

What we heard report

Revised cease-to-pump rules – Draft water sharing plans for the Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan unregulated river water sources 2026

March 2026



Acknowledgement of Country



Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency – Boss Lady Creative Designs, created the People and Community symbol.

What we heard report

Published by NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

water.dcceew.nsw.gov.au

First published: March 2026

Department or Agency reference number: PUB25/964

More information

Cover image: Courtesy of Amy Halliday, Gwydir River, Collymongle

Copyright and disclaimer

© State of New South Wales through Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 2026. Information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing, March 2026, and is subject to change. For more information, please visit the following websites:

For ECCS documents: <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/copyright>

For Water and Environment <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/about-us/copyright-and-disclaimer>

For General NSW Government <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/copyright>

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	ii
Executive summary	4
About this document.....	4
Background	5
Consultation.....	5
How did we consult?	6
Face-to-face information sessions.....	6
Webinar session.....	7
Targeted consultations.....	7
What we asked.....	7
How we assessed submissions	8
Key issues.....	8
Other issues.....	13
Government response	13
More information	23
Appendix 1: Out-of-scope issues	24
Assessing out-of-scope issues	24
Out-of-scope issues heard.....	25

Executive summary

About this document

The [2012 water sharing plans](#) for the Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan unregulated rivers water sources, expired on 30 June 2025.

As part of replacing these 4 plans, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) undertook **additional consultation** on proposed revised cease-to-pump (CTP) access rules in 11 water sources across those plan areas.

The department publicly exhibited proposed revised rules from 4 September to 15 October 2025. This provided an opportunity for water users, broader stakeholders and other interested parties to learn more about the proposed changes, to make submissions and comment on the revised access rules for the draft plans.

This report summarises how we engaged with communities during the additional consultation period, the key issues we heard and the next steps in finalising the draft replacement water sharing plans for the Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan unregulated rivers water sources (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Engagement summary



Background

The department is responsible for surface and ground water management, including ensuring water security for NSW. We also ensure equitable sharing of surface and groundwater resources, and that water entitlements and allocations are secure and tradeable.

Water sharing plans are the primary legal framework for managing and sharing water in NSW. They are made under the NSW Water Management Act 2000 (WM Act) and are valid for 10 years. The rules in the plans allow equitable sharing of water for all water users, including the environment.

They do this by:

- providing water for the environment by protecting a proportion of the water available for fundamental ecosystem health
- setting limits on the total volume of water extracted to ensure security for the environment and water users and protecting the water needed to meet basic landholder rights
- providing water users with a clear picture of when and how water will be available for extraction
- providing flexibility for licence holders in the way they can manage their water accounts
- specifying rules to minimise the impacts of extraction on groundwater users, groundwater-dependent ecosystems, culturally significant sites, water quality and the integrity of aquifers
- setting the mandatory conditions that apply to licence holders.

Under the WM Act water sharing plans are subject to review every 10 years and may be replaced to deliver better outcomes for all water users, including the environment.

Consultation

Consultation is an essential part of developing the draft replacement water sharing plans for the Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuu Bogon and Lachlan unregulated rivers water sources (the draft replacement plans).

Initial consultation on the draft replacement plans occurred between November 2024 and January 2025 and is reported on separately for each plan.

Following expiry of the draft replacement plans on 30 June 2025, revised cease-to-pump (CTP) access rules were proposed in 11 specific water sources and management zones in 4 lapsed inland water sharing plans. The proposed revised CTP access rules were publicly exhibited from 4 September 2025 to 15 October 2025 and that consultation is the subject of this What we heard report.

We encouraged stakeholders to give feedback directly and through written submissions. Our website included a 'Have your say' section that gave people different ways to make a submission, including via email and a downloadable feedback form.

During this period, Namoi Water requested further detailed information and asked for additional time to review that information before making a submission. The department provided Namoi Water with the requested information, where it was available, and allowed them an extension to provide feedback. Sixteen other stakeholders duplicated Namoi Water's request (or parts thereof) and were provided a copy of the material sent to Namoi Water.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council also requested further information to support their submission and were granted an extension.

In addition to the feedback provided by those who attended face-to-face and webinar sessions, we received 87 written submissions during public exhibition.

How did we consult?

The consultation period on proposed revised cease to pump access rules was initially proposed to run between 4 September 2025 and 8 October 2025 during which the department consulted with stakeholders and sought their views on the proposed revised rules. In response to public feedback, an additional face to face meeting was held in Manilla and the consultation period was extended to 15 October 2025 to allow for comment on the proposed revised access rules.

We identified stakeholders with a potential interest in the proposed revised rules. These included water access licence holders in the 11 identified water sources or management zones and water supply work approval holders (WaterNSW customers), environmental interest groups, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, community groups, farming groups and local councils/water utilities.

WaterNSW customers were contacted via mail (551 letters) and other groups and individuals were contacted via email (5,386 individual recipients). These communications informed recipients of the proposed revised access rules, ways to access information and invited them to attend the public and targeted information sessions.

Public information sessions were held over the 41-day exhibition period, including one public webinar, 5 face-to-face meetings and 4 targeted online meetings with plan-specific presentation and communication materials available. Staff from the department's Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group, Water for the Environment team were in attendance to speak with stakeholders about the proposed rules and to answer questions.

Face-to-face information sessions

We held face-to-face information sessions across the water sharing plan areas in convenient locations for the majority of stakeholders likely to be impacted by proposed changes to the plan. We used a presentation and discussion approach for the meetings at which departmental staff were available to discuss the plan changes and answer questions. Stakeholders could watch the presentation, gather printed information, inspect maps and discuss any questions or concerns one-on-one with staff.

Table 1 summarises participation at each meeting.

Table 1. Stakeholder attendance at face-to-face meetings

Location	Date	Registered to attend	Attended
Tamworth	8 September 2025	12	9
Moree	10 September 2025	1	8
Eugowra	16 September 2025	8	8
Boorowa	16 September 2025	4	3
Manilla	26 September 2025	21	33

Webinar session

The department held a live webinar session using a virtual meeting platform. We presented the proposed revised access rules for the 4 plans and attendees could post questions in the live chat. We allocated time at the end of the presentation for clarification, questions and discussion.

Table 2 summarises the attendance at the webinar.

Table 2. Attendance at webinar

Location	Date	Registered to attend	Attended
Online webinar – Proposed revised cease to pump rules for the 2025 Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan unregulated river water sharing plans	15 September 2025	102	86

Targeted consultations

We held one online targeted meeting with environmental interest groups and 3 online meetings with water users during the public exhibition period.

What we asked

The online submission form focused on proposed revised access rules in the following unregulated plans:

Gwydir plan

- (New) Copeton Dam Management Zone in the Copeton Dam Water Source
- Moredun Creek Water Source
- Tycannah Creek Water Source

Namoi and Peel plan

- Macdonald River upstream of Woolbrook Management Zone in the Mid Macdonald Water Source
- Maules and Horsearm Creek Management Zone in the Maules Creek Water Source
- Cockburn River Management Zone in the Cockburn River Water Source
- Macdonald and Namoi River Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Water Source

Macquarie/Wambuul and Bogan plan

- Lower Bogan River Water Source
- (New) Cudgong River Downstream Management Zone

Lachlan plan

- Boorowa River and Hovells Creek Water Source
- Lower Mandagery Creek Management Zone in the Mandagery Creek Water Source

How we assessed submissions

Stakeholders raised issues in consultation sessions, through formal submissions and correspondence. When determining whether the issues raised were in or out of the scope of this consultation the department considered the following:

- Is the issue within the scope of the **proposed revised cease-to-pump access rules**?
- Is the suggestion consistent with the WM Act?
- Are existing programs/processes or other departments addressing the issue?
- Does the issue relate to water charges, costs, operational activities or licensing matters that are outside of the scope of the water sharing plan?
- Is the issue likely to affect water availability for basic landholder right users and licence holders, and if so, how?
- Can current legal mechanisms enable the change, or is legislative change required?
- Is the issue consistent with current policy settings, and if not, can we develop robust, alternative policies within the timeframe for developing the water sharing plan?
- Are there additional costs for the NSW Government?
- Can we investigate the issue within the timeframe for developing the water sharing plan?

Issues raised during public consultation that were deemed out of scope of the revised cease-to-pump access rule proposals, are summarised in [Appendix 1](#). These issues were not explored further as part of the replacement plan.

Key issues

We received feedback on the proposed rule changes during the consultation sessions and through submissions. The feedback is summarised in Table 3 and was considered as part of finalising the draft replacement plan.

Table 3. Summary of submissions about the proposed rule changes

Issue	Comments
<p>General comments across all 4 plans – Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan WSPs</p>	<p>29 submissions, predominately from community members and members of environmental groups, were in support of better river management and protection of aquatic and riparian species across the Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan water sources. However, some felt as though the proposed rules are not equitable between all water users and the environment, and some were concerned the method applied was not suitable and does not provide adequate downstream protection or connectivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Better protection of river management is required, not just for some water sources, but for all’. • ‘Proper river management is essential – not just for farmers, but also for fish, wildlife, and the health of our waterways’. • Glad to see principals of the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i> applied. • Three organisations were in support of better river management but felt it is ‘more likely that the proposed changes will improve water security for downstream water holders’. • Environmental Concerned Citizens of Orange (ECCO) felt ‘the access rules are a step in the right direction however they will do little to improve conditions and protect environmental values’. • ‘While Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG) acknowledges that there will be benefits to rivers where the changes have been made; environmental benefits in those rivers are unlikely, as they will not improve connectivity in the Ngamaay, Wambuul, or Baawan/Baaka Rivers’. • ‘We want effective rules, not silly rules’ (in relation to the large scale of proposed change).

<p>General comments across all 4 plans – Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/ Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan WSPs</p>	<p>Two submitters opposed the revised access rules being implemented across any of the 4 valleys. However, general comments were made by water users, community members and local Council/Parliamentary members that were not in support of rule changes specifically expressing concerns regarding the consultation timeframe, flawed or incomplete data, socio-economic impacts, and compensation issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelming concern by those opposed to the revised rules regarding substantial socio-economic impacts as a result of reduced access to water, including; foreclosure of homes, ceasing of operations, relocation of families, concern for mental health and wellbeing, impacts to broader community; loss of employment and income interjection into communities. • ‘The change has potential to be economically fatal, rendering local farms unviable and devalued.’ • ‘Flow on effect to communities with less employment, relocation of families and loss of skilled workers.’ • Majority of submissions received were concerned that there was no sufficient evidence for the basis of change, stating that there are large knowledge gaps in the data and supporting information, and appropriate assessments including socio economic assessments, metering, options analysis, and real assessments of take have not been completed. • ‘Data is inaccurate and is not representative of real impacts.’ • ‘The data was outdated and lacked transparency, ground truthing and scientific studies on hydrography of the river system and ground water.’ • Many people felt as though the four-week consultation period was inadequate given the magnitude of the potential impacts these proposed changes would bring and requested further face-to-face engagement before final CTPs were decided and introduced. • Some submissions argued compensation should be paid to water access licence holders for reduced access. • Several submissions were concerned there is no clarity around what the objectives are, what measured outcomes are expected from the proposals and how will this be determined. • There were concerns land value will decrease due to reduced potential to irrigate. • Several submissions from water users were in support of ‘credible, evidence-based measures to protect river health and threatened species’. However, they did not support the proposals currently on exhibition as they ‘are not evidence-based’... ‘These proposals are rushed, unjustified, and unlawful without the evidence base. I urge you to pause, release the material, extend consultation, and only then re-engage with stakeholders in good faith’. • ‘Hay growers pay a water charge but cannot access water’ under the proposed rules. • ‘The new CTP rules removes the purpose of having an irrigation licence without formally revoking them and compensation should be payable.’
---	--

Issue	Comments
<p>General comments across all 4 plans – Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/ Wambuul Bogan and Lachlan WSPs</p>	<p>Other comments and queries raised during face-to-face and online meetings related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the proposed CTP values were chosen • Compensation for loss of access to water which affects business viability and livelihoods • Local insights, including hydrology, river values and river management • Distance between gauge and pump sites and location of gauges in relation to tributary inflows • Lack of consideration of physical limitations on ability to take (pump size) and user behaviour • Suggested alternatives – stagger the introduction of rule changes to allow people time to adjust, investigate changes to trade rules instead.
<p>Access rules - Namoi and Peel plan</p>	<p>46 submissions strongly opposed the proposed revised rules in the Namoi and Peel plan area. The majority of these submissions wrote in opposing the proposed 36 ML/day access rule at Kootingal gauge in the Cockburn River Management Zone because it would affect their ability to operate and have detrimental effects on the broader Tamworth community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘New access rules at the Kootingal gauge will reduce capital purchase from local suppliers and making irrigation hay producing farms unviable.’ • ‘Our land and our business is in our blood and is our cultural connection that is shared throughout the community.’ • 3 submissions expressed concern they are expecting heavy financial losses as a result of the proposed rule change as investments in infrastructure have been made over recent years. • Tamworth City Council noted the changes are significant and represent tangible risk to economy and social wellbeing of communities of the Peel Valley. • 6 submissions noted the change will result in a decline of mental health throughout communities and would put pressure on mental health services that are already stretched in the local area. • Several submissions noted the loss of lucerne and turf growing in the region would have negative environmental impacts ‘given both lucerne and turf farming extracts up to 2.5 kg of carbon per square metre even after energy inputs’. • ‘Ecological assessments do not consider the pristine health of the Namoi system.’ • Manilla weir ‘no visible flow’ trigger should not be dropped as it provides better environmental protection (due to flows through the fishway) than the 16 ML/day rule. • One submission wrote in regards to groundwater linkages noting any step-up in commence-to-pump thresholds for Macdonald & Namoi Rivers (North Cuerindi 419005) could cascade to groundwater reliability for the Manilla Alluvial URAMZ licences.

Issue	Comments
Access rules – Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan plan	<p>7 submissions made specific comment regarding proposed access rules in the 2 Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan water sources where changes were proposed. Of these submissions, 5 supported the proposed revised access rules and made general comments. However, some specific comments raised regarding equity within the water source, socio-economic impacts, gauges and connectivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One submission contended that based on local experience, the proposed changes to the Lower Bogan River rules will render an intergenerational family business on which the community relies, unviable. The water-dependent business reportedly generates in excess of \$1 million from production. Of this, it is estimated that \$600,000 is spent within the Bourke economy in the form of wages, transport, chemicals, weed and machinery support, and that the proposal will significantly worsen high levels of disadvantage to the community particularly among youth and a large indigenous population. • The ECCO was concerned the ‘revised access rules may be unfairly targeting entitlement holders while Town Water Supply customers are afforded exemption from contributing to improving stream flows for environmental outcomes’. • It was also suggested “there should be no application of a cease to pump rule at the Bogan River Gongolgon gauge as ‘the flows and pools in the Little Bogan River are totally influenced from water that has backed up from the Darling River, and do not bear any similarities to the flows in the Bogan River itself’. • The River Integrity Project did not feel the proposed revised rules in the Lower Bogan would achieve connectivity.
Access rules – Gwydir plan	<p>4 submitters wrote in regards to access rules in the Gwydir plan area, 3 of which were opposed to the rules. There were some specific comments relating to proposed rule changes in the Gwydir:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association (GVIA) did not feel as though new rules will help with connectivity: ‘The Independent Assessment of the 2018-19 Fish Deaths in the Lower Darling estimated that only between 8-7% of inflow leave the Gwydir Valley. The low contribution, which is consistent with other terminal wetland systems, is a result of most of the water within the system flowing naturally towards the terminal wetlands and watercourse’. • GVIA also noted the gauges being used to inform the flows in the Gwydir are inappropriate: ‘Gauge is at the end of water source for the Moredun Creek, and the gauge is not even in the water source for the Copeton Dam’.

Issue	Comments
Access rules – Lachlan plan	<p>Only one peak stakeholder made a submission on the proposed revised cease to pump rules in the Lachlan plan area citing general comments opposing new rules and raising some valley specific concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence or record of any endangered species in the Mandagery Creek. • Inequity between upstream/downstream: ‘The new rules relying on the gauge height at Smithfield are inequitable’ as they will restrict the ability of licence holders in the lower management zone from pumping as the Smithfield gauge does not measure all inflows to Mandagery Creek and there is a time lag issue for both upstream and downstream users. • Lachlan Valley Water (LVW) strongly opposed to 48 hour first flush upstream of Eugowra. • Some attendees advised they were already operating to a 10 ML/day CTP in the Lower Mandagery Creek Management Zone.

Other issues

During the consultation period additional issues were raised. Some of the other issues raised that are within scope of the draft replacement plans are:

- *Water Management Act 2000*
- compensation
- request for additional information and consultation time
- request for more gauges in the plan areas.

Government response

Feedback and issues raised within the scope of the draft replacement plan were considered by the department before recommending a replacement water sharing plan to the Minister for Water.

Before deciding to replace the plan, the minister was required to seek and obtained agreement from the Minister for the Environment. The Lachlan replacement plan commenced on 27 February 2026 and the remaining 3 commenced on 2 April 2026.

Table 4 outlines the cease-to-pump rules adopted in the 11 water sources or management zones where additional consultation was held on revised rules in late 2025. It includes key considerations for adopting those rules after reviewing consultation feedback (summarised Table 3) and information provided by the department.

In general, the rules adopted in these 11 areas aim to protect low flows to support native fish survival and movements, reduce water quality risks, and maintain flow connectivity within river reaches, while considering the impacts on users’ access and the feedback provided above.

Table 4. Access rules adopted following revised cease-to-pump consultation in late 2025 and key considerations

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
Gwydir	Copeton Dam Water Source Gwydir River Management Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New management zone created for Gwydir River • 7 ML/day CTP measured at Gwydir River at Bundarra gauge (418008) applied to new Gwydir River Management Zone • Amendment provision to review this access rule by 31 December 2027. 	<p>Management zone creation Applies rules only to licences that affect Gwydir River flows and can contribute to outcomes sought</p> <p>CTP 7 ML/day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses the high risk to low flows identified by risk assessment • exceeds the ideal flow requirements at this location for both Bells turtle (2.6 ML/day) and Catfish (6.3 ML/day). • improves low flow protection and benefit water quality • ensures key environmental outcomes are met while limiting impacts on access means no access 20% of the year (on average). <p>Amendment provision Enables rule to be reviewed to consider new information</p>

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
Gwydir	<p>Moredun Creek Water Source</p> <p>Gwydir River and Lower Moredun Creek Management Zone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two new management zones created – one for the Gwydir River and lower reaches of Moredun Creek, one for the upper reaches of Moredun Creek and catchment areas across the water source. 7 ML/day CTP measured at Gwydir River at Bundarra gauge (418008) applied to the new Gwydir River and Lower Moredun Creek Management Zone Amendment provision included to review this access rule by 31 December 2027. 	<p>Management zone creation</p> <p>Applies rules only to licences that most affect Gwydir River flows and can contribute to outcomes sought</p> <p>CTP</p> <p>7 ML/day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the high risk to low flows identified by risk assessment exceeds the ideal flow requirements at this location for both Bells turtle (2.6 ML/day) and Catfish (6.3 ML/day). improves low flow protection and benefit water quality ensures key environmental outcomes are met while limiting impacts on access means no access 20% of the year (on average). <p>Amendment provision</p> <p>Enables rule to be reviewed to consider new information</p>

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
Gwydir	Tycannah Creek Water Source	2 ML/day CTP measured at Tycannah Creek at Horseshoe Lagoon (418032)	<p>CTP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The water source has high ecological value throughout, including threatened fish • 2 ML/day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reduces the frequency of zero flow periods, improves low flow protection, supports connectivity, protects pools ○ protects flow depths of approx 12 cm at gauge, supporting fish passage ○ is needed to ensure key environmental outcomes are met and results in no access 52% of the year ○ will not apply to licences that already have higher of (stricter) or other access rules

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
Namoi and Peel	Cockburn River Water Source Cockburn River Management Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 ML/day CTP measured at Downstream of Kootingal Bridge Weir gauge (419114) • Amendment provision to review this access rule by year 5 of the plan 	<p>CTP</p> <p>5 ML/day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses risks to low flows, improves river connectivity and reduces the length of zero flow periods • improves low flow protection and benefits water quality • provides a 12 cm flow depth for fish passage • ensures key environmental outcomes are met while limiting impacts on access means no access 24% of the year (on average). <p>Amendment provision</p> <p>Enables rule to be reviewed to consider new information, and allows time to obtain a greater understanding of conditions at current gauge which has only been operating for a limited time.</p>
Namoi and Peel	Mid Macdonald River Water Source Macdonald River Upstream Woolbrook Management Zone	15 ML/day CTP measured at Woolbrook gauge (419010)	<p>15 ML/day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aligns with the CTP at the downstream gauge for the downstream management zone • improves low flow duration, important to maintain connectivity of pools and the wetting and drying regime • ensures key environmental outcomes are met while limiting impacts on access means no access 9% of the year (on average) • will apply to all 4 unregulated licences in the management zone.

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
Namoi and Peel	Upper Namoi Water Source Macdonald and Namoi Rivers Management Zone	<p>A 2-part access rule requiring both flow conditions to be exceeded for access to occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 ML/d measured at North Cuerindi gauge (419005), AND • No visible flow (NVF) over the crest of the Manilla Weir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manilla Weir includes a fishway that flows at approx. 20 ML/day before flow over the weir crest occurs. • Including a requirement for at least 16 ML/d at North Cuerindi gauge as well as flow over the weir crest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provides habitat for the threatened fish and frog species and flow-dependent macroinvertebrate communities ○ mitigates the high risk of zero and low flow periods, and risks to high in-stream values ○ protects depths of approximately 10 cm at the gauge, providing some fish passage • Analysis using gauged data from both North Cuerindi and Halls Creek gauges indicates the existing rule of NVF at Manilla Weir crest will be the main CTP driver (where NVF at the weir crest was the sum of flows at both gauges over the period of record). • The new CTP rule will not apply to licences that already have higher of (stricter) or other access rules.

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
<p>Namoi and Peel</p>	<p>Maules Creek Water Source Maules and Horsearm Creek Management Zone</p>	<p>10 ML/day CTP measured at Avoca East gauge (419051)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 ML/day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provides substantially greater projection of low flows and less time that flows are at 1 ML/day ○ helps to address risks to high instream values in the water source, such as endangered/threatened species ○ ensures key environmental outcomes are met while limiting impacts on access means no access 52% of the year (on average). ○ will not apply to licences that already have higher of (stricter) or other access rules.

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
<p>Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan</p>	<p>Lower Bogan River Water Source</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 ML/day CTP measured at Bogan River at Gongolgon gauge (421023) • Amendment provision for review as part of the Northern Basin Connectivity program 	<p>CTP</p> <p>20 ML/day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protects low flows, improves river connectivity and supports high in-stream values • ensures key environmental outcomes are met while limiting impacts on access means no access 43% of the year (on average). • will not apply to licences that already have higher of (stricter) or other access rules, being most licences and entitlement in the water source. <p>Amendment provision</p> <p>The Lower Bogan River water source is being reviewed as part of the Northern Basin Connectivity program and this enables further changes to be made if required as part of the NSW Government’s response to the Connectivity Expert Panel’s recommendations.</p>

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan	Upper Cudgegong River Water Source Cudgegong River Downstream Management Zone	3 ML/day CTP measured at Cudgegong River at Rylstone gauge (421903)	<p>3 ML/day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> will reduce zero flows, increase flowing water habitats and protect flows in the low flow and higher range protects flow depths of approximately 30 cm at gauge, supporting fish passage helps to address risks to high instream values, including endangered species ensures key environmental outcomes are met but means no access potentially 32% of the year (on average). will not apply to the licence that already has a higher of (stricter) or other access rule.
Lachlan	Boorowa River and Hovells Creek Water Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two new management zones created – one for the lower reaches of the Boorowa River, and one for the upper reaches of Boorowa River, Hovells Creek and the catchment areas across the water source. 6 ML/day CTP measured at Boorowa River at Prossers Crossing gauge (412029) applied to the Lower Boorowa River Management Zone Upper Boorowa River and Hovells Creek Management Zone retains existing rule. 	<p>Management zone creation</p> <p>Reflects parts of the water source have no hydrological connection to Boorowa River or there is a limited relationship between conditions at pump locations and at the gauge.</p> <p>CTP</p> <p>6 ML/d:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> helps mitigate the high risk of increased zero and low flow periods protects flow depths of approximately 19 cm at the gauge, supporting fish passage ensures key environmental outcomes are met but means no access 24% of the year (on average).

Plan	Water source or management zone	Rule/s	Key considerations
Lachlan	Mandagery Creek Water Source Lower Mandagery Creek Management Zone	<p>A 2-part access rule requiring both conditions to be met for access to occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 ML/day at Mandagery Creek upstream Eugowra gauge (412030) AND • first flush of <u>an average</u> of 10 ML/day over 2 days 	<p>10 ML/day at the gauge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equates to 12 ML/day at the end of system • protects habitat for threatened fish and frog species and the Lower Lachlan River endangered ecological community • helps mitigate high risk of increased zero and low flows periods • provides flow depths of approximately 16 cm at the gauge, supporting fish passage • ensures key environmental outcomes are met but results in no access 33% of the year (on average). <p>A first flush of <u>an average</u> of 10 ML/day over 2 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protects first flows after a dry period • provides additional protection for low flows.

More information

The department has published a background document on each replacement plan. These documents include a summary of the changes made to that plan. Some of the changes were made because of public consultation, including from this additional consultation on proposed revised cease to pump access rules.

The new plans and other supporting information are available [here](#) on the department's website.

Appendix 1: Out-of-scope issues

Assessing out-of-scope issues

Managing resources in New South Wales relies on a range of legislation, initiatives and cooperative arrangements with other agencies. Many issues that are out of scope of a water sharing plan are managed by other agencies, including some issues relating to:

- complying to plan rules
- assessing development applications
- the costs and processes of obtaining water licences and works approvals
- pollution and contamination of water sources.

Feedback on out-of-scope issues may be passed on to responsible agencies, where appropriate.

Table 5 outlines the criteria for and examples of out-of-scope issues.

Table 5. Assessment criteria for identifying whether an issue is out of scope

Assessment criteria	Comment/Example
Does the issue relate to water charges, costs, infrastructure proposals, operational activities or licensing?	These are issues with the implementation and operation of water management that a water sharing plan cannot address.
Is the issue about including descriptions or explanations within the Plan?	The water sharing plan is a legal document that states the rules relevant to water sharing. Other documents provide supporting information that describe how water is managed and how decisions have been made.
Is another program or process addressing the issue, or is it the responsibility of another department?	Proposed or current land development activities such as mine approvals, road tunnel developments or water pollution are managed under other legislation by other departments. The <i>Access Licence Dealing Principles Order 2004</i> is the basis for assessing the local impacts of water extraction, when an applicant seeks approval to trade water or construct a new water supply work.
Does the issue require time and resources beyond the time frame to review the water sharing plan?	For example, a study on the effects of climate change in a particular groundwater source.
Is the issue consistent with the current legislative and policy framework?	A water licence is required for any activities that intercept or extract surface or groundwater unless a valid exemption applies.

Out-of-scope issues heard

Table 6 summarises issues raised during public consultation that are outside of the scope of the water sharing plan and the proposed revised access rules consultation.

Table 6. Summary of submissions on out-of-scope issues

Issue	Comments
Metering	Requests for the department to apply water meters allowing real-time monitoring for all extraction pumps without exception.
Basin Plan reform	<p>Over the past 25 years the township of Bourke has been severely affected by water reforms resulting in a population decrease by 42%.</p> <p>The impacts of water reform and changes to water availability have directly impacted regions and the local economies of Collarenebri and Moree in particular, where an estimated 200 jobs were lost and ongoing social issues have resulted.</p>
Hydrological risk assessment	Inland Rivers Network are concerned the hydrological risk assessment for developing gauges in high-risk areas has not been released.
Northern Basin Connectivity (NBC) Panel recommendations	<p>NBC Panel recommendation to improve equity for unregulated water users.</p> <p>The proposed cease-to-pump changes are not designed to address system connectivity in the northern basin.</p> <p>The commencement flow at Gongolgon Bridge on the Lower Bogan is proposed to be increased from 'visible flow' to 48 megalitres a day. The Connectivity Expert Panel recommended that extraction not commence until the flow rate identified in the Long-Term Environmental Watering Plan was reached; that is, more than 100 megalitres per day.</p>
Requests for legal documentation	<p>'Provide section 9 WMA compliance statement, concurrence/WRP Consistency, Basic Landholder Rights/exemptions, measurement/compliance protocols, and transition'.</p> <p>'The Department must release its legal advice on whether changes are allocation reductions (potentially compensable under the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i>) or mere access amendments'.</p>