

Report Card for Rouchel Brook Water Source

FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Water Source Context	River Flows
<p>Area: 434.5 km² (42% forested) Average Annual Rainfall 852 mm Inflowing water source: Nil Receiving water source: Hunter River Regulated System, Hunter River Tidal Pool</p>	<p>Low flow Index: (80thile in December of days with flow) = 9.8 ML/day Flow records: 1934 to 2006 (72 yrs) This estimate is based on flows measured at Rouchel Brook at Rouchel Brook (The Vale) (210014) adjusted for longer term climate.</p>

Licensed Water use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total surface water entitlement: 1097 ML/year (99% used for irrigation purposes) • 25 surface water licenses - Peak Daily Demand=10.1 ML/day • 0.59% of total Hunter Extraction Management Unit entitlement

Background information

Water Source attributes	Rating	Justification
Relative Instream Value (within catchment)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 threatened amphibian species • high species diversity • good fish community integrity, • the ecology value for invertebrates is deemed to be moderate
Hydrological Stress	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peak extraction demand exceeds available flows in December
Relative Economic Significance of Irrigation (within catchment)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium economic dependence of the local community on water extracted for irrigation
Risk to Instream Value (from extraction)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instream values are at medium risk of being impacted by extractions within the water source

Existing Access Arrangements During Dry Conditions

Water User Association (WUA)	yes - Rouchel Brook WUA
Licensed Cease to Pump (CtP)	none

Proposed Recommendations for Rouchel Brook Water Source

Draft Access Rules	
Cease to Pump (CtP) A Class	During October to March (inclusive) the cease to pump is when flows are at or below 2 ML/day on a falling river as measured at the Rouchel Brook at The Vale gauge. During April to September (inclusive) the cease to pump is when flows are at or below 1ML/day on a falling river as measured at the Rouchel Brook at The Vale gauge.
Commence to Pump (ComtP) A class	During October to March (inclusive) the commence to pump is when flows are at or above 10ML/day on a rising river as measured at the Rouchel Brook at The Vale gauge. During April to September (inclusive) the commence to pump is when flows are at or above 10ML/day on a rising river as measured at the Rouchel Brook at The Vale gauge.
Cease to Pump (CtP) B Class	The cease to pump is when flows are at or below 35 ML/day as measured at the Rouchel Brook at The Vale gauge.
Reference Point	Rouchel Brook at The Vale gauge

Draft Trading Rules	
INTO water source	No trading into or out of the water source.
WITHIN water source	No upstream trades within the water source
Conversion to High Flow Access Licence	Not permitted
Conversion to Aquifer Access Licence	Not permitted

Key Factors for Panel Decision

Classification

- Gaining stream type
- High instream value, high hydrological stress, medium risk to instream value, medium economic dependence.
- The regional panel revised the instream value from moderate to high, because Rouchel Brook has the only stream (Back Creek) with recognised Wild and Scenic values in the Hunter Catchment.

Rules

- Trading rules identified through the classification process were adopted by the Regional Panel.
- Access rules identified by the classification process were adopted by the Regional Panel.

Matters raised during targeted consultation

Based on submissions received from water users in the Hunter the Regional Panel has proposed a number of amendments to the local impact management rules within the draft plan. These relate to:

1. No transfer allowed in an upstream direction in the Rouchel Brook water source. This rule previously only applied to Back Creek.
2. Access rules have been amended to include a commence to pump figure of 10ML/day, and a differential cease to pump figure based on seasons as recommended by water users. These rules were more stringent than the original rules recommended by the classification process in recognition of the fact that the gauge is located upstream of a substantial proportion of the extraction.
3. B class access is now proposed for the Rouchel Brook water source based on demand from water users and assessment of adequate high flows to provide for such access.

Aboriginal Cultural Values

- The initial consultation with local Aboriginal communities indicate that they consider healthy rivers with natural flows and good biodiversity as being important. Further feedback is being sought from Aboriginal communities about values in their area.

For more information about the macro planning process for the Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources refer to the "Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources – Background Document" on the Department's website:

www.dwe.nsw.gov.au

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