

Report card for the Brigalow Creek Water Source

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Water source context

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| Water Sharing Plan: | <i>Namoi and Peel Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2025</i> |
| Area: | 344 km ² |
| Inflowing water source: | Nil |
| Receiving water source: | Lower Namoi Water Source |

River flows

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|---------------|---|
| Flow records: | 31 years at Brigalow Creek at Tharlane Gauge (419083) |
| Stream type: | Non perennial |

Basic landholder rights

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Domestic and stock rights estimate: | 25 ML/year |
| Native title rights: | Nil at commencement of the plan |

Licensed water entitlements

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|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Total surface water entitlement: | 1,257 ML/year | (4 licences) |
| Unregulated River: | 1,243 ML/year | (2 licences) |
| Domestic and Stock: | 14 ML/year | (2 licences) |

Table 1. Access rules for management zones

| Management Zone | Type | Current rules | Proposed rules |
|---|---------------|---|----------------|
| Brigalow Creek Management Zone | Cease to take | Take is not permitted when flows are less than or equal to 4 ML/day at Tharlane gauge (419083) or, when there is no visible flow at the pump site | No change |
| Merri Creek and Other Tributaries Management Zone | Cease to take | Take is not permitted when there is no visible flow at the pump site | No change |

Table 2. Access rules for whole water source

| Type | Current rules | Proposed rules |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Take from in-river pools | Comply with the gauged-based access rule when there is one AND Take is not permitted when the in-river pool is below 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 below its full capacity | No change |

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| Exemptions | <p>Some exemptions apply to specific access rules for the water source, including for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and hygiene • Domestic use • Take from a run-off harvesting dam. <p>Specific licences are listed in Schedule 2 of the plan.</p> | No change |
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Table 3. Rules for constructing surface water supply works

| Type | Current rules | Proposed rules |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| In-river dams | Permitted, subject to assessment | No change |
| Protection for wetlands | N/A | <p>No new or amended works permitted within or 3km upstream of a Ramsar wetland.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This rule does not apply to replacement works.</p> |

Table 4. Water trading (dealing) rules

| Type | Current rules | Proposed rules |
|---------------------|--|----------------|
| INTO water source | <p>Permitted, up to a volumetric limit of 1,957 ML, subject to assessment.</p> <p>Trades not permitted into natural off-river pools.</p> | No change |
| WITHIN water source | Permitted subject to assessment, but not into natural off-river pools | No change |

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|-------------------------|-----|---|
| Protection for wetlands | N/A | <p>Not permitted into or within 3 km upstream of a Ramsar wetland.</p> <p>Not permitted into wetlands identified in the WSP Prescribed Wetlands Map.</p> <p>Trade between licences within the same WSP prescribed wetlands are permitted.</p> |
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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 indicates that the water source has low in-stream value. The identified potential risk from extraction is low for zero flow periods and low for base-flow and low flows. Based on this information access rules were considered appropriate for the water source.

Carryover

- The department is proposing to allow carryover for all domestic and stock access licences and local water utility access licences within the draft plan. In the 2012 plan, carryover for these licence types was only allowed within Peel unregulated river water sources. Now, with these proposed changes, these licence types within the Namoi unregulated river water sources will benefit from the same access rule. This change aims to maintain internal consistency across all water sources within the draft plan.

Amendments

- An amendment provision has been included in the draft plan to allow changes associated with the Connectivity Expert Panel's Final Report. The amendment will facilitate the implementation program developed to improve connectivity in the Northern Basin and may result in changes to rules in this water source.

Improving protection of wetlands

- The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) have recommended the replacement plan provide better protection for 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 on 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, Endangered Ecological Communities and any existing list in the current water sharing plan.
- A map of the WSP prescribed wetlands identified for this plan is available on the department's website.
- More information on improving the 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.

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 including prohibiting new water supply works and trades within or near WSP prescribed wetlands.

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

To read the draft *Water Sharing Plan for the Namoi and Peel Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2025* and supporting fact sheets, please visit the department's [Public Exhibition website](#).