

Report card for Groundwater Works Approvals

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Draft Water Sharing Plan for the Brunswick Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2027

General Information

Water supply work and use approvals allow you to construct and use a work which takes water from a river, lake or aquifer. Examples of water supply works are water pumps, water bores, dams, weirs, irrigation channels, banks and levees. Approvals are granted through WaterNSW to construct and operate water supply works.

The purpose of water supply work approvals is to ensure that the construction or use of a work does not cause negative impacts on water sources and their dependent ecosystems, or, for access to water by other authorised water users.

A water use approval authorises its holder to use water for a particular purpose, such as irrigation, at a particular location. Every approval includes conditions that are in place to reduce adverse impacts. For more information, please visit the [WaterNSW water supply works approvals](#) website.

Metering requirements apply to water supply work approvals for water supply works that meet the metering thresholds under the new non-urban metering framework. For more information, or to see if you need to comply, please visit the department's [non-urban metering](#) website.

Table 1. Draft rules for groundwater water supply works

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Rules to minimise interference between bores	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within: • 200 m from a bore that is nominated on an aquifer access licence on another landholding • 200 m from a bore that is used to extract basic landholder rights on another landholding • 100 m from a property boundary (unless negotiated in writing with neighbour) • 500 m from a bore nominating a local or major water utility access licence • 100 m from a government monitoring bore. These distance restrictions do not apply if: • the bore is used solely for basic landholder rights • the bore is a replacement bore • the bore is used for monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services • the location of the bore at a lesser distance will have no more than minimal detrimental effect on existing extraction.	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within: • 200 m from a bore that is nominated on another landholding and authorised to take water from the same water source under an aquifer access licence or basic landholder rights • 100 m from a property boundary (unless negotiated in writing with neighbour) • 500 m from a bore nominating a local or major water utility access licence • 100 m from a government monitoring bore. These distance restrictions do not apply if: • the bore is used solely for basic landholder rights • the bore is a replacement bore • the bore is used for monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services • the location of the bore at a lesser distance will have no more than minimal detrimental effect on existing extraction.

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Rules for bores located near contamination sources	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within: • 250 m from the edge of a plume of a contamination source listed in the plan • 250 m and 500 m from the edge of a plume associated with a contamination source identified within the plan, unless no drawdown of water will occur within 250 m of that plume • any distance considered insufficient to protect the water source or public health and safety. These distances restrictions do not apply if: • the location of the bore is adequate to protect the water source, the environment and public health and safety • the bore is used for the purpose of monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services.	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within: • 500 m of a contamination source identified within the plan • 250 m from the edge of a plume of a contamination source • 250 m and 500 m from the edge of a plume associated with a contamination source identified within the plan, unless no drawdown of water will occur within 250 m of that plume • 250 m of an onsite sewage disposal system unless the water supply work is: – constructed with cement grout in the borehole annulus to a minimum depth of 20 m from the ground surface – located at a sufficient distance from the on-site sewage disposal system to prevent migration of septic contamination in the aquifer. The minimum construction depth may be less than 20 m if it can be shown there is adequate protection of the water source, the environment and public health and safety, or the work is used for monitoring or remediation. These distances restrictions do not apply if: • the location of the bore is adequate to protect the water source, the environment and public health and safety • the bore is used for the purpose of monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services.

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Rules for bores located near high priority groundwater-dependent ecosystems	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within: • 40 m of the top of the high bank of a river • 100 m of a high priority groundwater-dependent ecosystem listed in the plan • 400 m of a high priority groundwater-dependent ecosystem listed in the plan if the approval includes a condition that no more than 20 ML is taken per water year or used for basic landholder rights only • 800 m of a high priority groundwater-dependent ecosystem listed in the plan if it includes a condition that no more than 100 ML is taken per water year or used for basic landholder rights only. • any distance if it, in the minister's opinion, is likely to cause more than minimal drawdown to the high priority groundwater-dependent ecosystem, unless for basic landholder rights only. These distances restrictions do not apply if the bore: • is part of a network for a major or local water utility for town water supply • is a replacement groundwater work • is used for the purpose of monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services • at a lesser distance can be shown to have no greater impact on, or minimal draw down at the perimeter of, the water source and its groundwater-dependent ecosystems.	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within: • 40 m of the top of the high bank of a river (waterfront land') • 200 m of any high-priority, groundwater-dependent ecosystem • 200 m of a wetland. These distances restrictions do not apply if the bore is: • used for basic landholder rights • a replacement groundwater work • used for the purpose of monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services • in the minister's opinion, likely to cause no more than minimal harm to any water source or its dependent ecosystems.

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Rules for bores located near potential acid sulfate soils	New bores cannot be in an area classed as having a high probability of the occurrence of acid sulfate soils if it would result in of acidification of the water source.	New bores cannot be in an area classed as having a high probability of the occurrence of acid sulfate soils if there is significant risk of acidification of the water sources.
Rules for bores located near groundwater-dependent, culturally significant sites	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within: • 100 m of groundwater-dependent, culturally significant sites for basic landholder rights use only • 200 m of groundwater-dependent, culturally significant sites for a licenced bore. This location distance restriction does not apply if: • the bore is a replacement bore • the bore is used for monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services • the location of the bore at a lesser distance will have no more than minimal harm to any groundwater-dependent, culturally significant sites.	Water supply works (bores) must not be granted or amended within 200 m of groundwater-dependent, culturally significant sites. This location distance restriction does not apply if: • the bore is used solely for basic landholder rights • the bore is a replacement bore • the bore is used for monitoring, environmental remediation activities or emergency services • the location of the bore at a lesser distance will have no more than minimal harm to any groundwater-dependent, culturally significant sites.

¹ Waterfront land is as defined in the Dictionary of the *Water Management Act 2000*, includes the bed and bank of any river, lake or estuary and all land within 40 meters of the highest bank of the river, lake or estuary.

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Rules for bores used solely for basic landholder rights	None listed in current plan.	Water supply works (bores) used solely for basic landholder rights must not be granted or amended if the bore is located within: • 100 m of a government monitoring bore • 40 m from the top of the high bank of a river • 100 m of any high-priority vegetation groundwater-dependent ecosystem • 100 m of a groundwater-dependent, culturally significant area • 100 m of a wetland. These location distance restrictions do not apply if: • the bore is a replacement bore • a lesser distance would result in no more than minimal harm to any high-priority vegetation groundwater-dependent ecosystem • a lesser distance would result in no more than minimal harm to any groundwater-dependent, culturally significant area • a lesser distance would result in no more than minimal harm to a wetland.

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Replacement groundwater works	Must extract from the same water source and from the same depth as the previous water supply work. A replacement water supply work (bore) must be located within: • 20 m of the existing bore • no closer to the river than the bore being replaced if within 40 m of the top of the high bank of the river. A replacement bore may be permitted to a different depth within the water source, or greater than 20 m from the existing bore, if it can be determined that it will result in no greater impact on a water source or its dependent ecosystems. The replacement bore must not have a greater internal diameter or excavation footprint than the existing bore, unless the existing bore's internal diameter is no longer manufactured, in which case it may be no greater than 110% of the current internal diameter.	Must extract from the same water source and from the same depth as the previous water supply work. A replacement water supply work (bore) must be located within: • 20 m of the existing bore • no closer to the river than the bore being replaced if on waterfront land². The replacement bore must not have a greater internal diameter or excavation footprint than the existing bore, unless the existing bore's internal diameter is: • no longer manufactured, in which case it may be no greater than 120% of the current internal diameter • less than 100 mm, in which case the internal diameter must be no more than 100 mm. A replacement bore may be permitted to a different depth within the water source, or greater than 20 m from the existing bore if it can be determined it will not adversely impact: • a water source • a high priority groundwater dependent ecosystem • public health and safety • a groundwater-dependent culturally significant area • take of water by another user with an existing water supply work.

² Waterfront land is as defined in the Dictionary of the *Water Management Act 2000*, includes the bed and bank of any river, lake or estuary and all land within 40 meters of the highest bank of the river, lake or estuary.

Public exhibition

The department seeks feedback from the public on the suitability of the proposed rules for new groundwater work approvals.

The draft Water Sharing Plan for the Brunswick Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2027, supporting documents and a submission form are available from the department's [public exhibition website](#).