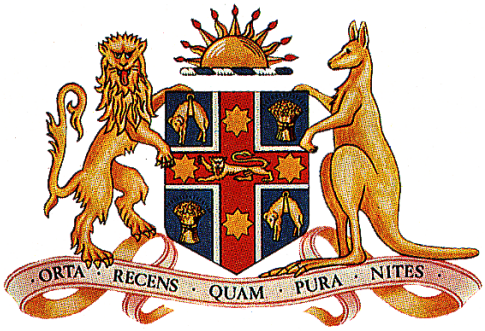

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Temporary Water Restriction (various water sources in the Northern Murray-Darling Basin) Order 2026

under the

Water Management Act 2000

I, the Minister for Water, in pursuance of section 324(1) of the *Water Management Act 2000* and being satisfied that it is necessary in the public interest to do so, make the following Order.

Dated 15 April 2026

ROSE JACKSON, MLC

Minister for Water

Explanatory note

The purpose of this Order is to impose temporary water restrictions on the take of water in the Northern Murray-Darling Basin when the total volume of 'active' water in the upper Menindee Lakes falls below 250 GL. This Order applies to the take of water under specified access licences and does not apply to the take of water pursuant to basic landholder rights, for other specified purposes, by means of specified works, or where specified flow thresholds are met.

This Order is made under section 324(1) of the *Water Management Act 2000* to cope with a water shortage in the Lower Murray-Darling Unregulated River Water Source and to improve connectivity between the Northern and Southern Murray-Darling Basin for environmental purposes.

Temporary Water Restriction (various water sources in the Northern Murray-Darling Basin) Order 2026

under the

Water Management Act 2000

1 Name of Order

This Order is the *Temporary Water Restriction (various water sources in the Northern Murray-Darling Basin) Order 2026*.

2 Commencement

This Order commences on the day on which it is published in the NSW Government Gazette.

3 Duration

This Order will remain in force until 30 September 2026, unless amended or repealed by a further Order.

4 Temporary water restrictions

This Order is a direction to restrict the take of water in accordance with the restrictions specified in Schedule 1.

5 Interpretation

(1) In this Order—

(a) ***Baradine Etoo Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources 2016*.

(b) ***Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source*** means the water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2012*.

(c) ***Carole Creek Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(d) ***Gingham Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(e) ***Gingham Watercourse Water Source*** means the water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Unregulated River Water Sources 2012*.

(f) ***Gwydir Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(g) ***Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(h) ***Lower Macquarie River Water Source*** means the water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Macquarie Bogan Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2012*.

(i) ***Lower Marthaguy Creek Management Zone in the Marthaguy Creek Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Macquarie Bogan Unregulated Rivers Water Sources 2012*.

(j) ***Lower Namoi Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources 2016*.

(k) ***Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source*** means the water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources 2016*.

(l) ***Lower Namoi Valley Floodplain*** means the land declared to be a floodplain at item 4 and shown on the map at item 23 of Schedule 2 of the *Water Management (General) Regulation 2025*.

(m) ***Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source*** means the water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source 2016*.

(n) ***Mallowa Creek Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(o) ***Mallowa Creek Management Zone in the Mehi River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Unregulated River Water Sources 2012*.

(p) ***Mehi River Tributaries management zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(q) ***Moree Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(r) ***NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water Source*** means the water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water Source 2021*.

(s) ***Other (Lower Namoi) Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources 2016*.

(t) ***Pian Creek Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources 2016*.

(u) ***Thalabah Creek Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source*** means the management zone and water source as described in the *Water Sharing Plan for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source 2016*.

(v) ***Upper Menindee Lakes*** means Lakes Tandure, Wetherell, Pamamaroo and Copi Hollow.

(2) Unless otherwise defined, words and expressions that are defined in the *Water Management Act 2000* or in regulations made under that Act have the same meaning in this Order.

Schedule 1 Specified restrictions

(1) If the total volume of water capable of being released from the Upper Menindee Lakes is less than 250 GL—

(a) The holder of an access licence of a category set out in Column 2 of Table A with a share component specifying the water source, or with an extraction component specifying the management zone, set out in Column 1 of the corresponding row of Table A is prohibited from taking water under the access licence.

Table A

Column 1— Water source	**Column 2— Categories of access licence**
Regulated river water sources	
Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	• floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licences • supplementary water access licences
Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source	• supplementary water access licences
NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water Source	• floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licences • supplementary water access licences
Unregulated River Water Sources	
Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source	• unregulated river (B Class) access licences • unregulated river (C class) access licences
Gingham Watercourse Water Source	• floodplain harvesting (unregulated river) access licences • unregulated river access licences
Lower Macquarie River Water Source	• unregulated river access licences • unregulated river (special additional high flow) access licences
Lower Marthaguy Creek Management Zone in the Marthaguy Creek Water Source	• unregulated river access licences • unregulated river (special additional high flow) access licences
Mallowa Creek Management Zone in the Mehi River Water Source	• unregulated river access licences

(b) The holder of the following categories of access licence, with a share component specifying the Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source, is prohibited from taking water under the access licence by means of a water supply work located downstream of Burrendong Dam water storage—

(i) a floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licence, or

(ii) a supplementary water access licence.

Note—
The above prohibitions do not apply to the taking of water pursuant to basic landholder rights, which does not require an access licence.

(c) The taking of overland flow water within the Lower Namoi Valley Floodplain is prohibited, unless—

(i) pursuant to basic landholder rights, or

(ii) under an access licence with an extraction component specifying one of the following management zones and flows in the Namoi River are at least 4,500 ML/day at the Bugilbone gauge (419 021)—

(A) Baradine Etoo Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source,

(B) Lower Namoi Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source,

(C) Other (Lower Namoi) Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source,

(D) Pian Creek Management Zone in the Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source.

(2) Subsection (1)(a)–(c) does not apply to take of water—

(a) for the purposes of testing metering equipment,

(b) by means of a water storage, such as a farm dam,

(c) by means of a tailwater drain, or

(d) by means of a water supply work, such as an irrigation channel, that cannot be reasonably prevented from taking water due to the nature of the work, but only if the water is not moved into a water storage and the water substantially returns to the water source.

(3) Subsection (1)(a) and (b) do not apply to take of water under a floodplain harvesting (regulated river) access licence or a floodplain harvesting (unregulated river) access licence with a share component specifying one of the water sources, or with an extraction component specifying one of the management zones, set out in Column 1 of Table B if flows in the water source or management zone meet or exceed the volume specified in Column 2 of the corresponding row of Table B—

Table B

Column 1— Water source or management zone	Column 2— Flow threshold
NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water Source	3,000 ML/day in the Barwon River at the Mungindi gauge (416 001)
Carole Creek Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	550 ML/day in Gil Gil Creek at Galloway gauge (416 052)
Gingham Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	250 ML/day in Gingham Channel at Teralba gauge (418 074)
Moree Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	250 ML/day in the Gwydir River (South Arm) at d/s Tyreel Offtake Regulator (418 063)
Gwydir Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	250 ML/day in the Gwydir River (South Arm) at d/s Tyreel Offtake Regulator (418 063)
Mallowa Creek Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	1,200 ML/day in the Mehi River at Near Collarenebri gauge (418 055)
Mehi River Tributaries Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	1,200 ML/day in the Mehi River at Near Collarenebri gauge (418 055)
Thalabah Creek Management Zone in the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	300 ML/day in the Thalaba Creek Belarre gauge (418 091)
Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source	Combined flow of 3,400 ML/day in the Marebone Break at the downstream regulator gauge (421 088) and in the Macquarie River at the downstream Marebone Weir gauge (421 090)

(4) Subsection (1)(a) and (b) do not apply to take of water under an access licence of a category set out in Column 1 of Table C if flows meet or exceed the volume specified in Column 2 of the corresponding row of Table C—

Table C

Column 1— Categories of access licence	Column 2— Flow threshold
floodplain harvesting (unregulated river) access licences	(1) flows in the Darling River at Bourke Town gauge [425003]— (a) are at least 1,550 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or (b) have reached 21,700 ML over a consecutive 14-day period, **or**
supplementary water access licences	
unregulated river access licences	
unregulated river (B Class) access licences	
unregulated river (C Class) accesss	(2) flows in the Darling River at Wilcannia Main Channel gauge [425008] are— (a) at least 1,400 ML/day for 14 consecutive days, or

	(b) have reached 19,600 ML over a consecutive 14-day period.

(5) Subsection (1)(b)(ii) does not apply to take of water under a supplementary access licence if flows in the Macquarie River at Warren Town gauge [421014] are at least 30 GL in total over a consecutive 14-day period.