

Report Card for Upper Hunter Water Source FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Water Source Context	River Flows
<p>Area: 1293.1 km² (51% forested) Average Annual Rainfall 892 mm Inflowing water source: Nil Receiving water source: Hunter Regulated River, Hunter River Tidal Pool</p>	<p>Low flow Index: (80thile in December of days with flow) = 54 ML/day Flow records: 1940 to 2006 (66 yrs) This estimate is based on flows measured at Hunter River at Moonan Damsite (210018) adjusted for longer term climate.</p>

Licensed Water use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total surface water entitlement: 3412 ML/year (99% used for irrigation purposes) • 65 surface water licenses - Peak Daily Demand=43.2 ML/day • 1.85 % 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"> • 5 threatened amphibian species • 1 threatened bird species • high species diversity • high recreation value • high wet flora values • moderate fish community integrity, • the ecology value for invertebrates is deemed to be moderate
Hydrological Stress	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peak extraction demand is generally less than 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)	no
Licensed Cease to Pump (CtP)	Cease to pump condition on some licences

Proposed Recommendations for Upper Hunter Water Source

Draft Access Rules	
Cease to Pump (CtP)	For the first five years of the plan the cease to pump is when there is no visible flow at the Hunter River at Moonan Damsite gauge. From year six of the plan the cease to pump is when flows are at or below 19ML/day at the Hunter River at Moonan Damsite gauge. The cease to pump reference point may be moved during the plan based on the availability of adequate information at the Hunter River at Belltrees gauge. This may result in an amendment of the cease to pump level to an equivalent 95%ile flow level at the Hunter River at Belltrees gauge.
Reference Point	Hunter River at Moonan Damsite gauge

Draft Trading Rules	
INTO water source	No trading into or out of the water source.
WITHIN water source	Trading permitted throughout 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, medium hydrological stress, medium risk to instream value, medium economic dependence.
- The Regional Panel revised the instream value from medium to high, recognising the high values of the headwater portions of the catchment and that many tributary streams are in relatively good condition.
- The Regional Panel revised the hydrological stress from high to medium the because the gauging station used in the assessment only accounts for about half of the catchment, whereas Peak Daily Demand figures account for the entire catchment. Flows at the end of system would be expected to be higher.

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 to commence when adequate data is available, with a visible flow rule to apply until then.

Matters raised during targeted consultation

- No changes to the rules were proposed by water users or interest groups during the targeted consultation period.

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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