

## Policy – Managing the SRW Thomson Bulk Entitlement

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**Policy** Available volumes from the Southern Rural Water Thomson Bulk Entitlement are to used to:

- Meet peak customer demand;
- Mitigate customer hardship during drought; and
- Supplement district allocation to maximise production

This policy is to be implemented in accordance with Schedule 1.

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**Effective date and review date** This policy takes effect on 1 June, 2021.

It is due for management review in June 2024 and board review in June 2027.

The policy must be reviewed immediately following any season when water from the drought reserve component of the Thomson entitlement is used.

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**Who is affected** This policy applies to the Macalister Irrigation Area.

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**Rationale** The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate management of the Thomson Entitlement, and that the cycle of review is met as approved by the Board.

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**Contact** For more information on this policy, contact the Manager Water Supply.

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**Related documents** None

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**Communications** This policy will be made available on SRW's website.

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## Managing the SRW Thomson Bulk Entitlement

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**Introduction** SRW currently holds a Bulk Entitlement for the Thomson and Macalister river systems, which includes a share of storage capacity and inflows into the Thomson Reservoir.

The storage capacity available is 45,000ML, with 6% of all inflows attributed to SRW. If expressed as a percentage of total entitlement, the Thomson Entitlement would add around 20% to the entire allocation in the Macalister Irrigation Area (MIA).

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**Purpose** The purpose of the Thomson Entitlement (the entitlement) is to provide a valuable volume of water in years when Lake Glenmaggie does not spill and/or allocations are under 100% (Drought reserve).

It is also used to supplement MIA allocations in normal years (supplementing allocation) and to reduce order lead time in peak demand periods each year.

Peak demand periods are defined as short periods when the capacity of the channel system from Glenmaggie is so constrained that waiting periods in Nambrok Denison and on Thomson River and Rainbow Creek are forecast to be four days or more.

Importantly, a component of the reserve is to assist in safeguarding the MIA against future hardship in seasons of low allocations. Noting that the spring period is critical to the success of pasture production.

We take steps to maximise the volume in the entitlement at all times.

SRW uses the entitlement in the following ways:

1. **Meeting Peak Demand** – SRW uses the water to buffer peak demand periods in Nambrok Denison and on the Thomson River & Rainbow Creek. This water is essential for the productivity of the MIA and included annually in the allocation model. The volume is based on the long term average of previous seasons use.
  2. **Drought reserve – 30,000ML**, only included when the allocation is below 100%, rules detailed below.
  3. **Supplementing allocation** – Is the water remaining above drought reserve (**30,000ML**) and Peak Demand volume that can be used to supplement allocations. This water is used each season and included in the allocation model.
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## Using the entitlement

### 1. Meeting Peak Demand

The long term average requirement to buffer peak demand, currently 3,450 ML, is to be included into the allocation model regardless of volume in the entitlement.

This water is to be used when:

- a. The demand for irrigation in the Thomson old course upstream of the Thomson River Siphon cannot be supplied from river harvest rights and/or waiting periods in this area of the river are deemed unacceptable. (i.e. when waiting periods are forecast beyond four days); and/or
- b. Within the Macalister Irrigation District in the Nambrok/Denison area, if waiting periods are deemed unacceptable (i.e. when waiting periods are forecast beyond 4 days).

### 2. Drought Reserve

- a. The drought reserve will be used to maximise allocations early in the season, and to provide additional allocations for dry years.
- b. The drought reserve, or a proportion of it, will remain in the allocation model until 100% is reached using Lake Glenmaggie and Harvest Rights only. From this point, any allocation of low reliability water will come from inflows into Lake Glenmaggie.
- c. In practice, this means that;
  - i. at the beginning of the season (1 July);
  - ii. at the end of Lake Glenmaggie actually spilling; or
  - iii. the end of potential spilling period (15 December)

the entire entitlement shall be applied to the allocation model. This is likely to mean:

- i. Where the drought reserve volume is less than 20,000ML, the maximum allocation will be 90%;
  - ii. Where the drought reserve volume is greater than 20,000ML, but less than 30,000ML then the maximum allocation will be 95%; and
  - iii. Where the drought reserve volume is greater than 30,000ML, the maximum allocation will be 100%.
- d. Water releases shall be managed to ensure the maximum volume of water is maintained in the entitlement – i.e. river harvest rights and releases from Lake Glenmaggie will be the first sources used to meet demand.

### 3. Supplementing Allocation

This is the water remaining above drought reserve (**30,000ML**) and Peak Demand volume. This water is used each season and included in the allocation model every year. Using this volume helps lessen the occurrence of internal spills in the Thomson Reservoir and adds valuable production to the MIA.

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**Maximising  
the volume  
in the  
drought  
reserve**

When allocation is above 100% without drought reserve included:

- a. Only water from the peak demand volume is to be used, until the drought reserve reaches 30,000ML.
- b. Drought reserve volume to be maintained at approximately 30,000ML on 15 May each year to allow for winter inflows (long-term average inflows of approximately 13,000ML with 85% of inflows received between June and December)
- c. If the entitlement volume is forecast to exceed 45,000ML, then the availability of airspace in the Thomson Reservoir should be investigated