

Report card for Dalhousie Creek Water Source

Background

Water source context		River flows	
Area	6.97 km ²	Low flow index	No flow records.
Inflowing water source	None	Flow records	No flow records.
Receiving water source	None	Stream type	
Catchment boundary definition			
Surface waters and the connected alluvial aquifers in the hydrological catchment of Dalhousie Creek. The water source is located in the south-east of the plan area. Its waters are not connected to other water sources in the water sharing plan and is its own extraction management unit for this reason.			
Upriver alluvial aquifer description			
The upriver alluvial aquifer consists of medium to coarse-grained sand, silts and gravel deposits. Groundwater from the aquifer is typically highly connected to the surface water. As a result of this connection, coupled with the coarser sediments, water quality is typically good with high yields potentially obtainable in some areas.			
Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems		Nil present at commencement of the Plan.	
Licensed water entitlement			
Total surface water entitlement	191 ML/year.		
Licences	2 licences to access surface water.		
Proportion of extraction management unit	100% of the Dalhousie Creek Catchment Extraction Management Unit.		
Total groundwater entitlement	Nil.		
Licences	N/A		
Note: Estimated at January 2020			
Existing access arrangements during dry conditions			
Cease to take	No visible flow at the point of take.		
Reference point	Point of take.		

Proposed recommendations

Draft access rules for surface waters	
Cease to take	No visible flow at the point of take.
Reference point	Location of take.
Draft access rules for groundwater	
Cease to pump	Nil.
Draft Distance rules for groundwater	
Distance conditions	<p>A standard suite of rules have been adopted for the upriver alluvials. Distance criteria will apply to new and replacement bores (not current) in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimising interference between bores • protecting groundwater-dependent, culturally significant sites • contaminated sites • acid sulphate soils • basic landholder rights • protecting groundwater dependent sensitive environmental areas.
Exemptions	Exemptions to these rules (e.g. for replacement works) apply in specific circumstances.
Draft license dealing rules	
Rules	Trade
INTO water source	Not permitted.
WITHIN water source	Permitted.
Rules	Conversion
Surface to ground	Permitted.
Ground to surface	Not permitted.
High flows	Not permitted.
Draft rules for granting access licences/works approvals	
Aboriginal cultural access licence	Permitted, no greater than 10ML/yr. per application and subject to assessment.
Aboriginal community development access licence	Not permitted, subject to assessment.
In-river dams	Not permitted in all order steams, and subject to assessment.
Alluvial bore	Permitted, subject to assessment and distance rules.

Key factors for decisions

- Basic access rule is adopted as there are no flow reference points suitable for the water source.
- High risk to low flow periods due to two large dams in the water source. Exacerbation of this risk may present issues for the intermittently closed and open lake or lagoon downstream in the estuary. In-river dams are prohibited in all order streams due to this risk.
- Trading is not permitted into this water source as there is no hydrologic connectivity between it and other water sources in the Bellinger River Extraction Management Unit and for reasons listed in this report card.
- No conversion of licences to high flow access licences due to the high sensitivity of the estuary to high flows.
- No Aboriginal community development access licences to be granted due to the high sensitivity of the estuary to freshwater inflows.

Public exhibition

Feedback is particularly sought on the suitability of the proposed access and trading rules.

The draft Bellinger River Area water sharing plan and other fact sheets are available from <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water>

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