



Coastal Burnett groundwater management area—groundwater for irrigation purposes

The Burnett Basin Water Resource Plan (the plan) was amended in November 2007 to include the coastal Burnett groundwater management area (CBGMA).

The plan provides a framework for sustainable allocation and management of groundwater within the CBGMA.

Implementation of plan

The plan will be implemented by amending the existing Burnett Basin Resource Operations Plan. The resource operations plan will:

- detail the process for converting groundwater licences
- define water sharing rules
- outline rules for water trading.

The department is currently preparing the resource operations plan in consultation with water users. When completed, a draft resource operations plan will be released for public comment through a formal submissions process. It is expected that the draft resource operations plan will be released by mid-2009 and finalised by early 2010.

Together, the plan and resource operations plan introduce new arrangements within the CBGMA for access to groundwater for irrigation purposes.

What is irrigation use?

Irrigation means the extraction of water for drainage services or irrigation of crops and/or pastures for commercial gain.

Fact sheet W131 details the new arrangements within the CBGMA for access to groundwater for stock and/or domestic use.

Plan areas

For the purpose of this fact sheet, the CBGMA is considered as two areas, A and B, (see Figure 1).

Existing irrigation users

Area A

All groundwater irrigators in Area A (see Figure 1) are currently licensed. Under the plan, these licences will remain operational until the release of the final resource operations plan.

When the resource operations plan is finalised, water licences will be converted to water allocations which will have their own title and as such will not be attached to land. The 'nominal volume' currently specified on an irrigation licence will be retained as a 'volumetric limit' on the new water allocation and a water user's existing access to groundwater will not be diminished in any way.

Area B

Groundwater irrigators in Area B (see Figure 1) are currently unlicensed. The plan allows for these irrigators to be granted a water allocation. The department is working with water user representatives and irrigators in Area B to ensure that the process for determining water allocations is fair and equitable.

New irrigation users

The plan does not provide for any additional groundwater to be made available from the CBGMA for irrigation purposes. However, the introduction of water trading through the resource operations plan will provide opportunities for new water users to purchase existing groundwater allocations.

The rules and limitations for water sharing and trading will be detailed in the resource operations plan.

Replacement bores

A replacement bore is one that is constructed to replace an existing authorised bore. A replacement bore must be constructed within 10 metres of the original bore and be no deeper than the original bore.

Once a replacement bore is operational, the original bore must be decommissioned.

Landowners in Area A may construct a replacement irrigation bore in accordance with the Code for Self-Assessable Development of Replacement Bores. This code is available from the department's website <www.nrw.qld.gov.au> or any NRW service centre.

Landowners in Area B wanting to construct a replacement bore are required to apply to the department for a development permit. Once a development permit is issued, the owner may construct the bore and continue to extract water.



Seasonal water assignments

Groundwater irrigators in Area A may currently seasonally assign existing water entitlements within Area A only.

Irrigators wishing to seasonally assign existing water entitlements are required to submit an application, accompanied by the correct fee, to the department.

Each application will be assessed in accordance with the department's water sharing rules. These rules are available from the department's website <www.nrw.qld.gov.au> or at any NRW service centre.

Groundwater irrigators in Area B cannot currently access seasonal water assignments as they do not possess a defined water entitlement.

When the resource operations plan is finalised, irrigators in Area B will be issued with water allocations. It will then be possible to apply to seasonally assign this water by submitting an application, accompanied by the correct fee, to the department.

Each application will be assessed in accordance with the department's water sharing rules

Further information

For more information on the coastal Burnett groundwater management area, go to the department's website <www.nrw.qld.gov.au> or contact the Bundaberg water services group on 07 4131 5855.

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For further information phone 13 13 04

Figure 1: Coastal Burnett groundwater management area map

