

Report Card for the Toorumbree Creek Water Source

Why is the Plan being replaced?			
<p>The Toorumbree Creek Water Sharing Plan (the Toorumbree WSP) commenced in 2004 and is due to expire in 2015. Replacement of the Toorumbree WSP at its expiry has been approved by the Minister for Primary Industries, based on a review of the Toorumbree 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 Toorumbree WSP will be incorporated into the Macleay WSP. NOW is proposing minor changes to the Toorumbree 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 Toorumbree WSP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removal of Daily Extraction Limits. • update of cease to pump rules. • inclusion of upriver alluvial aquifers. • updating rules to current legal template and policy positions. 			
Water source context		River flows	
Area	35,600 ha (92% forest)	Low flow index* (for November)	80th%ile = 8 ML/day (Source. Stressed Rivers Assessment Report 1999)
Average annual rainfall	1,662mm	Flow records	Low flow index calculated from nearest suitable gauging station (outside of water source)
Inflowing water source	None	Stream type	Gaining
Receiving water source	Macleay Valley	* 80 per cent of the time average daily flow exceeds 8 ML/day and this represents low flows.	
Water users association	None.		
Upriver alluvial aquifer description			
<p>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. Lower reaches of these freshwater systems have proven water resources such as the Kempsey town water supply bore field at Sherwood.</p>			
Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems		Nil.	
Licensed water entitlement			
Total surface water entitlement	Nil*		
Licensed purpose	N/A.		
Proportion of extraction management unit	N/A.		

Total groundwater entitlement	Nil**.
Licensed purpose	N/A.
Estimated at October 2012* and November 2013**.	

Access rules for surface waters		
Rule	Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
Cease to Pump (CTP)	No visible flow at the pump site.	<p>Pumping is not permitted from natural pools when the water level in the 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 pools include in-river pools found within the channels of rivers and creeks and off-river pools located on flood runners, floodplains and effluents e.g. lakes, lagoons and billabongs.</p> <p>Note: For the minority of pump sites not within a natural pool, these licences will be required to cease to pump when there is no visible flow at that pump site.</p>
Reference point	<p>Pump site.</p> <p>Note: An end of system flow reference point was to be installed to assist with the implementation of daily flow sharing and CTP arrangements. However, the end of system flow reference point was never installed.</p>	Individual natural pool.
Pumping restrictions	None.	None.
Daily flow sharing (TDEs and IDEs)	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>Note: Flow sharing arrangements were 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 NOW is proposing to remove IDEs and TDEs, plan templates include standard provisions that allows for such provisions to be considered as required in the future.</p>

Access rules for alluvial aquifers		
Cease to Pump (CTP)	N/A.	Nil. Note: A restriction on the establishment of new works in close proximity to the water course applies (refer to Rules for the granting of new water supply work approvals in alluvial aquifers below).
Reference point	N/A.	Not required.
<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 - Stock and domestic licences for the first three years of the plan (provided that extraction for stock purposes does not exceed 14 litres per hectare of grazeable area per day)* - 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>. <p>* This exemption applies to alluvial aquifer access licences only.</p>		
Distance rules for alluvial aquifers		
Rule	Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
Distance rule	N/A.	Standard suite of rules developed by the State Ground Water Panel (with the exception of the proposal below). Note. The standard set of distance rules that are designed to minimise for example, the impact of extractions on other groundwater works, groundwater dependent ecosystems and groundwater dependent culturally significant sites apply. Exemptions to these rules (e.g. for replacement works) apply in specific circumstances.
Rules for the granting of new water supply work approvals	N/A.	A new water supply work (groundwater work) approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may not be granted, or amended, to authorise the construction of a new work to take water within 40m of the high bank of any third order or greater stream, • may be granted or amended to authorise the construction of a new work to take water beyond 40m of the high bank of any third order or greater stream (new works would be subject to standard groundwater distance rules). <p>Note. The restriction on new works does not apply to water supply works being used for basic landholder right purposes.</p>

Trading rules for surface waters		
Rule	Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
INTO water source	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
Within water source	Permitted.	Permitted, subject to assessment.
Trading rules for alluvial aquifers		
Rule	Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
INTO water source	N/A.	Not permitted.
Within water source	N/A.	Permitted, subject to assessment
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.	Not permitted due to the absence of a gauge.
Conversion to high flows	Not permitted.	Not permitted due to the absence of a gauge.
Conversion to alluvial aquifer access licence	N/A.	Permitted, subject to assessment.

Key points, amendments to the Toorumbee Creek WSP

1. Removal of Daily Extraction Limits (DEL)

To provide consistency in management across the Macleay catchment, DELs are unable to be implemented under the Toorumbee WSP, and 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

Cease to pump rules in the Toorumbee WSP were reviewed using the macro method and current planning policies. A cease to pump rule consistent with current arrangements and those proposed for other like catchments is being recommended for the Toorumbee Creek water source. The cease to pump rule will result in minimal change in the Toorumbee Creek water source as the new rule reflects the intent of the existing cease to pump arrangements. Note. No entitlement is currently held in the surface water source.

3. Trading rules

Trading rules in the Toorumbee WSP were reviewed using the macro method and current planning policies. The existing rules permitted trades within the water source but prevented trades into the water source. It is proposed that the existing trading rules be retained (i.e. no trade in but trade within permitted). Accordingly, the trading rules included in the Macleay WSP will result in no change in the Toorumbee Creek water source.

4. Inclusion of upriver alluvial aquifers

Since 2004 water sharing plans developed using the macro method include surface waters and associated alluvial aquifers. Accordingly, the Macleay WSP will incorporate both surface waters and alluvial aquifers. Note. No entitlement is currently held in the alluvial aquifer.

5. Policy and template changes

Other amendments are proposed to, ensure rules in the Toorumbee Creek 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 an equitable and consistent manner.

Key factors for decisions

Background Information		
Water Source Attributes	Rating	Justification
Relative Instream Value (within catchment)	MED	- 7 threatened frog species. - 2 threatened bird species. - significant area of national park.
Hydrologic Stress	LOW	- within water source = low.
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.

- Medium instream value, low hydrologic stress, low risk to instream value and low economic dependence.
- The most basic access rule was proposed due to no gauging station or suitable reference point other than the pump site in the water source.
- It is recommended that a cease to pump rule not apply to bores in the upriver alluvial after noting the absence of entitlement, the continued and expanded restriction on the establishment of new works in close proximity to streams, and the negligible risk to the water source from extraction.
- One groundwater dependent culturally significant site was identified in the water source. Access and trading rules recommended for the water source provide the necessary protection for the site.

Public exhibition

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

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