

Water management and outlook for 2011/12

Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated River Water Source April 2011

Recommencement of the water sharing plan

Introduction

Under NSW legislation when there is a severe water shortage affecting a water source, the relevant water sharing plan may be suspended, after which the NSW Office of Water must allocate water in accordance with the priorities outlined in Section 60(3) of the *Water Management Act, 2000*.

Typically, a water sharing plan will only be suspended when town water supply cannot be guaranteed for the current and subsequent water year.

The water sharing plan for the *Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated River Water Source* was suspended in July 2007, due to a severe water shortage. Since then, the NSW Office of Water has worked to ensure that the water available within the Macquarie Valley was allocated to provide the best outcomes for communities, water use industries and the riverine environment. At all times the NSW Office of Water has managed water consistent with the provisions of the water sharing plan wherever possible.

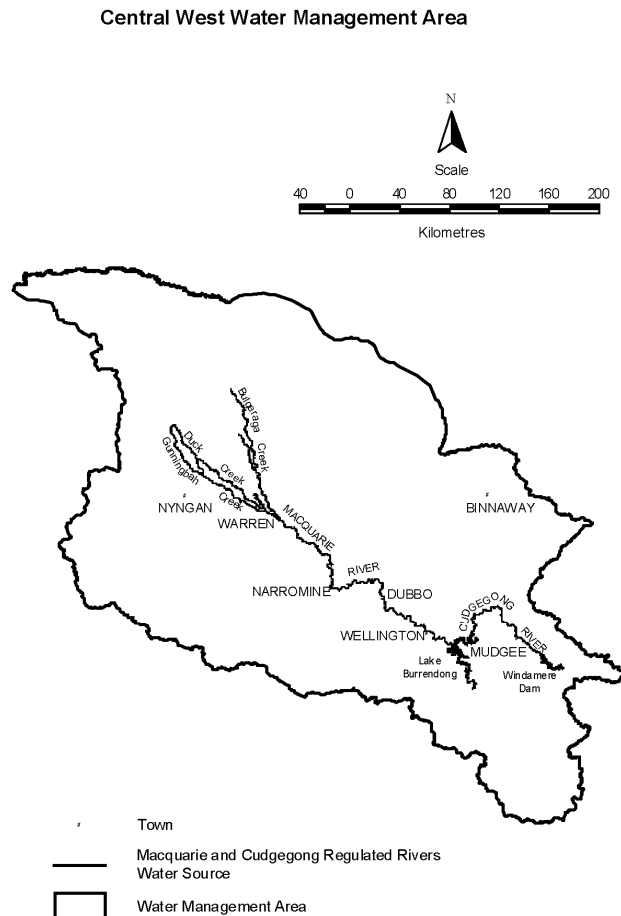
Now that the drought has broken, the Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated River water sharing plan will recommence on 1 July 2011, and thereafter the management rules contained in the plan will apply to water users during the 2011/12 water year.

This document provides an overview of the key features of the water sharing plan.

Where do the water sharing plan rules apply

The Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated River water sharing plan applies to **all licence holders** from the upstream limit of Windamere Dam water storage to the junctions of the Macquarie River and its effluent rivers with the Barwon River.

Area of Regulated Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated River water sharing plan



Water availability outlook

Burrendong Dam steadily rose from about 15 per cent in July 2010 to over 100 per cent in October, reaching a peak of 150 per cent (well into the Flood Mitigation Zone) in December 2010. Water was released to return the dam to 100 per cent capacity during January 2011 and has been operated to meet demand since then.

During this time, Windamere Dam rose from about 17 per cent to 46 per cent of capacity.

The Bureau of Meteorology is still forecasting above average rainfall in autumn and winter, therefore prospects for the 2011/12 water year are very optimistic.

The likely allocations for the start of the 2011/2012 water will be 100 per cent for towns, domestic and stock, and high security licences, as well as full carryover of unused water from the 2010/2011 water year.

How much water can I use in 2011/12?

Under the plan, local water utilities (towns), domestic and stock, as well as high security users will have access to a maximum of 100 per cent of entitlement, while general security users will have access to any water carried over from the 2010/11 water year, together with any future Available Water Determinations (AWD) up to a maximum of 100 per cent during the 2011/12 water year.

General security licence holders should check with State Water as to the volumes of water in their accounts that will be carried over into 2011/12.

Accounting and carryover from 2010/11 into 2011/12 **This means that on 1 July 2011;**

All water in regulated river (general security) will be carried over from 2010/11 into the 2011/12 water year.

New AWDs will be made on 1 July 2011 for domestic and stock, town water supply, high security and supplementary access licences, which are all expected to be 100 per cent (or 1 ML/share, depending on the licence type).

Trade rules

- **Domestic and Stock:** cannot be traded.
- **Town Water Supply:** can be traded if approval has been given by the NSW Office of Water and the town has an approved drought management plan.
- **High Security:** can be traded in accordance with the provisions of the water sharing plan.
- **General Security:** can be traded in accordance with the provisions of the water sharing plan.

Assignment of Account Water (“Temporary Trades”) for General Security Access Licences

Allocation assignments of general security account water can be made in accordance with plan provisions.

Licensees are reminded that there are some limits of volumes of water that can be traded into some creeks and between the Macquarie and Cudgong rivers. Prospective buyers should consult with State Water before entering into contractual arrangements.

Assignment of Account Water (“Temporary trades”) for Supplementary Water Access Licences

Allocation assignments of supplementary account water can be made to another supplementary water account in accordance with the provisions of the plan.

Allocation reset

If Burrendong Dam spills during 2011-12, all general security and high security AWD accounts in Macquarie and Cudgong valleys will be recredited to a volume equivalent to 100 per cent of share components. The Environmental Water Allowance will also be re-credited with 100 per cent. This will occur whenever the water level in Burrendong Dam re-enters the Flood Mitigation Zone (FMZ) in that water year.

Water users should note that any account water that is traded during the year before the ‘Allocation reset’ will be lost when the allocations are reset due to the dam spilling.

Current flow management

Both Burrendong and Windamere dams are being operated 'normally' to meet downstream demands. A return to more typical seasonal demand should see reduced releases in coming months with increases expected in spring.

Probabilities for 2011/12

The following probabilities are indicative only and are based on estimates of water use and historical inflows for wet, average, and dry conditions, up to 1 October 2011.

Climatic Conditions	Likely general security allocation at 1 October 2011
Wet	General security allocations reset to 100 per cent following a storage spill
Average	General security allocations reset to 100 per cent following a storage spill
Dry	23 per cent AWD plus carryover from 2010/2011

Note: Wet, average and dry conditions have been estimated using 20 per cent, 50 per cent and 80 per cent exceedance conditions.

Communication and additional information

In 2011/12 the NSW Office of Water will make formal Available Water Determinations (AWD) on the 5th day of each month (adjusted to the first working day after the 5th if it should fall on a weekend or public holiday). This will allow time for State Water to provide end-of-month data and for the NSW Office of Water to make a determination and publish an Order of the determination.

Notification will then be made through media releases, with all media releases being available on the NSW Office of Water website - www.water.nsw.gov.au

Where do I go for additional information?

NSW Office of Water: call James Muddle 0407 103 507 or visit the website www.water.nsw.gov.au