

MEDIA RELEASE

Phil Costa
Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development



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NEW RULES FOR INLAND GROUNDWATER TRANSFERS

Water users will now be able to trade their groundwater allocations under new rules introduced today to support rural communities and businesses, NSW Water Minister, Phil Costa announced today.

Minister Costa new rules for the transfer of groundwater entitlements and allocations for inland NSW water license holders are now in place to give drought stricken irrigators more flexibility.

“Water is the lifeblood of rural and regional NSW – vital to the security of communities and businesses,” Mr Costa said.

“The new rules apply to inland groundwater users who are not currently operating under a water sharing plan.

“The changes standardise the transfer rules in systems where trading is already in place and gives the licence holders in the remaining systems the ability to trade, which will encourage a greater return on this limited and valuable resource for water uses.

“While these changes will allow more licence holders to transfer, each transfer will be assessed to consider the impacts on existing licensed users, basic landholder rights, and groundwater dependent ecosystems.

“These new rules are further evidence of the NSW Government’s commitment to an open, flexible water market, whilst also considering the needs of other users and the environment.

“Applications to transfer groundwater entitlements under the new rules would be assessed to ensure existing water users and the environment were protected.

“Water sharing plans now cover more than 90% of the water used in NSW. These plans apply to all the major groundwater systems in the inland part of NSW, including the Great Artesian Basin. All the plans allow trading.

“Water sharing plans for the remaining systems are now in the process of being completed. In the meantime, the trading rules for these systems have been reviewed.

“These new transfer rules complement the December 2008 orders which embargoed new applications for groundwater licences in inland groundwater sources not covered by water sharing plans.”

Information regarding groundwater transfers in inland NSW outside water sharing plan areas is available on the NSW Office of Water’s website: www.dwe.nsw.gov.au.

Media contact: Claire March 0403 937 849