
October 2015
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Minister’s Foreword

I am pleased to announce the Statement of Proposals for amendments to the Water Resource (Moreton) Plan 2007 and Moreton Resource Operations Plan. These amendments seek to improve the water allocation and management arrangements in the Central Lockyer Valley Water Supply Scheme.

The provisions in the water resource plan will be examined to identify areas where the water management framework can be improved. The amendment will result in the implementation of stronger, more efficient and more flexible water management arrangements that better meet the community’s needs and support sustainable agricultural development in the Central Lockyer Valley.

Decisions about the allocation and management of water will be supported by the best available science. Information is already being reviewed to ensure that any management proposals consider both the millennium drought and the more recent flood events.

The proposed amendment to the plans formally commences with the release of this Statement of Proposals, which provides a solid basis for further engagement with the community on water management issues in the Central Lockyer Valley, ensuring that community views are considered early in the process.

Preliminary consultation with key irrigator and stakeholder groups has already started and will continue throughout the process to ensure that all concerns and suggestions are considered. I encourage anyone with an interest in the proposed amendments to the Water Resource (Moreton) Plan 2007 and Moreton Resource Operations Plan to present your views on the issues raised in this Statement of Proposals.

The Hon. Dr Anthony Lynham
Minister for Natural Resources and Mines
1 Introduction

Together, the Water Resource (Moreton) Plan 2007 (Moreton WRP) and Moreton Resource Operations Plan (Moreton ROP) provide the strategic and operational framework for sustainable management of water resources in the Moreton plan area. Water resources in the Moreton plan area comprise three large water storages, (the Somerset, Wivenhoe and North Pine Dams) and six water supply schemes that supply water for irrigation and urban purposes. Unsupplemented water and overland flow are also managed under the Moreton WRP, while groundwater is also extensively managed within the plan area through the regulation of groundwater take in three defined groundwater management areas.

From time to time, amendments may be made to water resource plans and resource operations plans to address water allocation and management issues that may arise in a plan area. The last amendment to the Moreton ROP was made in 2014 to include management arrangements for the Warrill Valley and Lower Lockyer water supply schemes in the plan. These schemes were previously managed under interim arrangements. The amendment converted interim water allocations within the two schemes to tradeable water allocations, providing flexibility and water supply security to water users in these valleys.

This leaves the Central Lockyer Valley Water Supply Scheme (Central Lockyer Valley WSS) as the only remaining water supply scheme in the Moreton plan area still managed under interim arrangements.

Prior to the commencement of the Moreton WRP in 2007, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (the department) had been working with water users in the Central Lockyer Valley as part of a project to establish volumetric allocations for all surface water and groundwater entitlements in the Central Lockyer area. A process for determining draft allocations was developed in consultation with the Central Lockyer Community Reference Group; however, the proposed rules were not implemented at that time.

Through the release of this Statement of Proposals, the Minister has formally commenced the process for amending the Moreton WRP and ROP. Supported by surface water and groundwater modelling and additional information gathered about the millennium drought and more recent flood events, the proposed amendments will build on the existing body of work produced in consultation with the Central Lockyer Community Reference Group, focusing on the allocation and management of supplemented water supplies associated with the operation of the Central Lockyer Valley WSS. The introduction of defined volumetric allocations will address Queensland Competition Authority recommendations for the introduction of an irrigation price path for the Central Lockyer Valley WSS as well as provide supplemented water users with more secure, certain and flexible entitlements.

2 Statement of Proposals

A Statement of Proposals is a requirement under section 39 of the Water Act 2000 (the Water Act) in those instances where the Minister has decided there is a need for formal consultation during the development of a draft amendment to a water resource plan. This consultation is additional to the formal consultation process required following the release of a draft amendment to a water resource plan.

The Minister has decided that further information about community views and expectations in relation to water allocation and management issues associated with the Central Lockyer Valley WSS should inform the development of draft amendments to the Moreton WRP and Moreton ROP.

The Statement of Proposals outlines the scope of proposed amendments and identifies the key issues in relation to the matters being considered for amendment. The Statement of Proposals also provides an opportunity for the community to provide input into the proposed amendments. Details on how to make a submission are provided in section 9 of this document.
3 The plan area to which proposed amendments apply

The proposed amendments apply to the following water in the Moreton WRP area:

- water supplied under water supply agreements from Morton Vale Pipeline
- supplemented surface water managed under the Central Lockyer Valley WSS
- groundwater taken from those areas within the Lockyer Valley groundwater management area, implementation area 1 recognised as benefitting from water supplied by the Central Lockyer Valley WSS (supplemented groundwater) (Figure 1).

3.1 Central Lockyer Valley Water Supply Scheme

Established in the 1980s, the Central Lockyer Valley WSS comprises two off-stream storages (Lake Clarendon and Bill Gunn Dam) and nine recharge weirs that together function as infrastructure to support irrigation in the Central Lockyer Valley near Gatton in South East Queensland. The two storages are filled by diverting water from nearby creeks during significant flow events. The scheme supplies water for the Morton Vale Pipeline, recharges groundwater areas adjacent to Lockyer and Laidley creeks, and supplies downstream surface water entitlements. Seqwater own and operate the scheme and manage the infrastructure according to the rules and requirements of an Interim Resource Operations Licence (IROL).

The water supply scheme supplies approximately 315 water entitlements, comprising 115 interim water allocations to take surface water, 150 licences to take groundwater, and 50 land owners on the Morton Vale pipeline (supplied under water supply agreements with Seqwater). These entitlements and water supply agreements are recognised as supplemented because they receive benefit from the operation of the water supply scheme. These supplemented entitlement holders are customers of Seqwater and are charged annually for their water usage.

Groundwater entitlement holders in Implementation Area 1 outside the supplemented area are regarded as unsupplemented and are managed by the department.
*It should be noted that the proposed plan amendment will only apply to those supplemented surface water entitlements, supplemented groundwater entitlements and water supply agreements managed as part of the Central Lockyer Valley WSS.
4 Amendments to the Moreton WRP and Moreton ROP

Water entitlements in the Central Lockyer Valley WSS are currently specified in one of three ways:

- surface water interim water allocations that describe an area that can be irrigated (hectares)*
- groundwater licences that state land parcels that may be irrigated (expressed as Lot on Plan)
- an entitlement volume for those supplied by the Morton Vale Pipeline.

One of the broad aims of the proposed amendments to the Moreton WRP is to explore options for converting all water entitlements supplemented by the operation of the Central Lockyer Valley WSS to tradeable, volumetric water allocations. This will create consistent water entitlement specifications across the scheme as well as providing water users with the option for water trading.

The other aim of the proposed WRP amendments is to define water allocation security objectives for both groundwater and surface water in the Central Lockyer Valley WSS to ensure allocation holders are protected when changes are considered to the scheme’s management arrangements.

In line with the WRP amendment, it is proposed that the amendments to the ROP will set the volume for each water allocation in the scheme as well as detailing the management rules for water sharing, infrastructure operating and trading water within the Central Lockyer Valley WSS.

Unsupplemented surface water and groundwater entitlements are beyond the scope of this proposed amendment to the Moreton WRP and ROP. However, it should be noted that the boundary between the supplemented and unsupplemented groundwater entitlement areas of Implementation Area 1 will be reviewed as part of this Statement of Proposals (see section 5.2.1 for more information).

Before implementing the proposed amendments, draft amendments to the Moreton WRP and ROP will be prepared for public comment.

4.1 Amendments to the Moreton WRP

Water resource plans provide the management framework for water resources by outlining outcomes, objectives and strategies for achieving a sustainable balance between water for industry, irrigators, town water supply and the environment. The following issues, which fall within the jurisdiction of a water resource plan, are proposed to be addressed under the Moreton WRP amendment.

4.1.1 Providing security for groundwater entitlements

Current provisions

Water Allocation Security Objectives (WASOs) for supplemented water are provided in Schedule 8 Part 1 of the Moreton WRP. For the Central Lockyer Valley WSS, the Moreton WRP states two supplemented WASOs—one for water allocations in the medium priority group in Laidley Creek and another for water allocations in the medium priority group in Lockyer Creek. Further, section 47 of the plan states that water allocations to take supplemented surface water or groundwater identified by an interim resource operations licence belong to the medium priority group.

Issues

WASOs are measures that can be calculated to be used as a strategy to protect an allocation holder’s share of a water resource. Water resource plans state WASOs that must be met when considering changing current management arrangements or water sharing rules. The Water Act requires that a water resource plan includes WASOs where the plan provides a framework for establishing water allocations.

However, the WASOs for Central Lockyer Valley WSS as stated in the Moreton WRP only apply to surface water in either Laidley or Lockyer Creek.

*Currently only Crowley Vale Water Board and Laidley Golf Club hold interim water allocations that state an annual volumetric limit in ML
What will be explored?

It is proposed to revise the WASOs for the Central Lockyer Valley WSS to provide appropriate security objectives for both surface water and groundwater. It is also proposed to review the definition of medium priority groups so that the distinction between surface water and groundwater supplies can be recognised.

4.1.2 Providing for conversion of entitlement

Current provisions

The Moreton WRP provides for determining the nominal volume for converting interim water allocations to water allocations in the Central Lockyer Valley WSS. It also provides for granting interim water allocations to landowners that have a contractual arrangement for water supplied by the Morton Vale Pipeline.

Issues

There are three different groups of authorisations supplied by the Central Lockyer Valley WSS—interim surface water allocations, supplemented groundwater licences and contracts on the Morton Vale Pipeline. Each of these groups have different entitlement specifications—interim surface water allocations state an area that can be irrigated each year, groundwater licences simply state the land parcels that may be irrigated and Morton Vale contracts state an annual volume.

While the Moreton WRP provides for converting surface water entitlements to water allocations, it does not currently provide for converting supplemented groundwater licences to water allocations or for converting Morton Vale Pipeline contracts directly to water allocations.

What will be explored?

It is proposed to amend the Moreton WRP to provide the statutory framework for converting all supplemented water entitlements and contractual arrangements to water allocations. It is proposed that the process and details for conversion which would be part of the amendment to the Moreton ROP would be based on previous assessments prepared in conjunction with water users and the Central Lockyer Community Reference Group, alongside additional information gathered about the millennium drought and recent flood events.

4.2 Amendments to the Moreton ROP

Strategies contained within the Moreton WRP are implemented through a resource operations plan. The following issues which fall within the jurisdiction of a resource operations plan are proposed to be addressed under the Moreton ROP amendment.

4.2.1 Boundaries of the supplemented groundwater area

Current provisions

Implementation Area 1 is one of four implementation areas within the Lockyer Valley groundwater management area, shown in Schedule 3 of the Moreton WRP. Implementation Area 1 consists of the alluvial aquifers—defined as ‘groundwater unit 1’ in the Moreton WRP.

The Moreton WRP states that groundwater unit 1 within Implementation Area 1 consists of the supplemented groundwater area and the unsupplemented groundwater area. In particular, the supplemented groundwater area is defined as the part of Implementation Area 1 that contains groundwater that is recharged by water supplied by the authority to operate the Central Lockyer Valley WSS. The Moreton WRP also provides that the resource operations plan must state the boundaries of the supplemented groundwater area.

Issues

The recognition that some areas in groundwater unit 1 benefit more than others from recharge of groundwater as a result of releases from the Central Lockyer Valley WSS was based on an evaluation...
of groundwater levels from monitoring bores and release data from the storages. This evaluation was first undertaken in 1991 to determine benefits from Bill Gunn Dam and then again in 1996–97 to identify an extended benefited area after releases began from Lake Clarendon.

The existing benefited groundwater area (supplemented groundwater area) is identified in the Central Lockyer IROL as Schedule 2.8.

As required under the Moreton WRP, the amended Moreton ROP will need to state the boundaries of the supplemented groundwater area. While it is generally considered that the existing boundary is a good representation of the supplemented groundwater area, it is appropriate to review this boundary as part of this amendment to the Moreton plans.

**What will be explored?**

It is proposed to review data from monitoring bores to evaluate those areas in groundwater unit 1 that receive benefit from scheme releases. This will ensure that the determination of the boundary is based on best available data and any recent improvements in understanding of the behaviour of the groundwater system. It is not expected that there will be significant changes in the current boundary, however in those areas where the boundary is under review, representatives of the department will be in contact with land owners of the properties under review to discuss the process.

### 4.2.2 Infrastructure operating and water sharing rules

**Current provisions**

Currently water sharing and infrastructure operating rules are stated in the IROL for the Central Lockyer Valley WSS. These rules outline the process for determining announced allocations for customers on the Morton Vale pipeline and for the Crowley Vale Water Board. The IROL also provides the rules for diverting water into Lake Clarendon and Lake Dyer as well as for releasing water for downstream surface water entitlements and to maintain water levels in downstream recharge weirs.

**Issues**

The IROL does not provide for an equitable share of the water resource as the water sharing rules do not provide for the determination of announced allocations for each group of entitlement holders. Announced allocations currently only apply to Morton Vale Pipeline, Crowley Vale Water Board and Laidley Golf Club. Announced allocations are not currently provided for any other surface water entitlements within the Central Lockyer Valley WSS.

For groundwater entitlements, while there are currently no announced allocation rules, the IROL states that an announced allocation procedure for groundwater will be prepared following conversion of existing groundwater entitlements to volumetric allocations and outlines the information that will be considered as part of this procedure.

In addition, the release rules as currently stated in the IROL may need clarification to improve the way water is shared between the different water user groups.

**What will be explored?**

Current IROL arrangements will be reviewed with the intention of establishing a new set of announced allocation procedures for all surface water and groundwater entitlements supplied by the scheme. The development of the rules will consider both the volume of water throughout the scheme along with rules for the operation of scheme infrastructure to store and release water. The resulting announced allocation procedure will provide important information about the water available for each water allocation group from year to year.

It is also proposed to refine current infrastructure operating rules to ensure the rules are more transparent and better reflect day-to-day operating practices to enable more efficient management of the scheme.
4.2.3 Water trading rules

Current provisions

Trading is permitted in the scheme but is limited to seasonal water assignments (also referred to as temporary trades). Temporary trading is further limited to holders of interim water allocations with a stated volume on their entitlement—this includes the Laidley Golf Club, Crowley Vale Water Board, and Morton Vale Pipeline irrigators. Requests for temporary trades in the Morton Vale Pipeline are also subject to engineering assessment.

Issues

Seasonal water assignments, or temporary trades, are the only form of water entitlement transfer allowed under the IROL and are currently limited to those entitlements that state a volumetric limit. There are currently no opportunities for permanent water entitlement transfers as all existing entitlements are still attached to the land. This means that permanent change of entitlement ownership can only occur as part of the process of land disposal and/or acquisition. This limits the opportunity to buy, sell or lease water entitlements.

What will be explored?

Proposed amendments to the Moreton WRP would provide for the conversion of the following to tradeable water allocations:

- surface water interim water allocations
- groundwater licences
- water supplied under Morton Vale Pipeline contract arrangements.

This would require new provisions in the Moreton ROP to provide for seasonal and permanent trading of water allocations for each of these groups of entitlements holders, supporting more flexible access to water.

5 Science

In a highly connected surface water-groundwater system like the Central Lockyer Valley WSS, key tools to support decisions about allocating and managing water include the development of surface water and groundwater hydrological models.

The surface water model developed for the Moreton WRP is based on recorded stream flows, rainfall records, metered water use, entitlement data and typical cropping patterns for the period 1889–2000. This model was used to define water allocation security and environmental flow objectives as stated in the Moreton WRP. To continue to protect existing access to water and support natural ecosystems dependent on water, it is a requirement of the plan that these objectives continue to be met when considering proposed management arrangements in the Central Lockyer Valley.

The Central Lockyer groundwater model was finalised in 2000 and related to the period 1987–97. At the time, this period was considered representative of the long-term climatic pattern. The model was informed by extensive information about groundwater levels, metered water use and bore stratigraphy. Outputs of the model were important inputs into the surface water model which help ensure that the surface water model suitably represents connected surface water-groundwater processes in the Central Lockyer Valley.

However, in recent years the subcatchments of the Moreton WRP area have experienced an extended period of drought followed by several years of flood and above-average stream flows. In collaboration with the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, both the surface water and groundwater models are currently being updated so that the most recent hydrological events are represented. Throughout the development of water allocation volumes, trading rules, water sharing rules and infrastructure operating rules, the extended models will be...
tested against the plan outcomes to ensure that both the surface water and groundwater models continue to represent hydrological processes in the plan area.

6 Consultation

Release of this Statement of Proposals marks the start of the formal submission period, and provides an opportunity for all interested stakeholders to provide a submission on the proposed amendments.

The department will advertise the availability of the Statement of Proposals in the following ways:

- public notices in the Queensland Country Life and the Gatton, Lockyer and Brisbane Valley Star newspapers
- media statement
- letters to water entitlement holders, industry and environmental representative groups, and local governments
- the department’s website www.dnrm.qld.gov.au.

The department will also conduct a number of consultation activities in support of the release of the Statement of Proposals and to help with preparing submissions. Firstly, an information session will be held in the plan area to provide an opportunity to further discuss the issues contained in the Statement of Proposals. This will take place prior to the close of the submission period as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 November 2015</td>
<td>10.00am to 12.00pm</td>
<td>Gatton Shire Hall, 52 North Street, Gatton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please register your interest in attending by phoning the department’s Woolloongabba office on 1800 308 252.

Secondly, following the formal submission process, the department will hold targeted workshops with smaller groups of water users. Details of how water users can be involved in this consultation will be provided during the information session, or alternatively contact the department’s Woolloongabba office on 1800 308 252 to register your interest.

Thirdly, as part of the process to review the boundary between supplemented and unsupplemented groundwater areas, the department will personally contact those water users whose entitlement is attached to a land parcel to which the proposed boundary review applies, to discuss the review process and its implications.

Preliminary peak body consultation has also been undertaken with the Water Engagement Forum which represents statewide interests in water policy issues. Indigenous groups with interests in the Moreton WRP area have also been contacted about the proposed amendments to the Moreton WRP and ROP.

Advice on how to provide a submission on the Statement of Proposals can be found in section 9.

7 Next steps

Following the close of the submission period, submissions will be collated and analysed and used to guide the development of draft amendments to the Moreton WRP and ROP. The department will then prepare the draft plan for release, at which time all water users and other interested parties will have another opportunity to make formal submissions on the proposed plan changes. Water users are encouraged to check the department’s website www.dnrm.qld.gov.au to keep up to date with these planning activities.
8 Further information

Your local DNRM officers are also available to talk to you about what these changes may mean for you. Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Davin Hansen, Senior Project Officer, Water Planning Service Delivery, South Region on 1800 308 252. Alternatively, email the Moreton team at wrpMoreton@dnrm.qld.gov.au.

9 How to make a submission

Anyone can make a submission on the Statement of Proposals. Submissions may be made in writing and posted, emailed or faxed to the department, or made online by 5pm, 11 December 2015.

To make a written submission, please use the submission form included in this document (refer Appendix A) and complete the checklist on the form to ensure the submission is properly made. Only properly made submissions will be considered in preparing draft amendments to the Moreton WRP and ROP.

Mail

Postal address:
Chief Executive
Attn: Moreton WRP Coordinator
Water Planning
Department of Natural Resources and Mines
GPO Box 2771
Brisbane QLD 4001

Street address:
Chief Executive
Attn: Moreton WRP Coordinator
Water Planning
Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Level 3 Landcentre
Cnr Main Street and Vulture Streets
Woolloongabba QLD 4102

Facsimile 07 3224 2933

Email wrpMoreton@dnrm.qld.gov.au

Online www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

Enquiries

Phone the Department of Natural Resources and Mines on 1800 308 252.

All submissions will be treated with sensitivity and wherever possible in confidence. However, submissions may be viewed by other parties under the provisions of the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Information Privacy Act 2009.
Appendix A: Submission form

(Please use a ballpoint pen to complete this submission).

Title and surname

First name(s)

Address

Postal address (if different)

Organisation

Position

Telephone       Mobile

Facsimile       Email

Signature(s)    Date

Which interest group(s) do you primarily represent (e.g. irrigator, water harvester, groundwater user)?

...............................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................................

In which part of Implementation Area 1 are you located (you may tick more than one box)?

☐ Lockyer Creek       ☐ Laidley Creek
☐ Morton Vale Pipeline
☐ Other (please specify)
What type of water entitlement do you have?

- [ ] Supplemented surface water
- [ ] Supplemented groundwater
- [ ] Unsupplemented surface water
- [ ] Unsupplemented groundwater
- [ ] Water supply agreement
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Workshops

Following the submission process, the department will be holding a number of workshops to discuss the proposed allocation process for sharing water within the Central Lockyer Valley WSS.

If you would like to participate in any of these workshops, please provide contact details where the department can reach you to let you know about these workshops.

Telephone: .................................................................

Mobile: ...........................................................................

Email: ...........................................................................

Facsimile: ...........................................................................

Other: ............................................................................
What issues in the Statement of Proposals for the amendment of the Moreton WRP and ROP do you support? What issues concern you? How do you think the Moreton WRP and/or ROP can be improved to address these or other issues (within the scope of the proposed WRP and ROP amendments)?

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☐ Please tick this box and attach a detailed submission if more space is required.

Checklist

Please follow these five steps to ensure the submission is completed correctly:

☐ Details of each person making the submission have been specified.
☐ Each person or authorised representative making the submission has signed the submission form.
☐ The grounds for making the submission, and the facts and circumstances relied on in support of the submission have been stated.
☐ If additional space is required, the box at the end of the submission form has been ticked and the detailed submission is attached.
☐ Submission made by the closing date 5pm, 11 December 2015