



3 July 2020

Via email:

To: nrc@nrc.nsw.gov.au

Submission on the review of the Water Sharing Plan for the Bega and Brogo Rivers Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Source 2011 (the Plan)

Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the review process for the *Water Sharing Plan for the Bega and Brogo Rivers Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Source 2011* (the Plan). BVSC's submission, as invited by the Natural Resources Commission letter of 15 May 2020, is provided by way of this letter.

Further input from BVSC will be provided as the review proceeds in 2020/21. This includes both information for the Plan and Background Document.

In general, BVSC has supported and valued the Plan since its introduction in February 2011. It has provided structure to, and an understanding of, local water management in the Bega Valley Shire. It has helped to foster stakeholder communication and cooperation with the sharing of water in times of drought. The rules for available water determinations, water allocations and daily access have been helpful for town water supply system planning required to meet future water demands and levels of service. Total Daily Extraction Limits for local water utility access licences have enabled the setting of programmed SCADA control of pump discharges to Yellow Pinch Dam.

The Plan has not been without some problems and shortcomings, made apparent during the last 10 years, inclusive of drought. Table 1 aims to document these from a predominantly local water utility (town water supply) perspective.

The clauses, issues and suggestions for review in Table 1. are preliminary. All draft changes to the Plan will require BVSC appraisal at a later review stage.

Table 1. Overview of the Plan clauses requiring review from a predominantly local water utility and town water supply perspective

Clause	Issue	Suggestion
4 3(b)	The Regulated Rivers water source includes the Bega River 500m upstream of its junction with the Brogo River. During times of surface flow in the Bega River (most of the time) there is no regulated flow from the Brogo River flowing/migrating 500m upstream against the hydraulic gradient. During times of no surface flow in the Bega River (dry times) there may be losses to Brogo River flow around the	For review.

Clause	Issue	Suggestion
	<p>junction, dependent on groundwater levels. The regulated definition for the Bega River 500m upstream of the junction is arbitrary based on Brogo flow losses during dry times rather than actual regulated flow in this part of the Bega River.</p>	
32 (2) (a)	<p>There is a lack of clarity over the account keeping process for Cochrane Dam drought reserve and which organisation has responsibility for managing the account on a day-to-day basis. Daily management of the account during drought is required to ensure a flow is maintained to Kanoona and for meeting the Plan requirements, whilst minimising releases and losses from the reserve.</p>	<p>The Plan requires a definition for Cochrane Dam drought reserve account and a defined management system for account crediting and debiting.</p>
32 (2) (b) and (c)	<p>Drought declaration definition and flow triggers for setting aside a volume of water as drought reserve in Cochrane Dam are out of date.</p>	<p>For review. Up-to-date flow data and flow modelling with climate change should be used. An updated definition is required for drought and for flow triggers for establishing the drought reserve. The 500ML and 800ML volumes require a review with a view to increasing these volumes. A stakeholder working group is suggested to workshop this issue with DPIE.</p>
32(2) (e)	<p>The purpose of road maintenance/construction is not specified. The volume of water extracted by carters for road maintenance/construction activities is relatively small. The central availability of a limited amount of water from Morans Crossing for this activity would reduce transport costs, energy usage and construction delays during drought times. Road maintenance is a safety issue that continues during drought.</p>	<p>Consideration be given to including the purpose of water extraction for water carting for road maintenance/construction activities, with an associated IDEL and extraction location at Morans Crossing.</p>

Clause	Issue	Suggestion
41 and 42 (1)	Lacks clarity on responsibility and accountability for calculating current levels of annual extraction and assessment against the long-term average annual extraction limit after each water year. It is unclear if this information is available and if the analysis is completed each year.	For review. Defining responsibility and accountability for these annual tasks is important.
47 (2) (3) and (4)	Commencement of this plan has passed and is no longer relevant.	Reword for BVSC review.
47 (2)	No longer relevant.	Delete
47 (3)	After the first year in which this Plan has effect is no longer relevant	Clause (3) changed to: An available water determination of 100% of access licence share component should be made for local water utility access licences with a share component that specifies one of these water sources, excluding the Bega and Brogo regulated Rivers Water Source.
47 (4)	The Brogo Dam storage reserve determination of around 1200 ML, established through the AWD process, is considered too low to ensure 100% of access licence share component for local water utility access licence. This low reserve volume diminished the security and reliability of supply at the Brogo River pump station in times of recent drought and bushfires. An increased AWD for local water utility access licences would ensure town water supplies could be maintained for a 12-18-month period without inflow to the dam, considerate of releases required to maintain minimum operating levels at the pump station.	Option 1. Clause (3) changed to: An available water determination of 200% of access licence share component should be made for local water utility access licences with a share component for the Bega and Brogo Regulated River Water Source. Option 2. Maintain existing 100% AWD for local water utility access licences and include a new clause about Brogo Dam storage reserve volume necessary to meet local water utility and domestic and stock access licence needs for a 12-18-month period of no inflow, considerate of releases required to maintain minimum operating levels at the pump station and for emergency management such as bushfires and water quality issues. Option 3. As per option 2 and increase the ECE in clause 94 part 6
50, 51, 52 and 53 (2) and (3)	At the commencement of this plan and at the commencement of each water year after the first year in	Reword for BVSC review.

Clause	Issue	Suggestion
	which this plan has effect, are no longer relevant.	
56 (2)	For the period of the first three water years in which this plan has effect is no longer relevant	Reword for BVSC review.
56 (3)	For the period of any three consecutive water years after the first year is no longer relevant	Reword for BVSC review.
57 (4) (a)	Carry over of remaining water allocation is permitted for high security access licences but not for local water utility access licences.	Include local water utility access licences for carry over of remaining water allocation.
64 (5)	Year 1 and year 6 of the plan have passed.	Reword for BVSC review.
Table B	Flows and groundwater levels are based on data pre-2010.	Rework column 5, percentiles and table using analysis of all flow and groundwater level data to date, for BVSC review.
65 (5)	Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority Accreditation Scheme may no longer be functioning.	Check whether scheme is still relevant.
65 (16) (e) (i) and (ii)	The IDELs of 0.2 ML/d and 0.1 ML/d for Bemboka are too low to meet demand and unnecessary given the value to a population of around 300 people and the small volume required relative to daily release amounts from the Cochrane Dam drought reserve. It is also not possible to halve the supply of water for the village upon Cochrane drought Reserve water release commencing.	For review with BVSC.
65 (f)	The IDEL established for local water utility access licence in the Mid Bega River Sands Water Source of 3.5 ML/d is too low to meet demand, particularly in peak summer periods.	For review with BVSC.

Clause	Issue	Suggestion
66 (1)	Notes are out of date. Tantawangalo weir supply has been augmented since the Plan commenced.	For review with BVSC.
66 (2) (a) and (b) and (4)	IDELs for Tantawangalo weir, reference to years after the commencement of the Plan and following the commissioning of the Bega to Yellow Pinch Dam pipeline are no longer relevant.	For review with BVSC.
67	Access rules for the taking of water from these alluvial sediments differs from wording in Part 10 Division 2 which uses Rules applying to water supply works that take groundwater	Consider rewording for improved clarity
69	The IDELs of 0.2 ML/d, 4.7 ML/d and 6.7 ML/d for local water utility access licences are too low to meet demand on a day-to-day basis.	For review with BVSC.
73 (1) and (2) and 90 (1)	The words “from these alluvial sediments and any alluvial sediments” are unclear.	Consider rewording.
89 and 90 (1)	The requirement to keep a logbook for local water utility access licence is questioned. LWU have flow metering and SCADA to record dates and volumes, for town water supply.	Consider a new clause specific to LWU access licences with conditions for data capture relevant to monitoring systems for LWU.
91 (e)	NSW Office of Water mentioned.	Update.
94 part 6	The requirement to include an environmental contingency allowance (ECA) in Brogo Dam of 500 ML after year 9 of the Plan is not mandatory. In the 7 months prior to the 2019/20 summer bushfires, Brogo Dam water releases caused the storage to fall from 100% capacity to 10% capacity. During the bushfires, higher release volumes than predicted were required for the emergency. This reduced the reserve in the dam and diminished the	Consider making this clause mandatory and including the word emergency.

Clause	Issue	Suggestion
	security of LWU access licences 100% share component. An ECE of 500 ML would have helped.	
Schedule 3, 1, 2	Licences 10SL014767 and 10SL024007 have been converted to Water Management Act 2000 licences.	Update for review by BVSC.

Yours sincerely,



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