



Queensland
Government

Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers



Gold Coast Draft Water Management Protocol

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Acknowledgement of Country

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Chapter 1 Preliminary

1. Short title

- (1) This water management protocol may be cited as the *Gold Coast Water Management Protocol*.
- (2) Reference in this document to '**this protocol**' means the *Gold Coast Water Management Protocol*.

2. Commencement of the water management protocol

To be determined following finalisation of the water plan.

3. Purpose of protocol

This protocol implements the Water Plan (Gold Coast) 2025 (the water plan).

4. Interpretation of words used in this protocol

Unless defined under the relevant provisions, the dictionary in Attachment 1 defines particular words used in this protocol.

5. Area to which this protocol applies

This protocol applies to the water plan area as shown in schedule 1, part 1 of the water plan.

6. Water to which this protocol applies

This protocol applies to water in the plan area, that is—

- (a) water in a watercourse, lake or spring (surface water); and
- (b) underground water in the—
 - (i) Springbrook underground water management area; and
 - (ii) Tamborine Mountain (Gold Coast) underground water management area.

7. Water management areas

For the water plan area, water management areas are—

- (a) for surface water shown in Schedule 4 of the water plan, the Lower Nerang water management area; and
- (b) for underground water shown in Schedule 5 of the water plan, the—
 - (i) Springbrook underground water management area; and
 - (ii) Tamborine Mountain (Gold Coast) underground water management area.

8. Trading zones

For the water plan area, the trading zones are—

- (1) for unsupplemented water, is the extent of the Lower Nerang water management area map shown in Schedule 4 of the water plan, and
- (2) for supplemented water, is the extent of the Nerang water supply scheme shown in Schedule 3 of the water plan; and
- (3) for subsections (1) and (2), each trading zone includes—
 - (a) each part of a watercourse, lake or spring that lies within the zone; and
 - (b) those sections of tributaries where there is access to flow or pondage from a watercourse or lake within the zone.

Chapter 2 Unallocated water

9. Scope of chapter 2

For part 7 of the water plan this chapter details—

- (a) the unallocated water reserve types, volumes and locations; and
- (b) considerations for implementing a process for unallocated water.

Part 1 Unallocated water reserve types, volumes and location

10. Record of volume of unallocated water

The chief executive may keep a record of the volume of the unallocated water available which may be released, under a process, on the unallocated water register.

11. Unallocated water reserve types, volumes and locations

- (1) Unallocated water is held in strategic and general reserve types.
- (2) At the commencement of the water plan, the volumes and the locations for strategic reserves are—
 - (a) up to 18,250ML within the Nerang water supply scheme; and
 - (b) up to 50ML within subcatchment 2, from the Coomera River upstream of the Army Camp gauging station (146010A).
- (3) At the commencement of the water plan, the volumes and the locations for general reserves are described in Attachment 2.
- (4) Despite subsection (3), the general reserve identified in Attachment 2 for subcatchment 4, must not be released within the Nerang water supply scheme.

Part 2 Considerations for implementing a process for unallocated water reserves

Division 1 General reserve

12. Considerations for releasing unallocated water

- (1) In deciding to release unallocated water, the chief executive must consider—
 - (a) the extent to which water is being taken under water entitlements and statutory authorisations to take or interfere with water in the area subject to the release; and
 - (b) emerging requirements in the area subject to the release for additional water and the likely timeframe in which the additional water will be required, including for towns and communities dependent on the water in the plan area; and
 - (c) the availability of an alternative water supply for the purpose for which water is required; and
 - (d) the extent to which the release of water or future take of water in an area may affect the water plan's outcomes.
- (2) For this section—

alternative water supply means access to water through another mechanism, for example through seasonal water assignment, under an authority to take under the *Water Act 2000* or reticulated supply.

13. Considerations for deciding an application for unallocated water

In deciding an application for unallocated water, the chief executive must consider any information for the area, about the effects of taking, or interfering with water on—

- (a) existing water entitlements and authorities to take or interfere with water; and
- (b) natural ecosystems; and
- (c) the physical integrity of watercourses, lakes, springs or aquifers; and
- (d) the cultural values of Aboriginal Peoples or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

14. Entitlement types and volumes

- (1) If the chief executive decides to grant a water entitlement in the Lower Nerang water management area, it must—
 - (a) be an unsupplemented water allocation; and
 - (b) state an annual volumetric limit in megalitres; and
 - (c) state a nominal volume in megalitres that is calculated by applying a factor of 0.8 to the annual volumetric limit.
- (2) If the chief executive decides to grant a water entitlement in a location other than the Lower Nerang water management area – the chief executive must grant a water licence for a nominal entitlement in megalitres per annum.

Division 2 Strategic reserve

15. Releasing unallocated water to Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority

- (1) Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority may write to the chief executive requesting the release of all or part of the strategic reserves.
- (2) The chief executive may release water to Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority for all, or part of the unallocated water held in the strategic reserves if—
 - (a) the proposed location is within—
 - (i) the Nerang water supply scheme; or
 - (ii) subcatchment 2, from the Coomera River upstream of the Army Camp gauging station (146010A); and
 - (b) the volume is available, considering water that may have already been allocated from strategic reserve volumes—
 - (i) stated in attachment 2 for the Upper Coomera subcatchment; or
 - (ii) for the Nerang water supply scheme – 18,250ML; and
 - (c) the proposed use of the water is for town water supply.

16. Granting a water allocation

If the chief executive decides to grant a water allocation, the water allocation must state—

- (a) the location is the ‘Nerang Zone’;
- (b) a nominal volume up to 18,250ML;
- (c) a purpose of ‘any’; and
- (d) the priority group ‘high priority A’.

17. Granting a water licence

- (1) If the chief executive decides to grant a water licence, the water licence must state—

- (a) the location for taking water within subcatchment 2, from the Coomera River is an activity parcel upstream of the Army Camp gauging station (146010A); and
 - (b) a volume up to 50ML; and
 - (c) a purpose of ‘urban’; and
 - (d) conditions for discharging water into Canungra Creek, including location details and that Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority must apply for a ‘relift’ water licence—
 - (i) for taking water from the same location in Canungra Creek as described in (1)(a); and
 - (ii) for a stated purpose of ‘relift’.
- (2) For subsection (1)(d), Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority must apply for a ‘relift’ water licence if the water is to be discharged into Canungra Creek.

18. Additional requirements for granting a relift water licence in relation to the grant of a water licence

- (1) Section 18 applies if Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority applies for a ‘relift’ water licence under section 17(2).
- (2) If the chief executive decides to grant a relift licence, the licence must state as a condition—
 - (a) that water may only be taken under the water licence following discharge of that water into Canungra Creek;
 - (b) the volume of water taken must not exceed the volume of water discharged; and
 - (c) the take of water that has been discharged into Canungra Creek must commence within 72 hours following the take of water from the Coomera River under the water licence granted under section 17(1).

Chapter 3 Supplemented water allocations

19. Scope of chapter 3

- (1) For section 158(2) of the *Water Act 2000*, this chapter states the water allocation dealings rules that apply to supplemented water allocations managed under the relevant resource operations licence for the Nerang water supply scheme.
- (2) The process for making an application for a water allocation dealing is prescribed in part 5, division 3 of the *Water Regulation 2016*.

20. Definition for chapter

In this chapter—

location, for a water allocation, means the zone from which water under the water allocation can be taken.

Part 1 Water allocation dealing rules

21. Application of part 1

For section 158(4)(c) of the *Water Act 2000*, this part states the types of water allocation dealings that are prohibited under this protocol.

Note – For deciding a water allocation dealing under this chapter, see section 159(2)(a) and 159(2)(c) of the *Water Act 2000*.

22. Application for changes not specified as prohibited

An application for a water allocation dealing that is not specified as prohibited in this part may be made in accordance with part 5, division 3, subdivision 4 of the *Water Regulation 2016*.

Division 1 Prohibited changes

23. Water allocation dealings that are prohibited

The following water allocation dealings are prohibited—

- (a) a change that would result in the nominal volume of the new water allocation not being expressed as a whole number, unless an existing water allocation to be changed specifies a nominal volume that is not a whole number;
- (b) a change from the priority group stated on the water allocation; or
- (c) a change to a location that is not the Nerang water supply scheme.

Chapter 4 Unsupplemented water allocations – Lower Nerang water management area

24. Scope of chapter 4

- (1) For section 158(2) of the *Water Act 2000*, this chapter states the water allocation dealings rules that apply to unsupplemented water allocations for the Lower Nerang water management area.
- (2) The process for making an application for a water allocation dealing is prescribed in part 5, division 3 of the Water Regulation 2016.

25. Definition for chapter

In this chapter—

location, for a water allocation, means the zone from which water under the water allocation can be taken.

Part 1 Seasonal water assignment rules

26. Application of part 1

- (1) For section 59(1) of the Water Regulation 2016, this part states the seasonal assignment rules for water not managed under a resource operations licence.
- (2) The process for making an application for a water allocation dealing is prescribed in part 5, division 2 of the Water Regulation 2016.

27. Seasonal water assignment rules

- (1) The chief executive must only approve an application for a seasonal water assignment of a water allocation if the—
 - (a) volume being seasonally assigned does not exceed the remaining volume of water that may be taken under the water allocation in the water year;
 - (b) take of water is metered using an approved measurement device—
 - (i) under the water allocation — by the assignor (seller); and
 - (ii) under the seasonal water assignment — by the assignee (buyer);
 - (c) the maximum rate to be applied to the seasonal water assignment does not exceed the maximum rate stated on the allocation being seasonally assigned; and
 - (d) location from which water is to be taken under the seasonal water assignment is from the same zone.
- (2) Subsection (1) also applies to the seasonal assignment of a seasonal water assignment notice where the reference to a water allocation is taken to be a reference to a seasonal water assignment notice.

Chapter 5 Surface water licences

28. Application of this chapter

This chapter applies to water licences to take or interfere with surface water within the water plan area and deals with—

- (a) for seasonal water assignment rules for section 127(2) of the *Water Act 2000*, the seasonal water assignment rules that apply to water licences;
- (b) for water licence dealing rules for section 129(1) of the *Water Act 2000*, the water licence dealings rules that apply to water licences; and
- (c) for subsections (a) and (b), the process for making an application for a water allocation dealing is prescribed in section 121 of the *Water Act 2000*.

29. Definition for chapter 5

In this chapter—

location, for a water licence, or seasonal water assignment notice, means the activity parcel from which water can be taken under the water licence or seasonal water assignment notice.

Part 1 Seasonal water assignment rules

30. Application of part 1

For section 67(c) of the *Water Act 2000*, this part states the criteria and process for deciding applications for a seasonal water assignment.

31. Seasonal water assignment rules

- (1) The chief executive must not accept an application for a seasonal water assignment if the application is inconsistent with subsection (2).
- (2) The chief executive may accept and approve an application for a seasonal water assignment only if the—
 - (a) volume being assigned does not exceed the remaining volume of water that may be taken under the water entitlement; and
 - (b) total combined volume of water seasonally assigned to an activity location for the water year, under all seasonal water assignments does not exceed 10ML; and
 - (c) take of water is metered using an approved measurement device—
 - (i) under the water entitlement—by the assignor (seller); and
 - (ii) under the seasonal water assignment—by the assignee (buyer); and
 - (d) location from which water is to be taken under the seasonal water assignment is from the same subcatchment; and
 - (e) purpose of the water licences held by the applicant and the assignee is ‘any’.
- (3) The maximum rate of take of water for the seasonal water assignment notice, expressed in megalitres per day, must not be greater than the maximum rate stated on any issued water licence held by the assignee for the location to which water is being seasonally assigned.

Part 2 Water licence dealings

32. Scope of part 2

For section 33 of the water plan this part specifies the water licences dealings rules for applications which the chief executive may—

- (a) accept; and
- (b) if it is permitted to be accepted, decide the application under this part if the application is not inconsistent with the water plan.

Division 1 Permitted water licence dealings

33. Change of purpose

The following changes of the purpose stated on a water licence is a permitted change for—

- (a) from ‘stock’ and/or ‘domestic’ to—
 - (i) ‘any’; or
 - (ii) ‘urban’;
- (b) from ‘any’ to ‘urban’ only if the holder of the water licence subject to the dealing is either—
 - (i) a local government; or
 - (ii) the Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority.

34. Change a location that is stated as an authorised activity parcel

A change to include a new location which is an authorised activity parcel stated on a water licence is a permitted change where the new land parcel or parcels are—

- (a) adjoining, adjacent or contiguous to the existing land parcel stated on the water licence; and
- (b) on the same watercourse; and
- (c) in the same subcatchment.

Division 2 Prohibited water licence dealings

35. Change of purpose

A change to the purpose stated on a water licence if the change is from ‘urban’ to another purpose is a prohibited water licence dealing.

36. Change of location

A change to include a new location on a water licence that is not permitted under section 34 is a prohibited water licence dealing.

Chapter 6 Monitoring

37. Water monitoring

- (1) The chief executive must measure and record—
 - (a) water quantity;
 - (b) water taken;
 - (c) underground water levels;
 - (d) prices for water permanently traded and seasonally assigned;
 - (e) number of permanent trades and seasonal assignments; and
 - (f) volume of water permanently traded and seasonally assigned.
- (2) The chief executive may use information collected to support water resource assessment and reporting.

38. Natural ecosystems monitoring

- (1) The chief executive must collect and keep publicly available information on—
 - (a) ecological assets that are linked to the ecological outcomes and plan strategies of the water plan; and
 - (b) the critical water requirements of ecological assets, including the provision of these requirements under the water plan.
 - (c) the reporting and monitoring requirements for this plan for operators of infrastructure interfering with water in the plan area
- (2) For this section—
ecological asset include a species, a group of species, a biological function, an ecosystem and a place of natural value that is dependent on attributes of a flow regime to support the asset's long-term viability

39. Assessment

The chief executive must make ongoing assessments of whether the trends in the data measured, collected and recorded under sections 37 and 38 indicate that outcomes specified in the water plan are being achieved.

Attachment 1 Dictionary

Term	Definition
Assignee	The recipient of an entitlement from a seasonal water assignment agreement.
Assignor	The giver of an entitlement from a seasonal water assignment agreement.
High priority water allocation	A water allocation belonging to a high priority group.
Location	For a water allocation, means the zone from which water can be taken under the water allocation. For a water licence or seasonal water assignment notice, means the location of works from which water can be taken under the water licence or seasonal water assignment notice.
Megalitre (ML)	One million litres.
Shown	For an area that is referred to as shown in the water plan for this protocol, is an area which is also held in digital electronic form and may be inspected on https://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au/
Supplemented	Water supplied under an interim resource operations licence, resource operations licence or other authority to operate infrastructure.
Unsupplemented	Water which is not supplemented.

Attachment 2 Unallocated water locations

Subcatchment area	Subcatchment area name	Reserve type	Volume (in AAV stated as ML)
1	Pimpama River	General	50
2	Upper Coomera River	Strategic	50
3	Lower Coomera River	General	200
4	Upper Nerang River	General	50
5	Lower Nerang River	General	50
6	Mudgeeraba Creek	General	50
7	Tallebudgera Creek	General	50
8	Currumbin Creek	General	50

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