

Standard Information for Consent Applications: Conduct within Special or Controlled Areas

Version 1.0 – March 2026

For conduct in a Special Area or Controlled Area, a Consent Application must be submitted to WaterNSW via the WaterNSW website.

WaterNSW may take up to 28 business days after receiving an application to determine a Consent Application. If the application is incomplete or more information is required, the assessment period restarts when the additional information is received. If any information requested is not received by WaterNSW within 28 business days of the request, the application may be refused.

Information supplied to WaterNSW is not approved or endorsed by WaterNSW, unless specifically stated by WaterNSW.

If consent is granted, WaterNSW will issue the consent in writing.

The following information is required with the Consent Application:

1. Standard Assessment Criteria: Details of how the proposal meets **ALL** the following standard assessment criteria:

1. It is for an activity that cannot be carried out elsewhere.
2. It is for an activity or purpose that will benefit WaterNSW's management of the Special Areas and Controlled Areas, or provide a broader public benefit.
3. It will not compromise the integrity, operation or management of any WaterNSW infrastructure or catchment areas.
4. The activity will not:
 - a) lower the quantity of water in the water storages or catchments, and
 - b) lower the quality of surface and groundwater inflows to water storages or catchments, and
 - c) have a negative impact on the ecological integrity of the Special Areas.

2. Scope of Works and Methodology: Details of the proposed activities to be carried out, including the scope of works, objectives (and how they will be met), details of the design, and detailed task methodology.

3. Dates: Dates of proposed entry, and number of days that entry will be required.

4. Vehicles: Vehicle types (including list of machinery), and maximum number of vehicles and persons that require entry at any one time.

5. Map: A clear and detailed map showing the specific location/s of the proposed activity and the access route, and including Lot and Deposited Plan (DP) number/s.

6. Ground and/or vegetation disturbance: Where the proposed activity may disturb soil, groundcover or vegetation, the Applicant must complete an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**, such as a **Review of Environmental Factors (REF)** or **Ready Reckoner Checklist (RRC)**. Where required, the WaterNSW Ready Reckoner Checklist template can be used.

7. Research: Provide a project proposal that includes the project brief, objectives (and how they will be met), project design (including the statistical approach), and detailed methodology for how the project will be conducted. The proposal must also include copies of any current licences, approvals or permits required to undertake the research activities, such as a Scientific Licence and/or Animal Research Authority.

8. Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) / drone use: RPAS operator's current Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operator's Certificate (ReOC), Remote Pilot Licence (RePL) or Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) operator accreditation, as relevant, issued by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

9. Asset Owner Approval: Prior to WaterNSW granting consent, the Applicant must obtain written approval from the relevant asset owner / infrastructure owner to undertake the proposed activity, unless the activity is otherwise authorised by legislation.

10. Insurance: Certificate/s of Currency in relation to Public Liability Insurance (minimum \$20 million) covering the Applicant and all persons that require entry, including contractors and subcontractors. The Certificate of Currency must be issued in the same name as the Applicant or list the Applicant as being insured.

11. Safe Work Plan (SWP) / Safe Work Method Statement/s (SWMS): must be specific to the location/s and activities proposed, be approved with signature of an appropriate person in the organisation (Applicant or its contractor), and consider and include details of:

- a) activity / task methodology,
- b) identified hazards, and subsequent risks,
- c) controls to be implemented to ensure health and safety,
- d) communications procedures and equipment, and
- e) emergency procedures.

The SWP / SWMS must address all identified hazards, including relevant hazards listed in the "Types of Hazards in Special Areas and Controlled Areas" below, and any additional expected hazards not listed.

The SWP / SWMS should reference or include the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) or Ready Reckoner Checklist (RRC) for the activity, if relevant.

Types of Hazards in Special Areas and Controlled Areas

Below is a list of standard types of hazards that you may encounter in a Special Area or Controlled Area while undertaking your activity/work. Please ensure the Safe Work Plan / Safe Work Method Statement has addressed (as a minimum) these hazards where relevant (noting some hazards may only apply to remote areas):

- Heat stress / Hyperthermia
- Cold Stress / Hypothermia
- Manual handling
- Slips, trips
- Being alone and in remote areas
- Communications breakdown
- Driving on and off road – 4WD (including collision with fauna, driver fatigue, injury due to vehicle accident)
- 4WD vehicle recovery (e.g. vehicle stranding due to bogging or slippery surface, injury due to use of 4WD recovery equipment (straps, winch, etc.))
- Moving cars and trucks
- Injury to event participant from being hit by vehicle
- Animals and parasites – bites, stings and scratches
- Snakes and spiders
- Scratches and cuts from vegetation
- Bushfire or structural fire hazards
- Rock falls
- Working at or near high places
- Falls from cliffs or into holes
- Flooding
- Inclement weather – Hot / Cold / Heavy Rain / High Wind / UV / electrical storm (Note: work should be postponed in high wind if there is a likelihood of trees falling down / branches snapping)
- Aggressive people – verbal abuse, threats or violence
- Coming into contact with chemicals or hazardous substances
- Working in or near water
- Working on water (watercraft use)

Further Information – Work Health and Safety

The [SafeWork NSW website](#) provides information and guidance on how to manage work place risks, including [Codes of Practice](#) that provide detailed information on how to achieve required standards.

For further information relating to Work Health and Safety, please refer to the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) and the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025](#).