

Compliance with water management principles - *Water Sharing Plan for the Murray Alluvial Groundwater Sources Amendment Order 2022*

This document details how the department has complied with the water management principles outlined in the Water Management Act 2000 in the developing the Water Sharing Plan for the Murray Alluvial Groundwater Sources Amendment Order 2022.

Background

When making or concurring to the making of the amendment of the *Water Sharing Plan for the Murray Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020* (the Plan), Ministers have a duty under section 9(1) of the *Water Management Act 2000* (the Act):

- (a) to take all reasonable steps to do so in accordance with, and so as to promote, the water management principles of the Act, and
- (b) as between the principles for water sharing set out in section 5(3) of the Act, to give priority to those principles in the order in which they are set out in that subsection.

The water management principles that are set out in section 5(3) provide that in relation to water sharing:

- (a) sharing of water from a water source must protect the water source and its dependent ecosystems, and
- (b) sharing of water from a water source must protect basic landholder rights, and
- (c) sharing or extraction of water under any other right must not prejudice the principles set out in paragraphs (a) and (b).

This amendment

Under the Plan, the maximum water account debit may be reduced on 1 July if actual or estimated use in the previous water year exceeds Plan limits. When metering data is finalised (usually in October), compliance with the limits is re-assessed.

The amendment maximises the social and economic benefits to the community by allowing the Minister to increase the maximum water account debit in the Billabong Creek Alluvial Groundwater Source, following its reduction earlier in the water year, if final assessment of data available after 1 July demonstrates plan limits were not exceeded. The increase that could be made under the amendment cannot exceed the maximum water account debit that already applies under clause 36 (3) of the Plan.

Similar rules already apply to the three other water sources covered by this water sharing plan. The amendment simply brings possible action to increase the maximum water account debit into line with what is already possible for the other water sources.

Compliance with water management principles



Murray Alluvial Groundwater Sources

This amendment promotes the water management principles set out in the Act, as detailed in the table below:

Water management/sharing principle #	How principle has been promoted	Relevant amendment item	Associated plan clause
Section 5 (2) (g) – the social and economic benefits to the community should be maximised	The amendment provides for the maximum volume of water, within the Plan limits, to be made available for extraction in the Billabong Creek Alluvial Groundwater Source by allowing increases to the maximum water account debit if final assessment of data demonstrates Plan limits were not exceeded.	[1]	CI 29 (4)
Section 5 (3) (c) sharing or extraction of water under any other right must not prejudice the principles set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) (which are to protect the water source and its dependent ecosystems, and to protect basic landholder rights).	The amendment does not alter the limits, assessment of compliance with the limits or action required in the case of non-compliance with the limits and therefore maintains protection of the water source and its dependant ecosystems (Section 5 (3) (a)), and basic landholder rights (Section 5 (3) (b)).		CI 29 (1), (2) and (3)

Note: Principles that are not impacted by this amendment are not included in the table.

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