

Temporary water restrictions by valley

This is a summary of the temporary water restrictions introduced on 17 April 2026 under section 324 of the *Water Management Act 2000*.

The following restrictions apply if the total volume of water capable of being released from the upper Menindee Lakes is less than 250 GL. By ‘upper lakes’ we mean the water stored in lakes Tandure, Wetherell, Pamamaroo and Copi Hollow. ‘Active’ water refers to water that can be released from the lakes and excludes water in dead storage that is below outlet levels. These restrictions are subject to the exceptions and exemptions specified below.

Barwon-Darling

The holder of an access licence is prohibited from taking water if the access licence:

- is in a water source or management zone set out in Column 1 of Table 1 below, and
- has a licence category set out in Column 2 of the corresponding row in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Restrictions on taking water in the Barwon-Darling

| Column 1 – Water sources and management zones where restrictions apply | Column 2 – Categories of access licence subject to restrictions |
|--|---|
| Unregulated river water sources | Unregulated river water sources |
| Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• unregulated river (B Class) access licences• unregulated river (C class) access licences |

The restrictions in Table 1 do not apply when:

- flows in the Darling River at Bourke Town gauge [425003] –
 - are at least 1,550 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 21,700 ML over a consecutive 14-day period, or
- flows in the Darling River at Wilcannia Main Channel gauge [425008] are –
 - at least 1,400 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 19,600 ML over a consecutive 14-day period.

Note that clause 43 of the Water Sharing Plan for the Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2026 already restricts floodplain harvesting in the plan area when the active storage in the upper lakes falls below 250 GL which is why it does not appear in the Table 1.

Gwydir

The holder of an access licence is prohibited from taking water if the access licence:

- is in a water source or management zone set out in Column 1 of Table 2 below, and
- has a licence category set out in Column 2 of the corresponding row in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Restrictions on taking water in the Gwydir

| Column 1 – Water sources and management zones where restrictions apply | Column 2 – Categories of access licence subject to restrictions |
|--|--|
| Regulated river water sources | Regulated river water sources |
| Gwydir Regulated River Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licences • supplementary water access licences |
| Unregulated river water sources and management zones | Unregulated river water sources and management zones |
| Gingham Watercourse Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • floodplain harvesting (unregulated river) access licences • unregulated river access licences |
| Mallowa Creek Management Zone in the Mehi River Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unregulated river access licences |

The restrictions in Table 2 do not apply to floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licences when:

- water is taken from a management zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source set out in Column 1 of Table 3 below, and
- flows in the management zone are at least those set out in Column 2 of the corresponding row in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Exceptions to restrictions for floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licences in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source

| Column 1— Management zone with exceptions to restrictions | Column 2— Flow thresholds when exceptions apply |
|---|---|
| Carole Creek management zone | Flows in Gil Gil Creek at Galloway gauge [416 052] are at least 550 ML/day |
| Gingham management zone | Flows in Gingham Channel at Teralba gauge [418 074] are at least 250 ML/day |
| Moree management zone | Flows in the Gwydir River (South Arm) at d/s Tyreel Offtake Regulator [418 063] are at least 250 ML/day |
| Gwydir management zone | Flows in the Gwydir River (South Arm) at d/s Tyreel Offtake Regulator [418 063] are at least 250 ML/day |
| Mallowa Creek management zone | Flows in the Mehi River at Near Collarenebri gauge [418 055] are at least 1,200 ML/day |
| Mehi River Tributaries management zone | Flows in the Mehi River at Near Collarenebri gauge [418 055] are at least 1,200 ML/day |
| Thalabah Creek management zone | Flows in the Thalaba Creek Belarre gauge [418 091] are at least 300 ML/day |

The restrictions in Table 2 do not apply to supplementary access licences, floodplain harvesting (unregulated river) access licences or unregulated river access licences when:

- flows in the Darling River at Bourke Town gauge [425003] —
 - are at least 1,550 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 21,700 ML over a consecutive 14-day period, or
- flows in the Darling River at Wilcannia Main Channel gauge [425008] are —
 - at least 1,400 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 19,600 ML over a consecutive 14-day period.

Macquarie

The holder of an access licence is prohibited from taking water if the access licence:

- is in a water source or management zone set out in Column 1 of Table 4 below – but only if the water is taken by a water supply work located downstream of Burrendong Dam water storage, and
- has a licence category set out in Column 2 of the corresponding row in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Restrictions on taking water in the Macquarie

| Column 1— Water sources and management zones where restrictions apply | Column 2— Categories of access licence subject to restrictions |
|---|---|
| Regulated river water sources | Regulated river water sources |
| Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licence, or • supplementary water access licence |
| Unregulated river water sources and management zones | Unregulated river water sources and management zones |
| Lower Macquarie River Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unregulated river access licences • unregulated river (special additional high flow) access licences |
| Lower Marthaguy Creek Management Zone in the Marthaguy Creek Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unregulated river access licences • unregulated river (special additional high flow) access licences |

The restrictions in Table 4 do not apply to supplementary water access licences or unregulated river access licences when:

- flows in the Darling River at Bourke Town gauge [425003] —
 - are at least 1,550 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 21,700 ML over a consecutive 14-day period, or
- flows in the Darling River at Wilcannia Main Channel gauge [425008] are —
 - at least 1,400 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 19,600 ML over a consecutive 14-day period.

The restrictions in Table 4 do not apply to supplementary water access licences when flows in the Macquarie River at Warren Town gauge [421014] are at least 30 GL in total over a consecutive 14-day period.

Namoi

The holder of an access licence is prohibited from taking water if the access licence:

- is in a water source or management zone set out in Column 1 of Table 5 below, and
- has a licence category set out in Column 2 of the corresponding row in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Restrictions on taking water in the Namoi

| Column 1— Water sources and management zones where restrictions apply | Column 2— Categories of access licence subject to restrictions |
|--|---|
| Regulated river water sources | Regulated river water sources |
| Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supplementary water access licences |

The restrictions in Table 5 do not apply when:

- flows in the Darling River at Bourke Town gauge [425003]—
 - are at least 1,550 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 21,700 ML over a consecutive 14-day period, or
- flows in the Darling River at Wilcannia Main Channel gauge [425008] are—
 - at least 1,400 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 19,600 ML over a consecutive 14-day period.

The taking of overland flow water within the Lower Namoi Valley Floodplain is prohibited.

This restriction does not apply when:

- water is taken under basic landholder rights, or
- water is taken under an access licence:
 - when flows in the Namoi River are at least 4,500 ML/day at the Bugilbone gauge [419 021], and
 - from a management zone in the Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source set out below:
 - Baradine Etoo Management Zone
 - Lower Namoi Management Zone
 - Other (Lower Namoi) Management Zone
 - Pian Creek Management Zone.

Note that the exception for access licences taking overland flow water within the Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source will only apply to floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licence if these licences are issued while the Order is in place. This exception has been included in the Order so that if this occurs the Order does not require amendment.

NSW Border Rivers

The holder of an access licence is prohibited from taking water if the access licence:

- is in a water source or management zone set out in Column 1 of Table 6 below, and
- has a licence category set out in Column 2 of the corresponding row in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Restrictions on taking water in the NSW Border Rivers

| Column 1— Water sources and management zones where restrictions apply | Column 2— Categories of access licence subject to restrictions |
|---|--|
| Regulated river water sources | Regulated river water sources |
| NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licences • supplementary water access licences |

The restrictions in Table 6 do not apply to floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licences when flows in the Barwon River at the Mungindi gauge [416 001] are at least 3,000 ML/day.

The restrictions in Table 6 do not apply to supplementary water access licences when:

- flows in the Darling River at Bourke Town gauge [425003]—
 - are at least 1,550 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 21,700 ML over a consecutive 14-day period, or
- flows in the Darling River at Wilcannia Main Channel gauge [425008] are —
 - at least 1,400 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or
 - have reached 19,600 ML over a consecutive 14-day period.

Exemptions

These restrictions do not apply in the following circumstances:

- the water is taken for the purposes of testing metering equipment,
- the water is taken by means of a water storage, such as a farm dam,
- the water is taken by means of a tailwater drain,
- the water is taken by means of a water supply work, such as an irrigation channel, that cannot be reasonably prevented from taking water due to the nature of the work, but only if the water is not moved into a water storage and the water substantially returns to the water source.