

Local Environmental Plan Assessment Tool for water-related clauses: Fact sheet



This tool assists anyone involved in the development of a Local Environmental Plan (LEP). This could include local council staff members such as natural resource managers and strategic planners.

What can this tool be used for?

This tool provides you with immediate access to water-related clauses in LEPs, and functions primarily as a tool to search the water-related clauses present in all existing LEPs. It was designed to facilitate effective and consistent reviews of their content. The tool helps you assess whether your stated zone objectives are appropriate and comprehensive given the water-related requirements in the clauses themselves,

and whether they are responsive to the priorities and issues of your community.

Why did we make this tool?

Recent changes to the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act 1979)* carry substantial changes to LEPs. The first of these changes is a requirement for a five-year review cycle for all NSW planning instruments to determine if they still serve the objectives of the Act and reflect local values and priorities.

The second major change is the requirement for councils to develop a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), which operates as the 20-year land-use vision for the local government area



(LGA). The LSPS establishes an area's unique local characteristics and community values, directing future growth and facilitating changes to established planning rules such as LEPs and Development Control Plans (DCPs) to support long-term planning objectives.

The LSPS supports the implementation of Regional and Sydney District Plans by integrating relevant regional, district and local goals into long-term vision for local management.

These changes make it important that councils have a full understanding of the content of their LEPs to identify key elements from an LSPS or regional planning perspective. To support councils in their review of LEPs, we have developed this 'LEP Assessment Tool' to help you identify where Councils have in place LEP clauses and zoning provisions for managing the impacts of urban development and other land use activities on the health of the State's waterways.

What does this tool include?

The LEP Assessment Tool is a Microsoft® Excel® (for Office 365) spreadsheet that contains all water-related clauses for 65 LEPs that were in force across New South Wales, prior to provisions for LSPSs under the *EP&A Act 1979*.

The tool categorises water-related clauses into nine fields that allow for systematic identification and sorting of type and intent of the clause. You can use these nine fields to filter and search the Microsoft® Excel® spreadsheet and navigate the LEP Assessment Tool.

The nine fields include identifiers (e.g. Name of Council) and clause content, including Objectives Statements (**Maintain, Protect, Enhance, Provide opportunities, None**) and Value Statements (**Aesthetic, Cultural, Economic, Environmental, Recreational**).

'All water-related clauses could be strengthened by specific reference to the NSW Government policy on water quality'

'Objective Statement' and 'Value Statement' codes were created to explicitly show how the current clauses and provisions align with the management goals of our state water quality policy. This helps ensure that waterways and associated aquatic ecosystems are protected, maintained or improved depending on whether the community environmental values and uses are being achieved ([NSW Water Quality Objectives](#)).

Do you think the tool is something you will use?

You can access the tool from the Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data (SEED) data portal, by using the search term 'LEP Tool' at <https://www.seed.nsw.gov.au/>

The accompanying *Local Environmental Plan Assessment Tool for water-related clauses: Guidance on the development and use of the tool* describes how the tool was developed, how it is used in the context of achieving water quality and waterway health outcomes for your area, and some key findings from our use of the tool. These findings include gaps or missing provisions for waterway health and stormwater management in LEPs, exemplar clauses that could be adopted due to a precedence, and minor changes to the content of clauses to strategically align with [state water quality policy](#).

Cover photo: Parramatta River estuary, Daniel Wiecek/DPIE. Above left to right: Barangaroo, Jocelyn Dela-Cruz/DPIE; Shelly Beach, Jocelyn Dela-Cruz/DPIE; Nielsen Park, Jocelyn Dela-Cruz/DPIE.

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