

Changes to multiple water sharing plans

A summary of changes made to multiple water sharing plans.

The NSW Government has amended 43 water sharing plans (listed in Appendix 1) to:

- address typographical errors
- amend other minor administrative issues.

This amendment order does not include any changes to the intent of rules and does not affect water users' access to water or change the environmental provisions in the plans. We have made these changes to simplify and improve plan drafting, to make the intent of provisions clear and improve legal robustness.

Table 1 is a high-level summary of these amendments. For details of all changes made, refer to the amendment order on the [NSW Legislation website](#).

A water sharing plan may be amended under section 45 (1) of the *Water Management Act 2000* (WM Act) by the Minister for Water if the minister is satisfied that it is in the public interest to do so. The minister must obtain the concurrence of the Minister for the Environment before making such an amendment (section 45 (3)).

Note: Some plan names have been shortened to simplify and increase readability of this document, and WSP is used to represent Water Sharing Plan. See Appendix 1 for the full names of plans that have been amended by this order.

Table 1: Summary of changes to multiple water sharing plans

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Access rules Castlereagh Unregulated River Water Sources 2024, (section 35A)</p>	<p>We specified that this division (access rules for the take of unconsolidated sediments water) applies to the Castlereagh River Gilgandra to Coonamble Water Source and, within the Binnaway to Gilgandra Water Source, to the Castlereagh River Binnaway to Gilgandra Management Zone only.</p>	<p>This change clarifies that this division does not apply to the Binnaway to Gilgandra Tributaries Management Zone, within the Binnaway to Gilgandra Water Source.</p>
<p>Access licence dealing rules Clarence River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016 (section 60)</p>	<p>We removed references to ‘cancelled’ licences in dealings rules related to the assignment of rights.</p>	<p>The assignment of rights does not involve the cancellation of an access licence.</p>
<p>Access licence dealing rules Murray Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020 (sections 49(1) and 51(1))</p>	<p>We corrected references to the Lower Murray Shallow Groundwater Source.</p>	<p>The plan unintentionally omitted the word ‘shallow’ from the name of this water source.</p>
<p>Access licence dealing rules Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 52(3)(d)(ii))</p>	<p>We clarified that compliance with volumetric limits to assignment of rights dealings in the Myrtle Creek Water Source is to be calculated after the dealing.</p>	<p>The clarifying term ‘following the dealing will be’ was mistakenly omitted from this provision.</p>
<p>Access licence dealing rules</p>	<p>We removed subclause 52(2) ‘An access licence may be amended to nominate a water supply work</p>	<p>We made this change for consistency with section 27 of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2025.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 57 (2))</p>	<p>located in a different water source’.</p>	
<p>Access licence dealing rules Multiple water sharing plans</p>	<p>We removed dealing provisions that are now covered by the Access Licence Dealings Principles Order (ALDPO).</p>	<p>We made these changes to avoid duplication and help simplify the water sharing plans.</p>
<p>Access rules Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2024 (sections 36(5) and 36(6))</p>	<p>We clarified that access rules in section 36(5) applies to B Class licences only and access rules in section 36(6) applies to C Class licences only.</p>	<p>We made this change to confirm the intent of the rule and avoid unintended consequences for other licence classes.</p>
<p>Access rules Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2024 (sections 37(4) and 40(2))</p>	<p>We repealed these subclauses which exempted access licences listed in Schedule 3 from rules that prohibit access to the Very Low Flow Class and associated recommence to pump restrictions.</p>	<p>We made this change to clarify that these access rules also apply to licences listed in Schedule 3.</p>
<p>Access rules Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2024 (section 35(2)(c)) Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 41(5)) Coffs Harbour Area Unregulated and Alluvial</p>	<p>We clarified that these provisions relate to the take of water from an in-river dam pool, not an in-river dam.</p>	<p>The unintentional omission of the word ‘pool’ was not consistent with other plans and could mean that the clause does not make sense. Water is not taken from the dam; it is taken from the pool.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Water Sources 2022 (section 35(2)(c))</p> <p>Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 35(2)(c))</p> <p>Lower North Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 35(2)(c))</p> <p>Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 36(2)(a))</p> <p>Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 35(2)(c))</p> <p>Tweed River Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 35(2)(c))</p>		
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Castlereagh Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 34(5))</p> <p>Intersecting Streams Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 34(5))</p> <p>Lower Murray-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2024 (section 34(5))</p>	<p>In each instance of ‘..Surface water must not be taken from an in-river dam pool to which a replacement approval applies unless the in-river dam pool is passing — ’ we removed the second ‘pool’ so it reads as ‘..Surface water must not be taken from an in-river dam pool to which a replacement approval</p>	<p>The unintentional addition of the word ‘pool’ was not consistent with other plans and could mean that the clause does not make sense. It’s the in-river dam that passes flows, not the in-river dam pool.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Murray Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 34(4))</p> <p>NSW Border Rivers Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 34(6))</p>	<p>applies unless the in-river dam is passing — '.</p>	
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 42(4))</p>	<p>We added a 0 ML/day limit for the very low flow class (in addition to the existing 0 ML/day limit for the A Class) for take under a local water utility licence in the Ourimbah Creek Water Source.</p>	<p>This licence has been prohibited from taking water until flows are in the B class. Without this clarification, the provisions were potentially contradictory.</p>
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (Schedule 2 Table A)</p> <p>Coffs Harbour Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (Schedule 3)</p> <p>Murray Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (Schedule 2 Table A)</p> <p>NSW Border Rivers Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (Schedule 2 Table B; Schedule 3)</p> <p>Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and</p>	<p>We updated licences listed in plan schedules, which are exempt from or subject to specific access rules.</p>	<p>The schedules included licences that have been replaced or cancelled, or had been listed against the incorrect water source, or were missing licences that should have been listed.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Alluvial Water Sources 2023 Schedule 2 Tables A and C)</p> <p>Tuross River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016 (Schedule 2)</p>		
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Lower North Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (Schedule 1)</p>	<p>We amended the Very Low Flow Class for the Karuah Upriver Management Zone to be ‘when flows are equal to or less than 9ML/day’.</p>	<p>The plan unintentionally referred to flows equal to or more than 9ML/day. This was inconsistent with the intent of the rule.</p>
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Lower North Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (1)</p> <p>Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (Schedule 1)</p>	<p>We clarified that the very low flow class threshold for the following water sources is 0 ML/day, not less than 0 ML/day:</p> <p>(a) Avon River in the Lower North Coast plan</p> <p>(b) Shannon Brook Water Source in the Richmond plan.</p>	<p>This change corrects a drafting error. It is not possible to have less than zero flow.</p>
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 36(3)(a))</p>	<p>We omitted Aboriginal Community Development licences from provisions prohibiting specific access licences from taking surface water unless flows are in the B Class or higher.</p>	<p>The plan allows for access licences of the subcategory Aboriginal Community Development to be granted in the Richmond River Area Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Source only. This water source does not have any flow classes.</p>
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Coffs Harbour Area Unregulated and Alluvial</p>	<p>We updated access rule provisions to clarify that licences and approvals listed in Schedule</p>	<p>As written, the specific access rules that apply to</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Water Sources 2022 (section 36)</p> <p>Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 36)</p>	<p>3 are subject to specific cease to take conditions, detailed in this schedule.</p>	<p>these licences and approvals were not clear.</p>
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 36)</p>	<p>We updated access rules for the very low flow and A Classes to consider differences between rising and falling rivers.</p>	<p>As written, the flow class rules were unnecessarily restrictive. Flow could drop to the A Class (but not the very low flow class) from the C Class, then rise again after rain, and take would be restricted because it's now a rising A Class.</p>
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (sections 15 and 39)</p>	<p>We clarified that the licence referenced in section 39 is an aquifer (town water supply) access licence and made corresponding updates to the requirements for water clauses.</p>	<p>The plan incorrectly referred to this licence as a local water utility access licence.</p>
<p>Access rules</p> <p>Tweed River Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (section 38)</p>	<p>We clarified that ground water take in the Tweed Estuary Water Source is exempt from the no visible flow rule in section 38.</p>	<p>section 35 exempts surface water take in this water source. The same should apply for groundwater users, but the plan didn't make this clear.</p>
<p>Amendment of this plan</p> <p>Castlereagh Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 53(1))</p>	<p>We added a standard amendment provision enabling extraction management units to be added to, modified, or removed from the plans, if necessary, in future.</p>	<p>This is a standard amendment provision in water sharing plans. This was incorrectly omitted</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Intersecting Streams Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 52(1))</p> <p>Lower Murray-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2024 (section 52(1))</p> <p>Murray Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 52(1))</p> <p>North Western Unregulated and Fractured Rock Water Sources 2024 (section 64(1))</p> <p>NSW Border Rivers Unregulated River Water Sources 2024 (section 52(1))</p>		<p>from inland plans replaced in 2024.</p>
<p>Application of plan</p> <p>Clyde River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016 (section 4(1))</p>	<p>We included the Southern Water Management Area in addition to the South East Water Management Area in the description of this plan area.</p>	<p>This plan falls within both water management areas. We had unintentionally referred only to the South East Water Management Area.</p>
<p>Application of the plan</p> <p>Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources 2023, (section 3)</p>	<p>We replaced the term ‘Tertiary’ with ‘Triassic’ in the definition of the Maroota Tertiary Sands Groundwater Source (a groundwater source to which this plan applies).</p>	<p>The terms ‘Tertiary’ and ‘Permian’ were incorrect. As previously drafted, the definition excluded the Hawkesbury Sandstone, which is middle Triassic in age. This was not intended</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Application of the plan Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 3(2)(a))</p>	<p>We clarified that the water sources include all surface water and all water in an estuary that is within the boundaries of the water source as shown on the Plan Map.</p>	<p>We made this change to make the intent of the provision clear and improve legal robustness.</p>
<p>Application of the plan Multiple water sharing plans</p>	<p>We updated notes stating plan maps are available on the NSW legislation website to clarify that they are now on the department's website.</p>	<p>Maps are no longer available on the NSW Legislation website.</p>
<p>Application of the plan Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016 (sections 5(1)(a),19(a), 21(a), 24(a), 25(a), 26(a), 27(a), 57(2))</p>	<p>We confirmed that the name of management zone 1A is Glenbawn Dam water storage and Hunter River to Goulburn River junction, as originally specified in Schedule 1.</p>	<p>This management zone had been inconsistently named throughout the plan.</p>
<p>Application of the plan NSW Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2016 (section 4)</p>	<p>We clarified the upper limit of the Lower Darling Water Source to be consistent with the lower limit of the Barwon-Darling unregulated plan.</p>	<p>The previous wording was ambiguous and did not provide enough detail about the boundaries of this water source.</p>
<p>Dictionary Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source 2016</p>	<p>We added a definition of 'Windamere Dam water storage' to the dictionary.</p>	<p>Windamere Dam water storage is referred to multiple times within this plan. We added a definition to the dictionary for consistency with other water storages referenced in the plan.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Dictionary</p> <p>Multiple water sharing plans</p>	<p>We added a definition of stream order to the plan dictionaries. This definition is consistent with section 4 of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2025.</p>	<p>Stream order is used to determine rules prohibiting in-river dams. We made this change to provide clarity and to assist with plan interpretation.</p>
<p>Dictionary</p> <p>Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2024</p> <p>Castlereagh Unregulated River Water Sources 2024</p> <p>Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023</p>	<p>We made minor changes to more accurately refer to current plan maps.</p>	<p>Some plans referred to previous versions of plan maps or they were inaccurately titled. This change makes the plans more legally robust.</p>
<p>Dictionary</p> <p>North Coast Coastal Sands Groundwater Sources 2016</p> <p>North Coast Fractured and Porous Rock Groundwater Sources 2016</p> <p>South Coast Groundwater Sources 2016</p>	<p>We amended plan provisions to refer to the most current guidelines for construction of water bores in Australia</p>	<p>The Minimum Construction Requirements for Water Bores in Australia were updated in 2020.</p>
<p>Flow classes</p> <p>Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Source 2022 (Schedule 1)</p>	<p>We confirmed the flow class thresholds for the A1 Class in the Paterson/Allyn Rivers Water Source and the A Class for the Seaham Weir Management Zone (Williams River Water Source).</p>	<p>We made these changes to confirm that the upper limits of the A1 and A flow classes align with the lower limits of the A2 and B classes, respectively.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>High priority groundwater-dependent ecosystems</p> <p>NSW Murray Darling Basin Fractured Rock Groundwater Sources 2020 (Schedule 2, Table A)</p>	<p>We removed O’Hares Creek from the list of high priority groundwater-dependent ecosystems.</p>	<p>O’Hares Creek falls outside of the boundaries of this plan. The inclusion of O’Hares Creek in this plan was unintentional.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions</p> <p>Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2024 (section 61(2))</p>	<p>We clarified that relevant access licences must have mandatory conditions to give effect to the system operation rules specified in Part 6.</p>	<p>This is a standard condition, already required of work approval holders. This plan change makes this requirement clear.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions</p> <p>Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2024 (section 60)</p>	<p>We amended section 60 to clarify that the requirement to confirm a cease-to-take condition does not apply before taking water – and to record that confirmation in a logbook – does not apply to domestic and stock licences in the regulated river water source.</p>	<p>Under section 106(4) of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2025, this requirement does not apply in relation to water taken from a regulated river.</p> <p>While the plan already made exemptions for other regulated river access licences, it did not account for domestic and stock licences in the regulated water source.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions</p> <p>Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (sections 69 and 72)</p>	<p>We added a requirement for water users to confirm that ‘cease to take’ conditions do not apply before taking water.</p>	<p>This is a standard condition, already required of work approval holders. This plan change makes this requirement clear.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Mandatory conditions Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 70 (4))</p>	<p>We removed a provision requiring approval holders to notify the minister upon becoming aware of a breach of their approval conditions.</p>	<p>This provision was outdated and should not be required for approved holders.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 75(2)(a))</p>	<p>We clarified that water users must notify the minister in writing within 48 hours if they encounter contaminated water during construction of a water supply work.</p>	<p>This change makes it clearer for water users to comply with the conditions of their work approval.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions Clyde River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016 (section 64) Deua River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016 (section 65) North Coast Fractured and Porous Rock Groundwater Sources 2016 (section 56) Snowy Genoa Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016 (section 64) Tuross River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016 (section 65)</p>	<p>We added a provision requiring approval holders to submit details of new water supply works to the Department within 60 days of construction.</p>	<p>This is a standard condition already required of work approval holders. This approval condition was mistakenly omitted from the plan when it was drafted.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions</p>	<p>We clarified that access licences must have mandatory conditions to give effect to the relevant</p>	<p>This is a standard condition, already required of access licence holders. This plan</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
<p>Darling Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020 (section 52)</p>	<p>access rules for the taking of water specified in Part 8 of the plan.</p>	<p>change makes this requirement clear.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources 2023 (sections 51, 52, 53) Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 (sections 65(2)(a), 66, 67(1)(7))</p>	<p>We clarified that unless otherwise specified, any written notice required to be given to the minister must be sent to the email address for enquiries specified on the Department’s website</p>	<p>The water sharing plans already require water users to notify the minister in writing in certain circumstances. This change provides detail on how to do that.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions Murrumbidgee Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020 (section 54)</p>	<p>We removed section 54(2), which defined ‘operational meter’ in the context of plan rules.</p>	<p>This provision has been superseded by metering requirements of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2025.</p>
<p>Mandatory conditions Murrumbidgee Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020 (sections 56 and 59)</p>	<p>We updated record keeping conditions to clarify logbook requirements for licence and approval holders.</p>	<p>The updated provisions are consistent with the reporting requirements of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2025, which superseded the original plan provisions.</p>
<p>Requirements for water Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 (section 20)</p>	<p>We corrected the total volume of domestic and stock entitlements in the plan area to 1,402 ML/year.</p>	<p>The total volume across all water sources was previously miscalculated. This change corrects that error.</p>

Plan and plan part	Change in amended plan	Basis for change
System operation rules Paterson Regulated River Water Source 2019 (section 46(2))	We updated the Gostwyck gauge number to 210079. This gauge is referred to in the plan’s environmental flow rules.	The incorrect gauge number was listed.
Various sections and schedules Multiple water sharing plans	We’ve made additional changes to correct minor typographical, cross-referencing and administrative errors.	We made these changes to simplify and improve plan drafting, to make the intent of provisions clear and improve legal robustness.

The process for changing water sharing plans

As well as the approval of the Minister for Water, amending a plan requires the agreement of the NSW Minister for Environment (this is known as ‘concurrence’). Consistent with section 9 of the *Water Management Act 2000* (the WM Act), when amending a water sharing plan the ministers must:

- take all reasonable steps to promote the water management principles of the WM Act and
- give priority to the principles relating to water sharing according to the order they are set out in under section 5 (3) of the WM Act.

The water sharing management principles under s5(3) of the WM Act are (in their order of priority):

1. Sharing water from a water source must protect the water source and its dependent ecosystems.
2. Sharing water from a water source must protect basic landholder rights.
3. Sharing or extraction of water under any other right must not prejudice the principles set out in points 1 and 2.

Given these amendments do not change the intent of any plan rules, there is no change to how plans meet the principles of the WM Act. The Water Group within the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water worked with colleagues in the department’s Conservation Programs Heritage and Regulation group to develop the amendments before submitting the plan for the agreement and approval of the ministers.

More information

To read the water sharing plan and supporting fact sheets, visit the Department's [water sharing plan status](#) webpage.

To read the protocol for amending water sharing plans, refer to the [Water sharing plan amendments protocol](#) webpage.

Appendix 1. List of plans amended by the order

1. Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2024
2. Bellinger River Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2020
3. Brunswick Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
4. Castlereagh Unregulated River Water Sources 2024
5. Central Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022
6. Clarence River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
7. Clyde River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
8. Coffs Harbour Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022
9. Darling Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020
10. Deua River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
11. Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources 2023
12. Gwydir Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020
13. Hastings Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2019
14. Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016
15. Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022
16. Intersecting Streams Unregulated River Water Sources 2024
17. Lachlan Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020
18. Lachlan Regulated River Water Source 2016
19. Lower Murray-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2024
20. Lower North Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022
21. Macleay Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
22. Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source 2016
23. Murray Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020
24. Murray Unregulated River Water Sources 2024
25. Murrumbidgee Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020
26. Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source 2016
27. Nambucca Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
28. Namoi Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020

29. New South Wales Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2016
30. North Coast Coastal Sands Groundwater Sources 2016
31. North Coast Fractured and Porous Rock Groundwater Sources 2016
32. North Western Unregulated and Fractured Rock Water Sources 2024
33. NSW Border Rivers Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020
34. NSW Border Rivers Unregulated River Water Sources 2024
35. NSW Murray Darling Basin Fractured Rock Groundwater Sources 2020
36. NSW Murray Darling Basin Porous Rock Groundwater Sources 2020
37. Paterson Regulated River Water Source 2019
38. Richmond River Area Unregulated, Regulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023
39. Snowy Genoa Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
40. South Coast Groundwater Sources 2016
41. Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023
42. Tuross River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2016
43. Tweed River Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023