



# Murrumbidgee to Googong Annual Performance Report 2014

***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation  
Act 1999***

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## Certificate of approval for issue of documents

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## 1. Background

In October 2007 the ACT Government, in response to recommendations from ACTEW aimed at securing the Territory and region's future water supply, announced a suite of new water infrastructure projects. The Murrumbidgee to Googong Water Transfer (M2G) is one of those projects.

The M2G involves pumping water from the Murrumbidgee River within the ACT and transferring it via a 12km pipeline to Burra Creek (in NSW), from where it flows approximately 13km to the Googong Reservoir. Construction of the pipeline started in January 2011, and the M2G became operational in September 2012. At the Federal level, the M2G was approved under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC 2009/5124). This report responds to the Condition of Approval No.6).

## 2. M2G Status

Since the M2G was handed over from construction in September 2012, regular maintenance runs (every 2-3 months) have been undertaken to ensure pumps and other equipment are maintained, and to avoid water remaining in the pipe for long periods of time. No operational runs (with the aim of transferring bulk water to Googong Reservoir) have taken place so far.

In the short-medium term, the scheme is unlikely to be run on a bulk transfer basis, based on a number of factors including overall water storage levels across the systems, flow in the Murrumbidgee River and climate and rainfall conditions.

## 3. Aim of Report

The Approval for the M2G from the Commonwealth Department of the Environment (DotE), formerly the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPAC), is dated 29 October 2010, and contains 11 conditions of approval.

One of the conditions of approval is the requirement for ACTEW to provide DotE with an Annual Performance Report on the *implementation of the conditions of approval and any approved plans required under these conditions*. This M2G Performance Report details the performance of M2G from September 2013 – August 2014.

## 4. Implementation of Commonwealth Conditions of Approval

During the reporting period ACTEW Water undertook an operational plan consolidation process, which resulted in minor changes (including name changes) to the operational plans (some of which are relevant to the Commonwealth approval conditions). The consolidation process was approved by the Department of the Environment on 4 August 2014.

Table 1 below tracks how the plans in the original Commonwealth approval conditions changed in the consolidation process. Note that the consolidation process included the addition of a management plan (*Operational Environmental Management Plan*).

Original Operational Management Plans	New Approved Operational Management Plans
Extraction & Gauging Plan	Streamflow & Water Quality Management Plan
Sustainable Diversion Limit Plan	
Biodiversity Management & Offset Plan	Biodiversity Management & Offset Plan
Burra Creek Environmental Management Plan	Aquatic Ecology Management Plan
	Operational Environmental Management Plan

The Commonwealth Condition of Approval are summarised and tracked for compliance below in Table 1.

CoA Ref#	Requirement	Compliance Status (condition met ongoing, not yet met)	Comments
1.	Submit an Extraction & Gauging Plan that meets CoA 1a-1d.	Condition met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original Plan approved 22 March 2012</li> </ul>
1.	Implement Extraction & Gauging Plan	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporated into updated plan (Streamflow &amp; Water Quality Management Plan) approved on 4 August 2014</li> <li>Performance reported below at Section 5</li> </ul>
2.	Submit a Sustainable Diversion Limit Plan	Condition met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original Plan approved 15 April 2011</li> </ul>
2.	Implement Sustainable Diversion Limit Plan	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporated into updated plan (Streamflow &amp; Water Quality Management Plan) approved on 4 August 2014</li> <li>Performance reported below at Section 5</li> </ul>
3.	Submit a Biodiversity Management & Offset Plan that meets CoA 1a-1l.	Condition met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original Plan approved 15 April 2011</li> </ul>
3.	Implement Biodiversity Management & Offset Plan	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance reported below at Section 6 August 2014</li> </ul>
4.	Submit a Burra Creek Environmental Management Plan that meets CoA 4a-4e.	Condition met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original Plan approved 22 March 2012</li> </ul>
4.	Implement Burra Creek Environmental Management Plan	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporated into updated plan (Aquatic Ecology Management Plan) approved on 4 August 2014</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance reported below at Section 7</li> </ul>
5.	Prepare and implement a Decommissioning & Closure Plan at least one year prior to decommissioning	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decommissioning not anticipated</li> </ul>
6.	Provide Annual Performance Reports and publish on ACTEW website	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2013 Performance Report approved by Cwith on 4 October 2013 and published on website</li> </ul>
7.	Maintain accurate records of activities and make available on request	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate records are kept. No data requests were made during the reporting period</li> </ul>
8.	Variations must be submitted to Minister for approval; and implemented if approved.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variation was sought during the reporting period and approved on 4 August 2014</li> </ul>
9.	Variations sought by the Minister	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No variations were sought by the Minister during the reporting period</li> </ul>
10.	Advise Department of commencement of construction and operation.	Condition met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACTEW advised commencement of construction on 31/1/2011</li> <li>• ACTEW advised commencement of operation on 27/9/12 in a letter dated 4/10/12</li> </ul>
11.	Upon direction of the Minister an independent audit of compliance with the CoA is conducted and reported to the Minister.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACTEW did not receive a direction from the Minister.</li> </ul>

## 5. Streamflow & Water Quality Management Plan

The *Streamflow & Water Quality Management Plan* (SF&WQMP) is the approved plan under which M2G now operates. This plan incorporates the originally approved *Extraction & Gauging Plan* and the *Sustainable Diversion Limit Plan*.

Throughout the reporting period ACTEW complied with all requirements of the *Extraction & Gauging Plan* and the *Sustainable Diversion Limit Plan* and the SF&WQMP.

On the 7 February, ACTEW's Independent Environmental Auditor (approved by NSW Government), conducted an audit on ACTEW's implementation of the *Extraction & Gauging Plan*. The audit included interviews and a desktop-based review of records and plans. No Observations of Concern were identified against this plan. The audit report is available on the ACTEW Water website.

Performance against this plan is also reported at the M2G Environment Reference Group meetings.

## 6. Biodiversity Management & Offset Plan

Throughout the reporting period ACTEW complied with all requirements of the *Biodiversity Management & Offset Plan*.

On the 7 February, ACTEW's Independent Environmental Auditor (approved by NSW Government), conducted an audit on ACTEW's implementation of the *Biodiversity Management & Offset Plan*. The audit included interviews and a desktop-based review of records and plans. No Observations of Concern were identified against this plan. The audit report is available on the ACTEW Water website.

Performance against this plan is also reported at the M2G Environment Reference Group meetings.

ACTEW's Biodiversity Offset spring and autumn reports are available on the ACTEW Water website.



## 7. Aquatic Ecology Management Plan

The *Aquatic Ecology Management Plan* (AEMP) is the approved plan under which M2G now operates. This plan incorporates the originally approved *Burra Creek Environmental Management Plan*.

Throughout the reporting period ACTEW complied with all requirements of the *Burra Creek Environmental Management Plan* and the *Aquatic Ecology Management Plan*.

On the 7 February, ACTEW's Independent Environmental Auditor (approved by NSW Government), conducted an audit on ACTEW's implementation of the *Burra Creek Environmental Management Plan*. The audit included interviews and a desktop-based review of records and plans. No Observations of Concern were identified against this plan. The audit report is available on the ACTEW Water website.

Performance against this plan is also reported at the M2G Environment Reference Group meetings.

ACTEW's Aquatic Ecology Monitoring spring and autumn reports are available on the ACTEW Water website.

## 8. Operational Environment Management Plan

The *Operational Environmental Management Plan* did not form a part of the original approval conditions. However, in the management plan consolidation process and subsequent Commonwealth approval, this plan now forms part of the Commonwealth Conditions of Approval.

The *Operational Environmental Management Plan* was approved by the Commonwealth on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Consequently the reporting period against his plan is quite short.

Throughout the reporting period ACTEW complied with all requirements of the *Operational Environmental Management Plan*. The OEMP was audited by the Independent Auditor on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

The Final Audit report (available on the ACTEW Water website) did note three Observations of Concern:

- The way in which ACTEW Water Environment & Sustainability Section formulates its response to the 4-week Notification could be improved. A more systematic approach, such as a checklist, a prompt-list, or a procedure, could be used to ensure a more thorough consideration of any issues is given.
- The remote Plant Operator is required to undertake pre-start checks. A checklist is used to complete these checks. This checklist does not appear to be a controlled form or have any document controls.
- It is considered that the reliance on the Incident Management System to report out-of-spec readings in Burra Creek is insufficient. A better approach would be for regular communications between Operations and Environmental staff during a water transfer event, such that trends can be analysed and exceedances can be pre-empted. Work Instruction 1011 should include communication protocols to be implemented during a water transfer event.

ACTEW Water will be responding to these Observations Of Concern and corresponding improvements to the management of the Murrumbidgee To Googong Water Transfer will be reported on in the 2015 Performance Report.

## 9. Conclusion

This 2014 Annual Performance Report and the supporting documentation on ACTEW's public website (including the independent auditor reports) demonstrate that all Conditions of Approval (2009/5124) under the EPBC Act 1999 for the Murrumbidgee To Googong Water Transfer have been met.