

Bundaberg Water Supply Scheme

What does the new plan mean for the scheme?

New water resource plan released

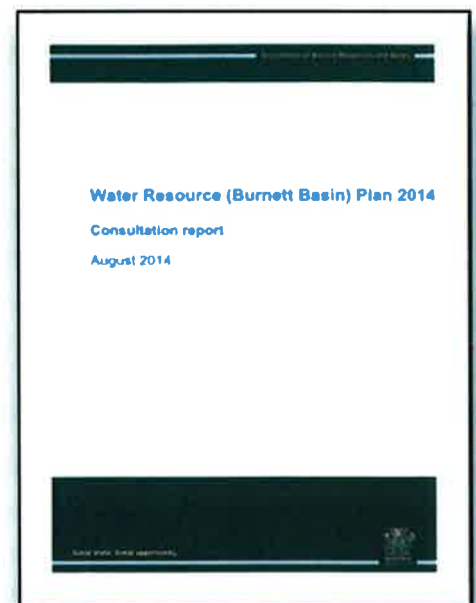
- the Water Resource (Burnett Basin) Plan 2014 was released on 22 August 2014, with explanatory notes and a consultation report

Bundaberg Water Supply Scheme

- the interim rules for taking and sharing water for the Bundaberg Water Supply Scheme are stated in Schedule 9, Part 3—the environmental management and infrastructure operating rules have now commenced
- changes between draft and final plans:
 - the interim rules for taking and sharing water commence on 1 July 2015 (section 2 of the plan)
 - for the 2014/15 water year, the water sharing rules are those stated in the Burnett Basin Resource Operations Plan 2003 (the ROP), Attachment 4.1F (see section 33 of the final plan)
 - final plan includes an additional rule that sets the AA for MP water allocations to 100% when the total useable volume in the Burnett River subscheme is above 340 000 ML
 - Bucca Weir environmental management rule changed from 5 ML/d to 35 ML in any seven day period—addresses any difficulties SunWater would have in maintaining a low flow release whilst continuing to satisfy the environmental outcome of the rule

Consultation report

- the draft plan was released on 4 November 2013—public information sessions and scheme and groundwater user meetings were held throughout the basin
- submissions on the draft plan closed on 13 December 2013—185 submissions were received
- issues raised for this scheme (see section 3.2 of the Consultation Report) predominately related to:
 - announced allocations at the start of the water year
 - nominal operating levels
 - environmental management rules (Bucca Weir, Paradise Dam and Ned Churchward Weir)
 - timing of rule implementation
 - converting interim water allocations in the Avondale Water Board Area



Overland flow management

- In the Coastal Burnett Overland Flow Area the taking of overland flow water will be limited to take:
 - for stock or domestic purposes
 - under a water licence
 - using existing works in place before 18 January 2010
 - to meet the environmental requirements such as capturing contaminated agricultural run off
 - by new works with a storage capacity of up to 20 ML for any purpose
 - by new works with a storage capacity greater than 20 ML where the catchment area of the storage is less than 25ha and the take of overland flow water is incidental to the purpose of the storage
- there is no management of overland flow water in the remainder of the Burnett Basin

Unallocated Water

- the final plan provides reserves for future water needs:
 - 15 295 ML—in Bundaberg Water Supply Scheme area to support new infrastructure proposals
 - 1 000 ML—across the basin to support projects of significant economic importance for the State¹
 - 1 000 ML—across the basin for Indigenous purposes²
 - 1 000 ML— general reserves in both the Gregory & Isis subcatchments
- reserves are also available in the Barker Barambah and Upper Burnett Water Supply Schemes



Coastal Burnett Groundwater Management Area

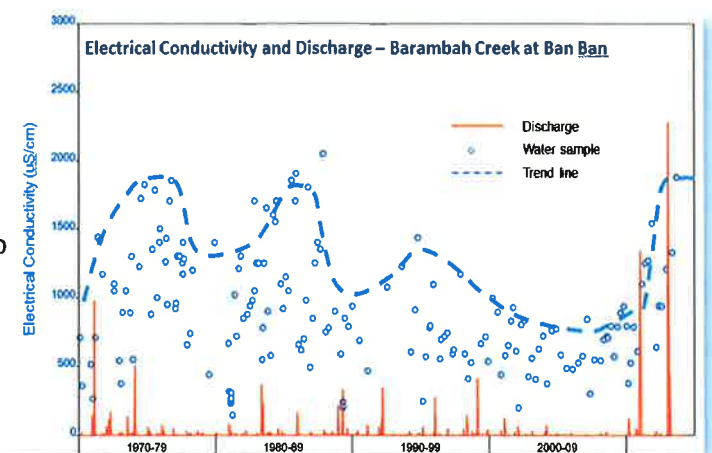
- the final plan provides for:
 - conversion of existing groundwater licences to tradable water allocations in Area A
 - granting of water licences in to landholders with existing groundwater works in Area B
- finalisation of the ROP amendment to include the CBGMA is proposed for November 2014

Reductions in regulation between draft and final plans

- the Queensland government is simplifying regulatory requirements where the take of water is 'low risk'—minimal impact on the resource—for example:
 - construction of new bores outside a critical distance from property boundaries, other bores or specified watercourses are exempt developments—works within critical distances are assessable developments (see section 98)
 - authorising taking water for stock or domestic purposes without the need for a water licence to reflect recent amendments to s20A of the Water Act 2000 where a landowner has riparian access to a watercourse or has permission to occupy the land that provides access to the watercourse
 - providing for water to be taken without a water licence for low risk activities described in Schedule 1 of the Water Regulation 2002, such as taking water for dairy washdown, rehabilitating riparian land and managing public recreation areas (only for unsupplemented water and groundwater)

Burnett River Water Quality Information

- since the 2010/11 wet season, salinity levels in the Burnett River have increased—caused by salts being flushed from the landscape into the streams
- landholders and industry groups have expressed concerns regarding the effects of salty water on crop production and soil health—measures are now proposed to improve understanding of the issue
- for information about water quality and land management in the Burnett Basin see:
 - www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/soil
 - www.bmrg.org.au/our-programs/burnett-river-water-quality-information



¹ State purpose means coordinated projects under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, projects of regional significance or for town water supply purposes.

² Indigenous purposes means projects that assist Indigenous communities to achieve their economic and social aspirations.