

Australian Capital Territory

Section 71 Reporting for 2013-14

1. Surface water overview

This section presents a summary of the key section 71 clauses of the Water Act 2007 for surface water resource plan areas (and SDL resource units where appropriate):

- Available water
 - (a) the quantity of water available from the water resources of the water resource plan area during that water accounting period.

For the ACT the long term average available water is 265GL. (Source Water available for taking from each water management area. Note: surface water only)

- Permitted take
 - (b) The permitted take for ACT surface water course resources is 73.2025 GL, (comprising 71GL ACTEW and 2.2025GL for non potable Water Access Entitlements, WAE) is the quantity of water permitted to be taken from the surface water course water resources of the water resource plan area during the water accounting period. Note that there is an additional 1.382GL of combined surface water and groundwater Surviving Allocations available for permitted take. These Surviving Allocations are from prior to the *ACT Water Act 1998 (now revoked)*. These Surviving Allocations will be converted to WAEs when a trade is sought or when the land associated with the water allocation is sold.

- in place to limit take, including strategies in place to limit growth in use
The eflow guidelines and related water management instruments under the *Water Resources Act 2007* establish the basis for permitted take. ACT take is currently significantly below permitted take. This is because of the water reduction initiatives undertaken in the mid 1990's which achieved a 20% sustainable reduction, followed by the *Think water act water* initiatives which commenced in 2004, along with the Millennium drought, producing a further 30% reduction in take. Therefore strategies to further limit growth in use are not currently required. However, options have been identified in the current draft ACT Water Resource Plan and will be implemented for the next ACT WRP due in 2025 and also will be considered in the ACT's water strategy *Striking the Balance*.

- Water allocations:
 - (c) details of the water allocations made in relation to the water resources of that area in relation to that water accounting period. 100% of licensed water was available for use in this accounting period.

Water allocations are provided under the related water management instruments under the *Water Resources Act 2007*.

- Actual take

(d) Actual take is 49.924 GL made up of take by ACTEW, the water utility (48.768GL) and non potable users (1.156GL). Note that non potable users includes take from surface water from both WAEs and Surviving Allocations. Known Commonwealth take, not included in the ACT figures, was 1.408GL. Note that this figure is likely to increase as all Commonwealth users are identified and issued with WAEs and their take recorded (from December 2014). ie the quantity of water actually taken from the water resources of the water resource plan area during the water accounting period.

Returns to river totalled 32.54GL, made up from ACTEW 29.399GL and Queanbeyan 3.141GL. Hence ACT **net** surface water take was 17.384GL, plus 1.408GL Commonwealth use.

Runoff Dams take including for basic rights, is not metered (unless it has a WAE, in which case it is included in the above figures) and hence is assumed to equal the estimated volume allowed for in the Basin Plan, 1GL.

Commercial Plantations take is estimated to be 6.5GL, based on the methodology used for the Basin Plan, adjusted by the reduced area of commercial plantations from what was used for the Basin Plan estimate of 11GL.

- Decision affecting permitted take

(e) There were no decisions made that affect the actual or permitted take during 2013-14. details of any other decisions made by, or under the law of, the Basin State, that permit the taking of water from the water resources of that area during that water accounting period

- Trade details

(f) There were no interstate trades involving the ACT. There were no surface water trades within the ACT.

Details of the trading or transfer of tradeable water rights in relation to the water resources of that area during that water accounting period:

- (i) within the area; and
- (ii) into the area; and
- (iii) from the area.

2. Groundwater Use Overview

The quantity of water available from the water resources of the water resource plan area during that water accounting period. For the ACT, the long term average available water is 7.248GL. (Source Water available for taking from each water management area. Note: groundwater only).

Groundwater WAEs are 1.0275GL. Surface water and groundwater combined Surviving Allocations are 1.382GL. The number of active surface water WAEs and groundwater is 285. Of that number there are 35 surviving allocations for surface water and groundwater.

Groundwater take in the ACT was 0.46 GL (includes take from groundwater from both WAEs and Surviving Allocations).

There were no interstate trades involving the ACT. There were 3 trades within the ACT (0.077GL).

3. Environmental water

The ACT does not singly account for environmental water or has an environmental water holder. However, under the ACT's environmental water flow guidelines environmental water is provided before allocations are provided for consumptive use. In general terms, the environmental water flow guidelines provides for the basis of water management in the ACT. In the ACT environmental flows are provided in one of two ways: either by releases or spills from dams, or by putting restrictions on the volume of water that can be abstracted from a water management area. In the ACT the volume of water available for abstraction within each water management area is limited to the volume remaining after environmental flow volumes have been provided. Abstraction rules are also applied to ensure that licensed abstractors do not impact on waterways during critical flow events such as very low flows, flooding flows or cause excessive drawdown levels. These Guidelines include environmental flows for the Molonglo River downstream of Scrivener Dam and drawdown limits for Lake Burley Griffin. Lake Burley Griffin remains under the control of the Commonwealth and is managed by the National Capital Authority. The Guidelines in general are reviewed every five years. The water utility, ACTEW, is required to report to the EPA each month on releases from its water supply dams to show it has complied with the Environmental Flow Guideline releases. ACTEW complied in this accounting period.

4. Progress of water reform

The ACT is preparing its water resource plan as required under the Basin Plan. It is most unlikely that there will be the need for the ACT to enact any legislative changes to its water resources management framework.

There were no changes required at this stage to ensure that the ACT's water trading rules are compliant under the Basin Plan requirements.