

# Report card for the Belubula Regulated River Water Source

Report card 1 of 1

## Water source context

Draft Water Sharing Plan:	Belubula Regulated River Water Source 2025
Water Management Area:	Lachlan Water Management Area
Boundary:	The Belubula Regulated River Water Source is defined as the main trunk of the river from, and including the upper limit of Carcoar Dam at full supply level, to its confluence with the Lachlan River.
Inflowing water source:	Belubula River above Carcoar Dam and Belubula Tributaries below Carcoar Dam
Receiving water source:	Lachlan Regulated River
Groundwater-dependent ecosystems:	Nil
Carcoar Dam capacity:	36,000 megalitres

## River flows

Low-flow index:	4.4 ML/day
Flow records:	Modelled
Stream type:	Regulated

## Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate:	462 ML/year
Native title rights:	0 ML/year

## Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement:	26,894 unit shares
Domestic and Stock:	220 ML/year (30 Licences)
Regulated River (General Security)	22,454 ML/year (79 licences)
Regulated River (High Security)	1,095 ML/year (7 licences)
Supplementary	3,125 ML/year (1 licence)

## Rules

**No changes are proposed in the draft plan to the following rules:**

### 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) will be measured via metering or logbooks.

### Carryover and Individual Account Limits

For domestic and stock, regulated river (high security) and supplementary accounts – carryover of water remaining in an account is not permitted.

The accounts for general security access licences have two sub-accounts. Sub-account A contains water allocations that may be taken in the current water year. Sub-account B contains water that can be held for extraction in future water years.

For general security, there is continuous accounting and carryover is permitted up to a maximum total account limit (sub-account A + sub-account B) of 1.1 ML/share unit (110%).

At the start of the water year, sub-account A will be adjusted to ensure it holds no more than the take limit. The take limit will equal 1 ML/unit share unless total extractions from the water source exceed the long-term average annual extraction limit (LTAAEL). If available water determinations result in the total account limit exceeding 1.1 ML/unit shares, all water above 1.1 ML/unit share will be forfeited.

### Available water determinations

- In all but exceptional drought years, an available water determination (AWD) for stock and domestic access licences will be made.
- An AWD for regulated river (high security) of 1 ML/unit share will be made available if there is sufficient water available to provide for delivery losses, existing allocations, system operation rules, basic landholder rights and 100% AWDs for domestic and stock and supplementary water access licences. If an AWD of 1 ML/unit share can not be made at the start of the water year, additional water determinations can be made if additional water becomes available.

- An AWD of 1 ML/unit share for regulated river (general security) will be made if there is sufficient water available to provide an AWD of 1 ML/unit share for high security.

### **Granting of access licences**

There are limited purposes for which a new licence will be granted. It is anticipated that most additional 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 Clause 10 of the Water Management Act General Regulation 2018.

Applications for Aboriginal cultural access licence (Regulated river - high security) are permitted to a maximum of 10 ML/year/ per Aboriginal person or application.

## Surface water access rules

### Access to uncontrolled flows for Regulated River (general security) access licences

Regulated River (general security) access licence holders may access uncontrolled flows following an announcement by WaterNSW when:

- flows at Helensholme gauge (#412033) are equal to or greater than 10 ML/day

However:

- If flows at Helensholme have been less than 10 ML/day for 120 days, access to uncontrolled flows is only permitted when the flows at Helensholme have been 70 ML/day or more for 10 days (the first flush environmental rule)
- If the effective available water determination (eAWD) for regulated river (general security) access licences is equal to or less than 20%, access to uncontrolled flows is only permitted when flows at Helensholme are equal to or greater than 13 ML/day
- If the eAWD is greater than 20% but less than 50%, access to uncontrolled flows is only permitted when flows at Helensholme are equal to or greater than 20 ML/day
- If the eAWD is greater than 50% and the volume in Carcoar Dam is less than 21,000 ML, access to uncontrolled flows is only permitted when flows at Helensholme are equal to or greater than 20 ML/day.

General security licence holders are not permitted to take more than 50% of the water allocation credited to their A sub-account as uncontrolled flows.

Access licences listed in Schedule 1 are not permitted to take uncontrolled flows.

Extraction from uncontrolled flows will be debited against future announced general security allocation increases in that water year.

### Access to uncontrolled flows for Regulated River (high security) access licences

Regulated River (high security) access licences may access uncontrolled flows following a WaterNSW announcement when:

- The available water determination (AWD) for regulated river (high security) access licences (AWD) is less than or equal to 50%

However:

- If the AWD is greater than 20%, but less than 50%, access to uncontrolled flows is only permitted when flows at Helensholme are equal to or greater than 20 ML/day

- If the AWD is less than or equal to 20%, access to uncontrolled flows is permitted when flows at Helensholme are be equal to or greater than 13 ML/day

Licence holders are not permitted to take more than 50% of water allocations credited to their account as uncontrolled flows.

#### Access to uncontrolled flows for supplementary access licences

Following WaterNSW announcement, supplementary water access licence holders can access uncontrolled flows when flows at the Helensholme gauge are greater than or equal to 20 ML/day.

### Trading

Trading covers conversion of access licence to a new category (for example from regulated river to unregulated river), 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) and water supply works dealings (relocation of an extraction point).

Assignments of rights and amendment of share component dealings (permanent trading) into this water source are not permitted

Water allocation dealings (temporary trading) within the water source is permitted unless:

- from a B sub-account to an A sub-account of another regulated river (general security) access licence
- it would result in the volume in the A sub-account plus the volume in the B sub-account of the regulated river (general security) licence exceeding 1.1 ML/unit share.

Conversion to another licence category is not permitted.

### Assessing growth in use

If the long-term average annual extraction under the 'current development' model run exceeds the LTAAEL by 3 percent the responses listed below will be triggered at the start of following water year:

- the available water determination for supplementary access licences will be reduced to less than 1 ML per unit share
- the take limit for regulated river (general security) access licences will be reduced.

The growth in use responses will be applied equally to both regulated river (general security) and supplementary water access licences to reduce average extractions to the LTAAEL.

### System operation rules for how WaterNSW operate the system

There are no changes to rules which govern and guide how WaterNSW deliver orders, manage channel capacity constraints, or the operation of Carcoar Dam during floods and droughts.

**Slight changes are proposed to the following plan rules. These changes should not directly affect how and when licence holders access water in this water source.**

### Long-term average annual extraction limit (LTAAEL)

Table 1 Long-term average annual extraction limit

Current rules	Proposed rules
<p>The LTAAEL is equal to the lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The long-term average annual extraction from this water source that would occur with the water storages and water use development that existed in 2009/2010, the share components and basic rights existing at the commencement of the Plan, application of the water management rules as defined in the Plan and estimated level of development from plantation forestry that existed on 1 July 2009. This is estimated at 7.37 GL/year,</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the long-term average annual extraction from this water source that would occur under the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council Cap baseline conditions. This is estimated at 7.38 GL/y.</li> </ul>	<p>The LTAAEL is equal to the lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The long-term average annual extraction from this water source that would occur with the water storages and water use development that existed in 2009/2010, the share components and basic rights existing at the commencement of the 2012 Plan, application of the water management rules as defined in the 2012 Plan and estimated level of development from plantation forestry that existed on 1 July 2009. This is estimated at 4.68 GL/year,</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long-term average annual extraction calculated under Cap baseline conditions as agreed under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement that was in place on 4 October 2012.</li> </ul>

## End of system and environmental flow requirements

Table 2. End of System flow requirements

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
End of system environmental flow rules	<p>A flow of 10 ML/day must be maintained at Helensholme gauge unless:</p> <p>Average flows at Beneree gauge on Flyers Creek are less than or equal to 10 ML/day for 120 consecutive days (dry trigger).</p> <p>The date on which the average flow at Beneree gauge exceed 40 ML/day for over 90 consecutive days (wet trigger).</p>	<p><b>Minimal change:</b></p> <p>The rules which specify when the end of system flow rule is not required to be met (dry trigger) has been slightly amended to account for water extracted from Cadia mine above the Beneree gauge on Flyers Creek if the average flow over 120 days has been less than 10 ML/d.</p> <p>The intent is to ensure the end of system flow rule is being delivered regardless of take by Cadia Mine in the unregulated Flyers Creek.</p> <p>An amendment provision has been included to review and amend the end of system flow rules in 5 years to ensure they are delivering the intended environmental benefits without overly impacting users or storage volumes in Carcoar Dam.</p>
Basic rights requirements	2 ML/day must be released from Carcoar Dam	No change

## Key factors for decisions

- Extractions from Flyers Creek upstream of Beneree gauge could trigger suspension of the end of system environmental flow requirements.

Review of the plan by the Natural Resources Commission identified that average flows at the Beneree gauge on Flyers Creek may be affected by extractions from above the gauge by unregulated access licence holders, including Cadia Mine. The Department reviewed flow data and determined that following dry times, extraction by Cadia Mine to replenish their storages volumes could result in reduced flows at Beneree gauge. Following discussions with Cadia Mine and WaterNSW, it is proposed to establish a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure Cadia Mine communicate with Water NSW when taking from Flyers Creek. WaterNSW will release extra water from Carcoar Dam to ensure the environmental flow rule is met when it may otherwise have been suspended due to lack of flows at the Beneree gauge.

An amendment provision has been included to review of these rules, the environmental benefits and impacts on licence holders and Carcoar dam storage by Year 5 of the Plan.

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## 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 the proposed changes to the end of system environmental flow rules.

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

To read the draft *Water Sharing Plan for the Belubula Regulated River Water Source 2025* and supporting fact sheets please visit the department's [Public Exhibition website](#).