

Report card for the Apsley River Water Source

Why is the Plan being replaced?			
<p>The Apsley River Water Sharing Plan (the Apsley WSP) commenced in 2004 and is due to expire in 2015. Replacement of the Apsley WSP at its expiry has been approved by the Minister for Primary Industries, based on a review of the Apsley WSP by the NSW Office of Water (the NOW) and the Natural Resources Commission. A new water sharing plan is being prepared for the Macleay River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources (the remainder of the Macleay catchment (the Macleay WSP). The Apsley WSP will be incorporated into the Macleay WSP. The NOW is proposing minor changes to the Apsley WSP to ensure that the WSP is consistent with the current legal format, applies current policy and reflects current water management practice. Changes proposed for the Apsley WSP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removal of Daily Extraction Limits. • amendment of cease to pump and trading rules. • inclusion of permission for Aboriginal Community Development Licenses. • updating rules to current legal template and policy positions. 			
Water source context		River flows	
Area	115,427 hectares (10.5% forested)	Low flow index* (for December)	80th%ile = 2 ML/day Source. Apsley River Gauge @ Apsley Falls (206018) NOW 2012. (open)
Average annual rainfall <small>*Data for Walcha Post Office Source .www.bom.gov.au/climate.</small>	808 mm*	Flow records	60 years of data (1952 to 2012) from Apsley River Gauge @ Apsley Falls.
Inflowing water source	None.	Stream type	Connected
Receiving water source	Apsley Gorge	* 80 per cent of the time average daily flow exceeds 2 ML/day and this represents low flows.	
Water user association	None.		
Licensed water entitlement			
Total surface water entitlement	330.5 ML/year.		
Licensed purpose	98% Unregulated River, 2% other.		
Proportion of extraction management unit	1.5% of total Extraction Management Unit entitlement.		
These figures and estimates were made in September 2012.			

Access rules		
Rule	Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
Cease to Pump (CTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At or less than 1ML/day. 	<p><i>Apsley River</i> 1ML/day</p> <p>Note: This rule applies to all extraction from rivers and creeks in this water source including natural in-river pools within the channels of rivers and creeks.</p> <p><i>Natural Off-River Pools</i> Pumping is not permitted when the water level in that natural off-river pool is lower than its full capacity</p> <p>Note: ‘Full capacity’ can be approximated by the pool water level at the point where there is no visible flow into and out of that pool.</p> <p>Note: Natural off-river pools include those pools located on flood runners, floodplains and effluents e.g. lakes, lagoons and billabongs.</p>
Reference point	Apsley River Gauge @ Apsley Falls	Apsley River Gauge @ Apsley Falls
Pumping restrictions	None.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 hours per day at 5ML/day or less (down to the cease to pump) at the reference point.
Daily flow sharing (TDELS and IDELs)	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>Note: daily flow sharing was not able to be implemented due in part to a lack of infrastructure, including metering equipment. The suite of updated access rules and or pumping restrictions being proposed are consistent with the intent of daily flow sharing and cease to pump arrangements.</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>Note. Whilst the NOW is proposing to remove IDELs and TDELS plan templates include standard provisions that allows for such provisions to be considered as required in the future.</p>
<p>Note: The Proposed Rules do not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local water utility access licences Town water supply access licences Water taken from existing dams. Any existing licence conditions associated with a dam will be carried over when the licence is converted under the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i>. 		

Trading rules		
Rule	Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
INTO water source	Permitted into water source where reciprocal arrangements are in place.	Permitted, only if the total licensed entitlement in the water source does not increase (no net gain) from, Apsley Gorge, Bakers Creek, Blue Mountain Creek, Chandler Gorge, Chandler River, Christmas Creek, Coastal Macleay, Collombatti Creek, Commissioners Waters, Dungay Creek, Dyke Creek, Euroka Creek, Five Day Creek, Gara River, Georges River, Gills Bridge Creek, Green Gully, Hickeys Creek, Kunderang Creek, Macleay Gorges, Macleay Valley, Malpas Dam, Mungay Creek, Nulla Nulla Creek, Oaky River, Salisbury Waters, Stockyard Creek, Styx River, Tia River, Toorumbree Creek, Warbro Creek, Yarrowitch River.
Within water source	Permitted.	Permitted.
Draft rules for granting access licences		
Rule	Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
In-river dams	Not permitted.	Permitted, subject to assessment. Note: Dams require a licence if they are located on a permanent (spring fed) first or second order stream, a third order (or greater) stream, or if they exceed the maximum harvestable right dam capacity for the property.
Aboriginal community development	Not permitted.	Permitted, up to a total volume of 88 ML (commence to pump of 16ML/day at the Apsley River Gauge @ Apsley Falls (206018).
Conversion to high flows	Not permitted.	Permitted, up to 429 ML/yr with the conversion rate of 1:5 for share components from unregulated river to unregulated river (high flow) entitlement.
Conversion to alluvial aquifer access licence	N/A.	N/A.

Key points, amendments to the Apsley River WSP

1. Removal of Total Daily Extraction Limits (TDEL) and Individual Daily Extraction Limits (IDEL)

To provide consistency in management across the Macleay catchment, daily extraction limits (DELs), unable to be implemented under the Apsley WSP, are not proposed for the Macleay WSP. However, the draft plan includes an amendment clause enabling the establishment, amendment, removal or reinstatement of DELs.

2. Cease to pump rules and pumping restrictions

Cease to pump rules in the Apsley WSP were reviewed using the macro method and current planning policies. Cease to pump rules the same as those in place and consistent with those proposed for other like catchments are being proposed for the Apsley River water source. Pumping restrictions, which are analogous with existing DELs are being proposed for the Apsley River water source. Updated cease to pump rules and pumping restrictions will result in minimal change in the Apsley River water source as the new rules reflect the intent of the previous suite of rules.

3. Trading rules

Trading rules in the Apsley WSP were reviewed using the macro method and current planning policies. The existing rules permitted trades within the water source and into the water source (provided reciprocal arrangements were in place). Trade rules recommended reflect those proposed for other like catchments (i.e. limited trade in (no net gain)) in the Macleay WSP. Updated trading rules will result in minimal change in the Apsley River water sources as the new rules reflect the intent of the previous rules.

4. Inclusion of permission for Aboriginal Community Development Licences

A policy change in 2006 provided for persons or organisations to apply for Aboriginal Community Development Licences. This change means that Aboriginal persons or organisations may now apply for these licences in the Apsley River water source.

5. Policy and template changes

Other amendments are proposed to ensure rules in the Apsley River water source reflect the current legislative plan template provisions including the alignment of visions, objectives and strategies, remove redundant provisions and simplify others as required. These amendments will also ensure that the whole of the Macleay catchment is managed in a consistent manner.

Key factors for decisions

Background information		
Water Source Attributes	Rating	Justification
Relative Instream Value (within catchment)	LOW	- 4 threatened frog species.
Hydrologic Stress	MEDIUM	- peak extraction demand exceeds available flows in December.
Relative Economic Significance of Irrigation (within catchment)	LOW	- low economic dependence of the local community on water extracted for irrigation.
Risk to Instream Value (from extraction)	LOW	- instream values are of low risk of being impacted by extractions in the water source.

- Low instream value, medium hydrologic stress, low risk to instream value and low economic dependence.
- The Panel noted that the existing plan set a range of flow classes that had not been implemented during the *Water Sharing Plan for the Apsley River Water Source 2003*.
- The Panel noted that flow classes were designed to facilitate the sharing of water between irrigators and the environment.
- The Panel recommended a combination of cease to pump and pumping restrictions, similar to the existing rules.
- Two groundwater dependent culturally significant sites were identified in the water source. Access and trading rules recommended for the water source provide the necessary protection for the sites.

Public exhibition

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

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