Report card for the Ewenmar Creek Water Source

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Water source context

Water Sharing Plan: Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2025

Area: 2,211 km^2

Inflowing water source: None

Receiving water source: Macquarie Cudgegong Regulated River Water Source

River flows

Flow records: N/A

Stream type: Non-perennial

Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate: 135 ML/year

Native title rights estimate: Nil at commencement of plan

Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement: 65,125 ML/year (22 licences)

Unregulated river: 1,248.5 ML/year (10 licences)

Unregulated river (regulated supply): 63,836 ML/year (3 licences)

Domestic and Stock: 40.5 ML/year (9 licences)

Table 1. Access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules

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Cease to take	Take is not permitted when there is no visible flow in Ewenmar Creek at the Oxley Highway Bridge as the reference point.	No change
Take from in-river pools	Take is not permitted when the in-river pool is less than full capacity.	No change
Take from in-river dam pools	Take is not permitted unless it is consistent with the water supply work approval.	No change
Take from off-river pools	Take is not permitted when the off-river pool is less than full capacity.	No change
Exemptions	Some exemptions apply to specific access rules for the water source, including for: • health and hygiene • domestic use • take from a run-off harvesting dam • specific licences listed in Schedule 4 of the plan. The exemption for stock watering ceased to apply after year 5 of the 2012 plan.	No change, however specific licences with exemptions are now listed in Schedule 2 of the plan.

Table 2. Access rules – Active Management

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules

Active Management	Access rules are in place to protect held environment water and releases made from the Macquarie Environmental Water Allowance (active sub allowance 2) in this water source. Take of water may be prohibited or a volumetric limit set, to protect the active environmental water moving through each management zone, in accordance with the Active Management Procedures Manual. Announcements describing the temporary access conditions will be made by the Minister and published on the Water NSW website.	The definition of active environmental water has been updated to also include active environmental water in the Barwon-Darling River which flows into the Macquarie River through breakouts or backflow events.

Table 3. Rules for constructing surface water supply works

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
In-river dams	Permitted, subject to assessment	Not permitted. An exemption for applications for town water supply purposes has been included.
Protection for wetlands	N/A	No new or amended works permitted within or 3 km upstream of a Ramsar wetland. No new or amended works permitted within wetlands indicated on the WSP Prescribed Wetlands Map of the draft plan unless there will be no more than minimal harm to the wetland concerned. This rule does not apply to replacement works.

Table 4. Water trading (dealing) rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
INTO water source	Not permitted	No change
WITHIN water source	Permitted, subject to assessment	No change

Protection for wetlands	N/A	Not permitted into or within 3 km upstream of a Ramsar wetland. Not permitted into WSP prescribed wetlands identified in the WSP Prescribed Wetlands Map. Trade between licences within the same WSP prescribed wetland is permitted.

Trading covers:

- assignment of rights dealings (trading of a licence)
- share component dealings between water sources (trading of entitlement between water sources)
- water allocation dealings (trading an annual allocation)
- water supply works dealings (relocation of an extraction point).

Key factors for decisions

- The risk assessment indicated the water source has high instream values and identified the risk from extraction as low to zero flow periods and base/low flows. There are no suitable gauges in this water source for gauge-based access rules. Based on this information current access rules were considered appropriate.
- Change in instream value from medium to high means this water source will now prohibit construction of in-river dams.

Improving protection of wetlands

- The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) have recommended the draft plan provide better protection for important wetlands. The department have developed criteria to identify specific wetlands in the plan area. It is proposed to include rules to improve their protection by prohibiting new water supply works and restricting trades into or upstream of these areas. The prohibition of new works will not apply to replacement works.
- Wetlands identified for improved protection were drawn from multiple datasets including the Long-Term Water Plan, Floodplain Management Plan, Ramsar listing, Directory of Important Wetlands of Australia and Endangered Ecological Communities.
- A map of the WSP prescribed wetlands identified for this plan is available on the department's website.
- More information on improving protection of wetlands is available in a fact sheet.

Other key rules – no change proposed

Managing access licences

Each water access licence has its own share component (volume of the licence) and a water allocation account that acts like a bank account where water is credited or debited.

- Water is credited to an account by an available water determination or if water is traded in (purchased) during the year from other licence holders.
- Water is debited from the account when water is extracted from a water source or traded out (sold). Total extraction from a work (pump, bore, etc.) will be measured through metering or logbooks.

Carryover and individual account limits

For domestic and stock and unregulated river access licence accounts, carryover of water remaining in an account is permitted up to 1 ML per unit share or 100 % of share component (where expressed in ML) at the end of each water year.

For domestic and stock and unregulated river access licences, the maximum water account debit in any 3 consecutive water years is:

- the volume of water allocated to the account over those 3 years from available water determinations, plus
- any adjustments made for allocation assignments (trades) or water allocation re-credited into the account.

Rules for granting access licences

There are limited purposes for which a new licence will be granted. We anticipate that users who need more water will source it from the market. One reason a licence may be granted is for Aboriginal cultural purposes. Aboriginal Cultural Access Licences are permitted to be granted up to a maximum volume of 10 ML/year per licence, subject to assessment.

Other reasons are identified in Section 10 of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018.

Public exhibition

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water seeks feedback from the public on the suitability of the proposed rules for this water source.

In particular, we seek your feedback on:

- **proposed rules to protect WSP prescribed wetlands.**

A submission form is available on the department's website.

To read the draft *Water Sharing Plan for the Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2025* and supporting fact sheets, please visit the department's Public Exhibition website.