

Rule Summary Sheet for the Lower Murray-Darling Unregulated Water Source

Rule Summary Sheet 1 of 1

Plan details

Water sharing plan:	Lower Murray-Darling River Water Source 2024
Plan commencement:	1 July 2024
Term of plan:	10 years
Extraction Management Unit:	N/A
Application:	These rules apply to all surface water within the boundaries of this water source.

Important

This fact sheet summarises the rules contained in the Water Sharing Plan for the Lower Murray-Darling River Water Source 2024 for the Lower Murray-Darling Unregulated Water Source. It is intended as a guide only. Consult the [water sharing plan](#) for further details on this water source.

Alternatively, contact the department on 1300 081 047, or via email at water.enquiries@dcceew.nsw.gov.au

Water access and other water sharing plan rules are implemented through conditions on the “Statement of Conditions” for access licences and “Statement of Approval” for water supply work approvals. These conditions are updated in accordance with any new or amended water sharing plan. However, this can take some time. Licence and approval holders must comply with the conditions on their existing licence condition and approval statements until new statements are provided by the department.

You can access this information from your ‘Statement of Approval’, ‘Statement of Conditions’ or via the [WaterNSW water register](#).

Rules

Managing access licences

Each water access licence has its own share component (volume of the licence) and a water allocation 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 another licence holder.
- Water is debited from the account when water is extracted from a water source or traded out (sold). Total extraction from a work (pump, diversion channel, etc.) is to be measured via metering or logbooks in accordance with the non-urban water metering regulations.

Carryover and individual account limits

For the accounts of all categories of licence held in the water source – carryover of water remaining in an account at the end of each water year is permitted up to 1 ML per unit share or 100 % of the share component (where expressed in ML).

For the accounts of all categories of licence held in the water source - 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.

Non-Urban Water Metering Framework

The NSW Government's [non-urban water metering framework](#), initiated in December 2018, aims to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of water among users, enhancing transparency and efficiency in water management across the state. The framework's implementation was staged to allow water users, suppliers, and installers sufficient time to achieve compliance. The NSW Government has recently completed a review of the non-urban metering rules and has updated the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 to make compliance quicker, easier and more cost effective.

The new metering rules require water users to assess their compliance requirements using their total entitlement and work size. Large water users must comply with the highest metering standards whilst smaller water users now have less prescriptive metering requirements. Water users are encouraged to consult the department's [non-urban metering website](#) for detailed information and updates. To verify individual access licence details, please refer to the [WaterNSW Water Register](#).

Access rules

Table 1. Access rules for taking surface water

Type	Rules
Cease to take	Take of water is not permitted unless there is a visible flow at the site of extraction.
Take from in-river pools	Take is not permitted when the in-river pool is below full capacity. Take of water is not permitted if the water supply work has taken more in any water year than the share components of the access licence as at 30 January 2012.
Take from in-river dam pools	Take of water is not permitted unless the take is in accordance with the conditions on the relevant water supply work approval.
Take from off-river pools	Take is not permitted when the off-river pool is below full capacity. Take of water is not permitted if the water supply work has taken more in any water year than the share components of the access licence as at 30 January 2012.
Take from identified* off-river pools (lagoons)	Take is not permitted when the off-river pool is below 50% of full capacity. Take is not permitted from Thegoa Lagoon if this lagoon is greater than 50% full because of diversions of environmental water from the regulated NSW Murray in accordance with a published notice.

* The identified lagoons of this Plan are Thegoa Lagoon, Neilpo Lagoon, Boeill Lagoon and Peacock Creek.

Table 2. Exemptions from surface water access rules

Type	Rules
Health and hygiene	For an access licence specified in Schedule 2, Table A of the plan, no more than 20 kl/day for the following reasons: • fruit and vegetable washing • cleaning of dairy plant and equipment for the purposes of hygiene • poultry watering and misting • cleaning of enclosures used for intensive animal production for the purposes of hygiene.

Type	Rules
Domestic use	For domestic consumption authorised under a domestic and stock access licence, up to 1 kl/day for each household supplied by the access licence.
Harvestable rights	From a runoff harvesting dam.
Aquifer interference activities	Access rules do not apply to the take of surface water under an access licence for which a planning approval is in force if: - the licence holder complies with an approved water management plan, and - in the Minister's opinion, the licence holder is not reasonably capable of complying with the access rules.

Water supply works approvals

Water supply work 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, spearpoints, dams, weirs, irrigation channels, banks and levees. Approvals are granted through WaterNSW to construct and operate water supply works. Every approval includes conditions that are in place to reduce adverse impacts. For more information, please visit the [WaterNSW works approvals](#) website.

Table 3. Rules for constructing surface water supply works*

Type	Rules
In-river dams	Permitted, subject to assessment.
Protection for wetlands*	Not permitted within 3 km upstream of, or within, a Ramsar listed wetland and within a significant wetland identified on the Significant Wetlands Map of the Plan unless, in the opinion of the Minister, there will be no more than minimal harm to the wetland concerned. This rule does not apply to replacement works.

*Note: see Significant Wetlands Map on the department's [website](#)

Trading

Trading covers assignment of rights dealings (trading of a licence), share component dealings (change of water source), water allocation dealings (trading an annual allocation), water supply works dealings (relocation of an extraction point) and conversion of an access licence to a new category (for example, from unregulated river to unregulated river (high flow) access licence).

Table 4. Rules for trading into or within this water source

Type	Rules
Into water source	Not permitted.
Within water source	Permitted, subject to assessment. Not permitted into or between an identified lagoon*. Not permitted into Great Darling Anabranch, except if for an environmental purpose.
Interstate trade	Not permitted.
Conversion to a new licence category	Not permitted.
Into Ramsar or significant wetlands**	Not permitted into or within 3 km upstream of a Ramsar-listed wetland and into a significant wetland identified in the Significant Wetlands Map of the Plan.
Within a Ramsar or significant wetland**	Permitted, subject to assessment.

* The identified lagoons of this Plan are Thegoa Lagoon, Neilpo Lagoon, Boeill Lagoon and Peacock Creek. These lagoons are all significant wetlands.

**Note: see Significant Wetlands Map on the department's [website](#)

Granting new licences

There are limited purposes for which a new licence will be granted. It is anticipated that most water needs will be sourced from the market. One reason a licence may be granted is for Aboriginal cultural purposes. Other reasons are identified in Section 10 of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018.

Table 5. Rules for granting access licences

Type	Rules
Aboriginal cultural access licence	Permitted up to 10 ML/year per licence, subject to assessment.

More information

More information about the planning process and the Water Sharing Plan for the Lower Murray-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2024 is available on the [water sharing plan pages](#) of the department's website.