

# Report card for the Swampy Plain Water Source

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## Water source context

Water sharing plan:	Murray Unregulated River Water Sources 2024
Area:	951 km <sup>2</sup>
Inflowing water source:	Nil
Receiving water source:	Upper Murray River
Approximate average annual rainfall:	1,480 mm

## River flows

Flow records:	None available
Stream type:	Perennial, gaining

## Basic landholder rights

Domestic and stock rights estimate:	42 ML/year
Native title rights:	0 ML/year

## Licensed water entitlements

Total surface water entitlement:	21 ML/year (4 licences) for Domestic and Stock access licences. 129 ML/year (4 licences) for Unregulated River access licences
Local water utilities entitlement:	140 ML/year, 1 Local water utility access licence for Khancoban

## Rules

Table 1. Access rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<b>Cease-to-pump</b>	Take is not permitted when there is flow less than full flow through a 200 mm pipe* at the pump site.	No change
<b>Take from in-river pools</b>	Take is not permitted when the in-river pool is below full containment volume.	No change
<b>Take from in-river dam pools</b>	Take is not permitted unless it is consistent with the water supply work approval.	No change
<b>Take from off-river pools</b>	Take is not permitted when the off-river pool is below 80% of full containment volume.	No change
<b>Exemptions</b>	Some exemptions apply to specific access rules for the water source, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and hygiene</li> <li>• Domestic use</li> <li>• Take from a run-off harvesting dam</li> <li>• Specific licences listed in Schedule 2 of the plan.</li> </ul>	No change

\* This flow is equivalent to around 0.5 ML/day.

Table 2. Rules for constructing surface water supply works

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
<b>In-river dams</b>	Permitted	No change
<b>Protection for wetlands</b>	n/a	No new or amended works permitted into or within 3 km upstream of a Ramsar wetland. No new or amended works permitted within significant wetlands listed in Schedule 4 of the draft plan unless there will be no more than minimal harm to the wetland concerned. This rule does not apply to replacement works.

Table 1. Trading (dealing) rules

Type	Current rules	Proposed rules
Into water source	Not permitted	Additional 44 ML permitted
Within water source	Permitted, subject to assessment	No change
Interstate trade	Not permitted	No change
Protection for wetlands	n/a	Not permitted into or within 3 km upstream of a Ramsar wetland. Not permitted into significant wetlands listed in Schedule 4 of the draft Plan.

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 indicated that this water has medium in-stream value.
- Flows in the water source are unnaturally high, due to deliveries from the Snowy Hydro Scheme, but the risk assessment defines the risk as tolerable.
- Environmental flows of around 20 GL p.a., known as Snowy Montane Rivers Increased Flows, are delivered into this water source. A review identified that these releases are safe from extraction.

### Trading

- Trading is currently only permitted within the water source. A limited increase in entitlement of 44 ML into the water source is unlikely to impact current instream values and risk from extraction. Trades into the water source may benefit access licence holders by increasing opportunity and flexibility and potentially reduce hydrologic stress in other water sources.

### Improving protection of wetlands

- The NRC have recommended the replacement plan provide better protection for significant wetlands. DPE Water have developed criteria to identify significant 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 of 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 and Endangered Ecological Communities.
- The significant wetlands identified for this plan are listed in schedule 4 of the draft plan.
- More information on improving protection of wetlands is available in the fact sheet.

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## 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, 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 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.) will be measured through metering or logbooks.

### Carryover and individual account limits

For domestic and stock and unregulated river access licence accounts, 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 domestic and stock and unregulated river access licences, 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.

### 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*.

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## Public exhibition

The Department of Planning and Environment 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 trade rules
- proposed rules to protect significant wetlands including prohibiting new water supply works and trades within or near significant wetlands.

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

To read the draft *Water Sharing Plan for the Murray Unregulated River Water Sources 2024* and supporting fact sheets, please visit the department's [Public Exhibition website](#).