

Tambo River Basin

May 2013

Introduction

Southern Rural Water is the water corporation responsible for administering and enforcing the Tambo River Basin Local Management Plan.

The purpose of the Tambo River Basin Local Management Plan is to:

- document the management objectives for the system
- explain to licence holders (and the broader community) the specific management objectives and arrangements for their water resource and the rules that apply to them as users of that resource
- clarify water sharing arrangements for all users and the environment, including environmental flow requirements
- document any limits, including water use caps, permissible consumptive volumes or extraction limits that apply to the system.

Management objectives

The objective of the Local Management Plan is to ensure the equitable sharing of water between users and the environment and the long-term sustainability of the resource.

Water system covered

The Local Management Plan covers all the unregulated rivers and creeks located within the Tambo River Basin, which includes:

Upper Tambo River

Swifts Creek
Bindi Creek
Straights Creek
Rileys Creek
Connors Creek
Bald Hill & Gap Creeks
Junction Creek

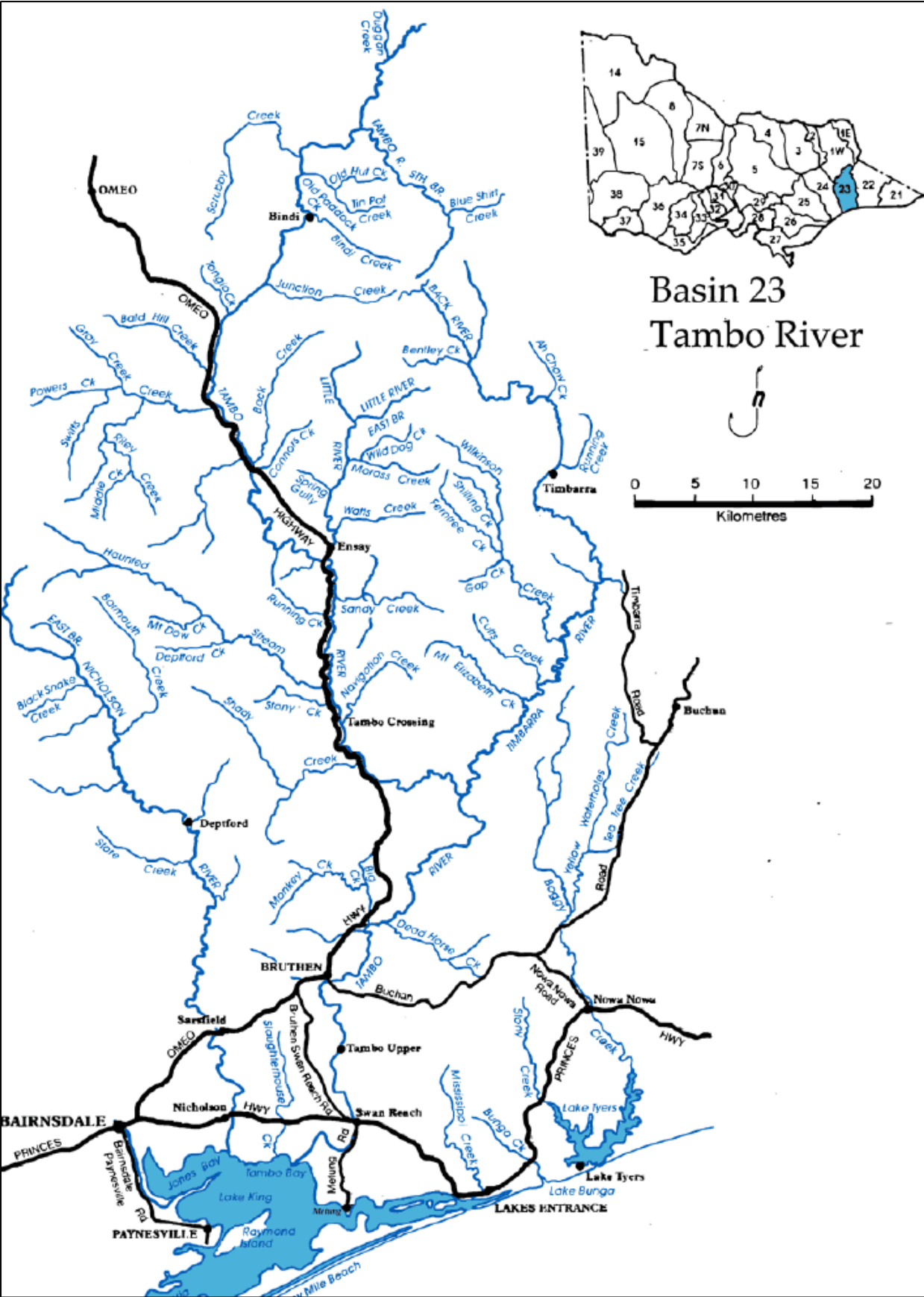
Middle Tambo River

Little River
Reedy Creek

Lower Tambo River

Old Tambo River
Nicholson River
Maringa Creek
Casey Creek
Bunga Creek
Stony Creek
Boggy Creek

The Tambo River Basin is shown in the map below.



Catchment information

The Tambo River Basin includes the Tambo and Nicholson Rivers and has a total area of 425,000 hectares. The long term average annual inflows to the basin are 297,800 megalitres (ML). The Tambo River catchment flows from the Great Dividing Range to The Gippsland Lakes, flowing through small towns along the way including Swifts Creek, Ensay, Bruthen and Swan Reach. Major tributaries in the Tambo catchment include the Little River and Timbarra River.

Mining and forestry has had a significant history within the catchment and continues today particularly in the upper reaches of the Tambo River. Sheep and cattle are the predominant agricultural industry. The Timbarra River forms part of the eastern boundary of the catchment and provides significant flows to the lower Tambo River during the drier periods.

The Nicholson River flows from the forested upland areas to the estuarine reach where it enters the Gippsland Lakes. The entire upper catchment of the Nicholson River is public land managed as State Forest.

There are also several smaller independent streams that flow directly into the Gippsland Lakes including, Slaughterhouse, Maringa, Stony and Boggy Creeks.

Water entitlements and use

Licence allocations in the Tambo River Basin include the Nicholson River catchment and independent systems. There are a high number of inactive licences throughout the Tambo and Nicholson River systems.

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation* - direct	67	3668.4
Irrigation - winterfill	15	167.5
Registration***	52	1247.7
Domestic and Stock	106	247.2
Commercial / Industrial	5	79.1
Dairy	4	8.1
Total	249	5418

* Includes amalgamated Dairy and Domestic & Stock licences

**Includes Dairy, Domestic & Stock, Industrial/Commercial licences

***Includes Industrial/Commercial licences

General rules

Licences in the Tambo River Basin are managed in accordance with the Water Act 1989 and Policies for Managing Take and Use Licences. A copy of these policies can be found at: <http://waterregister.vic.gov.au/Public/TakeAndUseLicences.aspx>

The general rules for licences in the Tambo River Basin are as follows:

New licences

- The Tambo River Basin is fully allocated, however the Sustainable Water Strategy 2011 has identified 1,500 ML for new winter-fill entitlements only. The Nicholson River catchment is not included and is fully capped.

Metering

- Diversions are metered and licence holders must not use more than their licensed volume.
- Meters are installed on all active licences of 10 ML or greater or all new licences regardless of the volume.
- Meters are read at least twice per year or upon request.

Restrictions

- Take and use licences allow for SRW to roster and restrict extraction during periods of low water availability. Restrictions will be applied by SRW as required. Notifications will be provided to licence holders in advance of their implementation.

Transfers

- Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
 - the licence will be transferred to a downstream user, or
 - the licence is issued to the buyer as a winterfill licence
- A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream (all-year licence).

Renewals

- Licences are renewed in accordance with the Water Act 1989 and Policies for Managing Take and Use Licences.

The general rules apply to all licences in the Tambo River Basin, unless otherwise stated in the system specific rules.

System specific rules

Some systems within the Tambo River Basin require more specific management rules that address rostering, restrictions and trade:

- Upper Tambo River – refer Appendix 1
- Lower Tambo River – refer Appendix 2

Annual reporting

Southern Rural Water produces Local Water Reports for each river basin. These reports include information on licences, water use and seasonal conditions. A copy is sent to each licence holder each year.

Consultation and review

SRW will consult with licence holders and relevant stakeholders before making changes to the Local Management Plan, other than administrative changes or clarifications.

The Local Management Plan will be reviewed every 5 years, unless an update is required sooner.

References

- Department Primary Industries – Victorian Resources Online
- Victorian Water Accounts

Contact details

For general information call or visit

1300 139 510

www.srw.com.au

Roster Hotline

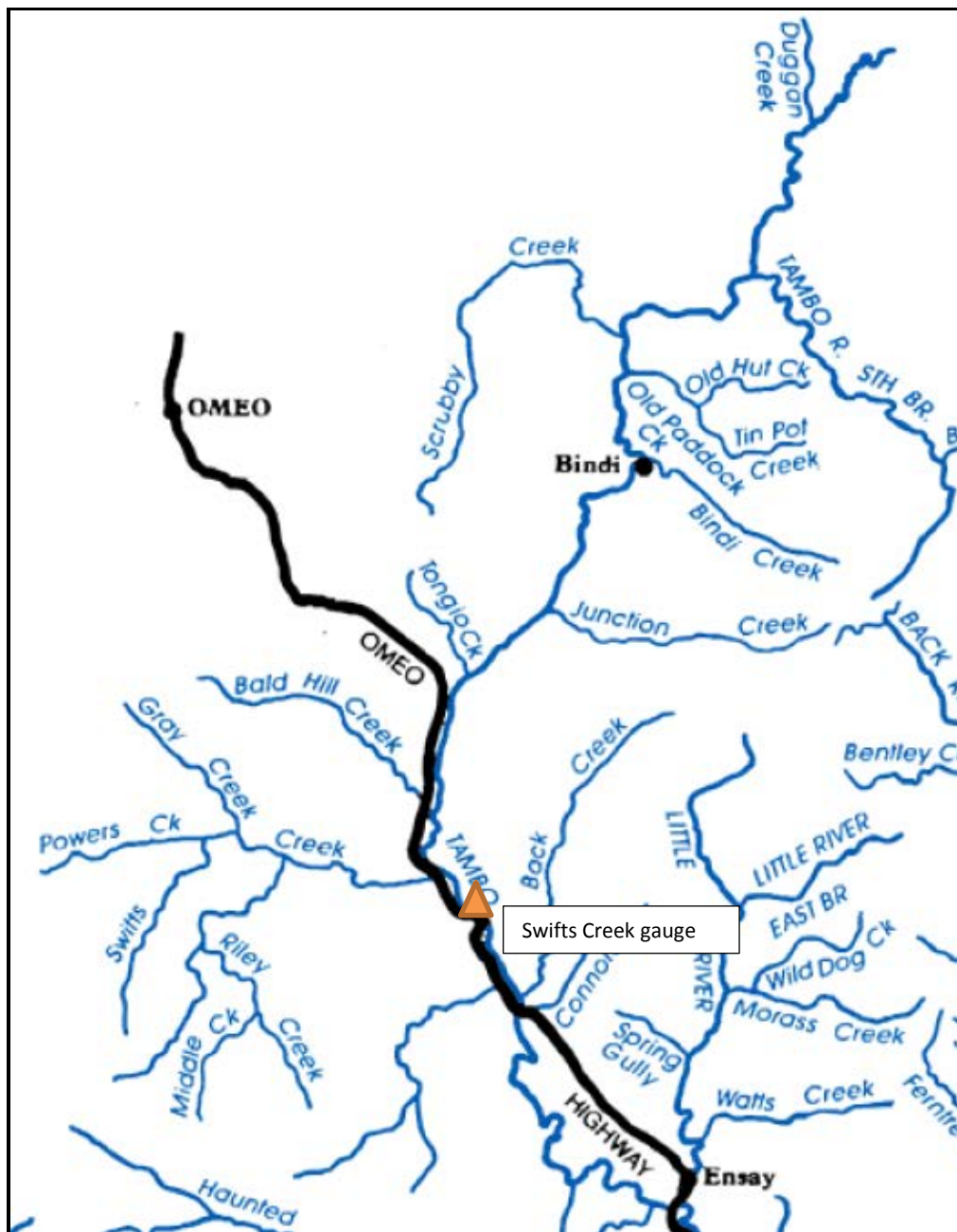
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Appendix 1

Upper Tambo River Rules

Area Description

These rules apply to all Upper Tambo River irrigation licence holders upstream of The Little River and Tambo river junction, near the township of Ensay.



Licences

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation - Direct Pumping	22	724.7

Management of Licences

The Tambo River upstream of the Little River can be fickle in dry periods often resulting in the need to apply total bans to irrigators. Due to the low number of active licences, no rosters are applied here.

Upper Tambo River - Restriction triggers for each stage of restriction

Restriction Stages	Trigger Value for Introduction of Next Stage of Restriction	Percentage Reduction
Ban	< 4ML per day	100%

Compliance Point

Southern Rural Water currently manages the Upper Tambo River using the Swifts Creek Gauge Site No. 223202

Transfers

- Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
 - the licence will be transferred to a downstream user, or
 - the licence is issued to the buyer as a winterfill licence
- A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream (all-year licence).

Consultation

Southern Rural Water liaises with the customers from the catchment as the need arises.

Review

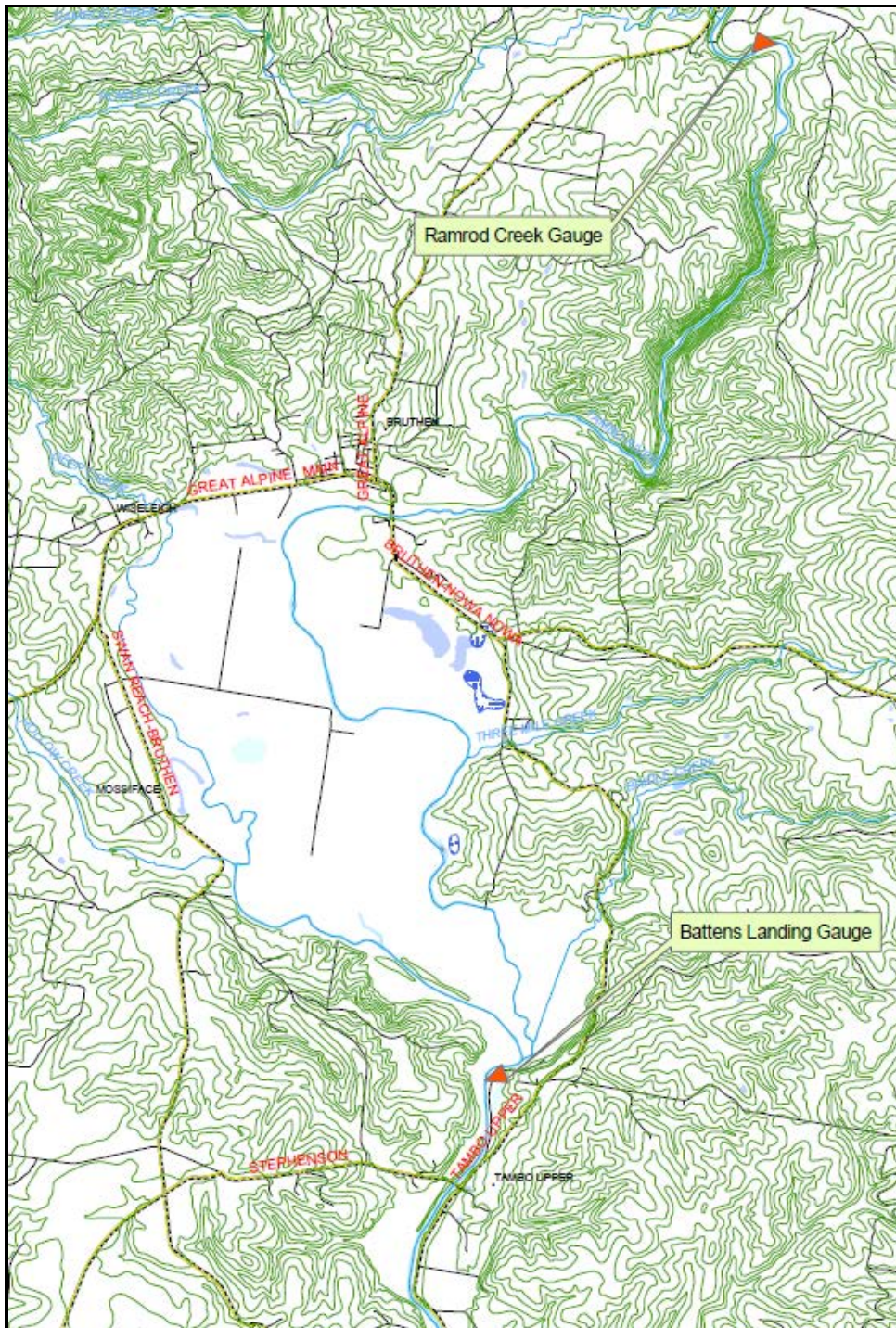
These rules will be reviewed every five years, unless an update is required sooner.

Appendix 2

Lower Tambo River Rules

Area Description

These rules apply to all Lower Tambo River irrigation licence holders downstream of the Ramrod Creek and Tambo River junction, as shown below. Rostering is not regularly applied as good flows can occur here over multiple seasons.



Licences

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation - Direct Pumping	37	2770.8

Management of Licences

Lower Tambo River - Restriction triggers for each stage of restriction. There are a significant number of inactive licences on the lower Tambo River. Inflows are indicative only as these are determined by the number of active licences during a season requiring restrictions.

Restriction Stages	Trigger Value for Introduction of Next Stage of Restriction	Percentage Reduction
1	24 ML per day	0
2	18 ML per day	25%
3	14 ML per day	40%
4	10 ML per day	55%
5	7 ML per day	70%
Ban	≤ 4 ML per day	100%

Compliance Points

Southern Rural Water currently manages the Lower Tambo River using the following Gauging Stations;

- Ramrod Creek 223205 – determines inflow levels.
- Battens Landing 223209 – determines restriction stages and bans.

Transfers

- Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
 - the licence will be transferred to a downstream user, or
 - the licence is issued to the buyer as a winterfill licence
- A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream (all-year licence).

Consultation

Southern Rural Water liaises with the customers from the catchment as the need arises.

Review

These rules will be reviewed every five years, unless an update is required sooner.