

RiverBank Water Use Plan for the Murrumbidgee Water Management Area

Part 1 Name of plan and water source to which it relates

- (1) This Plan is called the RiverBank Water Use Plan for the Murrumbidgee Water Management Area.
- (2) This Plan is made under section 8E(7) of the *Water Management Act 2000*.
- (3) This Plan relates to the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source as defined in the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source 2003, and the Lowbidgee floodplain.

Note. The Lowbidgee floodplain receives flows from the regulated Murrumbidgee River system but does not form part of the regulated river water source. It is however within the Murrumbidgee Water Management Area as constituted by the Ministerial Order published in the NSW Government Gazette on 23 November 2001. A water management plan for the Lowbidgee Flood Control and Irrigation District, as required under Clause 73(1)(b) of the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source, is in preparation.

Part 2 Aims and ecological objectives of this plan

- (1) In accordance with section 8E(3) of the Water Management Act 2000 this Plan is established to further objectives 10(a), (b), (c), (j) and (k) in the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source 2003.
- (2) This Plan authorises the use of water for environmental purposes that:
 - (a) contribute to maintaining the ecological character of wetlands and floodplains on the Lowbidgee floodplain, including within Yanga National Park;
 - (b) ensure the successful completion of colonial waterbird breeding in wetlands on the Lowbidgee floodplain, including within Yanga National Park, Yanga State Conservation Area and Yanga Nature Reserve;
 - (c) enhance opportunities for threatened and other native fish and waterbird recruitment in the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source;
 - (d) enhance river and wetland habitat for water dependent biota in the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source.

Part 3 Plan area

- (1) This Plan authorises the use of water within:
 - (a) those sections of the Lowbidgee floodplain within Yanga National Park, Yanga State Conservation Area, Yanga Nature Reserve and the Lowbidgee Flood Control and Irrigation District capable of being watered by diversions from Maude Weir;

- (b) those sections of the Lowbidgee floodplain within Yanga National Park, Yanga State Conservation Area and Yanga Nature Reserve capable of being watered by diversions from Redbank Weir;
- (c) those sections of the Lowbidgee floodplain within Yanga National Park, Yanga State Conservation Area, Yanga Nature Reserve capable of being watered by pumping from the Murrumbidgee River;
- (d) those sections of Yanga National Park, Yanga State Conservation Area and Yanga Nature Reserve capable of being watered by diversions from the Abercrombie Channel; and

Note. To deliver water to Yanga National Park from Abercrombie Channel requires the construction of additional works. The feasibility of these has not been investigated at the commencement of this Plan.

- (e) those sections of the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source that are downstream of Burrinjuck Dam.

Part 4 Watering priorities across the Plan area

- (1) Watering priorities are approved by the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment under the annual Riverbank Business Plan and specified in the RiverBank Operational Plan for the Murrumbidgee Water Management Area, which will be reviewed annually.

Part 5 Conditions on the use of water

- (1) Water allocations accrued under a regulated river (high security) access licence or a regulated river (general security) access licence nominating this Plan may be ordered to meet the objectives specified in Part 2 (2) of this Plan.
- (2) Water ordering conditions applicable to other licences in the water source are applicable to the access licences that nominate this Plan.
- (3) For the purpose of measurement of water delivered, the access licences that nominate this Plan may also nominate the works owned by State Water in order to use water allocations and for water accounting.
 - 1. Access licences that order water for use:
 - a. Under Part 3 (1) (a) shall nominate Caira Cutting regulator and additional regulators, where appropriate, on South Caira Channel located on the Maude floodplain
 - b. Under Part 3 (1) (b) shall nominate Yanga 1AS regulator and/or Waugorah regulator
 - c. Under Part 3 (1) (d) and (e) shall nominate appropriate works
- (4) For the purpose of measurement of water delivered, the access licences that nominate this Plan may also nominate the works owned by other private landholders / licence holders in order to use water allocations and for water accounting.

1. Access licences that order water for use:
 - a. Under Part 3 (1) (a) shall nominate appropriate works
 - b. Under Part 3 (1) (c) shall nominate works under approval 40CA400825
 - c. Under part 3 (1) (d) and (e) shall nominate appropriate works

Note. RiverBank will negotiate acceptable arrangements with the owners of the private works prior to placing any order for water that relies on these works for delivery. No formal agreements exist at the commencement of this Plan.

- (5) Compliance with NSW Water Monitoring Extraction Standards in relation to accuracy of flow measurements will be required for all extractions / diversions by the access licences that nominate this Plan.

Note. RiverBank recognises that special gauging / measurement on an event basis (as agreed or negotiated) may be required downstream of the works under Part 5 (3) 1 to ensure accuracy of measurements consistent with NSW Water Extraction Monitoring Standards. RiverBank will contribute to the cost incurred in such gauging / measurement, and for account keeping, at least in proportion with the contribution of RiverBank water to total event flows.

- (6) Water allocations accrued under a supplementary water access licence may be used to meet the objectives specified in Part 2 (2) of this Plan subject to availability of supplementary flows as per Section 51 of the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source, and State Water being notified as to the:

- (a) intent to use water;
- (b) maximum volume that will be used;
- (c) rate at which the water will be used;
- (d) period of time in which water will be used; and
- (e) volume of water already used under the respective supplementary water access licence during the year commenced 1 July.

Part 6 Rules for accounting water use

- (1) The amount of water taken under a regulated river (high security) access licence or a regulated river (general security) access licence nominating this plan shall be assessed as:

- (a) for use of water under Part 3 (1) (a) and (b) of this Plan nominating Caira Cutting, Yanga 1AS and Waugorah regulators, the amount of water measured at off-take regulators minus:
 - i. water orders for other downstream access licences; and
 - ii. 'targeted flow for other downstream requirements'.
- (b) for use of water under Part 3 (1) (c) of this plan nominating Murrumbidgee River pump site, the amount measured through metered works.

- (c) for use of water under Part 3 (1) (d) and (e) of this Plan, the amount measured through metered works.

Note. For accounting rules under part 6 of this Plan the term 'Targeted flow for other downstream requirements' means:

- (1) water supplied for the requirements of downstream domestic and stock rights;
 - (2) water supplied for native title rights;
 - (3) water supplied for other downstream requirements; and
 - (4) water losses associated with the delivery of water orders by other downstream access licences.
- (2) If State Water is notified of an intent to use supplementary water in accordance with Part 5 (5) (a) of this Plan, the amount of water used under a supplementary water access licence nominating this Plan shall be assessed as given in Part 6 (1) of this Plan, but after accounting for the high security and general security access licences that nominate this Plan.

Part 7 Access licence dealing rules

- (1) Water allocations may be assigned from an access licence nominating this Plan to another access licence if the allocations are not required or are not sufficient to meet objectives specified in Part 2 (2) of this Plan at the time of dealing or as otherwise foreseen.
- (2) Water allocations may be assigned to an access licence nominating this Plan from another access licence in order to supplement allocations required to meet objectives specified in Part 2 (2) of this Plan.
- (3) Water allocations may be assigned from an access licence nominating this Plan to another access licence to recover annual water licence costs and charges, consistent with a DECC approved Water Trading Strategy.

Part 8 Monitoring, evaluation and amendment of this Plan

- (1) Monitoring to evaluate the success of this Plan in achieving objectives under Part 2 will be as approved by the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment under the RiverBank Business Plan.
- (2) The evaluation under Part 8 (1) will inform both the annual reporting under the RiverBank Business Plan to the Environmental Trust and the review of the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source 2003 to be undertaken by the Natural Resources Commission.
- (3) This Plan may be amended, subject to a written request by the Department of Environment and Climate Change, to remain consistent with the approved annual RiverBank Business Plan and the annual RiverBank Operational Plan for the Murrumbidgee Water Management Area, consistent with the principles of adaptive management as specified in the *Water Management Act 2000*.

Part 9 Reporting arrangements

- (1) Reporting on the use of water under this Plan against the objectives specified in Part 2 will be undertaken annually under the RiverBank Business Plan.
- (2) Reporting on the use of water under this Plan will contribute to the annual review of the implementation of the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source 2003.
- (3) RiverBank will report on the quantity of water taken or used under specific licences to which this Plan relates, when required and in the form specified by the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, in accordance with part A (mandatory) licence conditions relevant to the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source.

Part 10 Management responsibilities

- (1) The Director General, the Deputy Director General Climate Change and Environment Protection Group and/or the Director Environmental Water and RiverBank of the Department of Environment and Climate Change, under the authority of the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, are to determine when water allocations accrued under an access licence nominating this Plan are to be used.