Report card for the Murrumbidgee Central (Burrinjuck to Gogeldrie) Water Source

Report card 24 of 43

Water source context

Water Sharing Plan: Murrumbidgee Unregulated River Water Sources 2025

Extraction management Unit: Unregulated Murrumbidgee Below Burrinjuck Dam to Gogeldrie

Area: 5,334 km^2

Inflowing water source: Burrinjuck and Blowering reservoirs

Receiving water source: Regulated Murrumbidgee River

River flows

Flow records: Nil

Stream type: Non–perennial

Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate: 744 ML/year

Native title rights estimate: Nil at commencement of Plan

Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement:	6,511 ML/year	(67 licences)
— **Unregulated River:**	6,390 ML/year	(50 licences)
— **Domestic and Stock:**	121 ML/year	(17 licences)

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Table 1. Access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Cease to take	Take is not permitted when there is no visible flow at the pump site	No change
Take from in-river pools	Take is not permitted when the in-river pool is below full capacity	No change
Take from in-river dam pools	Take is not permitted unless it is consistent with the water supply work approval	No change
Take from off-river pools	Take is not permitted when the off-river pool is below 80% of full capacity	From years 1 – 5 take is not permitted when the off-river pool is below 80% of full capacity. From year 6 of the Plan, take is not permitted when the off-river pool is below full capacity. NOTE: existing licence holders may apply for an exemption from the new rule and retain the current rule. See the “Key Factors for Decisions” section.
Take from off-river dam pools	Take is not permitted when the off-river dam pool is below its natural capacity	No change
Exemptions	Some exemptions apply to specific access rules for the water source, including for: • health and hygiene • domestic use • take from a run-off harvesting dam. Specific licences are listed in Schedule 2 of the Plan.	No change

Table 2. Rules for constructing surface water supply works

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
In-river dams	Permitted, subject to assessment	Not permitted in third or higher order streams. An exemption for town water supply purposes has been included.
Protection for wetlands	N/A	No new or amended works permitted within, or within 3 km upstream of, a Ramsar wetland. No new or amended works permitted within wetlands indicated on the WSP Prescribed Wetlands Map of the draft plan, unless there will be no more than minimal harm to the wetland concerned. This rule does not apply to replacement works.

Table 3. Water trading (dealing) rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
INTO water source	Not permitted	No change
WITHIN water source	Permitted, subject to assessment, but not into off-river pools	No change
Interstate trade	Not permitted	No change
Protection for wetlands	N/A	Not permitted into, or within 3 km upstream of, a Ramsar wetland. Not permitted into wetlands identified in the WSP Prescribed Wetlands Map of the draft plan. Trade between licences within the same WSP prescribed wetland is permitted.

Trading covers:

- conversion of access licence to a new category (for example, from unregulated river to unregulated river (high flow) access licence)
- 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)
- water supply works dealings (relocation of an extraction point).

Key factors for decisions

- The risk assessment indicates that the water source has very high in-stream value and identified possible risk from extraction as low for zero flow periods and low for base-flow and low flows. Based on this information, access rules were considered appropriate for the water source.
- The 2012 plan lists Sandy Creek and Goobbagumbalin Lagoon as water bodies that may receive environmental water from the regulated Murrumbidgee River, see Schedule 4. Two more water bodies have been added to the equivalent Table B of Schedule 3 of the draft plan. The new water bodies are Currawananna Lagoon and Mundowy (or Mundowey) Lagoon, near Collingullie in the mid-Murrumbidgee. The relevant rule that provides protection to deliveries of environmental water is at clause 57(11) of the 2012 plan and section 34(3) and (4) of the draft plan.
- Tables A and C of Schedule 3 in the draft plan list access licences, water supply work approvals and water bodies with 'take of water' conditions relating to old *Water Act 1912* licences, which are listed in the 2012 plan at Schedules 1 and 3. In general, these carried over conditions are stricter than the standard access conditions for this water source.

Off-river pools

- The 2012 plan allows water in natural off-river pools (e.g. lagoons) to be extracted down to 80% of full capacity. From Year 6 of the draft plan, the proposed rule is to prohibit extraction of water unless an off-river pool is at or above 100% of full capacity.
- Existing licensees on off-river pools may apply for an exemption to the new rule. Applications to retain current access conditions must be received by Year 5 of the Plan and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In-river dams

- As the updated risk assessment indicated very high in-stream environmental values in this water source, the department proposes to prohibit any new in-river dam applications in third or higher order steams. This decision intends to protect environmental values and mitigate further risk in this water source.
- An exemption for Town Water Supply has been introduced, that prioritises critical human needs in times of drought.

Improving the protection of wetlands

- The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) has recommended the replacement plan provide better protection for important wetlands. The department has developed criteria to identify specific wetlands in the Plan area. It is proposed to include rules to improve their protection by prohibiting new water supply works and restricting trades into or upstream of these areas. The prohibition on new works will not apply to replacement works.
- Wetlands identified for improved protection were drawn from multiple datasets including the Murrumbidgee Long-Term Water Plan, relevant Floodplain Management Plan, Ramsar listing, Directory of Important Wetlands of Australia, Endangered Ecological Communities and any existing wetlands identified in the current water sharing plan.
- A map of the WSP prescribed wetlands identified for this plan is available on the department's website.
- More information on improving the protection of wetlands is available in a fact sheet.

Other key rules – no change proposed

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 from a water source or traded out (sold). Total extraction from a work (pump, diversion channel, etc.) will be measured through metering or logbooks.

Carryover and individual account limits

For unregulated river access licence accounts, carryover of water remaining in an account at the end of each water year is permitted up to 1 ML per unit share or 100% of the share component (where expressed in ML). Water remaining in the water allocation account of a domestic and stock licence must not be carried over from one water year to the next water year.

For 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.

For domestic and stock access licences, the maximum water account debit in any 1 water year is:

- the volume of water allocated to the account in that year from available water determinations, plus
- any adjustments made for allocation assignments (trades) or water allocation re-credited into the account.

Rules for granting access licences

There are limited purposes for which a new licence will be granted. We anticipate that users who need more water will source it from the market. One reason a licence may be granted is for Aboriginal cultural purposes. Aboriginal Cultural Access Licences are permitted to be granted up to a maximum volume of 10 ML/year per licence, subject to assessment.

Other reasons are identified in Section 10 of the *Water Management (General) Regulation 2018*.

Public exhibition

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water seeks feedback from the public on the suitability of the proposed rules for this water source.

In particular, we seek your feedback on:

- **Inclusion of Currawananna Lagoon and Mundowy Lagoon for protection of deliveries of environmental water from the regulated Murrumbidgee River**
- **Prohibit applications for in-river dams in third or higher order streams**
- **Greater protection for WSP prescribed and Ramsar wetlands**

- **Change in access rule for off-river pools.**

A submission form is available on the department's website.

To read the draft *Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Unregulated River Water Sources 2025* and supporting fact sheets, please visit the department's Public Exhibition website.