

Proposed amendment of the Darling Alluvial Groundwater Water Sharing Plan



Submission form

Office use only	Submission number
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How to fill out this form

The department is seeking stakeholder views on removing subclause 37(3)(a) from the *Water Sharing Plan for the Darling Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020*. This rule prohibits some aquifer access licence holders from taking water from the Lower Darling Alluvial Groundwater Source unless that water is used for perennial horticulture (orchards and vineyards).

A supporting Factsheet (*Proposed change to the Water Sharing Plan for the Darling Alluvial Groundwater Sources 2020*) provides background to the proposed change.

Send completed submissions to:

Post: Darling Alluvial Groundwater Sharing Plan amendment

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

PO Box 2213

Dangar NSW 2309

Email: darling.gw.wrp@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Note: Submissions close midnight 10th April 2022

Information on privacy and confidentiality

All submissions received by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will be reviewed. The department values your input and accepts that information you provide may be private and personal.

If you would prefer your submission or your personal details to be treated as confidential, please indicate this by ticking the relevant box below.

If you do not make a request for confidentiality, the department may make your submission, including any personal details contained in the submission, available to the public.

Please note that, regardless of a request for confidentiality, the department may be required by law to release copies of submissions to third parties in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

I would like my submission to be treated as confidential	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
I would like my personal details to be treated as confidential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Name	[REDACTED]	
Postal Address	[REDACTED]	
Telephone	[REDACTED]	
Email address	[REDACTED]	

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Stakeholder Group

(please indicate which of the following best represents your interest by **ticking one box**)

- Irrigation Interests
- Fishing Interests
- Local Govt./ Utilities

- Aboriginal Interest
- Local Landholder
- Other (specify)

- Environment Interests
- Community Member

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Proposed change to access rules for licences in the Lower Darling Alluvial Groundwater Source

Under the current plan, groundwater extraction is restricted for most aquifer access licences in the Lower Darling Alluvial Groundwater Source. These licences were issued to surface water licence holders, providing water to sustain orchards and vineyards when surface water was not available.

The restrictions apply to 10 of the 11 aquifer access licences such that water cannot be extracted unless:

- water is used for the purpose of perennial horticulture (subclause 37 (3) (a)), and
- any one of the following apply (subclause 37 (3) (b)):
 - an available water determination made for regulated river (general security) access licences in the Lower Darling Regulated River Water Source is equal to or less than 0.5 ML per unit share
 - an order under section 324 of the Act is in place prohibiting the take of water under a regulated river (general security) access licence in the Lower Darling Regulated River Water applies or
 - the flow in the Darling River at the Pooncarie (425005) gauge is less than 2.2 ML/day.

One licence has no restrictions, and 2 licences can use water for other, limited, purposes (cleaning fruit or animal pens etc).

Most licence holders have removed their perennial crops under an agreement with the Commonwealth Government. The majority of these licences can no longer be used according to the access rules of the water sharing plan.

Licence holders have requested that the restriction for watering perennial horticulture crops only, is removed from the access rule so that the water can be used for other purposes. No other changes are sought and groundwater access will still be restricted to those times when surface water is not available.

Do you have any comments on the proposed change?

I support removing the requirement to only use water for perennial horticulture purposes. Since the licences were originally issued, commercial horticulture plantings downstream of Weir 32 have been permanently removed. Also since the licences were issued there has been an increasing incidence of no flow, that has resulted in native fish kills and environmental degradation. Allowing access to the limited groundwater available would reduce pressure on residual surface water pools that are important for drought refuge

Attach extra pages if required

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