

Report card for the Tuckean Area Water Source

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Water source context

Water Sharing Plan:	Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023
Extraction Management Unit (EMU):	Richmond River Extraction Management Unit
Area:	230 km ²
Inflowing water source:	Nil
Receiving water source:	Broadwater Area
Groundwater-dependent ecosystems:	GDE's are identified on the draft plan GDE map within this water source
Approximate average annual rainfall:	1,276 mm/year (measured at Coraki (Richmond Terrace))

River flows

Low flows/80 th percentile:	9.3 ML/day
Flow records:	Marom Creek at Graham Road gauge number 203059

Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate:	235 ML/year
Native title rights:	Four native title determinations exist in this plan area and water may be taken in the exercise of native title rights in accordance with the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i> of the Commonwealth.

Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement:	4,597 ML/year: 55 ML/year Domestic and Stock access licences and 4,542 ML/year Unregulated River access licences
Total groundwater entitlement:	5 ML/year
Local water utilities entitlement:	420 ML/year

Rules

Managing Access Licenses

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 or traded out (sold). Total extraction from a work (pump, bore, etc.) will be measured via metering or logbooks.

Carryover and Individual Account Limits

Domestic and stock, unregulated river and aquifer access licence accounts:

- Carryover is permitted at the end of each water year up to 1 ML per unit share or 100% of share component (where expressed in ML).
- 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.

Table 1. Draft rules for granting access licenses

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<p>There are limited purposes for which a new licence will be granted. It is anticipated that most additional water needs will be sourced from the market. One reason a licence may be granted is for Aboriginal cultural purposes. Other reasons are identified in Clause 10 of the <i>Water Management Act General Regulation 2018</i>.</p>		
Aboriginal cultural access licence	Permitted, up to 10 ML/year per licence, subject to assessment	No change
Aboriginal community development access licence	Not permitted	No change

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Table 2. Draft surface water access rules including Local Water Utility

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Cease to pump	Must cease pumping when there is no visible flow at the point of take.	No change
Extraction from natural in-river pools	Must cease pumping when the pool is below full capacity.	No change
Extraction from natural off-river pools	Must cease pumping when the pool is below full capacity.	No change

Note: There are exemptions to these access rules listed below in Table 4.

Table 3. Draft alluvial groundwater access rules including Local Water Utility

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Take of alluvial groundwater	<p>Take is not permitted when there is no visible flow in the river at the location closest to the supply work used for extraction.</p> <p>If the location closest to the water supply work in the river is a natural in-river pool, then take is not permitted if the pool is below full capacity.</p>	No change

Note: There are exemptions to these access rules listed below in Table 4.

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Table 4. Draft exemptions from access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Health and hygiene	<p>For an access licence specified in the plan, no more than 20 kl/day for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fruit washing • cleaning of dairy plant and equipment for the purposes of hygiene • poultry watering and misting • cleaning of enclosures used for intensive animal production for the purposes of hygiene. 	<p>No change to the exemption rule except for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the addition of “vegetable washing” as an exempt purpose • the exempt access licences are now listed in Schedule 2, Table A of the draft plan.
Domestic use	For water taken under a stock and domestic access licence, subcategory domestic, up to 1 Kl/day.	No change
Specific purpose (town water supply)	For an access licence specified in clause 2 of Schedule 3 of the plan.	No change to the exemption or scheduled access licences, however they are now specified in Schedule 2, Table B of the draft plan.
If taking from an in-river dam pool	Permitted if the dam is being operated in accordance with the conditions on the dam work approval.	No change
Location of groundwater work	Groundwater works greater than 40 m from a river are exempt from the access rules.	No change
Aquifer interference activities	<p>Access rules do not apply to the take of surface water and groundwater under an access licence for which a planning approval is in force if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the licence holder complies with an approved water management plan, and • the licence holder is not reasonably capable of complying with the access rules. 	No change

Note: Water taken under basic landholder rights (domestic and stock rights, harvestable rights and native title rights) are not subject to the access and trade rules set by water sharing plans and therefore have not been listed in the above table.

Table 5. Draft restrictions for the location of surface water supply works

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
In-river dams	Permitted, subject to assessment.	No change
All surface water works	Permitted, subject to assessment.	Not permitted within 200 m upstream of coastal wetlands defined in the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i> and within 3 km upstream of Ramsar wetlands, unless assessed to pose no more than minimal harm.

Note: the distance rules for groundwater water supply works are detailed in the [Report Card for the Draft Rules for Groundwater Works Approvals](#).

Table 6. Draft water trading (dealing) rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<p>Trading covers conversion of access licence to a new category (for example from unregulated river to aquifer), 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) and water supply works dealings (relocation of an extraction point).</p>		
INTO water source	Not permitted	No change
WITHIN water source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No trade permitted between the Tuckean Drains Management Zone and Tuckean Management Zone Trade permitted within each management zone, subject to assessment. 	No change
Surface to ground	Permitted, subject to assessment	No change
Convert to high flow	Not permitted	No change

Key factors for decisions

- Due to the recent catastrophic flooding events in the area, there are no proposed changes to access rules in the water sharing plan that will affect licence holders' access to water on a daily basis. Consultation on proposed changes to access rules will occur within the first five years of the new plan commencement, at a time more suitable to the community.
- The Tuckean Area Water Source has moderate ecological value. There is a high risk of hydrological stress due to extraction during very low flows and a medium risk during low flow times.

- There is a very high risk to groundwater-dependent ecosystems.
- Changes to rules reflect the ongoing protection of ecological assets and mitigation of extractive stress.

Public exhibition

The Department of Planning and Environment seeks feedback from the public on the suitability of the proposed rules for this water source.

The draft Water Sharing Plan for the Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 and supporting fact sheets are available from the department's [Public Exhibition website](#).