAEL (ML/year)	Average annual extraction (ML/year)	LTAEL exceedance (ML/year)
Shoalhaven River ¹	36,000	10,733	0
Illawarra Rivers	0	0	0
Upper Nepean and Upstream Warragamba	581,000	506,685	0
Hawkesbury and Lower Nepean	6,000	2,596	0
Southern Sydney	13,000	16,298	3,298
Northern Sydney		0	0

¹ Usage data unavailable for 2011-12. The maximum recorded usage is assumed for that year within the assessment.