

Report Card for Widden Brook Water Source FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Water Source Context	River Flows
Area: 708.1 km ² (83% forested) Average Annual Rainfall 746 mm Inflowing water source: Nil Receiving water source: Lower Goulburn River, Hunter River Regulated System, Hunter River Tidal Pool	Low flow Index: (80 th ile in December of days with flow) = 1.4 ML/day Flow records: 1954 to 1981 (27 yrs) This estimate is based on flows measured at Widden Brook at Widden (210034) adjusted for longer term climate.

Licensed Water use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total surface water entitlement: 2836 ML/year (100% used for irrigation purposes, 0% used for industrial purposes) • 3 surface water licenses - Peak Daily Demand=27.2 ML/day • Total groundwater entitlement: 1191 ML/year (100% used for irrigation purposes) • 5 groundwater water license • 7.40 % of total Goulburn Extraction Management Unit entitlement

Background information		
Water Source attributes	Rating	Justification
Relative Instream Value (within catchment)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 threatened amphibian species • high quality riparian vegetation • moderate fish community integrity, • the ecology value for invertebrates is deemed to be high
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)	no
Licensed Cease to Pump (CtP)	none

Proposed Recommendations for Widden Brook Water Source

Draft Access Rules	
Cease to Pump (CtP)	Groundwater trigger to be determined by year ten
Reference Point	To be defined by year ten

Draft Trading Rules	
INTO water source	No trading into or out of the water source. The Plan allows for amendment to allow downstream transfers between water sources in the Goulburn Extraction Management Unit based on studies to identify cumulative impacts of transfers, and the staged introduction of no net transfers as management systems become available.

WITHIN water source	Trading permitted within the water source but no transfers into specified groundwater buffer zones.
Conversion to High Flow Access Licence	Not permitted
Conversion to Aquifer Access Licence	Not permitted

Key Factors for Panel Decision

Classification

- Highly connected stream type
- Medium instream value, high hydrological stress, medium risk to instream value, medium economic dependence.

Rules

- Staged introduction of the trading rules identified through classification process.
- Access rules identified through the classification process (cease to pump for licences upstream of a strategic site once the presence of water is not observed at the site; cease to pump when water is not observed at pump site; specific flow rule for instream values) were not adopted by the Regional Panel due to lack of surface water flows. The draft plan allows for the development of cease to pump rules based on a groundwater level trigger by year ten of the plan.

Matters raised during targeted consultation

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

1. Application of the local impact rules to all new and replacement bores - amended to indicate that if the extraction from the replacement work does not increase the rules will not apply if the work is located within a specified distance from the previous work.
2. Restriction on new or replacement works in or near rivers/creeks - amended to indicate that if it can be demonstrated that the placement of the work will not have an impact on the river environment or river stability than the buffer distances do not apply.
3. Application of the buffer distances to spearpoints - now includes a proposed provision that the buffer distances do not apply to works held by the same individual. This means that the individual works within a spearpoint battery do not incur the buffer distances.

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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