

# Australian Capital Territory Water Use Report for 2012-13

## The Cap Assessment Tools

An ACT Cap was agreed by the Ministerial Council at meeting 45 - 23 May 2008. The Ministerial Council:

**1.1** defined the Cap for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) as:

Until the Basin Plan in the Water Act 2007 (Cwlth) comes into effect, the ACT Cap is:

- (i) 40 GL (42 GL minus 2 GL saving allocated to The Living Murray) climate-adjusted as recommended by the IAG; plus
- (ii) ACT Cap is reviewed and increased by 0.75 of the current per capita consumption of water for population growth of Canberra and Queanbeyan consumption;

with the conditions that:

- no urban water will be traded out other than that purchased from interstate;
- any growth in demand for water for industry and future Commonwealth use will be provided by trade; and
- existing Cap credits (based on the assumption that 40 GL Cap applied since 1 July 1997) are recognised.

**1.2** noted that the Commonwealth and the ACT need to settle the management arrangement for the water controlled and used by the Commonwealth and its agencies.

**1.3** noted the concerns raised by South Australia regarding the effect of the growth factor on the SA Cap.

## Comparison of Annual Diversions with the Annual Cap Targets

The ACT diversions and returns (ML) are set out in the table below

<b>Long-term Cap</b>		40,000
	ACTEW modelled Cap target	44,946
<b>Diversions</b>	ACTEW diversion	47,839
	Private diversions	1,478
	NCA diversion	965
	<b>Total Diversion</b>	<b>50,282</b>
<b>Returns</b>	LMWQCC return	28,988
	QSTP return	2,638
	<b>Total returns</b>	<b>31,626</b>
<b>Net Diversion</b>	(Diversions – Returns)	18,656
<b>Net Trade</b>		0
<b>Cap Credits</b>	(Cap – Net Diversion)	21,344

The ACT has a total net diversion of 18.6 GL consumed during the 2012-13 period. Water use has increased as compared to last year which coincides with the reduced rainfall for the 2012-13 period. The volume of rain recorded at Canberra Airport for 2012-13 was 400mls, a noticeable reduction from the 704ml received in the previous year and well below the long term average of 620mls.

The calculation of dam storage levels have changed following the completion of the Enlarged Cotter Dam. Total dam capacity is now 277.8GL, an increase of 35%. The Enlarged Cotter Dam is currently 38.35 % full. For consistency ACTEW's calculation method is now aligned to that used by the Bureau of Meteorology ie. counting that volume above the minimum intake level.

### Administration of the Cap

#### Measures taken during the year

There was no new industrial use or new Commonwealth water requirements, therefore, no calls for additional water under the Australian Capital Territory Cap provisions.

There was no external water trading by the Australian Capital Territory and no internal entitlement trading for surface water occurred. There were six trades of groundwater totalling in volume 25.5 megalitres.

Water restrictions were not imposed during 2012-13 and therefore the ACT's permanent water conservation measures continue to apply.

#### Groundwater usage

The volume of groundwater use in 2012-13 was 0.58GL which is below the volume of water able to be taken under the total licences available.

## **Cap Model Development**

The ACT Water has developed a cap model to implement the decision on an ACT Cap by the Ministerial Council. The ACT proposes to use the potable demand modelling of ACT and Queanbeyan water use as developed by ACTEW Water (formerly ACTEW). The model is climate adjusted. The proposed Cap model does not incorporate a population growth component as originally provided in the Cap decision of May 2008. It is understood that the Cap arrangements will be superseded in 2019 by the introduction of the Basin Plan and the application of the proposed sustainable diversion limits.

The ACT Cap model was presented to the Water Audit Panel on 11 September 2011 where it was endorsed and was sent on to the MDBA's Cap auditor.

The Chief Executive of the MDBA, Dr Rhondda Dickson, gave approval to the ACT Cap model on 6 November 2013.

## **Other aspects to note**

As previously pointed out, ACTEW water has embarked on a number of infrastructure and water purchasing projects to ensure future water security for the ACT region. ACTEW reports to the ACT Government on these projects and obtains support for the undertaking. These are:

1. The Enlarged Cotter Dam, capacity of 78 GL, was completed in October 2013.
2. The Murrumbidgee to Googong pump/pipeline project via Burra Creek was completed in August 2012.
3. ACTEW Water has purchased 4.145 gegalitres (GL) of high security water entitlements and 12.523 GL of general security entitlements and as part of the Tantangara Dam is currently finalising contractual arrangements with Snowy Hydro Limited for water management and availability.

Note: The ACT Government still does not have the legislative power to control and manage Commonwealth water resources within the ACT, in particular Lake Burley Griffin. It is understood that this is still a matter for the Commonwealth Parliament but it is expected to be passed in December 2013.