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## Innovative groundwater trading strategy is a win for users and the environment

The NSW Office of Water has released a report on groundwater trading and management of “local impacts” in the Lower Murrumbidgee Deep Groundwater Water Source.

Published by the NSW Office of Water, *Groundwater Trading and Management of Local Impacts* documents the methods used for establishing local management areas and highlights its importance within NSW’s most heavily pumped alluvial groundwater source with an active groundwater trading market.

NSW Water Commissioner, David Harriss, said that restrictions to trades were put in place six years ago in some parts of the groundwater source between Narrandera to Balranald to manage large water level declines or draw downs.

“This applies to two *local management areas* in the central portion of the Lower Murrumbidgee Groundwater Management Area to the east of Hay,” said Mr Harriss.

“Although there are a number controls in place within the Deep Groundwater Source, current management continues to provide a flexible trading environment for licence holders, whilst keeping environmental and third party impacts to within an acceptable range.”

Mr Harriss said that the *local impacts management strategy*, which was developed in consultation with the local groundwater users’ association, appears to working well.

“Monitoring of the groundwater has shown a halt to water level decline and a reduction in worsening seasonal fluctuations.”

“While there is no need to impose further restrictions on extraction volumes, the current trade restrictions remain in place to ensure that the system does not return to pre-2007 conditions,” Mr Harriss said.

This report highlights the importance of regular groundwater level and use monitoring in the assessment and management of groundwater extractions, which are an often “forgotten” water source.

The Office of Water’s groundwater monitoring network is the most comprehensive network in Australia with over 3000 sites regularly monitored.

*Groundwater trading and management of local impacts*, together with the Office of Water’s real time water monitoring are available at -[www.water.nsw.gov.au](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au)

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