

New water sharing plan rules in the Barwon-Darling

This fact sheet has information about the new environmental water rules being introduced in the Barwon-Darling.

From 1 July 2020, the water sharing plan for unregulated water sources in the Barwon-Darling will include new rules for individual daily extraction components, resumption of flow and active management. These new rules will help us manage water for the environment. Active management will ensure that releases of held environmental water remain in the river to achieve intended environmental outcomes.

The new rules change when and how much licence holders can pump. They also change how licence holders find out if, when and how much they can pump.

The new rules in the Barwon-Darling apply in all management zones in the river. Licence holders in the Barwon-Darling must note that:

- WaterNSW will announce the flow class that applies
- licence holders must check their announcement before pumping and pump in accordance with the announced flow class
- WaterNSW will also make announcements about adjustments to commence-to-pump thresholds for licences listed in Schedule 2/2A of the water sharing plan
- licence holders must pump in accordance with their individual daily extraction components and check for flow share announcements that may vary their individual daily extraction components
- from 1 December 2020, expressions of interests are being introduced to enable the sharing of flows between licence holders.

The new environmental water 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

The changed water sharing plan will come into effect from 1 July 2020. Individual daily extraction components and resumption-of-flow rules will also start from 1 July 2020.

Active management rules, including expressions of interest, will start on 1 December 2020.

Licences will be issued with new mandatory conditions that reflect these rules. Affected licence holders in the Barwon-Darling must comply with the new rules from the date their new licence and works approval is issued.

The new rules in the Barwon–Darling

Resumption-of-flow rules

Resumption-of-flow rules will prevent access when the first flows happen after an extended low-flow or dry period. The minister will announce a 'no flow class', which stays in place until downstream flow triggers are reached and river connectivity is re-established. Resumption-of-flow rules reduce the need for temporary water restriction orders. Further explanation can be found in the [Managing resumption of flow fact sheet](#).

Individual daily extraction components

This new component on a licence will limit the daily amount of water that can be extracted under unregulated river class A, B and C access licences. Individual daily extraction components limit the effects of pumping during peak irrigation periods. The rules achieve both local and downstream benefits, including for the environment. Individual daily extraction components are further explained in the [Individual daily extraction limits fact sheet](#).

Active management

New rules in the water sharing plan will change access for licence holders when environmental water is present. The minister will make announcements about flow classes and adjustments to commence-to-pump thresholds. Licence holders must only take water in accordance with an announcement.

Active management is a new way of operating that ensures water released for the environment remains in the river for its intended environmental purpose. These rules reduce the need for temporary water restriction orders. You can read more in the [Active management fact sheet](#).

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 the new environmental water rules

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

We need these new environmental water rules because the existing access rules for licence holders do not differentiate between flows from rainfall and releases that benefit the environment. Without the new rules, licence holders can pump when the commence-to-pump threshold is reached, even if part of the flow was released to benefit the environment. This means held environmental water can be extracted, and may not benefit the environment the way it is intended to.

Parts of a flow protected from extraction

Held environmental water will be protected from extraction in all the management zones of the Barwon-Darling.

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 held environmental water from upstream storages. In the Barwon-Darling, the intended environmental improvements from held

environmental water are documented in an annual environmental water plan, which is available from [the department's website](#). WaterNSW acts on the requests by the environmental water manager to deliver held environmental water.

Only the portion of flow attributed to 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)

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (June 2020). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment or the user's independent adviser.