

Changes to the water sharing plans for the Hunter and Paterson regulated river water sources as a result of merging the plans

A summary of changes made to the Water Sharing Plans for the Hunter and Paterson regulated river water sources

The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (The Department) has:

- Repeal the current Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016
- Amend the current Water Sharing Plan for the Paterson Regulated River Water Source 2019 to include the entirety of the current Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016 and rename this as the Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter and Paterson Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2019.

This is a change in Plan name only and the new plan retains all current provisions laid out in each individual plan. Table 1 summarises the amendment.

Table 1 Summary of changes to the Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016 and the Water Sharing Plan for the Paterson Regulated River Water Source 2019.

Change	Basis for change
Repeal the Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016	As per section 45A(1) of the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i> , the minister can only consolidate 2 or more management plans by either repealing one and amending another or amending one and letting the other expire.
Amend the Water Sharing Plan for the Paterson Regulated River Water Source 2019 to include all current provisions of the Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016	The Paterson Plan will retain its current provisions and incorporate all current clauses and provisions set out in the Hunter plan. There will be no practical change to rules in the plans.

Change	Basis for change
Rename the Plan to The Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter and Paterson Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2019.	There will be no significant change to any current clause in either plan. Minor changes have been made to align with current regulations; these changes will not affect the intent or operation of any current clause. The change will be in name only. The Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter Regulated River Water Source 2016 will adopt the duration of the current Water Sharing Plan for the Paterson Regulated River Water Source 2019. The new merged plan will now expire in 2029.

Why we have made these changes

The Department engaged external consultants to identify options to improve the efficiency of Water Sharing Plan replacements. Some one-off changes to the structure of water sharing plan replacements were suggested, one such change was the merging of these water sharing plans.

This change is in the public interest as it reduces the overall number of water sharing plans, making them easier and more efficient to manage.

The process for changing water sharing plans

The approval of the Minister for Water, is required under section 45A (1) (a) of the *Water Management Act 2000* (WM Act), to consolidate two or more plans. Consistent with section 9 of 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.

More information

To read the amended water sharing plan, [visit the Hunter region water sharing plans page](#).

To read the water sharing plan amendment protocol, visit the [Water sharing plan amendment protocol](#).