



MAXWELL UNDERGROUND MINE PROJECT



Groundwater Review

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Modification 2 Groundwater Review

Prepared for:

Malabar Resources Thomas Mitchell Drive Muswellbrook NSW 2333

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1 Introduction

The Maxwell Underground Mine Project (the Project) is an approved underground coal mining operation owned by Maxwell Ventures (Management) Pty Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Malabar Resources Limited (Malabar). The Project is in the Upper Hunter Valley of New South Wales (NSW), east-southeast of Denman and southsouthwest of Muswellbrook (**Figure 1**).

Development Consent SSD 9526 for the Project was granted by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) on 22 December 2020. The Project was subsequently approved under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) on 10 March 2021 (EPBC 2018/8287).

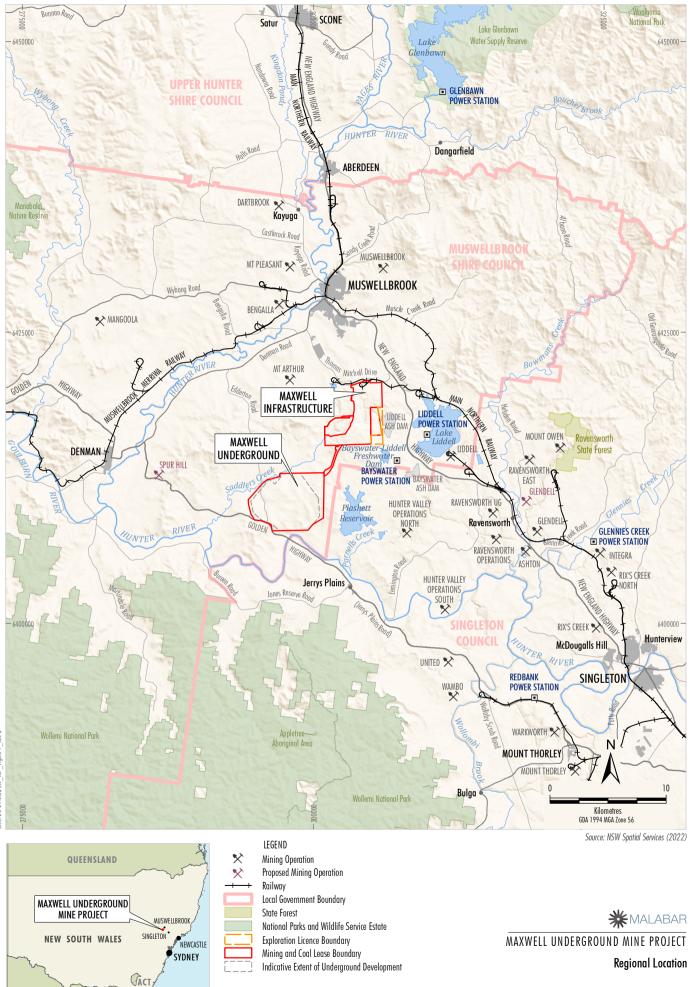
Malabar previously sought to modify Development Consent SSD 9526 under section 4.55(1A) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) for a minor extension to the mine entry area (MEA) (Modification 1). Modification 1 was subsequently approved on 19 November 2021 and EPBC 2018/8287 was varied on 14 December 2021.

A proposed Modification is being sought under section 4.55(2) of the EP&A Act (the Modification). The Modification is located wholly within the approved Development Application Area and would comprise the following components (**Figure 2**):

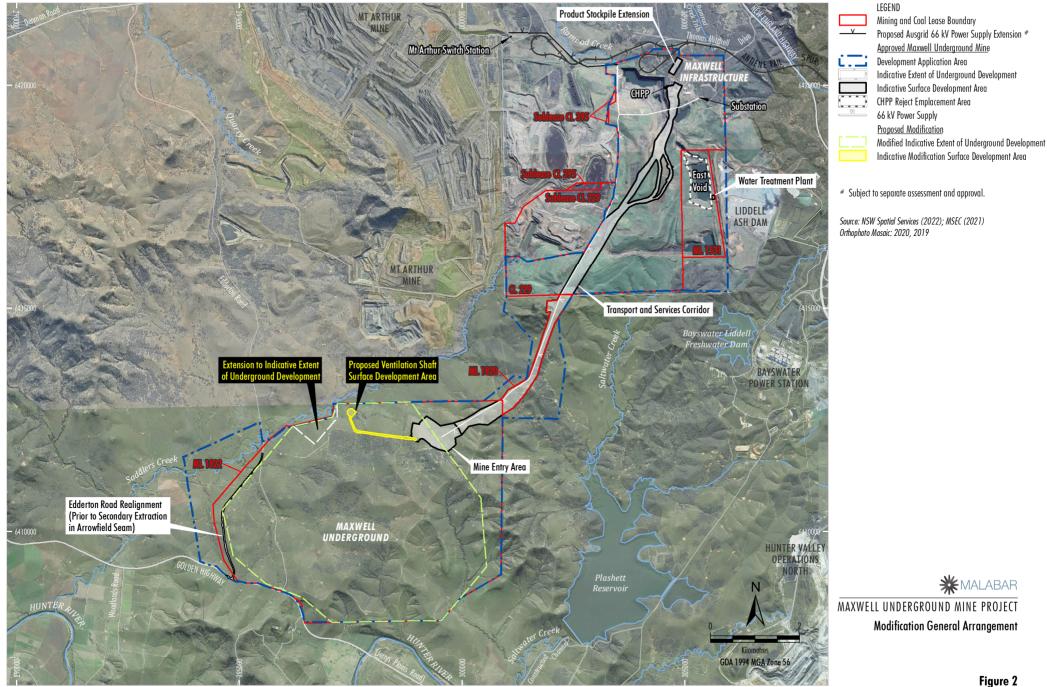
- re-orientation of the longwall panels in the Woodlands Hill, Arrowfield and Bowfield Seams resulting in a minor increase in the approved underground mining extent;
- reduction in the width of some of the longwall panels in the Woodlands Hill Seam, which facilitates earlier commencement of longwall mining;
- repositioning of the upcast ventilation shaft site and associated infrastructure; and
- other minor works and ancillary infrastructure components (e.g. access road and ancillary water management infrastructure for the repositioned ventilation shaft site).

HydroSimulations (2019) completed the Groundwater Assessment for the Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and has since been acquired by SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR). SLR was engaged by Malabar to prepare a Groundwater Review for the Modification.









SHM-20-04 MOD LW_MP_Figure 2_Rev B

2 Objectives and Scope

The objectives of this Groundwater Review are to:

- Update the mining and goaf fracturing in the groundwater model based on the revised mine plan and assess the potential incremental groundwater impacts of the Modification.
- Present updated baseline data, including new groundwater level and quality data, from site monitoring bores and surface water flow/level data for Saddlers Creek.
- Verify that the Project groundwater model (HydroSimulations, 2019) continues to adequately calibrate to the updated baseline data.



3 Hydrogeological Setting

A comprehensive discussion of the Project area hydrogeology is presented in the EIS Groundwater Assessment (HydroSimulations, 2019). The following section presents a high-level summary of the hydrogeological setting in consideration of additional information collected since the submission of the EIS.

3.1 Hunter River Alluvium

3.1.1 Distribution and Flow

The Hunter River alluvium comprises surficial silts and clays overlying basal sands and gravels. Groundwater occurs within the alluvium at depths of approximately 5 meters (m) to 10 m below the ground surface and generally over 2 m below the base of the Hunter River (Figure 3). This indicates that the Hunter River generally has losing conditions, where surface water from the river seeps into the underlying alluvium. Flow levels in the Hunter River are sustained by regulated releases from Glenbawn Dam.

The cumulative departure from the mean (CDM) rainfall trend is presented on Figure 3, generated for the SILO Grid Point for data from 1900 to 2021. The area experienced a period of above average rainfall from 2007 to 2012, followed by a period of fluctuating rainfall until 2017. From 2017 to 2019, the area experienced below average rainfall, with extended dry conditions over eastern Australia (Bureau of Meteorology [BoM], 2021). Since early 2020, conditions have been wetter than average, including high rainfall totals in February and August 2020, and again in March 2021.

Figure 4 presents the location of the groundwater monitoring bores for the Project area. Recent groundwater levels show limited responses to the rainfall recession between 2017 and late 2019, with the Hunter River sustaining the alluvium aquifer throughout this period.

Regional groundwater flow within the alluvium is a subdued reflection of the topography, with groundwater flowing in a south-easterly direction consistent with the alignment of the Hunter River.

MB1-Alluvial and MB4-Alluvial, which are screened within the Hunter River Alluvium immediately south of the Project, water levels are mostly responsive to stream flow rather than rainfall recharge or periods of drier conditions (i.e. NSW drought 2017-2019). Groundwater levels in August 2021 are 0.5m to 0.9 m higher than water levels observed at the end of the drought (i.e. late 2019), reflective of higher stream levels in the Hunter River.



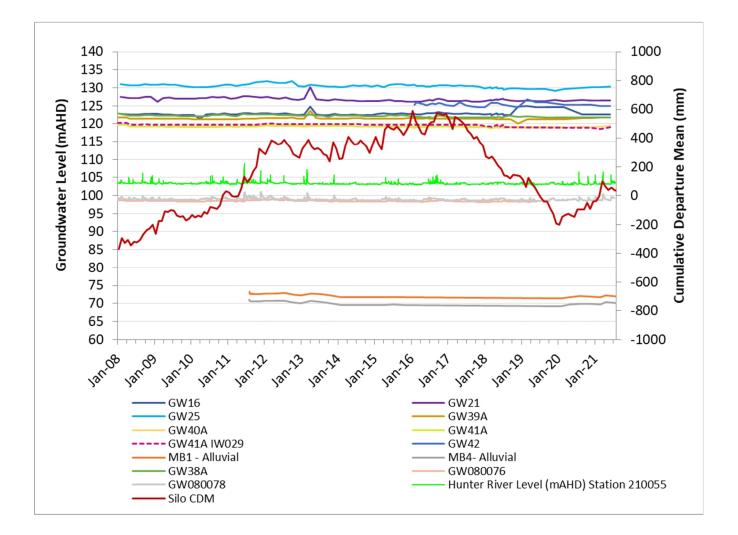
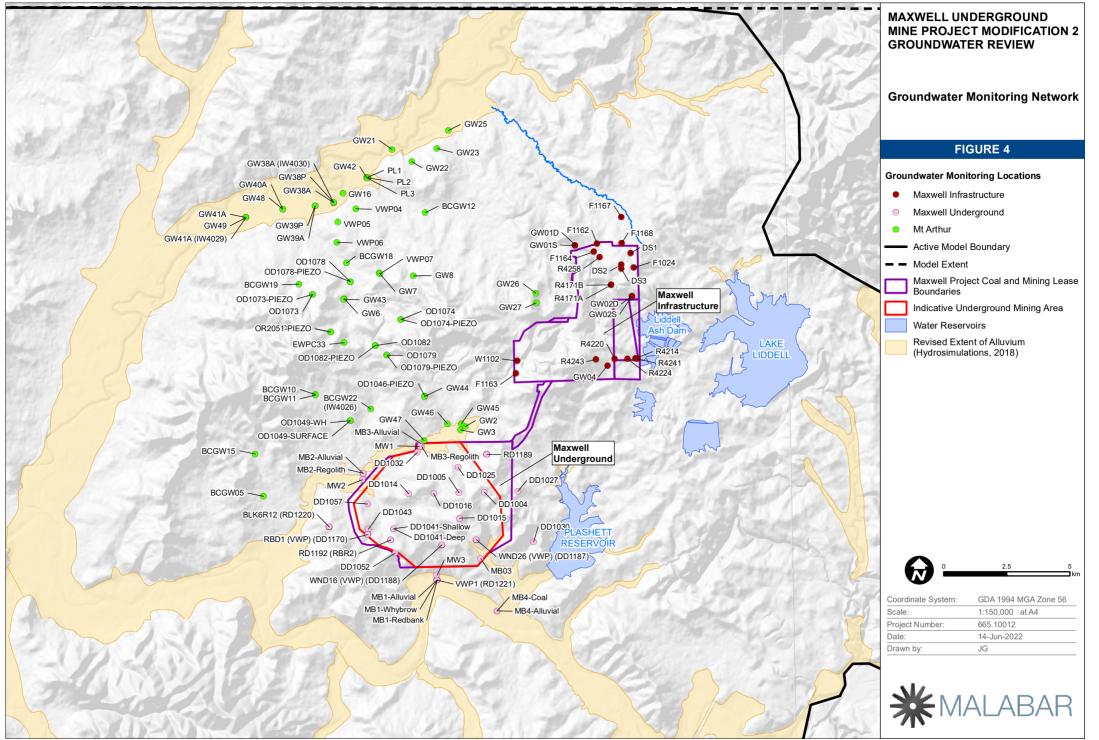


Figure 3 Hydrographs for bores in the Hunter River alluvium and Cumulative Departure from the Mean (CDM)





3.1.2 Recharge and Discharge

Recharge to the Hunter River Alluvium is mostly from regulated stream flow or flooding (losing streams), with direct infiltration of rainfall also occurring where there are no substantial clay barriers in the shallow sub-surface. There is also potential for discharge or vertical seepage to the underlying Permian Coal Measures.

3.2 Saddlers Creek Alluvium and Regolith

3.2.1 Distribution and Flow

The Saddlers Creek Alluvium presented in Figure 4 is comprised of surficial silts and clays overlying heterogenous interbedded clays, silts, sands and gravels. The occurrence of sands and gravels is predominantly within the lower reaches of Saddlers Creek, near the confluence with the Hunter River. The hydraulic properties of the alluvium near the confluence are expected to be similar to those of the Hunter River Alluvium, while the stratigraphy further upslope is expected to be lower yielding due to the increased presence of silts and clays. Spatially, the alluvium is variably saturated. Localised perched water tables are also evident where waterbodies continue to hold water throughout the dry period (e.g. pools along Saddlers Creek) occurring where clay layers slow the percolation of surface water (i.e. GW45).

Where groundwater is present, it occurs at depths of approximately 3 m to 10 m below the ground surface. Groundwater data collected between 2019 and 2021 is considered representative of local groundwater conditions and consistent with data presented in the groundwater impact assessment (HydroSimulations, 2019) to support the EIS. The water table within the alluvium is a subdued reflection of the topography with groundwater flowing in a general south-west direction toward the Hunter River.

Figure 5 shows groundwater levels in the Saddlers Creek Alluvium with responses to rainfall events by approximately 1 m at MB2-Alluvial and MB3-Alluvial, and occurrence of ephemeral streamflow events recharging the Saddlers Creek Alluvium. Saddlers Creek surface water levels increased in a range of 0.4 m to 1 m during high rainfall events in early 2020 and 2021 (Figure 5 B). At MB2-Regolith, groundwater levels are within baseline levels at 113 meters Australian Height Datum (mAHD) and still showing signs of an upward vertical gradient from regolith to the alluvium as of August 2021. An anomalous decline of approximately 5 m in April 2021 during exceptional rainfall events suggests a measurement error and is not considered representative of mining or climatic effects on water levels at this location.

Declining groundwater levels between 2 and 4 m at GW45 and GW47 since monitoring started in 2016 are attributed to low recharge due to the drought. This declining trend continued until late 2020, despite wetter conditions, before increasing by approximately 0.6 m (GW47) and 1.8 m (GW45) following above average conditions in early 2021.



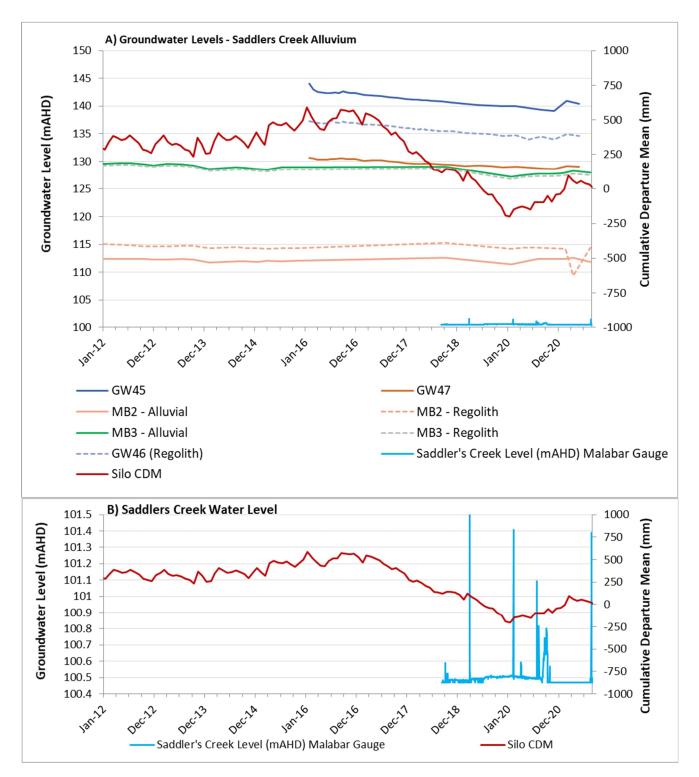


Figure 5 Hydrographs for bores in the Saddlers Creek Alluvium and Cumulative Departure from the Mean (CDM)



3.2.2 Recharge and Discharge

Saddlers Creek has intermittent flow, with flows occurring in response to rainfall events. When flowing, Saddlers Creek generally exhibits losing conditions, where surface water seeps into the underlying alluvium. Within the lower reaches of the creek there is also potential upward seepage from the underlying Permian Coal Measures.

There are possible minor short duration baseflow events after significant rainfall/flooding within the lower reaches of the creek.

3.3 Permian Coal Measures

3.3.1 Distribution and Flow

Groundwater within the Permian strata is encountered in the coal seams and in the sandstone/siltstone units of lower permeability. Recent groundwater levels and trends in the Permian Coal Measures (Figure 6) are consistent with the groundwater regime described in the EIS Groundwater Assessment. The coal seams are the primary groundwater bearing units in the Permian hydrostratigraphic sequence with low permeability interburden generally confining the individual seams. Additional observations to those previously reported in the EIS include the following:

- DD1032 is located to the south of Saddlers Creek Alluvium and monitors the Piercefield overburden. There
 was a rise in water levels in January 2020, followed by a decline in April 2020, stabilising throughout 20202021. A similar rise and decline in water levels early 2020 were also recorded in bore DD1043 despite above
 average rainfall in March 2020, however groundwater levels remain consistent with increasing rainfall from
 mid-2020 to mid-2021.
- The slight reduction in groundwater levels in monitoring bores DD1014, DD1005, DD1057, DD1030 and DD1025 between 2018 and 2020 is consistent with the trend observed for rainfall, suggesting the groundwater level declines were due to the drought. There was a groundwater response to rainfall recharge in DD1005 and DD1052 (approximately 2 m) in early 2021 while groundwater levels declined slightly throughout 2021 (approximately 0.5 m) at DD1004, DD1057 and DD1030 suggesting limited rainfall recharge at these sites.



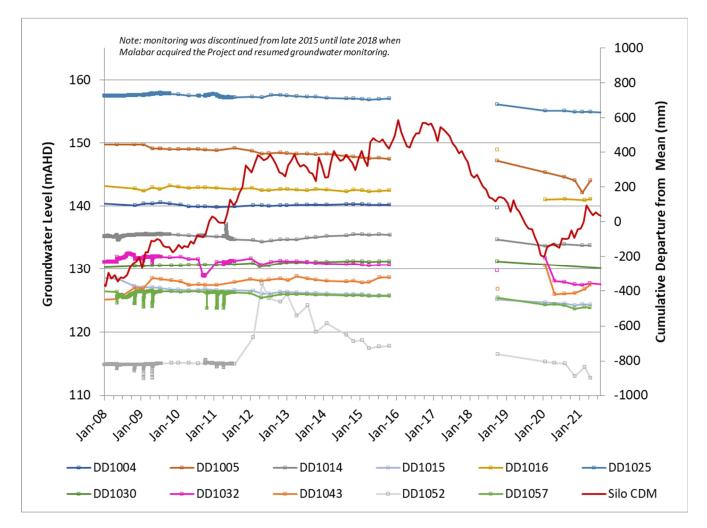


Figure 6 Hydrographs for bores in the Permian Coal Measures and Cumulative Departure from the Mean (CDM)

3.3.2 Recharge and Discharge

Vertical movement of groundwater (including recharge) is limited by the confining interburden layers, meaning that groundwater flow is primarily horizontal through the seams with recharge primarily occurring at sub-crop. Faults mapped within the region have been interpreted as exhibiting lower hydraulic conductivity compared to coal seams (AGE, 2012). Similarly, the presence of dyke intrusions localised along north-south trending faults within the Project area (MBGS, 2018) are not considered conduits to groundwater flow.



4 Water Quality

Water quality summary plots for pH, Electronic Conductivity (EC), Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and major ions, for available sites and surrounding bores, are included in Appendix A. A comprehensive discussion of the Project groundwater quality is presented in Section 4.4.4 of the EIS Groundwater Impact Assessment (HydroSimulations, 2019).

Recent water quality results within the hydrostratigraphic units across the Project area and surrounds are representative and consistent with the water quality summary presented in the EIS Groundwater Assessment.

Additional observations to those previously reported in the EIS include the following:

- Recent water quality measurements show that the "highly productive" Hunter River Alluvium continues to be generally fresh.
- The "less productive" alluvium within the upper reaches of Saddlers Creek remains moderately saline, with an average TDS of 3,388 mg/L that is consistent with 3,408 mg/L reported in the EIS (i.e. a difference of approximately 0.5%).
- Metal concentrations measured since January 2019 are consistent with concentrations previously reported in the EIS Groundwater Assessment, with concentrations remaining below the laboratory limit of reporting.



5 Groundwater Modelling

5.1 Model Summary

The numerical groundwater model developed for the EIS Groundwater Assessment has been verified using additional data collected since that assessment was completed. The model development and conceptualisation are described in HydroSimulations (2019) and are briefly summarised below.

The model was developed to simulate groundwater conditions at the Project area and is designed for stresses (mining) to be simulated to predict potential impacts to the hydrogeological regime.

The model has been undertaken using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in conjunction with MODFLOW-Un-Structured Grids (USG). A flexible mesh has been used to allow finer grid resolution in areas of the model that are sensitive. The model domain is discretised into 22 layers and a total of 875,182 Voronoi-shaped cells. The model domain has been designed to be large enough to prevent boundary effects on model outcomes associated with mining-related stress on the groundwater environment because of mining at the Project.

Model inputs include:

- Rainfall recharge.
- Regional groundwater inflows.
- Inflows from water courses.

Model outputs include:

- Evapotranspiration.
- Regional groundwater outflows.
- Pumping from bores.
- Water loss from mining (direct and indirect).

5.2 Calibration Results – Verification

5.2.1 Calibration Overview

The calibration data set for the groundwater model was updated with additional groundwater level data from the Project monitoring program as well as regional data available from other mining operations and government monitoring bores. The updated data set included water levels up to August 2021.

5.2.2 Transient Calibration Statistics

The transient calibration was conducted by matching the observed time series data to the simulated data. The new measurements recorded following the 2019 calibration have been included in the statistics to assess the continued reliability of the model. A total of 119 sites have been used to generate the transient calibration statistics. Groundwater levels recorded at the two monitoring bores RD1189m and RD1192m, equipped with vibrating wire piezometers (VWPs), were added to the observation target file for this study.



The industry standard method to evaluate the calibration of the model is to examine the statistical parameters associated with the calibration. This is achieved by assessing the difference between the modelled and observed (measured) water levels in terms of the scaled root mean square (SRMS).

The updated SRMS for the calibrated groundwater model is 5.5% which is slightly higher than the EIS model calibration. This indicates a good calibration and is within the 2012 Australian Groundwater Modelling Guidelines indicator of 10% SRMS (Barnett et al., 2012).

Table 1 shows a summary of the updated calibration statistics and the earlier modelling conducted for the EIS Groundwater Assessment (HydroSimulations, 2019).

Table 1	Transient Calibration Statistics for the U	Ipdated Model and EIS Groundwater Assessment
I able I		puated Model and EIS Groundwater Assessment

Statistical Parameters	Updated Statistics	EIS Groundwater Assessment)
Residual Mean	-2.7	-2.5
RMS error (m)	9.6	7.0
Scaled RMS error (%)	5.5	4.3

Appendix B presents simulated groundwater levels against the latest observed groundwater levels which remain consistent with hydrographs presented by HydroSimulations (2019). Bores equipped with VWPs at Spur Hill (i.e. SHD10, SHD17, SHD05 and SHD03) were excluded from the calibration datasets as the data appear unreliable (i.e. the observed declines at these bores do not accord with the conceptual understanding of the groundwater system).

Based on the above, the changes in the calibration performance due to the updated groundwater level dataset are considered negligible and, therefore, the groundwater model calibration remains valid and fit for purpose. Further details on calibration results are presented by HydroSimulations (2019) (refer to Section 5.3 of the EIS).

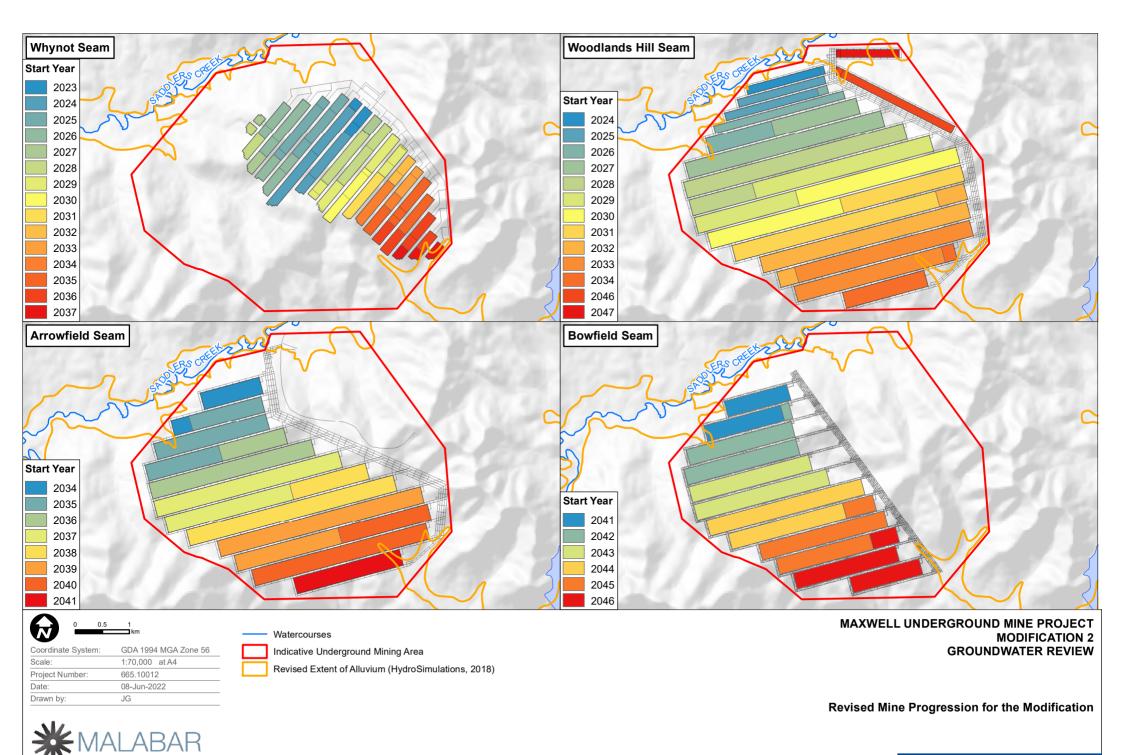


5.3 Predictive Model Update

Malabar has provided a revised mine plan (Modification Mine Plan) that included a slight change in the mine footprint and timing, as follows:

- Change in the mine schedule for Woodlands Hill, Arrowfield, and Bowfield Seams. Figure 7 presents the revised mine progression. The same mine layout and schedule were used for the Whynot panel (bord and pillar);
- Re-orientation of the longwalls in the Woodlands Hill, Arrowfield and Bowfield Seams;
- The longwall widths and cutting height were kept the same as in the EIS Project except for the four initial and two last panels in the Woodlands Seams (i.e. widths narrowed);
- The LW01 and LW02 layout in the Woodlands Hill seam slightly extends outside the approved Underground Indicative Mining Area (Figure 7); and
- Only the longwall panels were simulated in the model. The main headings, gate roads and the drifts were excluded (i.e. consistent with the EIS).



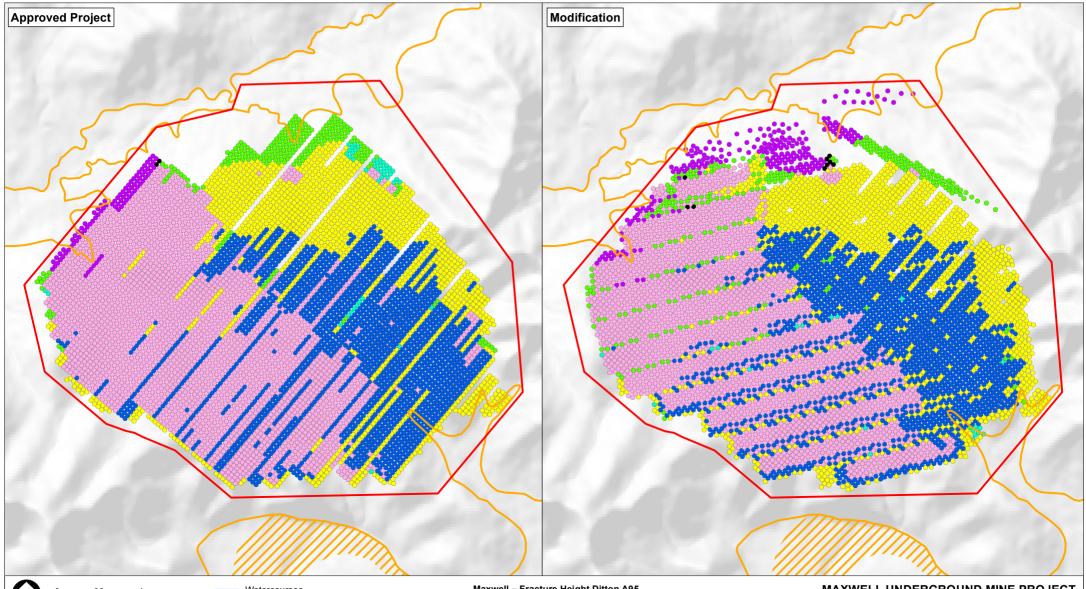


The Modification mine plan was incorporated into the model to assess the incremental impact compared to the approved Project mine plan. For the Modification model, the predictive model Drain (DRN) package was updated to include the re-orientated longwall panels in the Woodlands Hill, Arrowfield and Bowfield Seams. No change was made to the mine plan in the Whynot Seam in the model.

The height of fracture for the Modification mine plan layout design was then calculated using the methodology adopted in HydroSimulations (2019) to represent multi-seam fracturing. Figure 8 compares the fracture zone height between the Modification and the approved Project. It also indicates in which model layers the height of fracture is potentially extending across the Project area. The height of fracturing was added to the groundwater model using 'stacked drain' method, consistent with the method previously used in the EIS model. The DRN conductance was set to the same values as in the EIS model (HydroSimulations, 2019).

The Time Varying Material (TVM) package was updated to account for the updated fracture height. The enhanced equivalent porous medium hydraulic conductivities representing the collapsed strata and used in the EIS model were applied at the end of mining prior to the simulation of recovery. There were no updates made to any of the other model packages.





0 0.5 1 km Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56 Scale: 1:45,000 at A4 Project Number: 665.10012 Date: 08-Jun-2022 Drawn by: JG

- Watercourses

- Indicative Underground Mining Area
- Revised Extent of Alluvium (HydroSimulations, 2018)
- Proposed Highly Productive Alluvium Extent

Maxwell – Fracture Height Ditton A95

- Layer 1 Regolith (Representative of fracturing of the surface)
- Layer 3 Whybrow Overburden
 - Layer 4 Whybrow, Redbank and Wambo Seams, Interburden
- Layer 5 Whynot Seam

0

- Layer 6 Whynot-Blakefield Interburden
- Layer 7 Blakefield Seam
- Layer 8 Blakefield GlenMunro Interburden

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Modelled Height of Fracture (Ditton A95) for the Approved Project and the Modification



5.3.1 Groundwater Model Runs

To understand the potential incremental impact due to the Modification, three model scenarios were run:

- Null Run: A baseline scenario with no Project and no Mt Arthur Mine (i.e. a 'no-mining' or 'null' run as per Barnett et al. (2012). This enables assessment of the cumulative effects of the Project along with those of the Mt Arthur Mine. The Null run from the EIS was used.
- Approved: A baseline scenario with the Mt Arthur Mine was applied. The approved run from the EIS Groundwater Assessment was used.
- Approved plus Modification: The approved scenario with the Modification mine plan.

The following section presents the results of the Modification modelling compared to the EIS Groundwater Assessment. A positive change value means greater impacts due to the Modification than the approved Project. A negative incremental change value means less impacts with the Modification than the approved Project.

5.4 Predictive Results

5.4.1 Mine Inflows

Figure 9 compares the predicted total inflows (megalitre [ML]/day) to the Maxwell Underground for the Modification and the approved Project. Overall, the predicted inflow between the Modification and the approved Project are generally consistent on an annual basis, with the Modification resulting in an overall reduction of approximately 500 ML in total groundwater inflows over the life of the Project.

The predicted peak inflow to the Maxwell Underground with the Modification is estimated to reach 3.2 ML/day in Year 11. This represents a slight increase to the peak inflow associated with the approved Project, due to a slight increase in the area mined by the Modification. Under the Modification scenario, a higher number of active drains result in a slightly higher inflow peak during mining at Woodlands Hill.



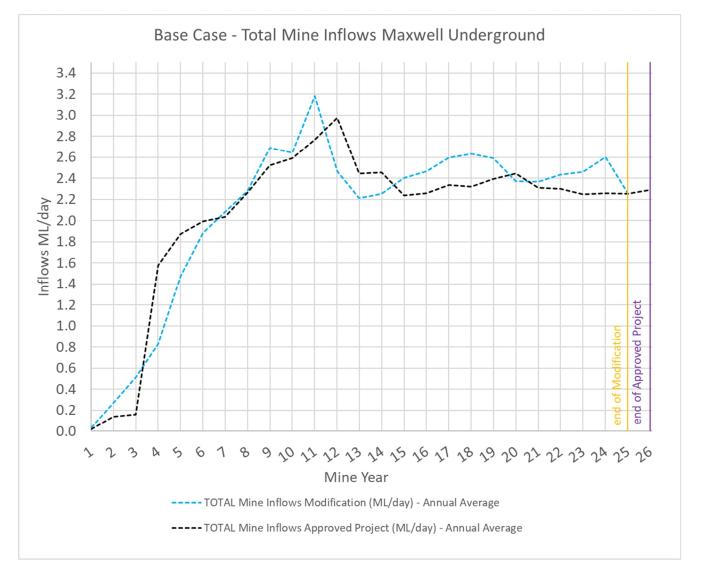


Figure 9 Predicted Inflows to Maxwell Underground – Base case for the Modification and Approved Project



5.4.2 Drawdown and Depressurisation

Mining results in depressurisation of the coal seams and fractured overburden/interburden within the immediate area of mining activities. Depressurisation, that is depression in the potentiometric surface, propagates away from the mining area based on the hydraulic properties of the surrounding strata. Depressurisation, or depression of the potentiometric surface, does not necessarily result in physical groundwater drawdown within constrained units (such as the deeper Permian groundwater system).

5.4.2.1 Drawdown and Depressurisation – Incremental Impact

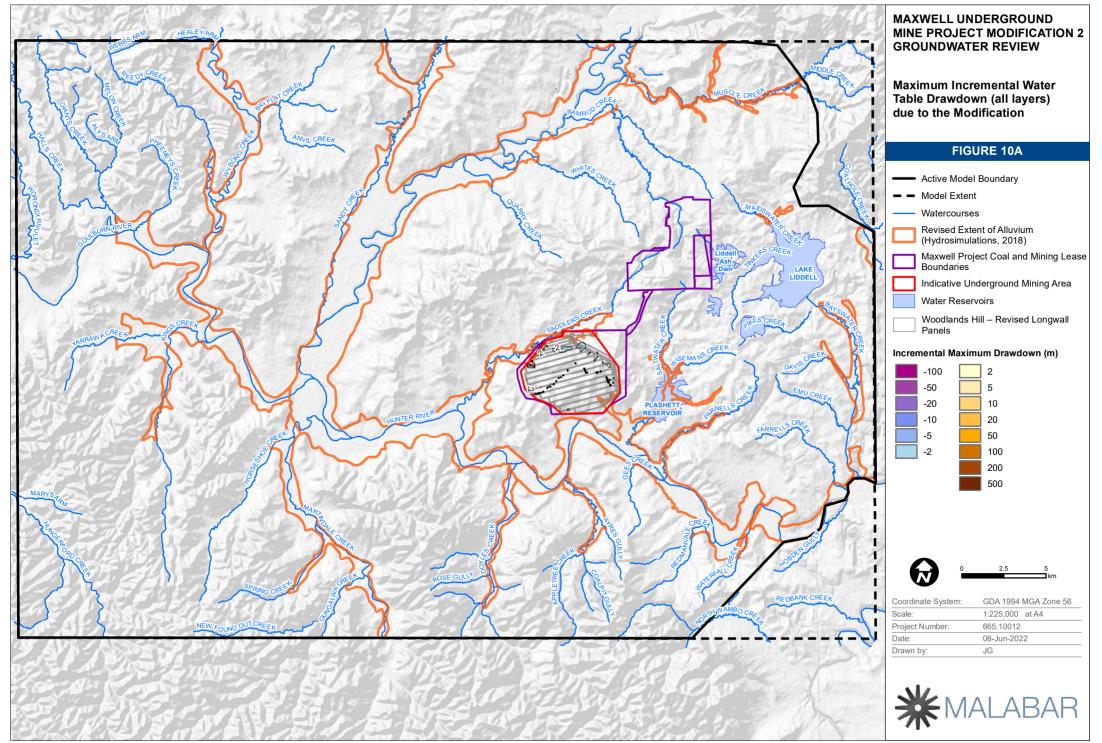
Figure 10 to Figure 15A-B show the maximum incremental drawdown due to the Modification (brown shades) and areas where drawdown is reduced due to the Modification (blue shades). The results are presented for the water table (all layers), unconsolidated sediments (Layer 1), and depressurisation within the Whynot Seam (Layer 5), Woodlands Hill Seam (Layer 11), Arrowfield Seam (Layer 13) and Bowfield Seam (Layer 15).

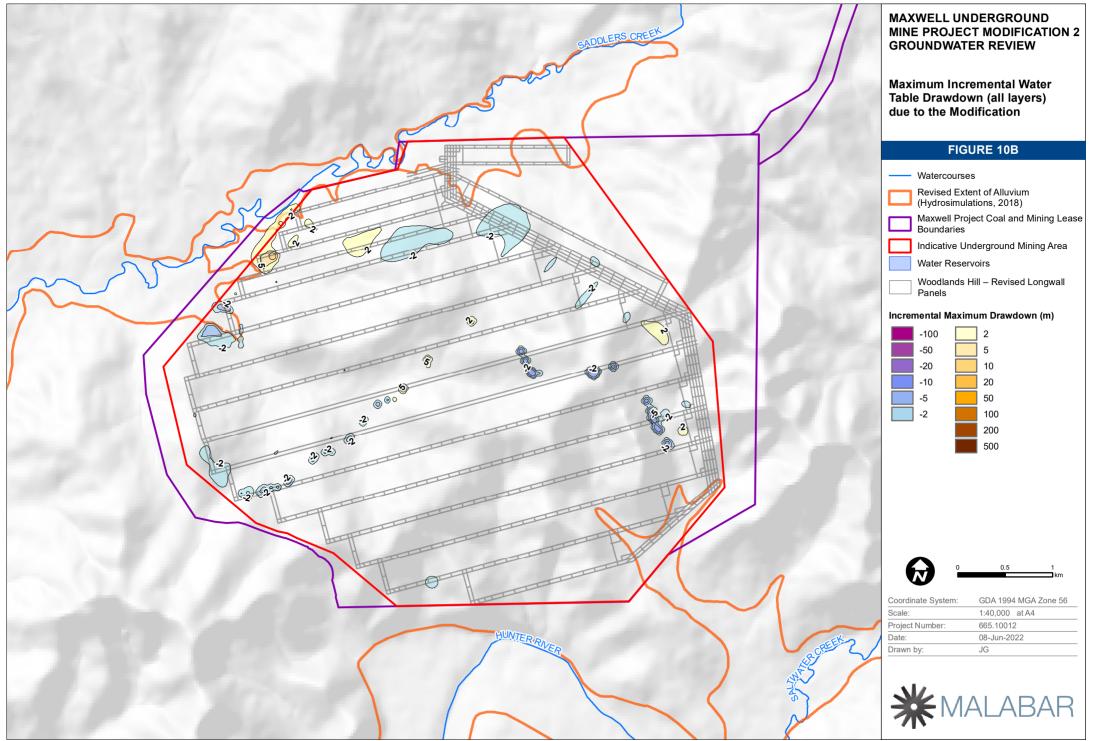
Figure 10A-B shows maximum incremental water table drawdown for all layers constrained across the indicative underground mining area ranging from 2 m to 10 m and along the edge of the Saddlers Creek alluvium (i.e. mid reach) to the north-west. The increase in water table drawdown is located where the early Woodlands Hill longwall panels extend further than the approved mine plan. Less water table drawdown is predicted (1 m to 5 m) for the Modification in areas where longwalls in the Woodlands Hill are shorter and have a change in their orientation compared to the approved mine plan (i.e. including along the Saddlers Creel alluvium within the boundary of the Indicative Underground Mining Area).

Figure 11A-B shows a negligible change in maximum incremental drawdown in the unconsolidated material (Layer 1) (around 1 m localised across Saddlers Creek alluvium) due to the Modification. The negligible drawdown is largely a function of the current modelled unsaturated conditions in Layer 1.

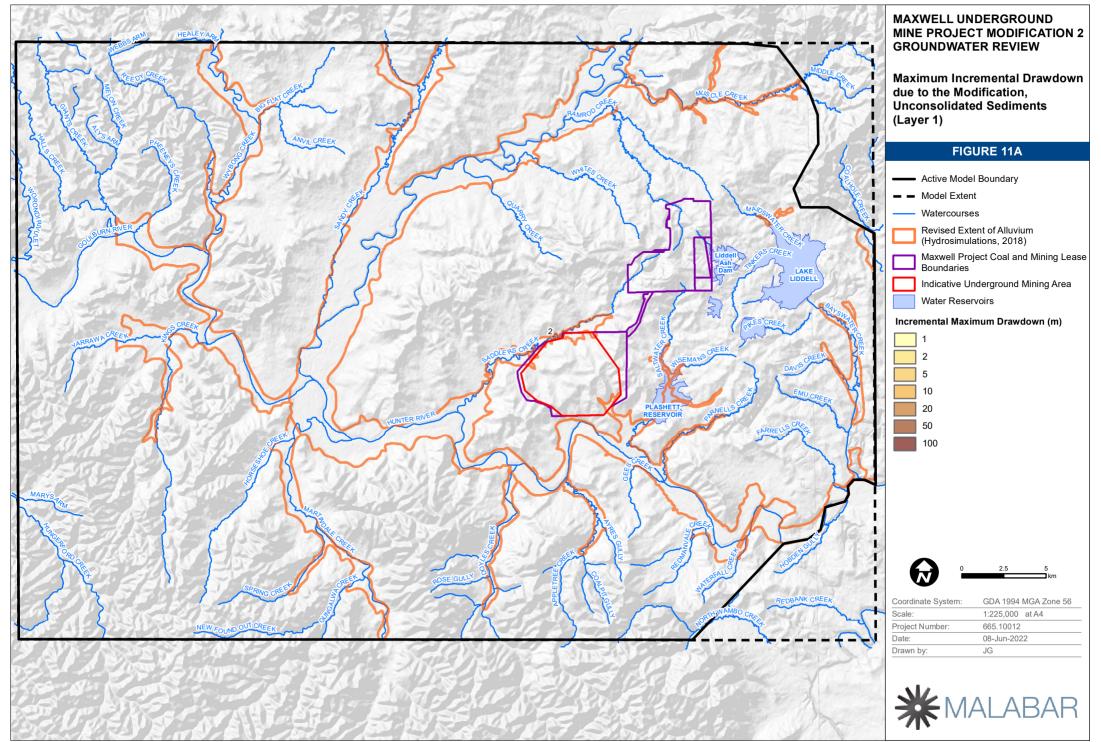
Figure 12A-B to Figure 15A-B show that the Modification would result in depressurisation of the deeper strata propagating further to the north-west and south-east, but a reduction in the propagation of depressurisation to the north-east and south-west (i.e. the Modification would have less of an impact on deeper strata beneath the Hunter River relative to the approved Project). As described above, the increase in the depressurisation of deeper strata to the north-west and south-east of the Project is not expected to cause a material increase in drawdown in the Saddlers Creek and Saltwater Creek alluvium.



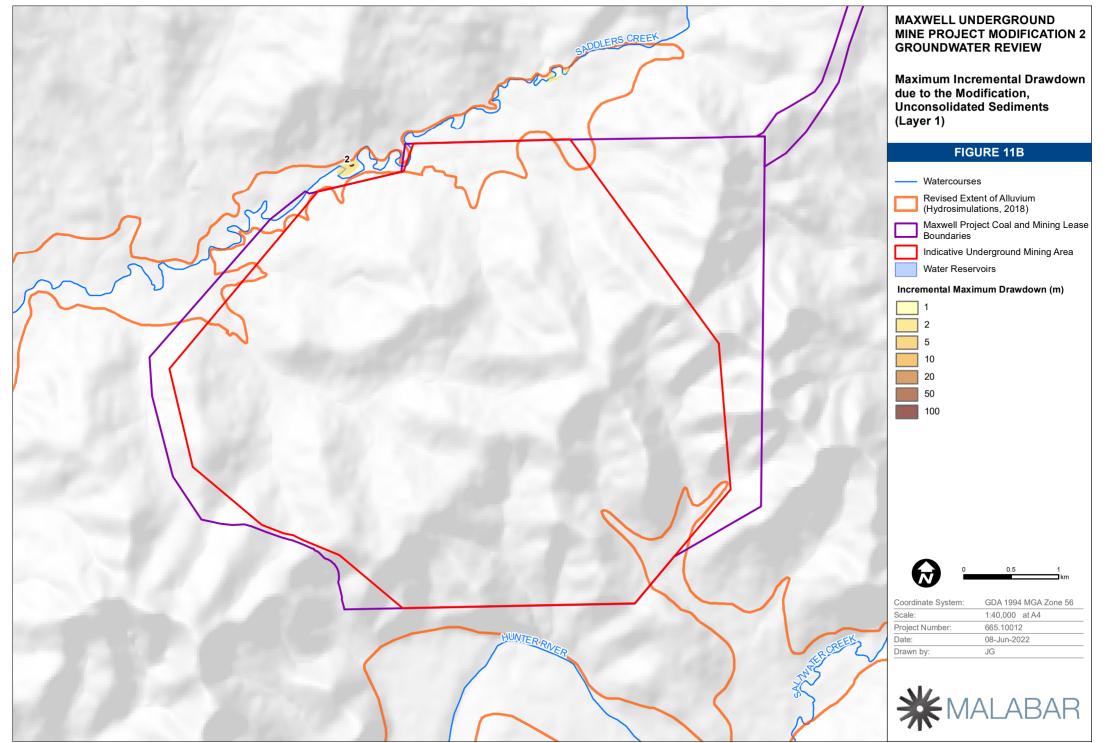




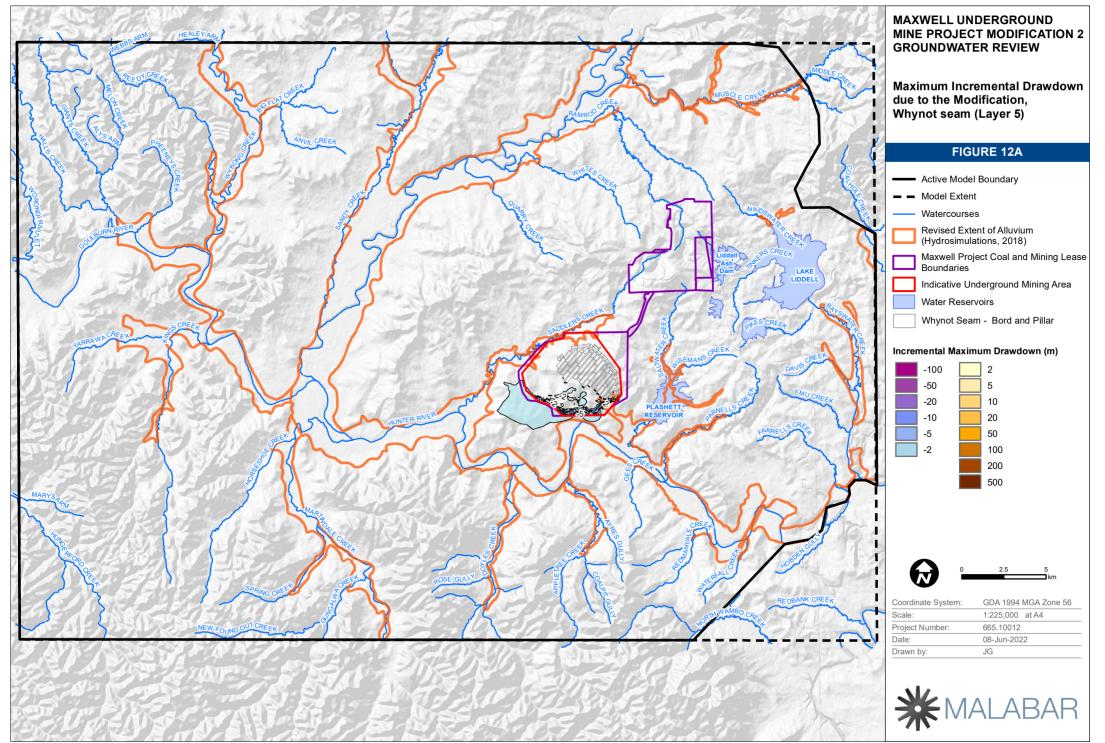
H:\Projects-SLR\620-BNE\665-WOL\665.10012 Maxwell Project GW RTS\ArcGIS\66510012 F10B Maximum Incremental Water Table Drawdown (all layers) Drawdown Due to the Modification.mxd

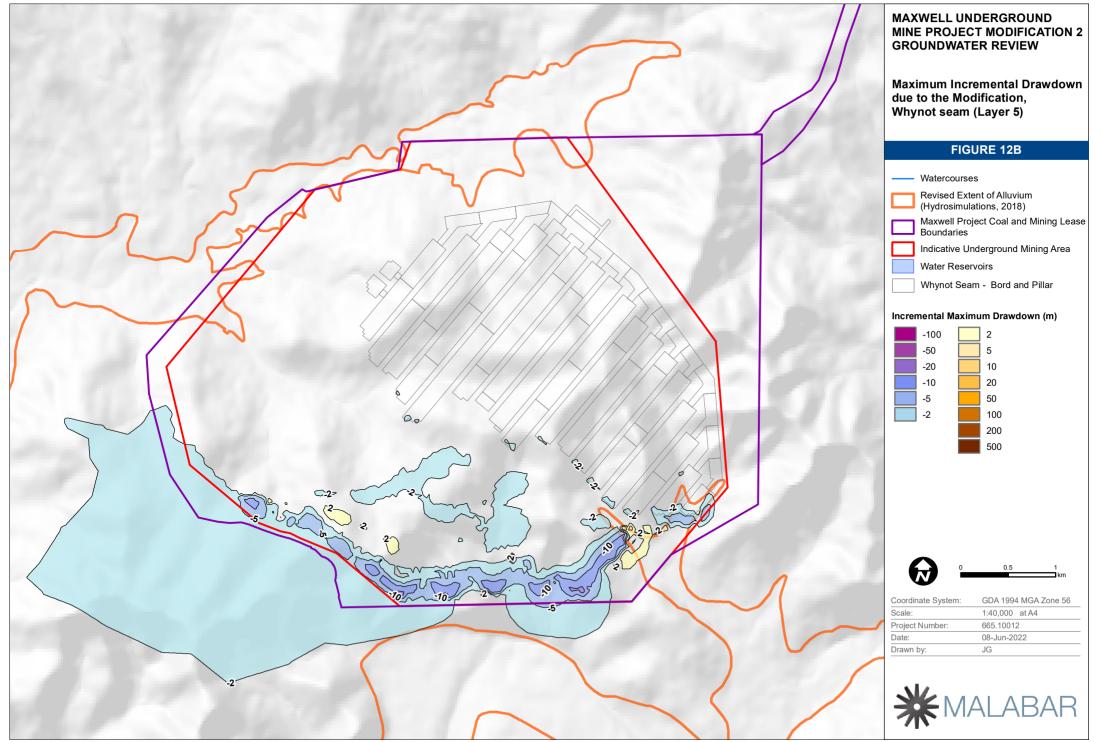


H: Projects-SLR\620-BNE\665-WOL\665.10012 Maxwell Project GW RTS\ArcGIS\66510012 F11A Maximum Incremental Drawdown due to the Modification, Unconsolidated Sediments (Layer 1).mxd

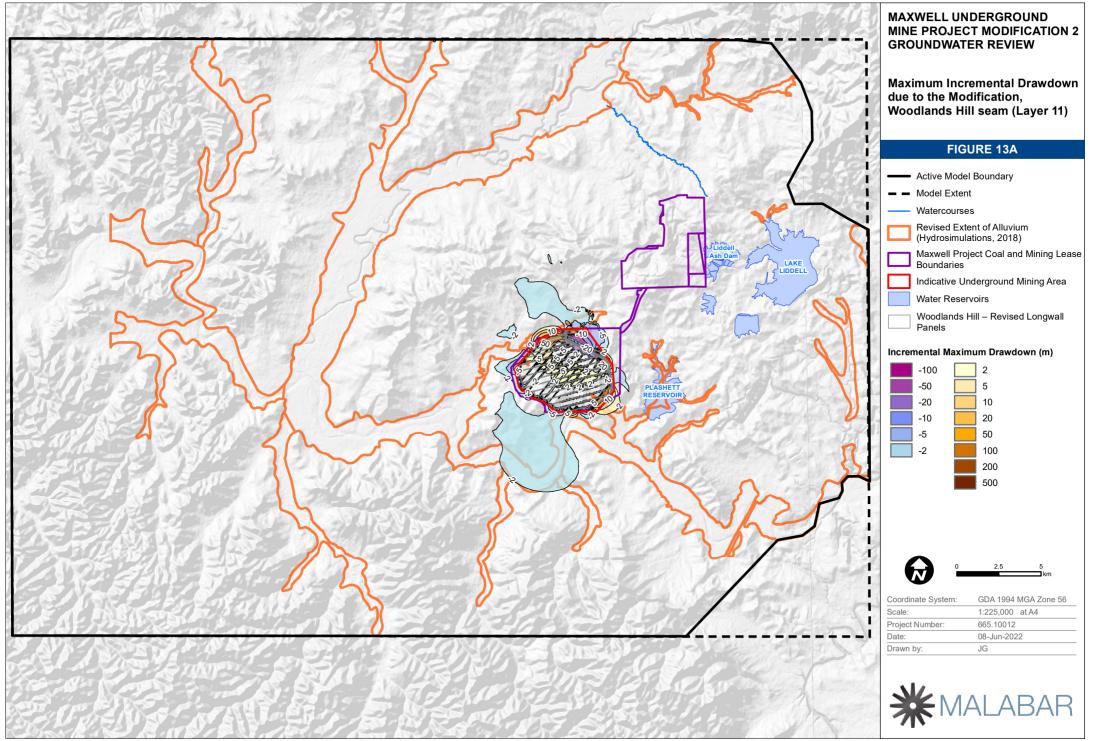


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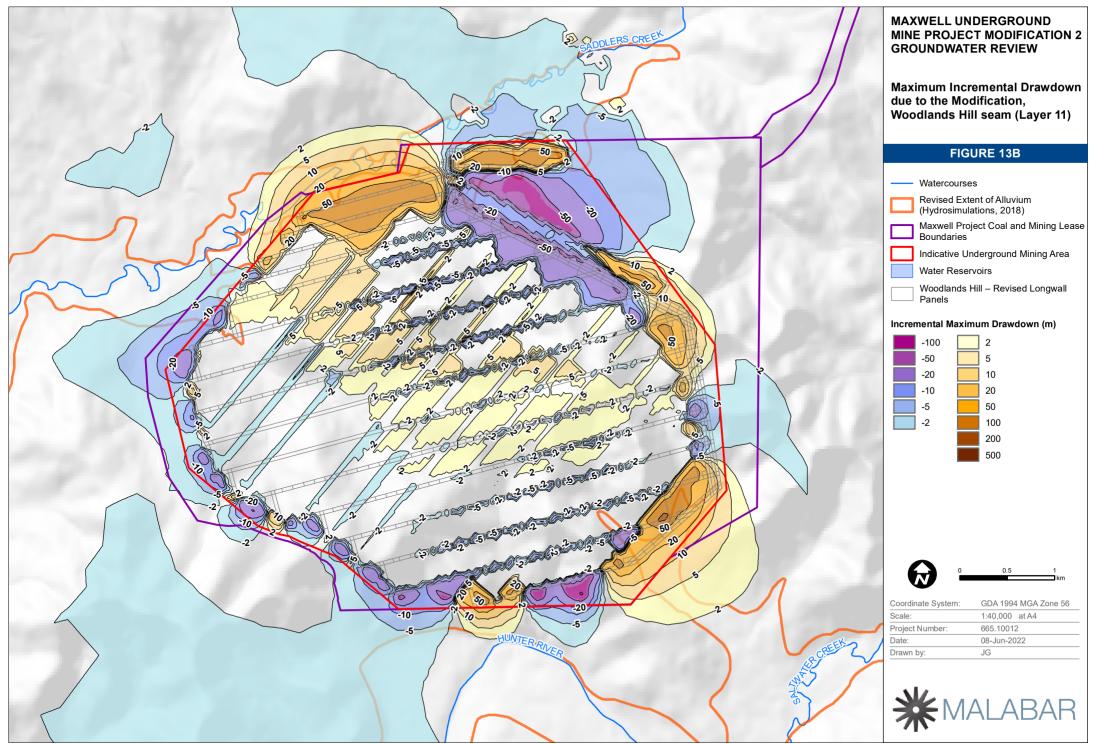




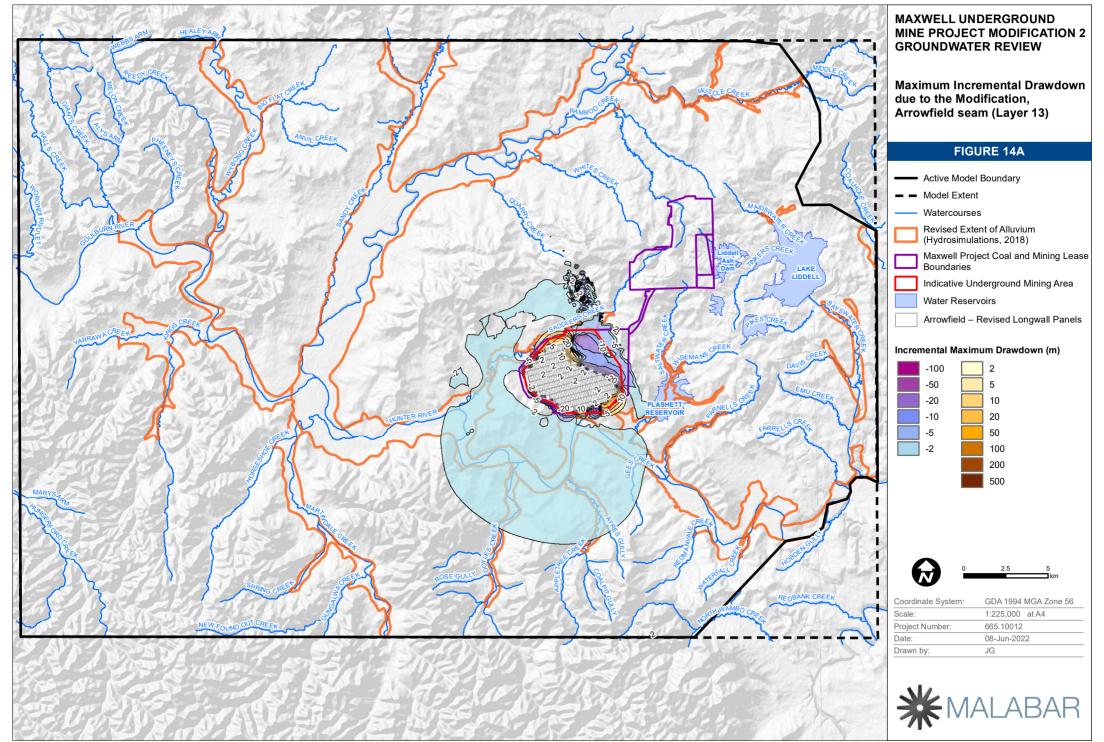
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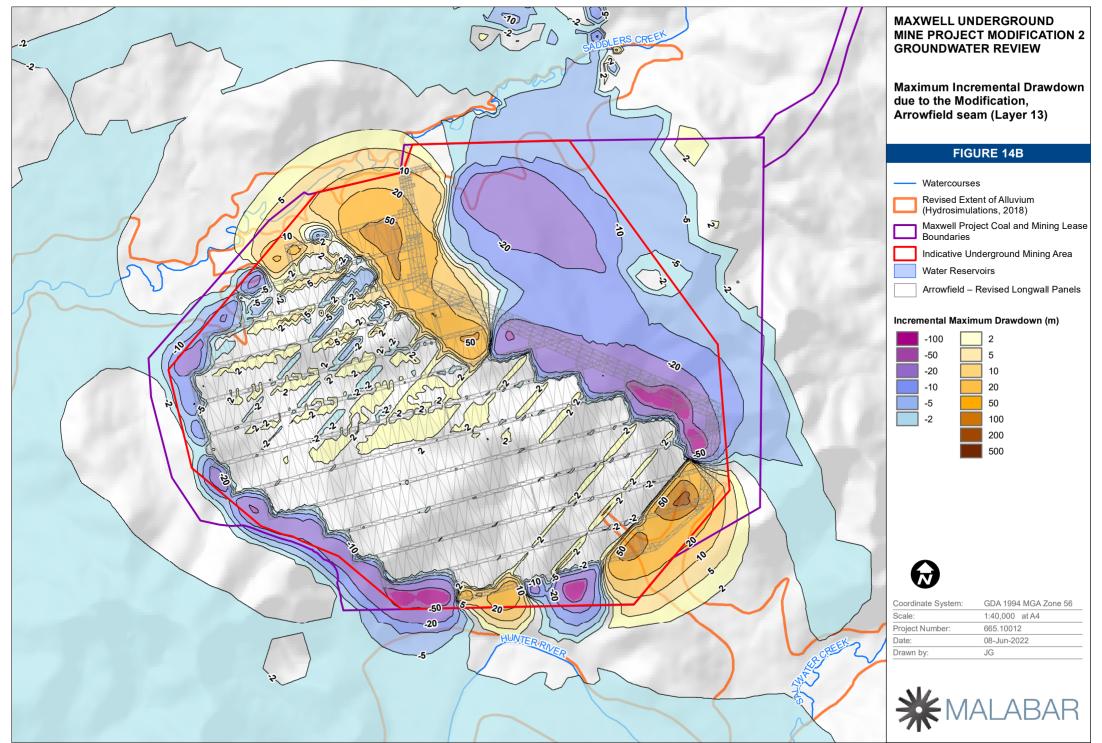
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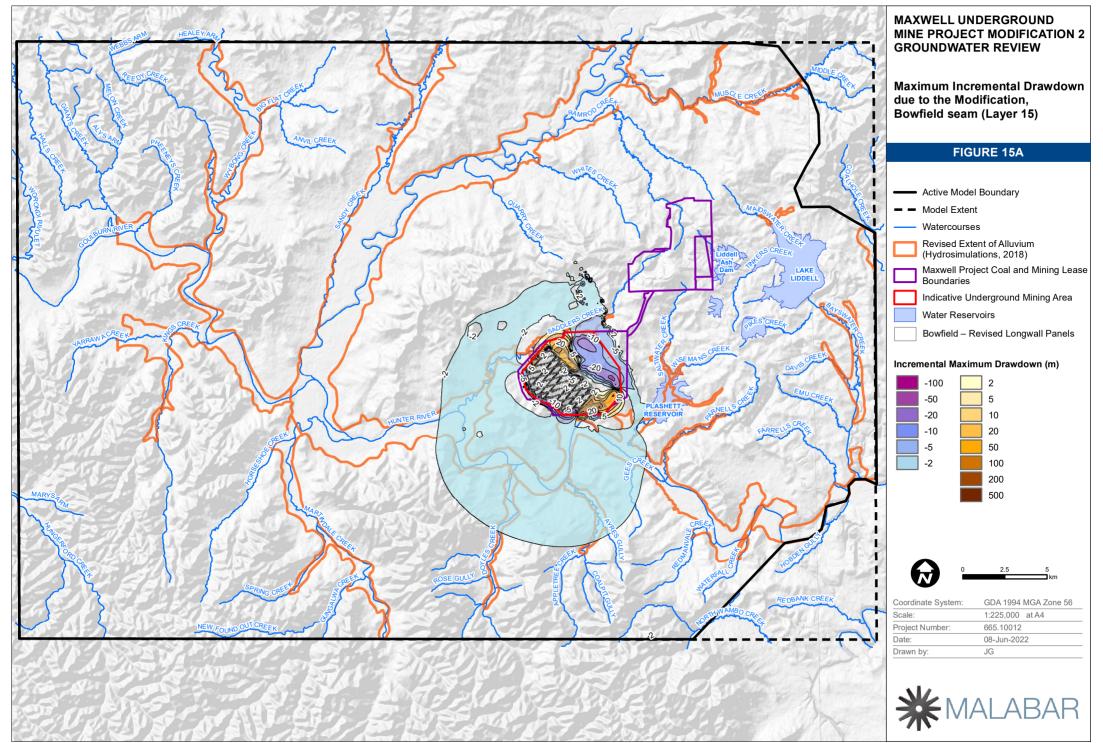
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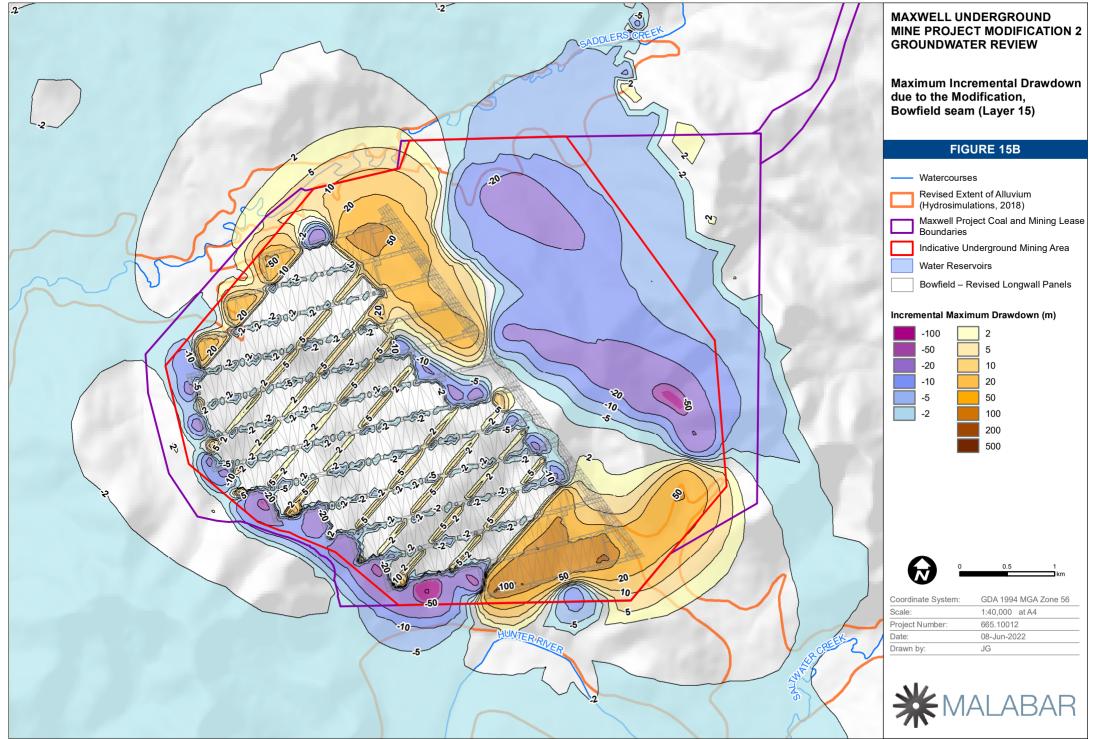
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H.\Projects-SLR\620-BNE\665-WOL\665.10012 Maxwell Project GW RTS\ArcGIS\66510012 F14B Maximum Incremental Drawdown due to the Modification, Arrowfield seam (Layer 13).mxd



H: Projects-SLR\620-BNE\665-WOL\665.10012 Maxwell Project GW RTS\ArcGIS\66510012 F15A Maximum Incremental Drawdown due to the Modification, Bowfield seam (Layer 15).mxd



H/Projects-SLR\620-BNE\665-WOL\665.10012 Maxwell Project GW RTS\ArcGIS\66510012 F15B Maximum Incremental Drawdown due to the Modification, Bowfield seam (Layer 15) .mxd

5.4.3 Predicted Incidental Take of Water from the Alluvium

Figure 16 presents the predicted incidental take of water from the different alluvial water sources for the Modification compared to the approved Project. Overall, the change in flow between the alluvium and the Permian coal measures due to the Modification is consistent with the approved Project (i.e. incremental change of less than 1 ML/year). Accordingly, the potential incremental impacts of the Modification on the alluvial aquifers are considered negligible.

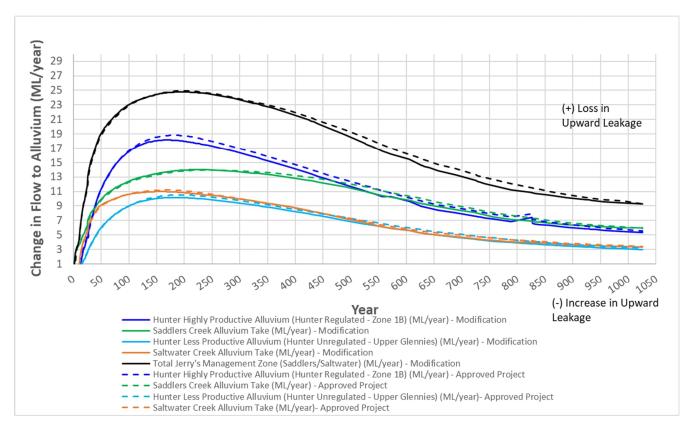


Figure 16 Predicted Incidental Take of Water from the Alluvium for the Modification and Approved Project



5.4.4 Predicted Stream Flow Effects

Predicted drawdown from the approved Project is predicted to extend toward the Hunter River, with the EIS groundwater model predicting increased leakage of up to 0.55 ML/year from the Hunter River to the underlying alluvium (HydroSimulations, 2019). This is considered negligible in comparison to the observed historical flow rates in the Hunter River and the regulation of its flow. For comparison, the median annual flow in the Hunter River at the Liddell Gauging Station (210083) is approximately 87,600 ML/year.

The change in baseflow for the Hunter River (ML/year) between the Modification and the approved Project during and post-mining is negligible.

The Modification would result in no change in river leakage for Saddlers Creek.

5.4.5 Drawdown at Privately Owned Water Supply Bores

The Modification will not result in impacts to any additional privately-owned or water supply bores.

Table 2 shows the privately-owned and mine-owned bores that were reported in the EIS Groundwater Assessment to experience drawdowns greater than the Aquifer Interference Policy minimal impact criteria (i.e. 2 m of drawdown). Table 2 demonstrates that, in all cases, the Modification results in less drawdown at privately-owned bores than the approved Project, including a reduction in impacts at the privately-owned bore to below the NSW Aquifer Interference Policy minimal impact criteria.

Table 2 Predicted Drawdown at Privately and Mine-owned Water Supply Bores

Bore ID	Use	Туре	Bore Depth (m)	Water Column (m)	Geological Unit	Modification - Maximum Drawdown (m)	Approved Project - Maximum Drawdown (m)	Incremental Change (m)
GW029660	Stock	Privately- owned	74.7	39.6	Jerry's Plains Subgroup	1.8	2.3	-0.5
GW049223	Stock	Mine- owned	67.1	65.2	Jerry's Plains Subgroup	10.1	13.5	-3.4
GW031622	Stock	Mine- owned	91.4	60.9	Jerry's Plains Subgroup	2.4	3.9	-1.5
GW031859	Stock	Mine- owned	61	38.1	Jerry's Plains Subgroup	2.2	4.3	-2.1
GW032077	Stock	Mine- owned	53.3	13.9	Jerry's Plains Subgroup	1.9	3.1	-1.2

A negative incremental change in drawdown means a reduced drawdown with the Modification A positive incremental change in drawdown means a greater drawdown with the Modification

6 Conclusions

The key conclusions from this Groundwater Review are summarised as follows:

- The updates to the baseline groundwater data set showed that the groundwater level trends and groundwater quality are generally consistent with the outcomes presented in the EIS Groundwater Assessment. Modest declines in groundwater levels and changes to groundwater quality have been attributed to the drought conditions (2017- 2019), with some subsequent recovery following a period of above average rainfall in 2020/2021.
- The model calibration was verified for the updated groundwater monitoring data. The updated data set, consisting of groundwater levels from 2018 to 2021 added to the calibration datasets, shows that the EIS groundwater model remains calibrated and is fit for purpose for prediction.
- The height of fracture was calculated for the Modification mine plan and showed a similar fracture zone as the approved Project design across the underground mining area.
- The predicted mine inflows to the Maxwell Underground workings during the life of the Project (incorporating the Modification) would be generally consistent with those predicted for the approved Project on an annual basis, with the Modification resulting in an overall reduction of approximately 500 ML in total groundwater inflows over the life of the Project.
- The Modification would result in depressurisation of the deeper strata propagating further to the north-west and south-east but a reduction in the propagation of depressurisation to the north-east and south-west (i.e. the Modification would have less of an impact on deeper strata beneath the Hunter River relative to the approved Project).
- The increase in the depressurisation of deeper strata to the north-west and south-east of the Project is not expected to cause a material increase in drawdown in the Saddlers Creek and Saltwater Creek Alluvium.
- There is a slight decrease in alluvial take due to the Modification(less than 1 ML/year).
- The maximum incremental change in baseflow to, or leakage from, the Hunter River and Saddlers Creek is negligible.
- The Modification will not result in impacts to any additional privately owned or water supply bores. In all cases, bores identified in the EIS as being impacted are now predicted to experience less drawdown due to the Modification.
- GW029660 and GW032077, which were previously predicted to experience greater than 2m drawdown due to the approved Project, are now predicted to experience less than 2 m of drawdown due to the Modification.

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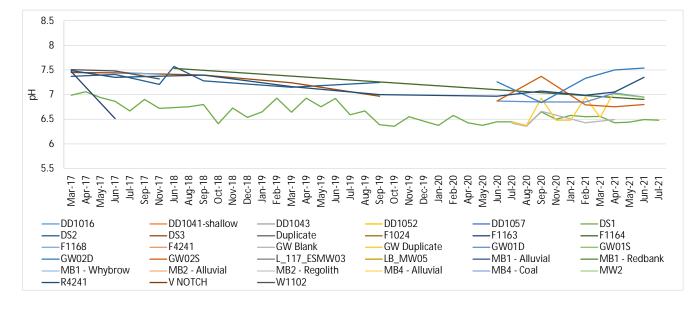
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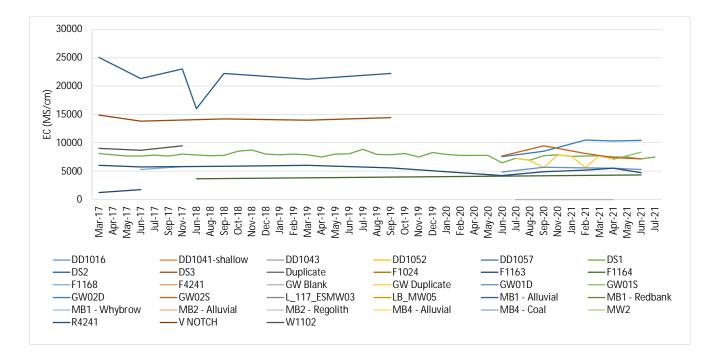
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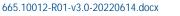


APPENDIX A

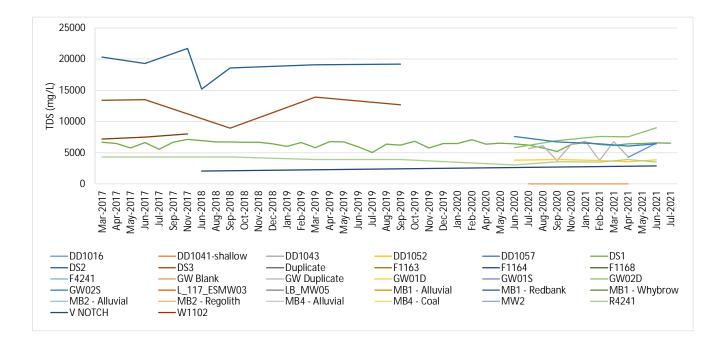
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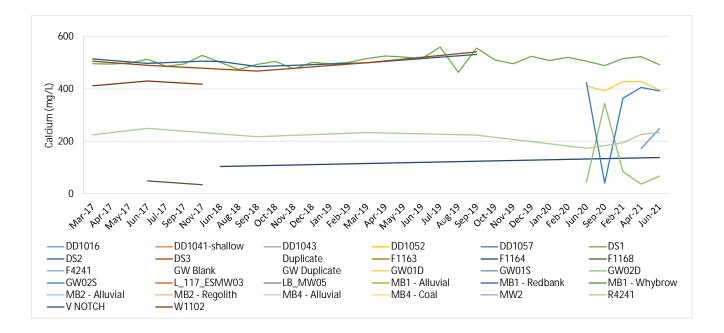




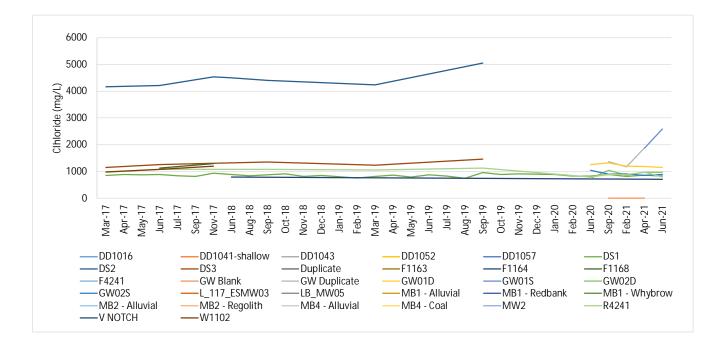


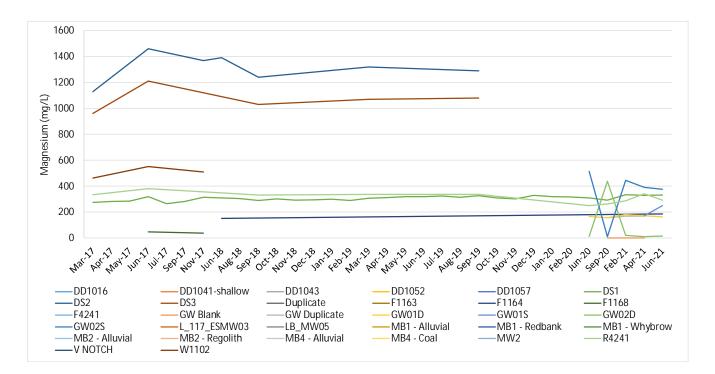




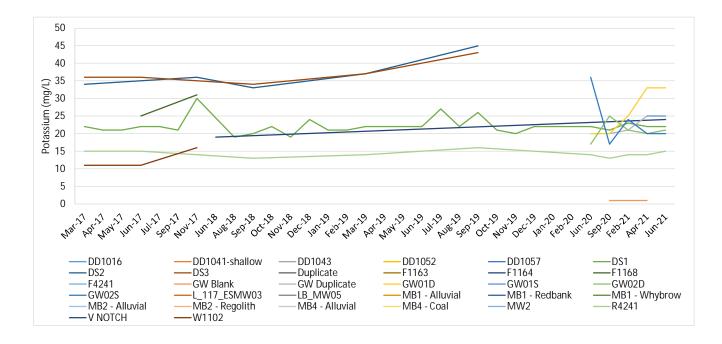


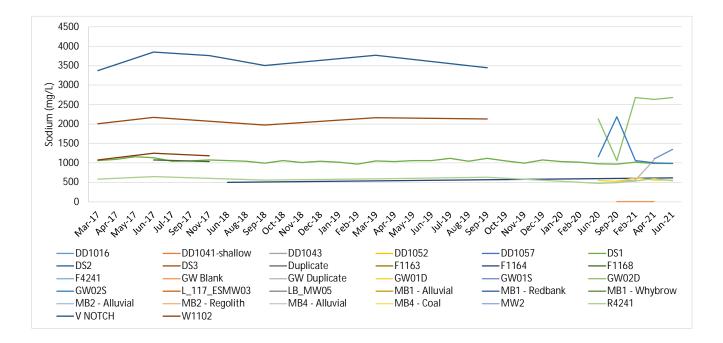




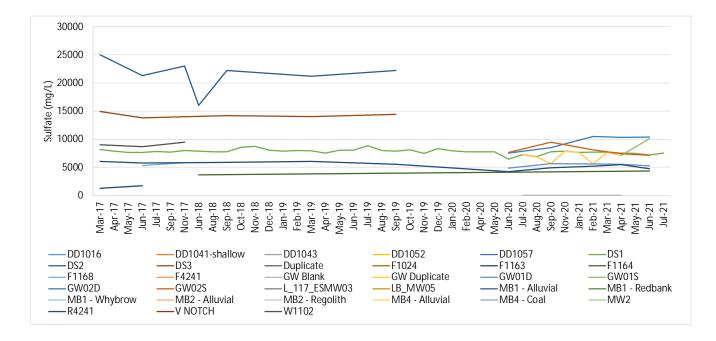










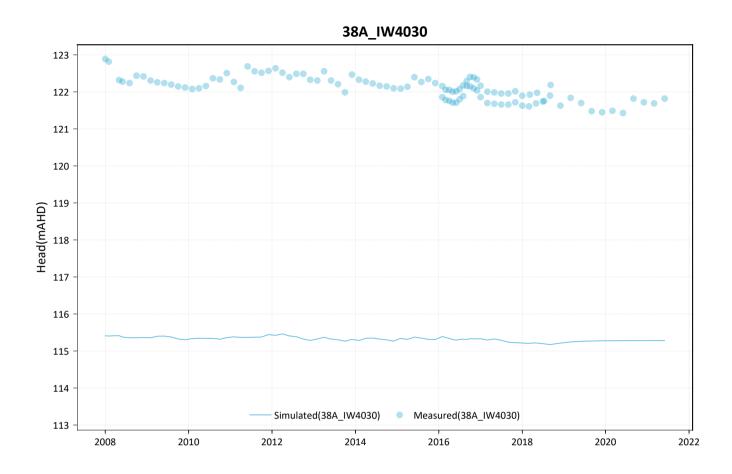




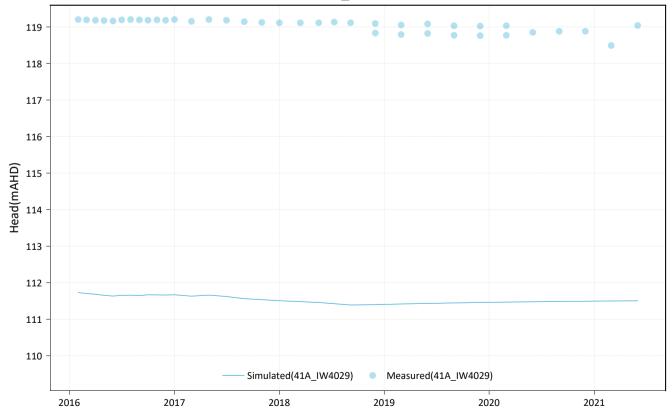
APPENDIX B

Calibration Hydrographs

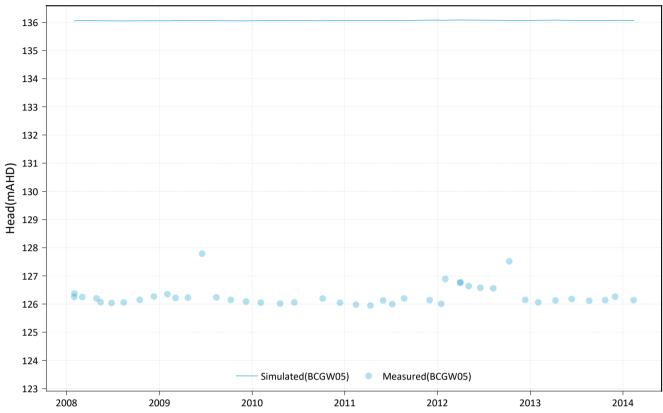




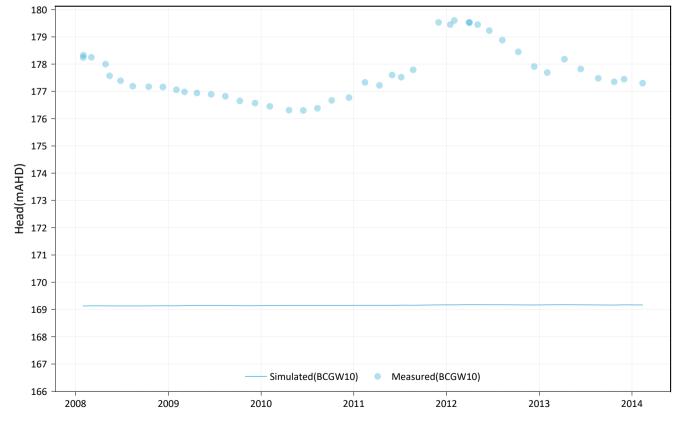
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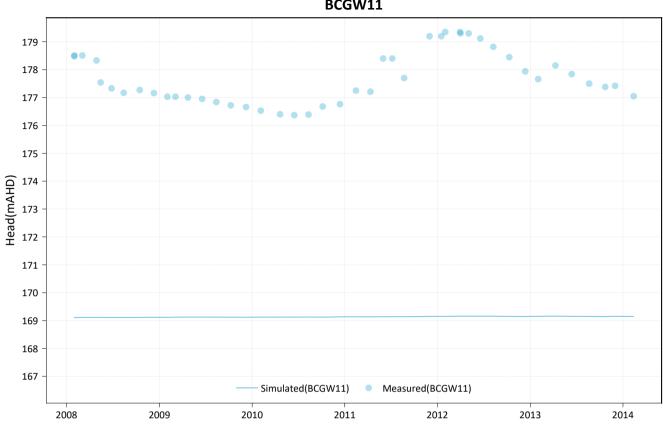




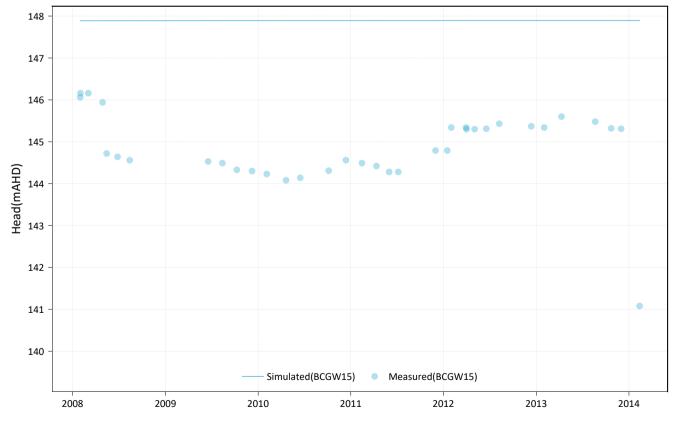


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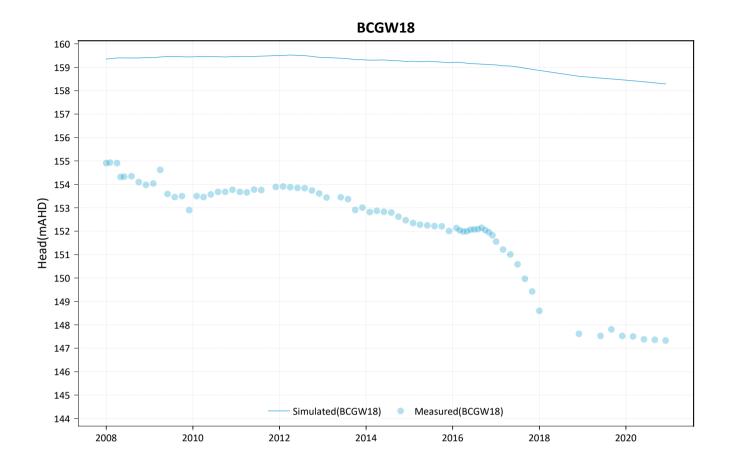


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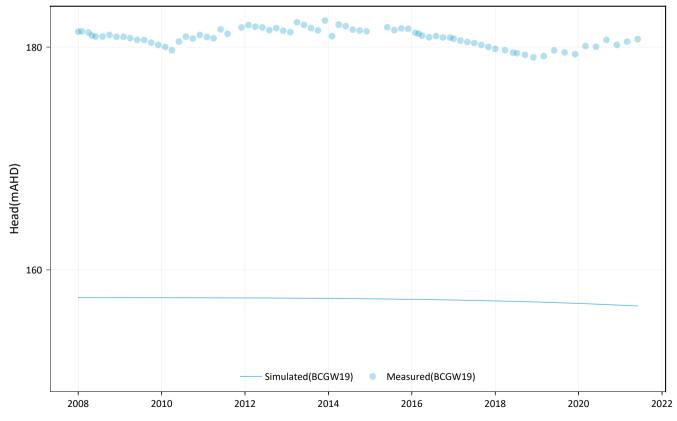


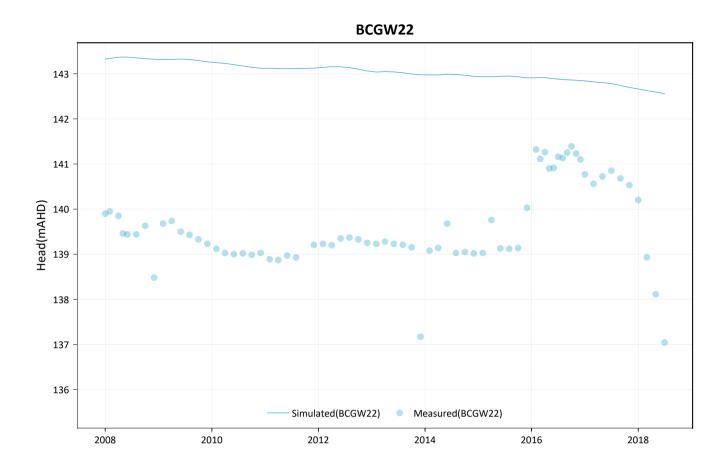
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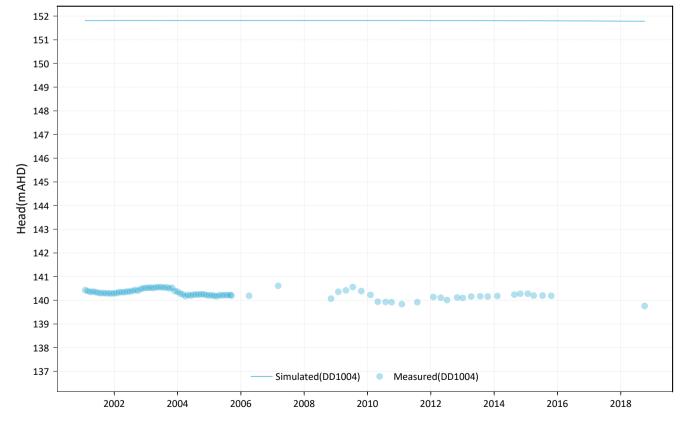
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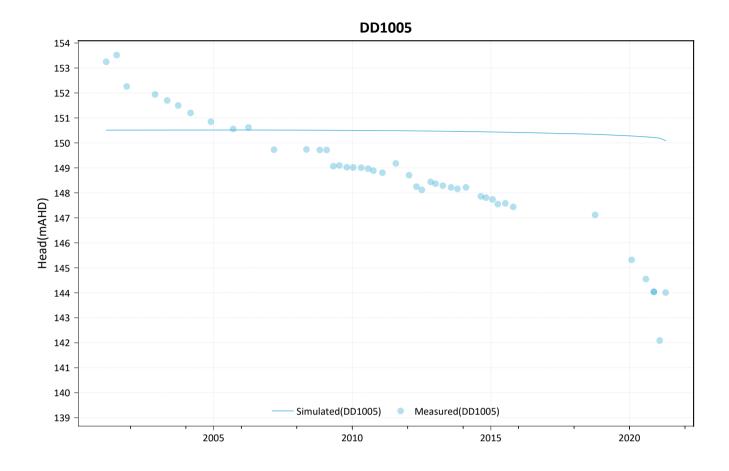


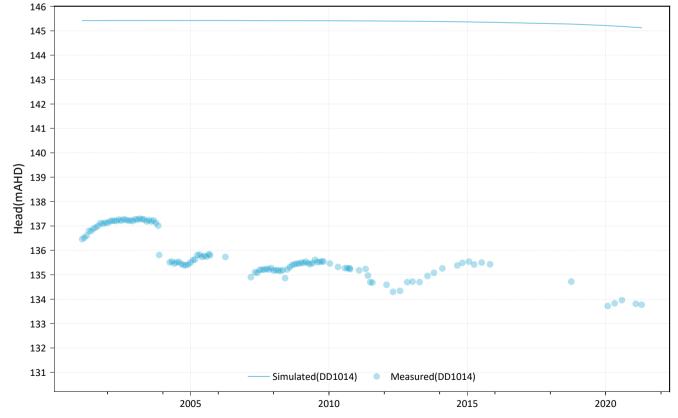
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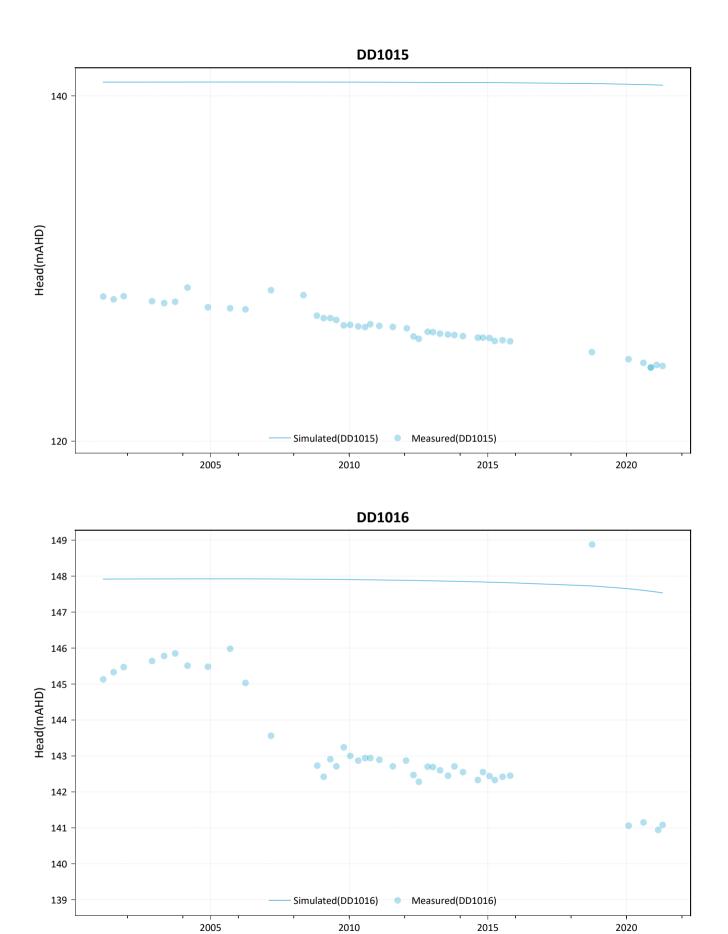




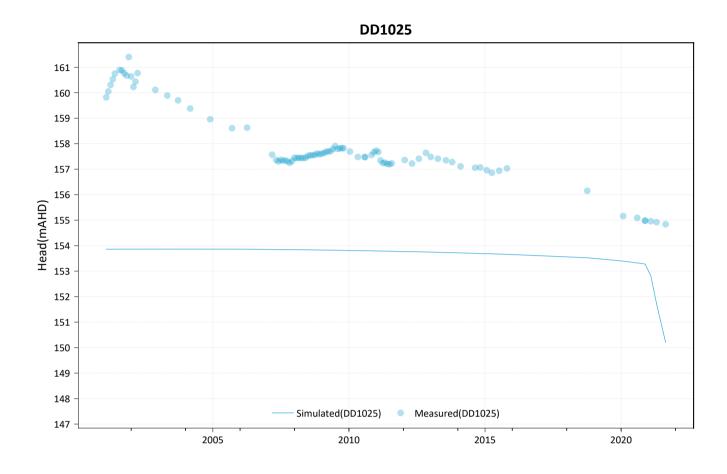


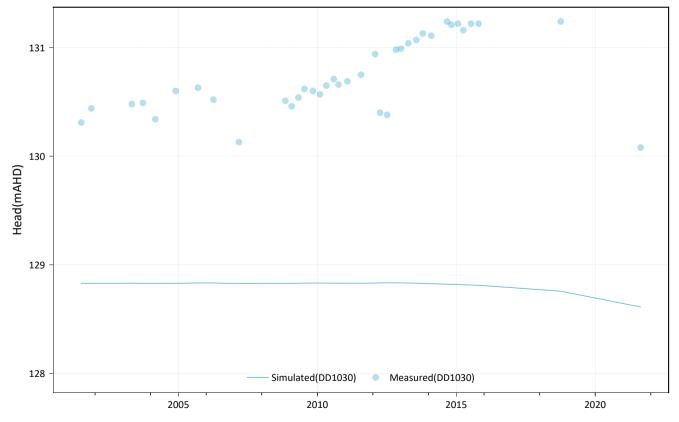




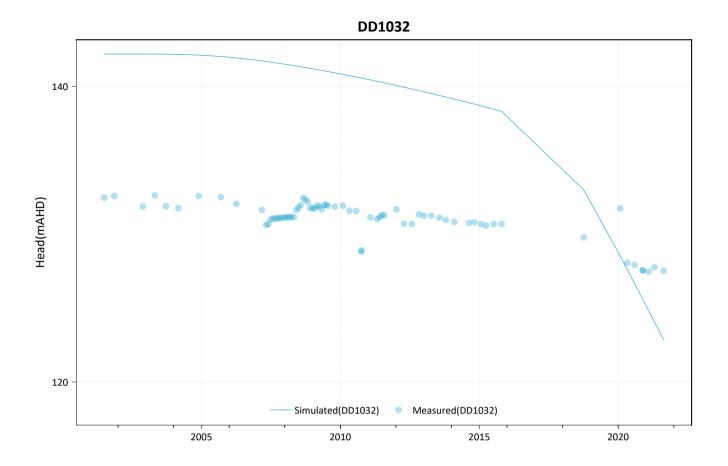


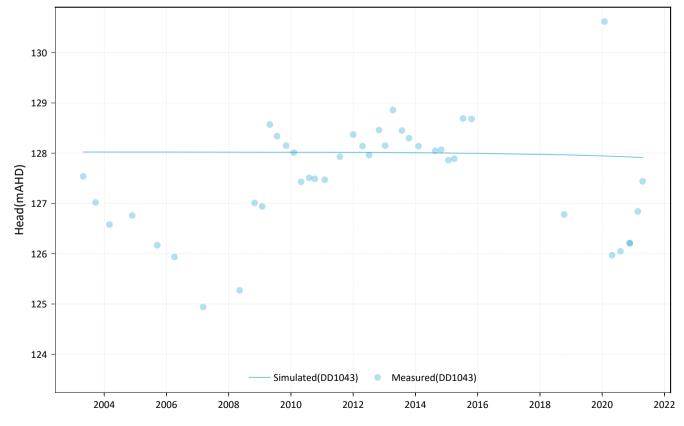
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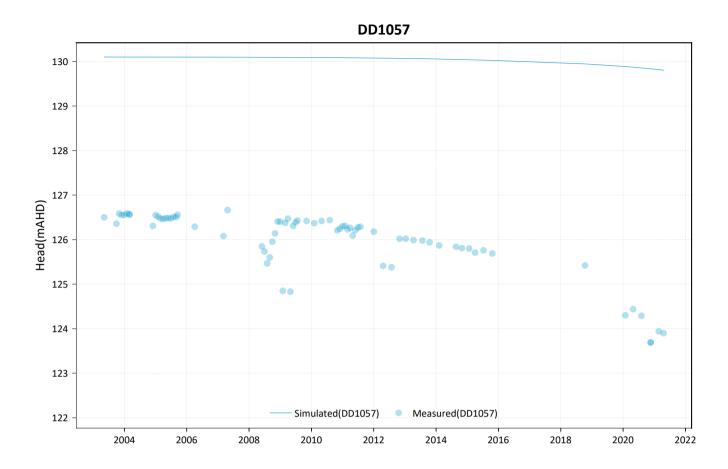




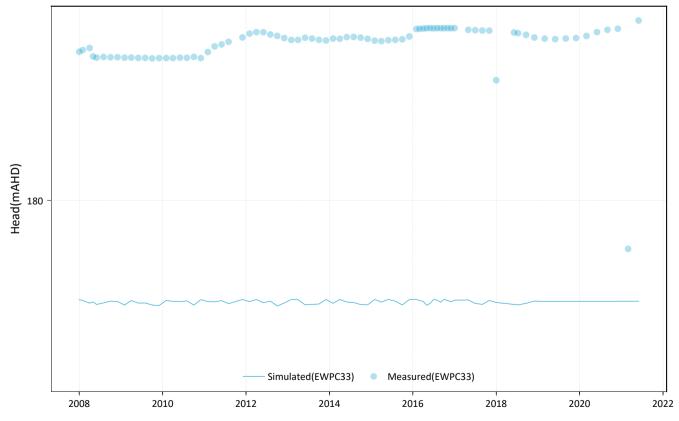
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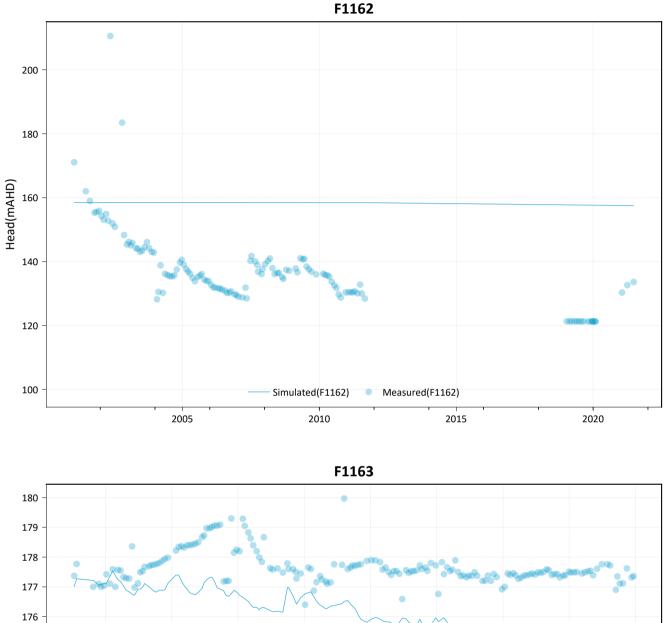






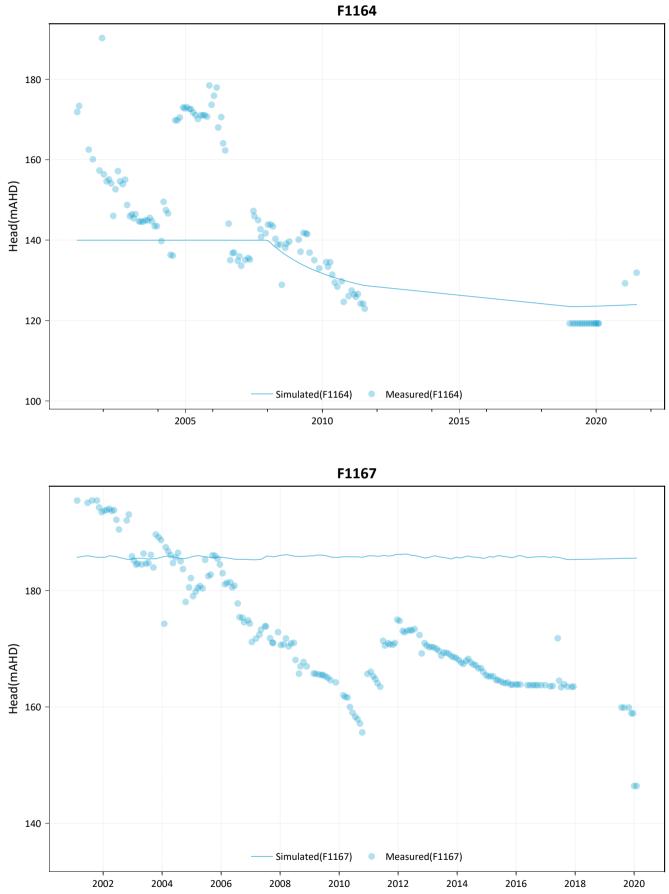




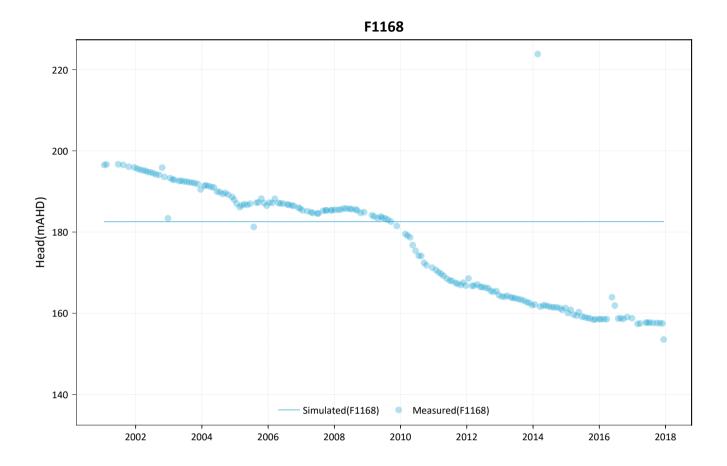




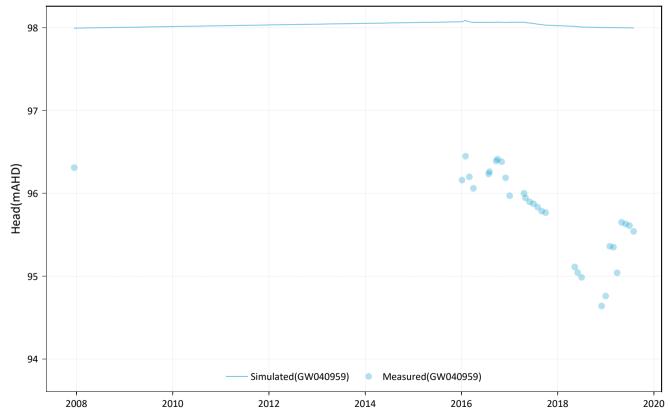
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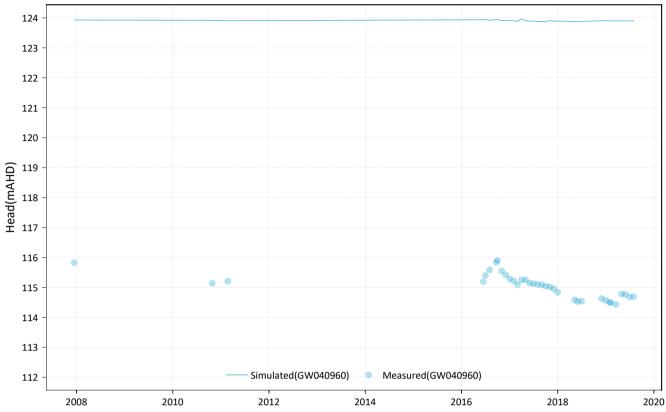
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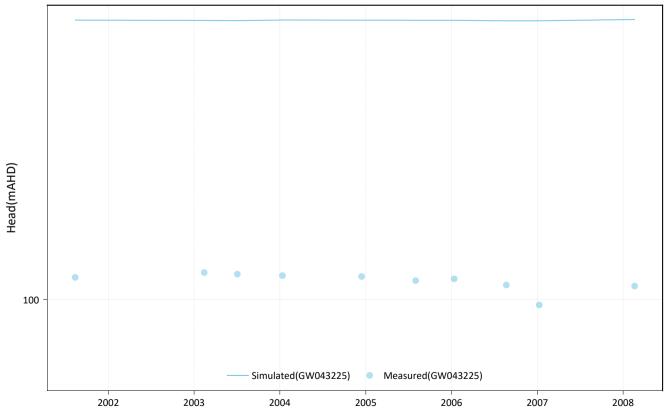
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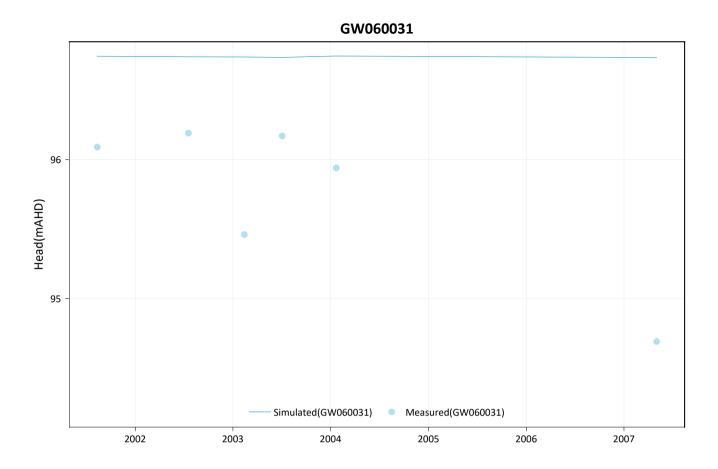


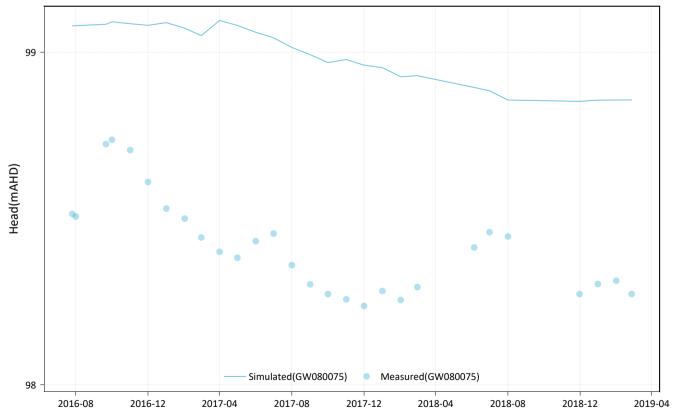




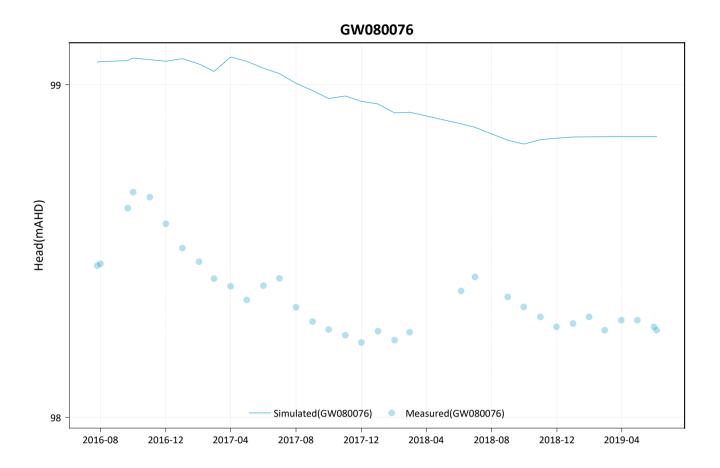


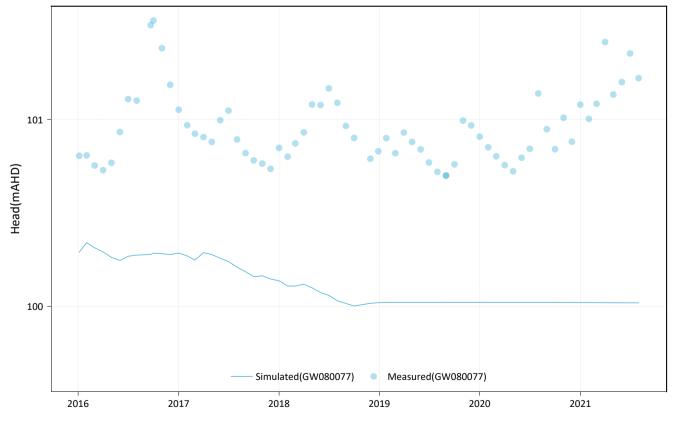




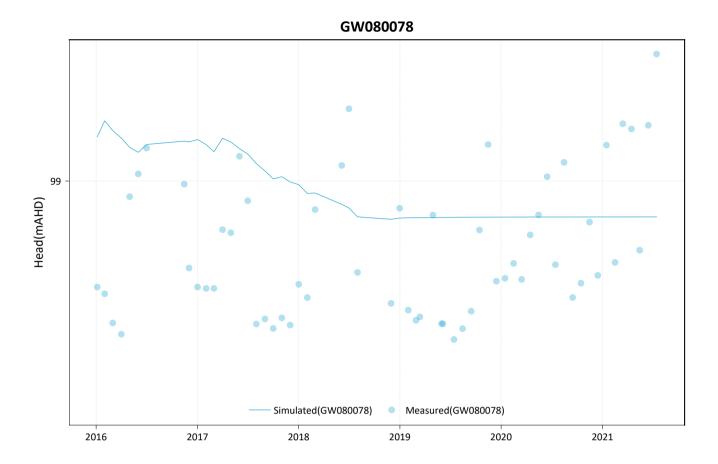


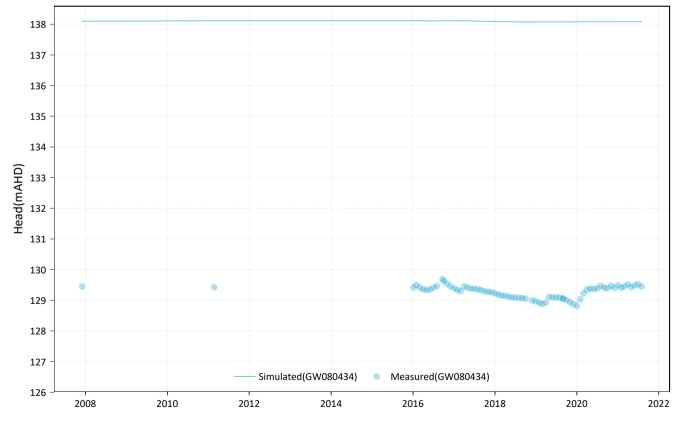
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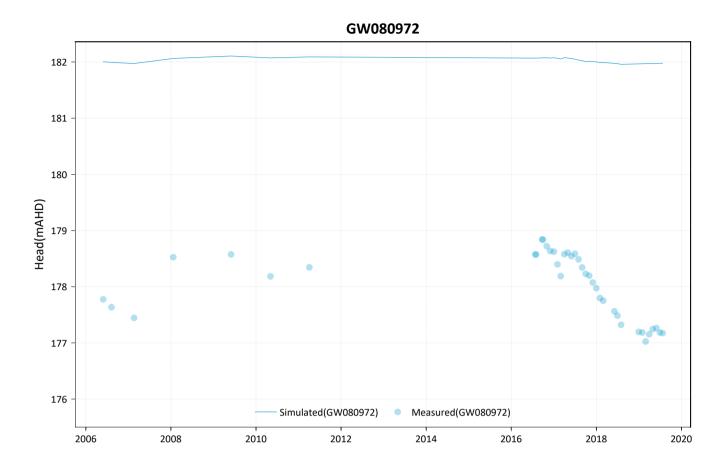




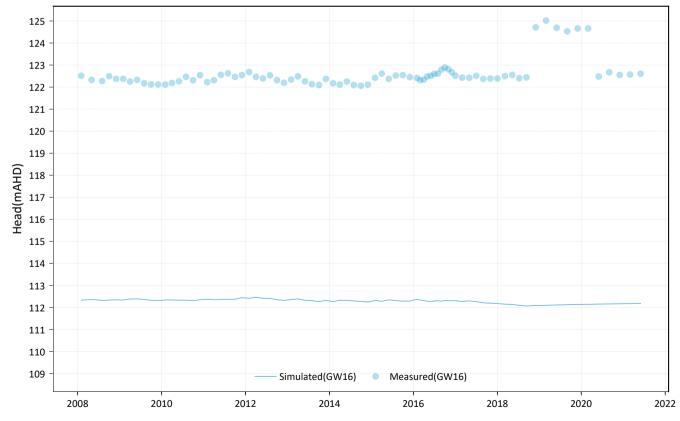
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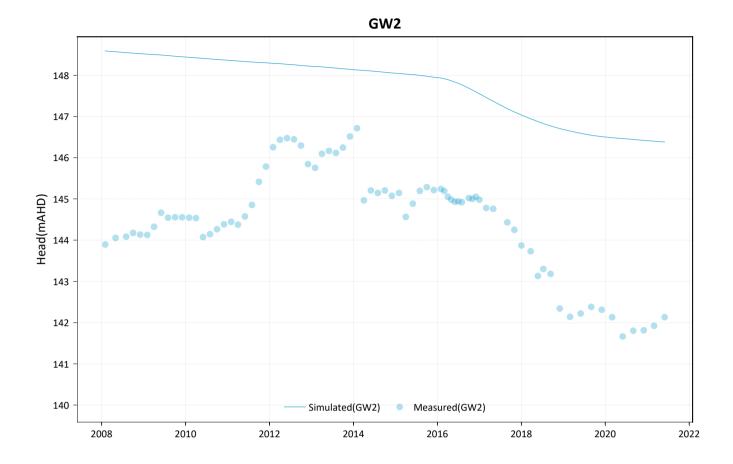




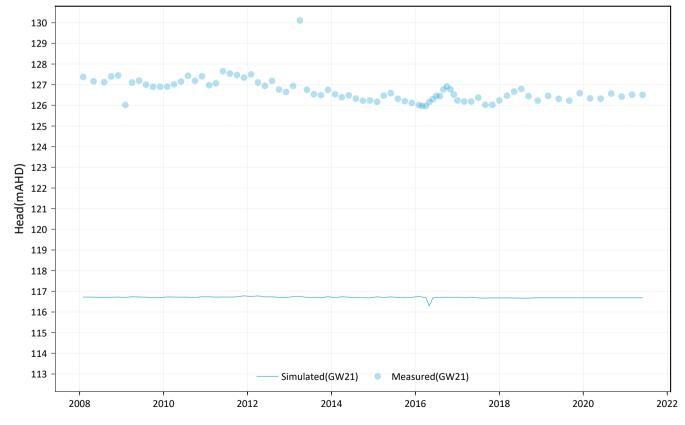
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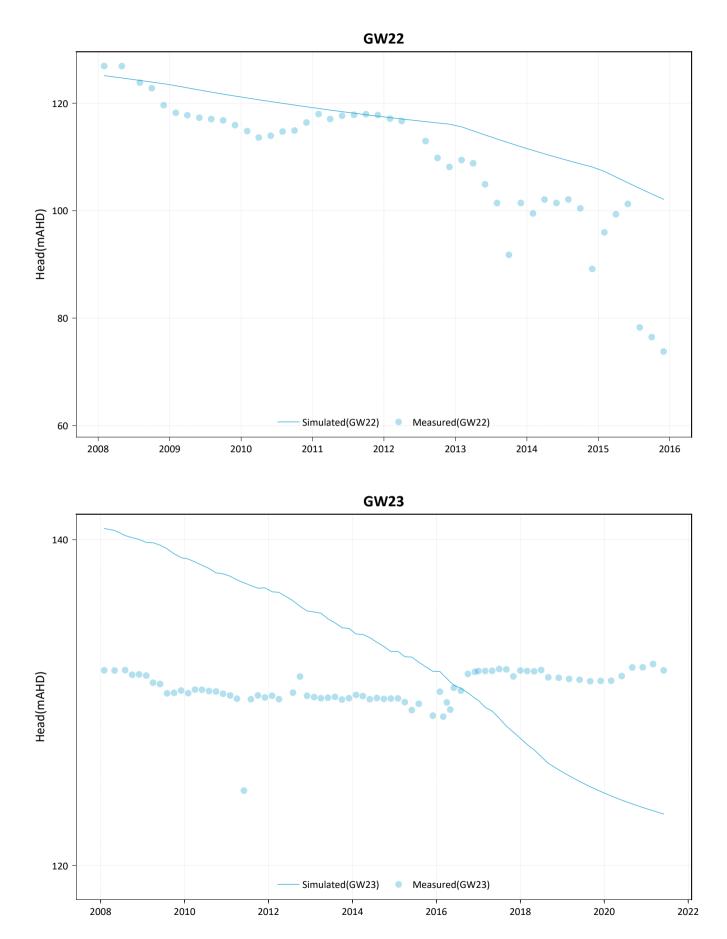
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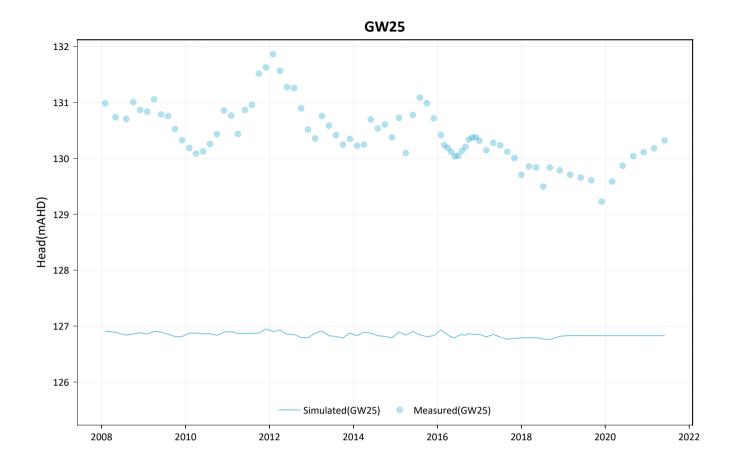


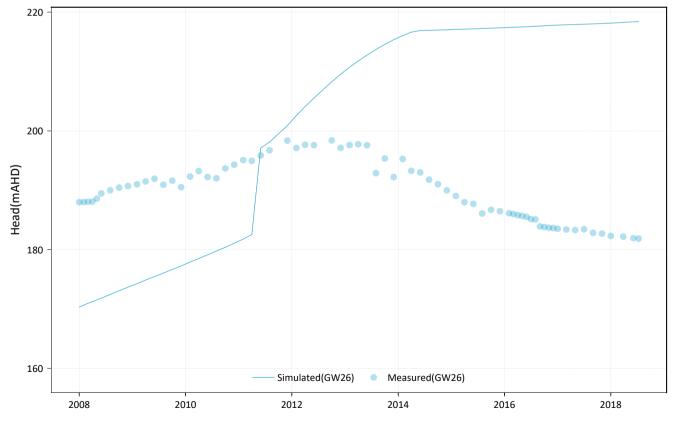


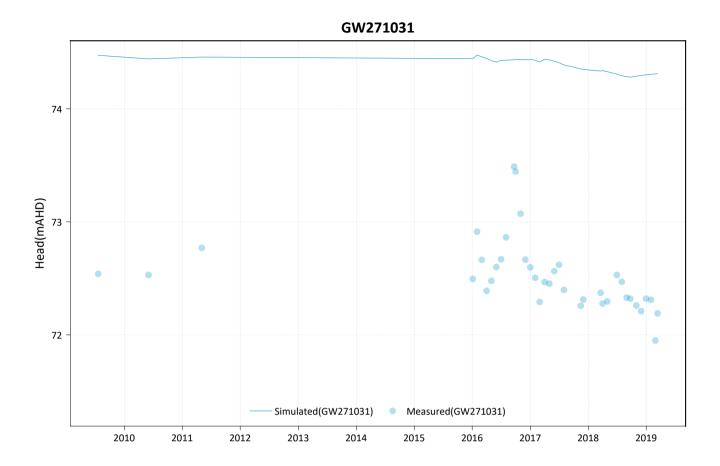
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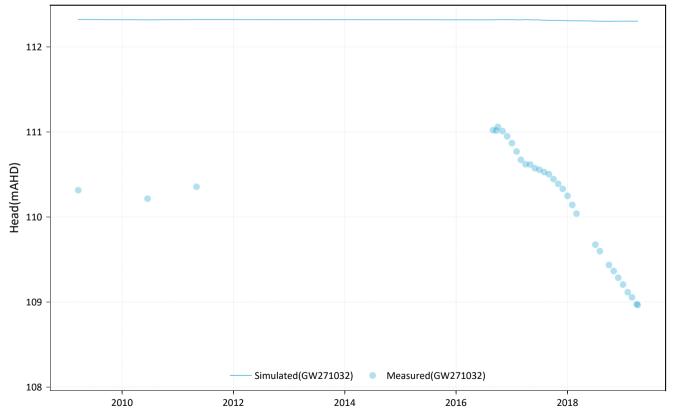
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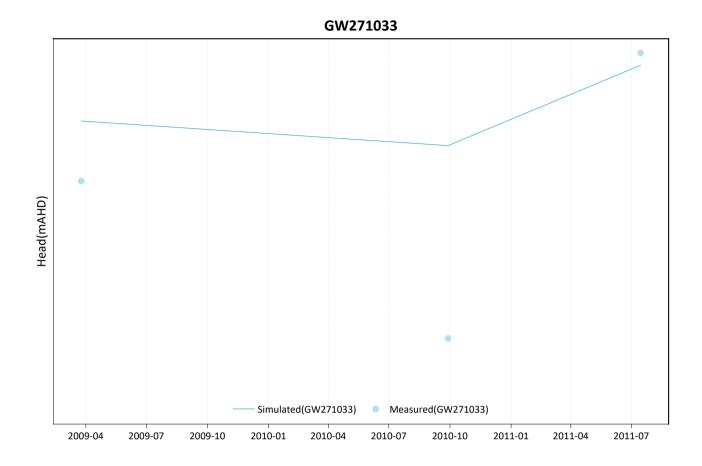


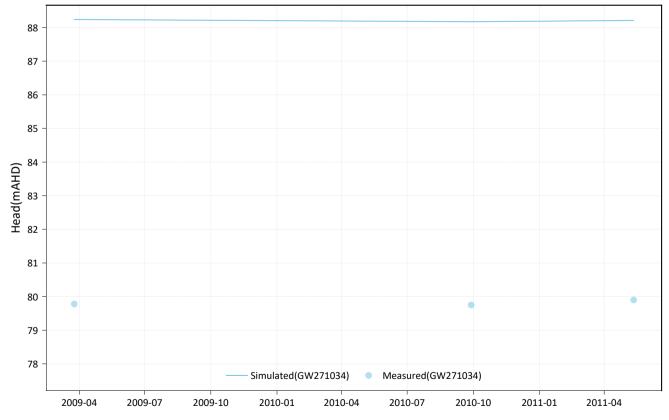


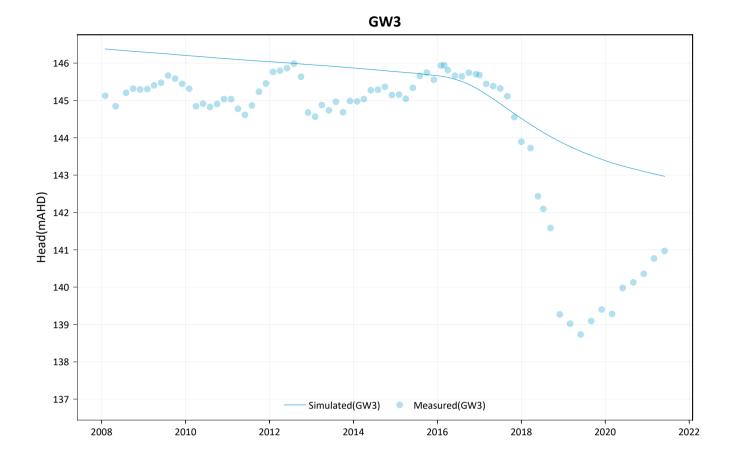




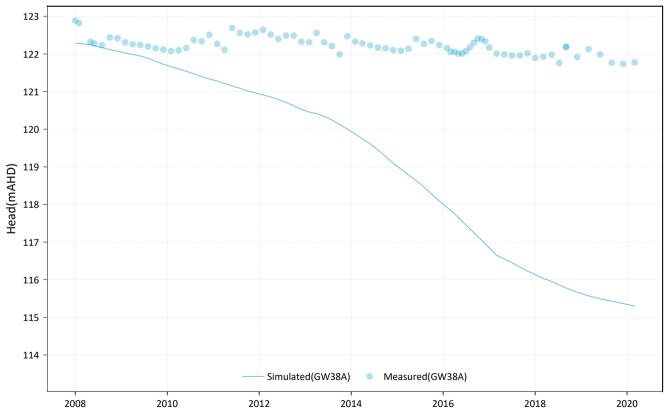


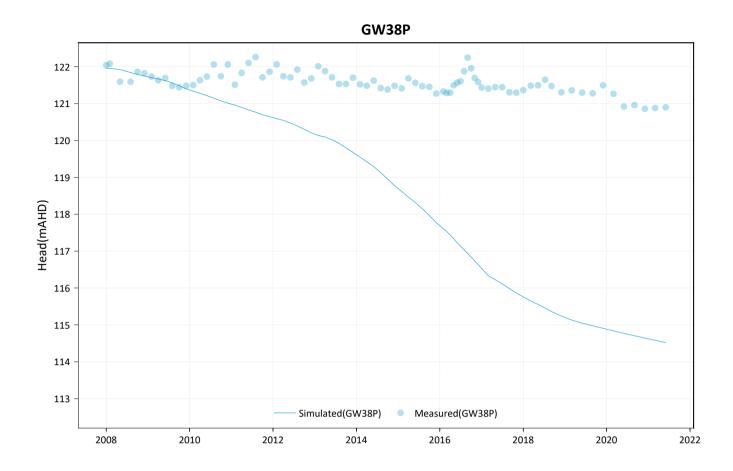




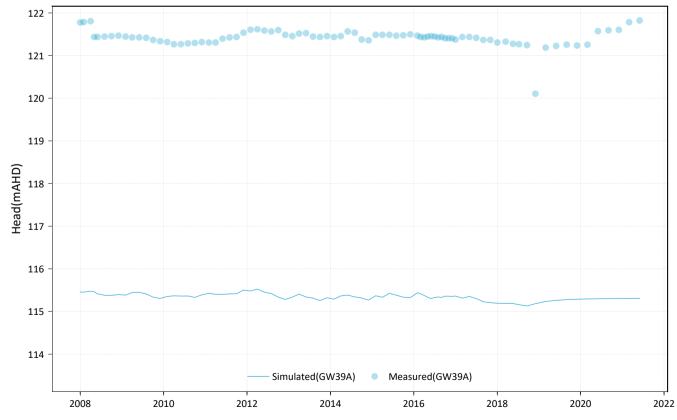


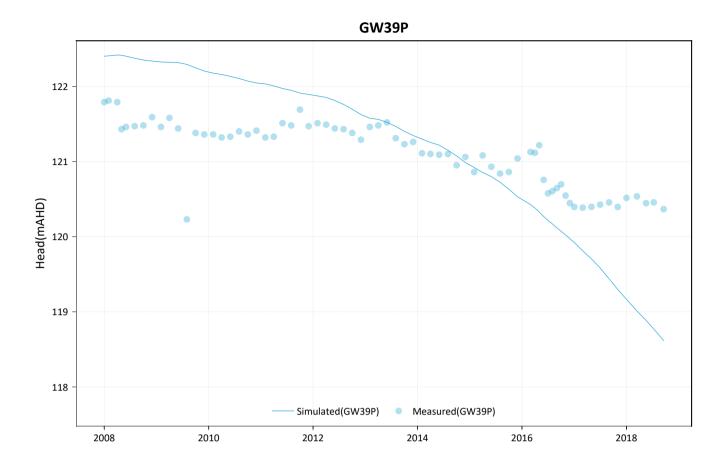




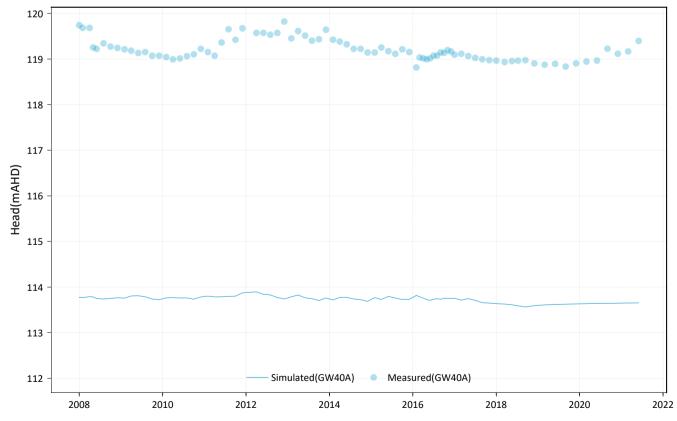


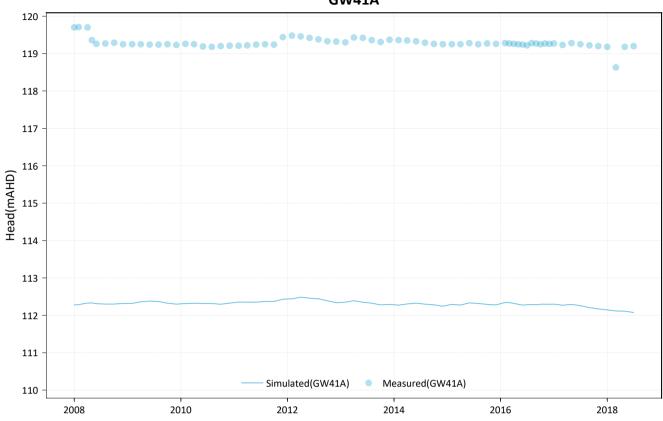
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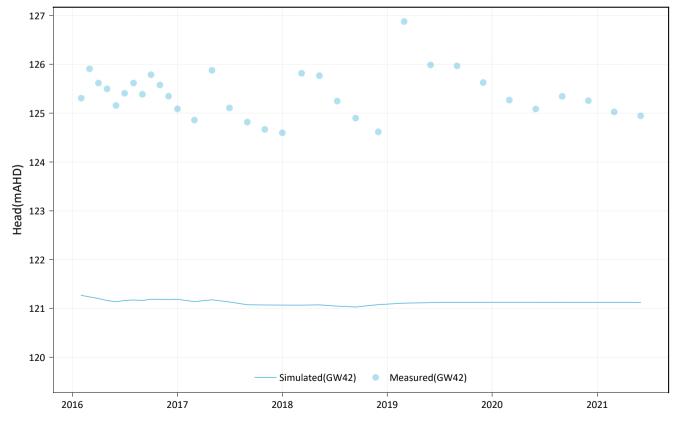


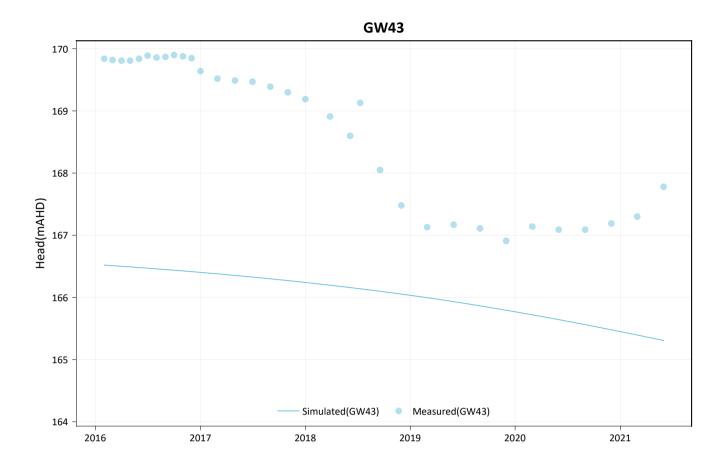
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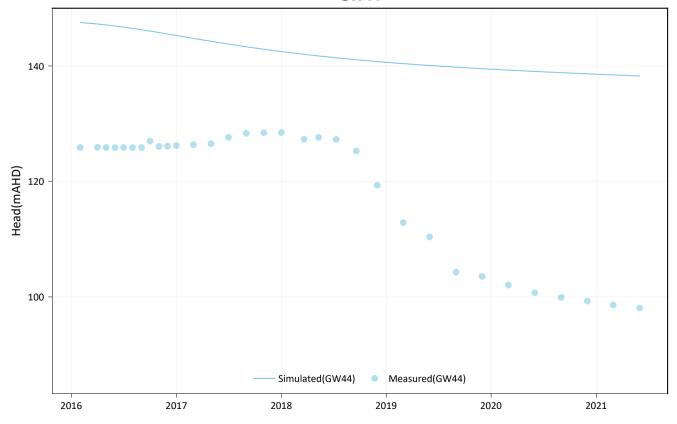


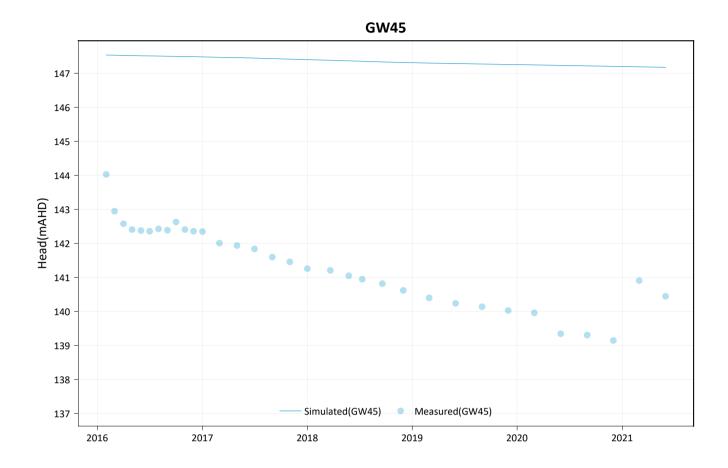


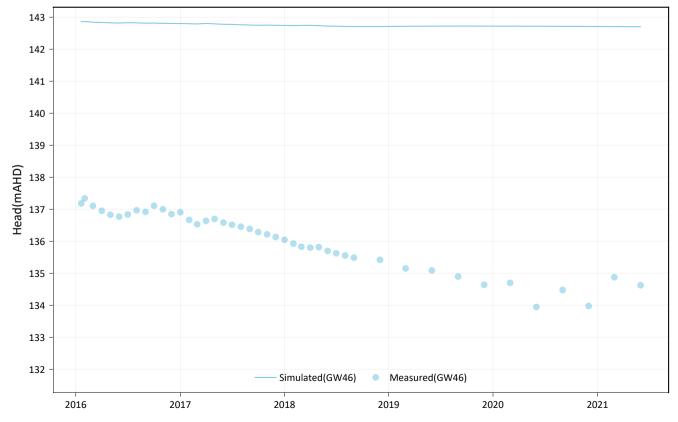
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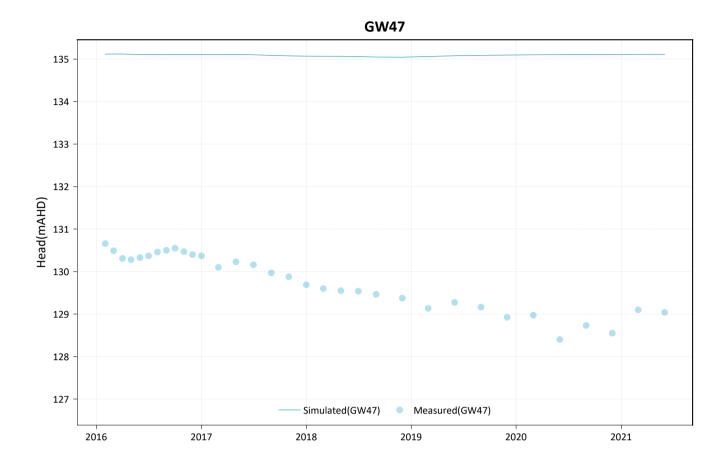




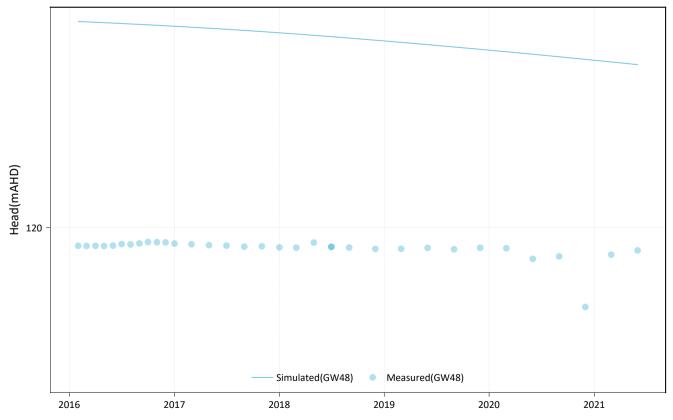




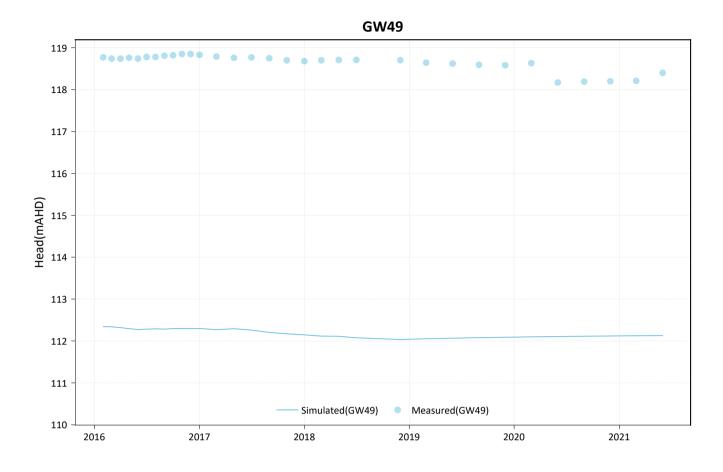


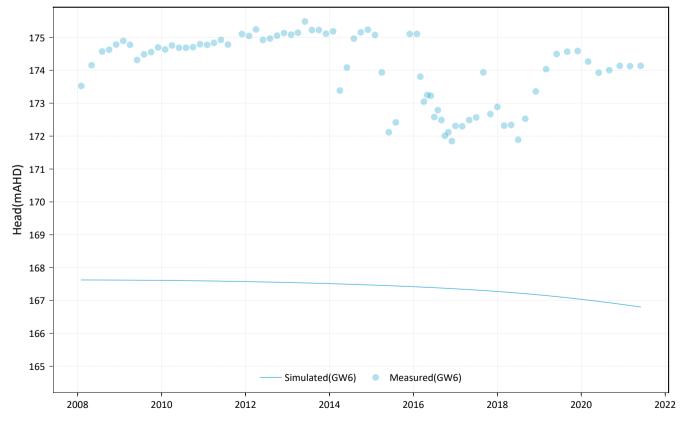


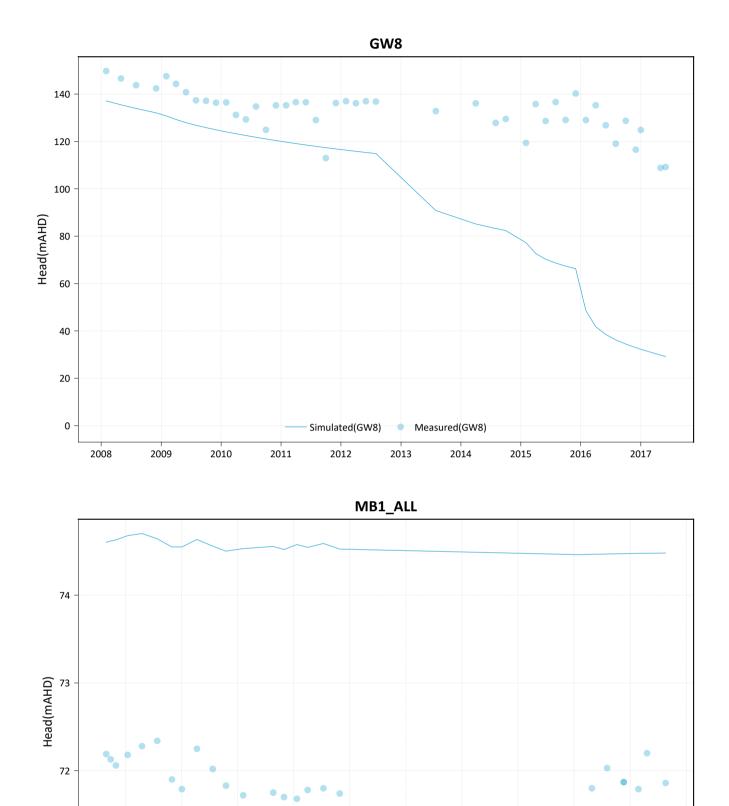




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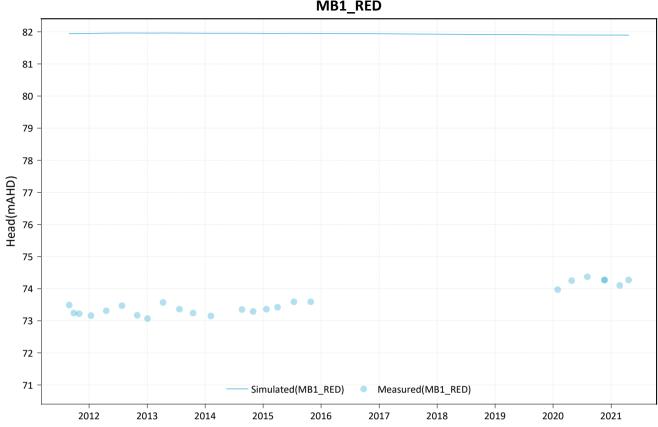


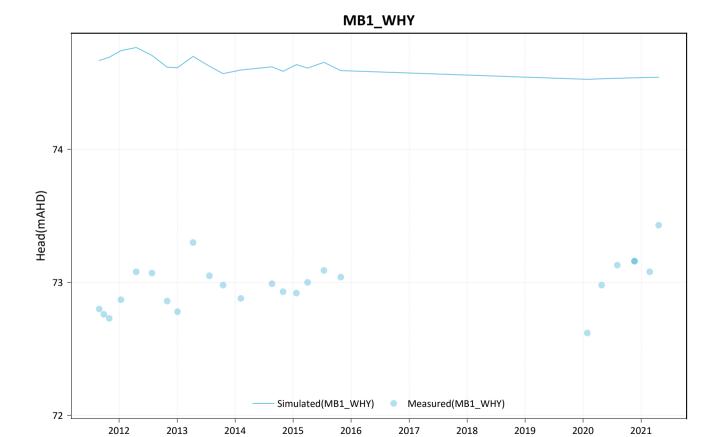




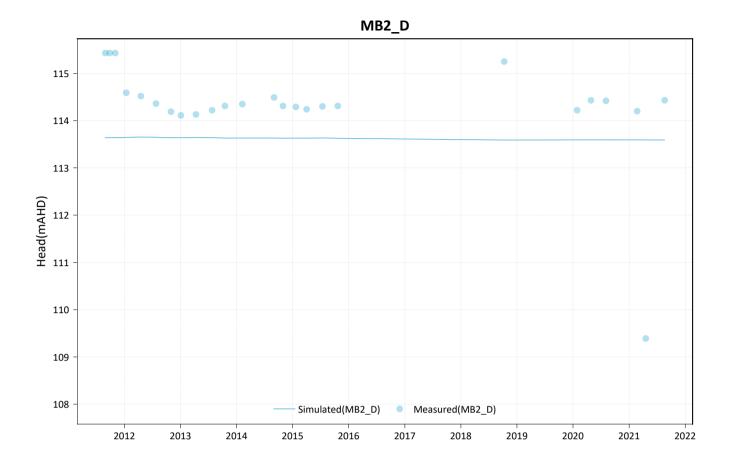
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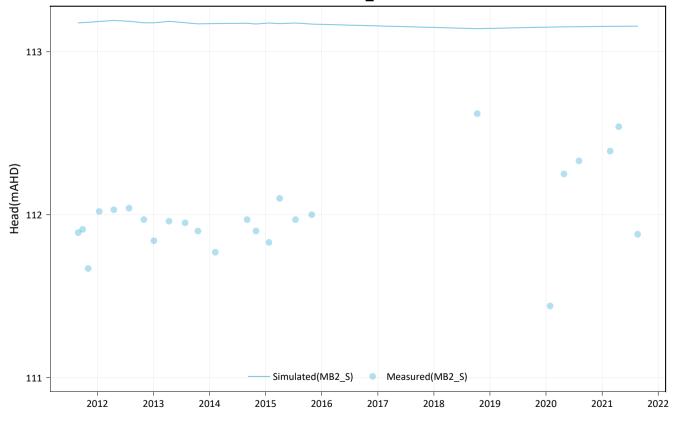


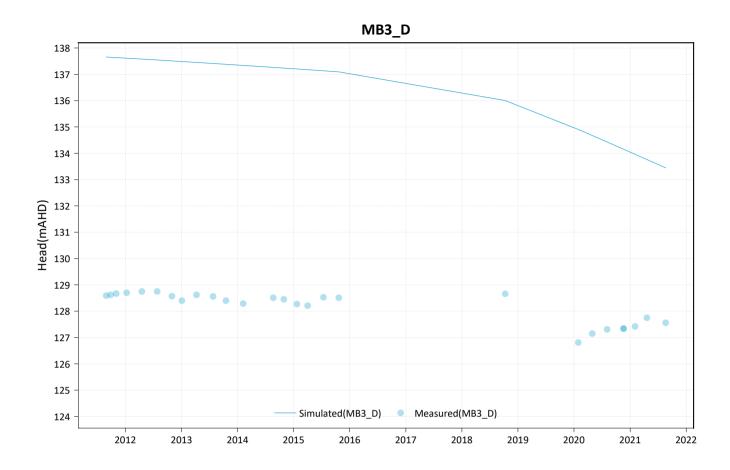


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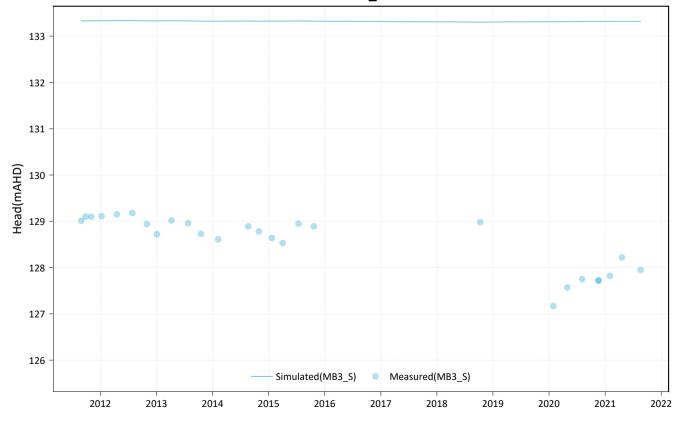




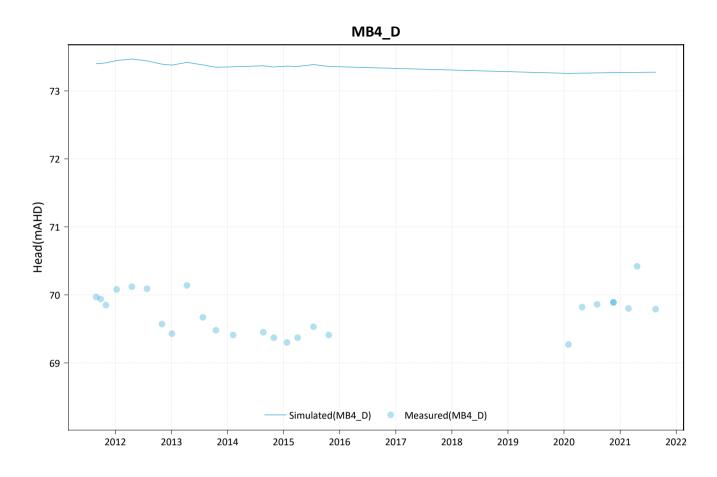




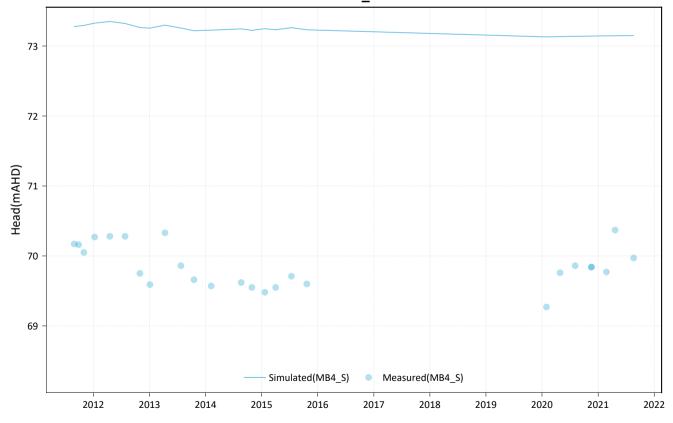




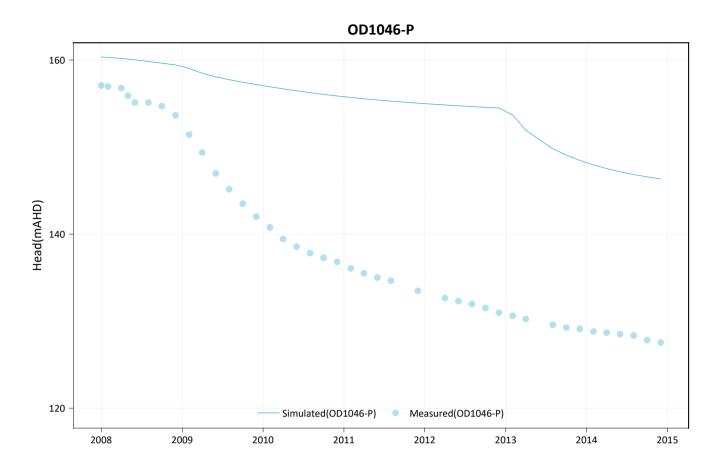
SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd - Calibration Hydrographs



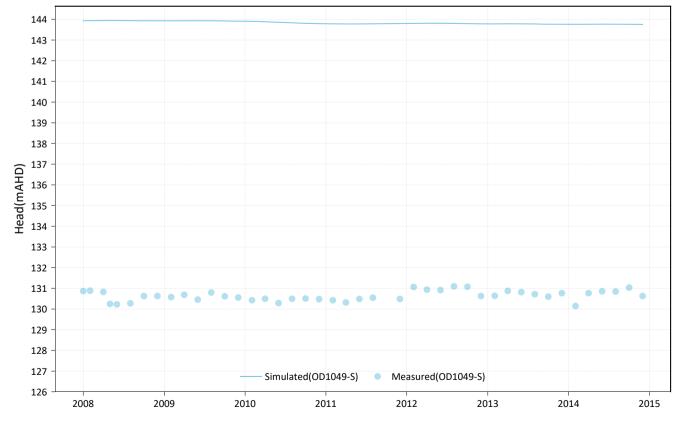




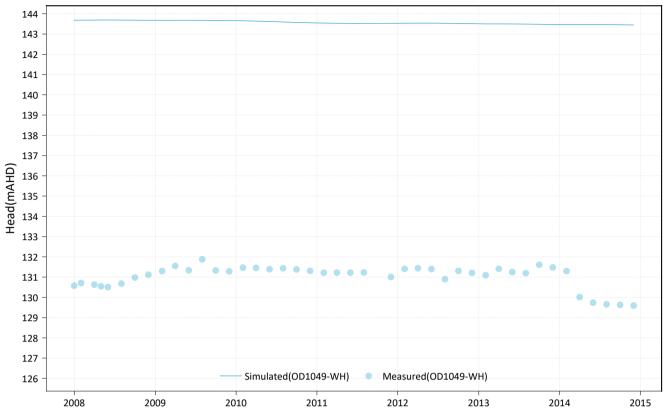
SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd - Calibration Hydrographs



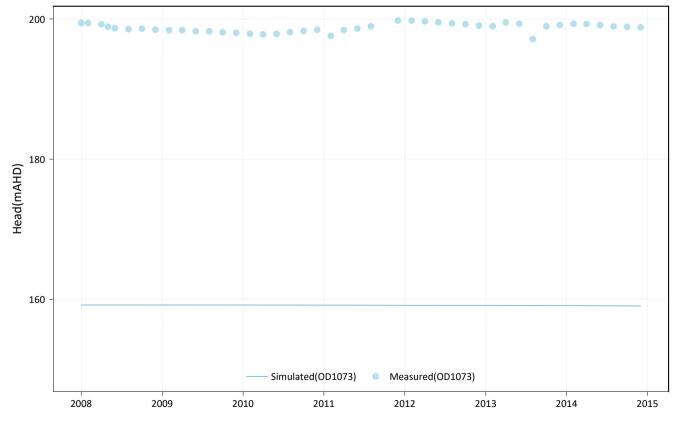
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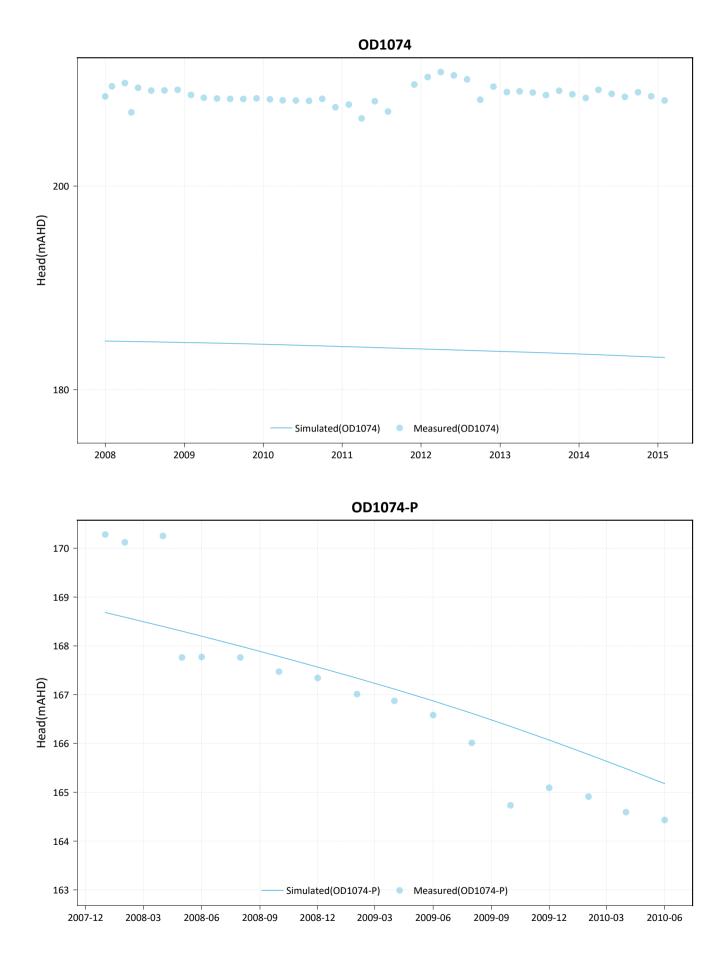




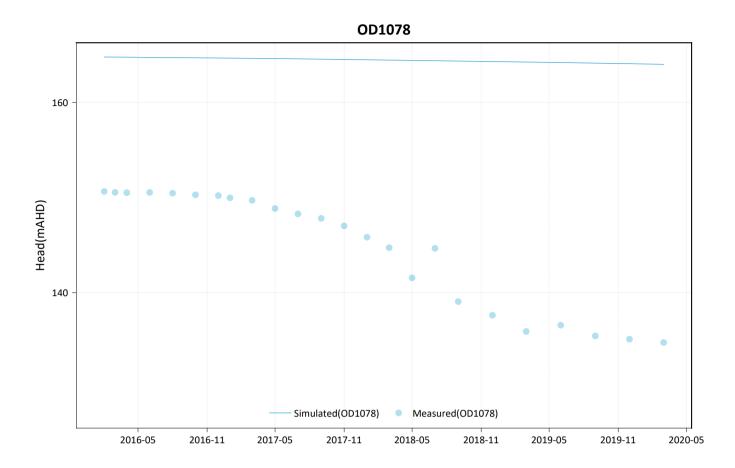


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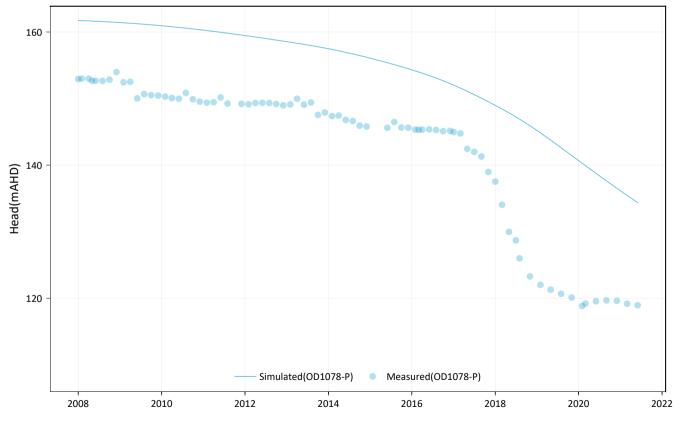


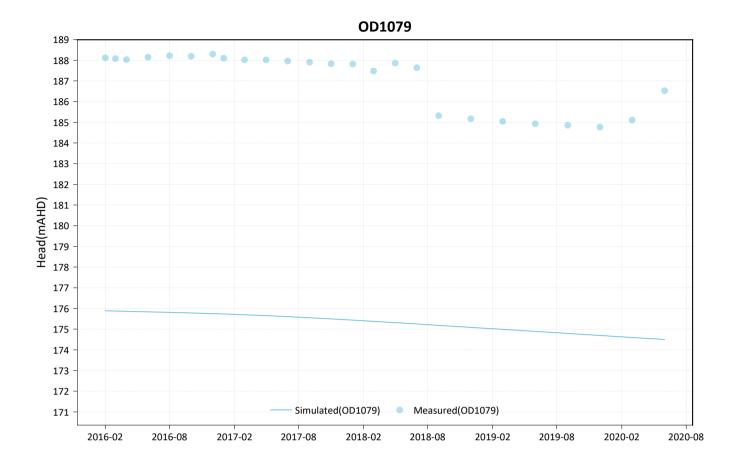


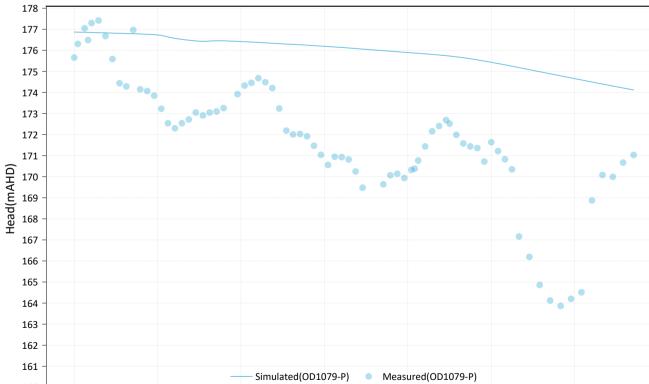
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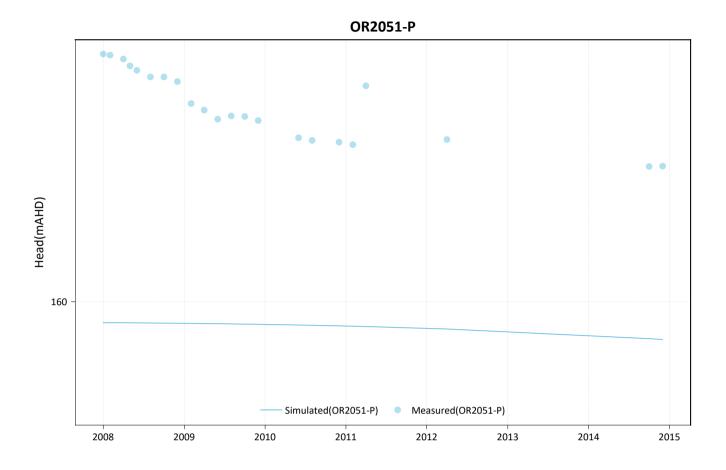




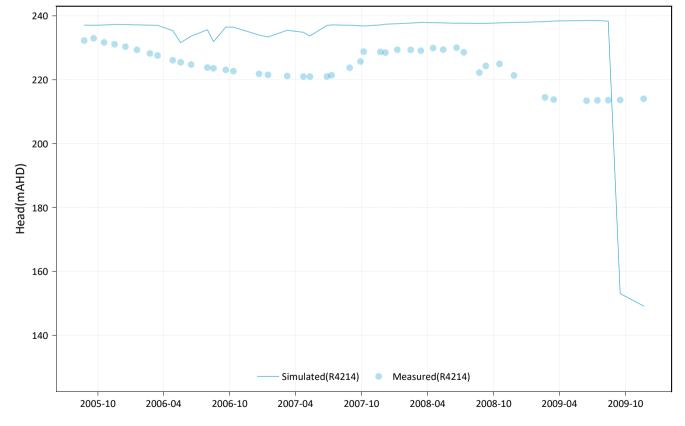


OD1079-P

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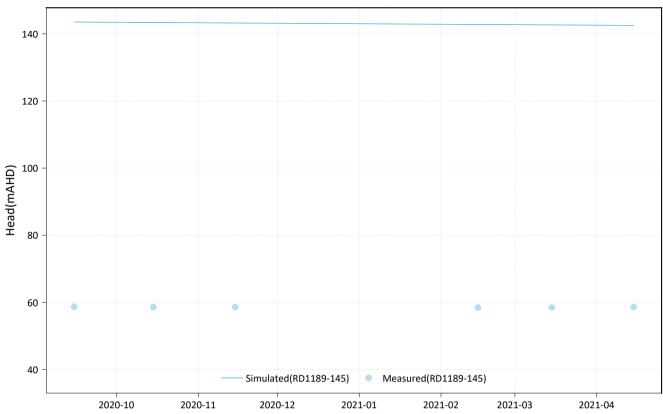




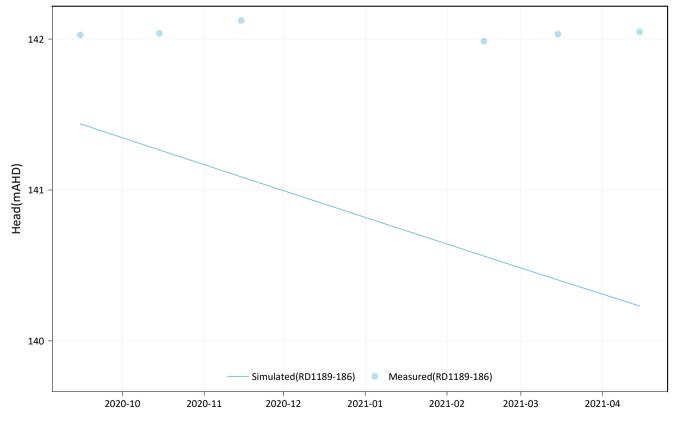


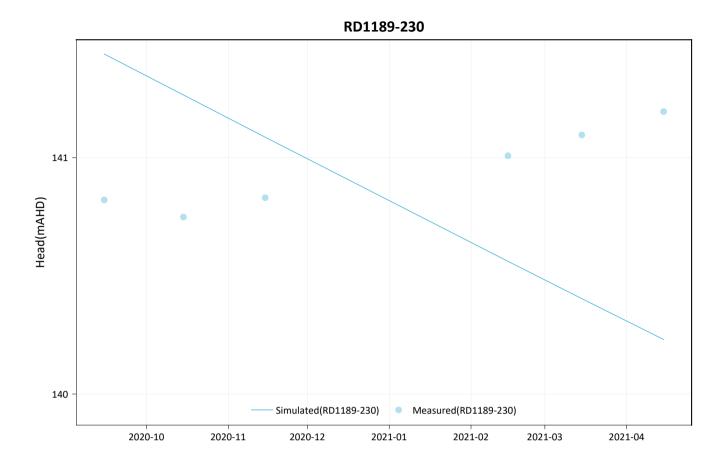
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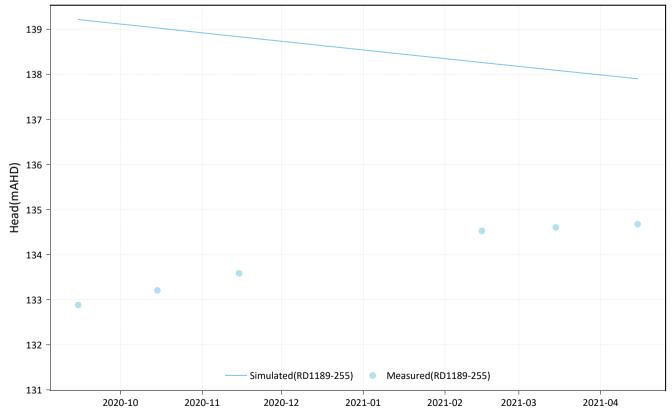


RD1189-186

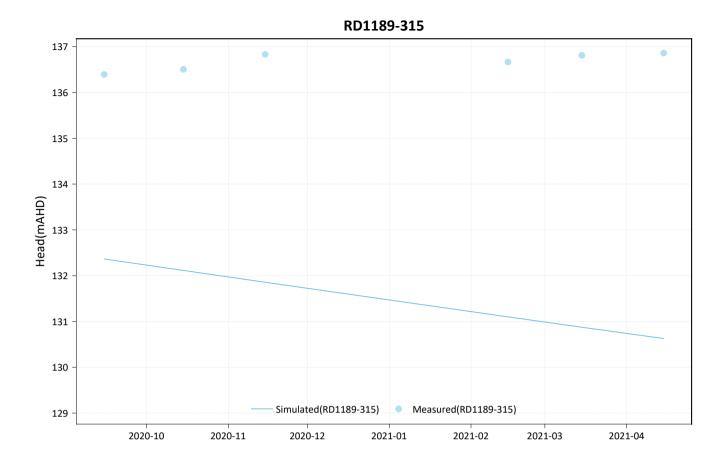




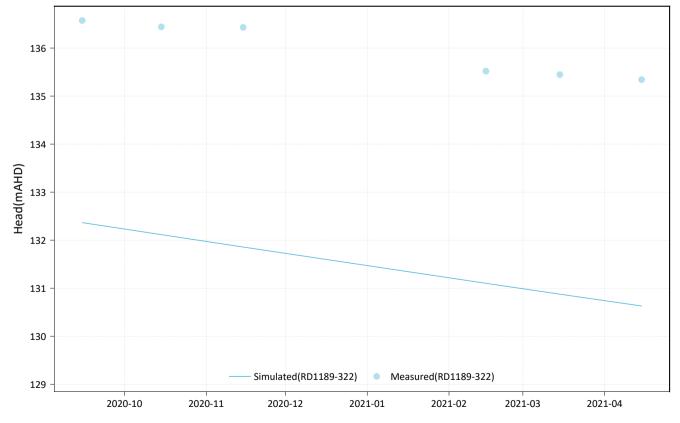
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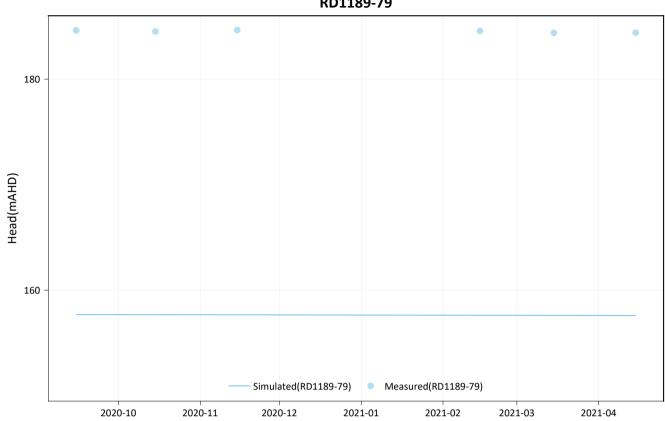


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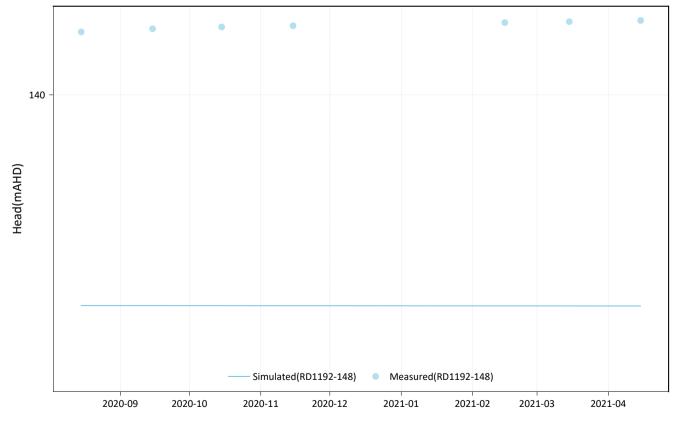


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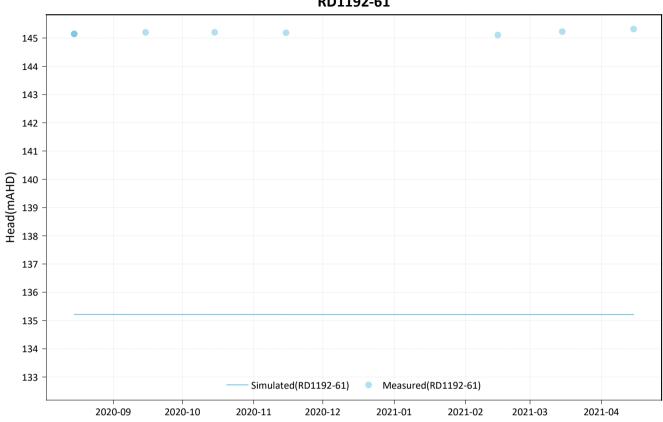




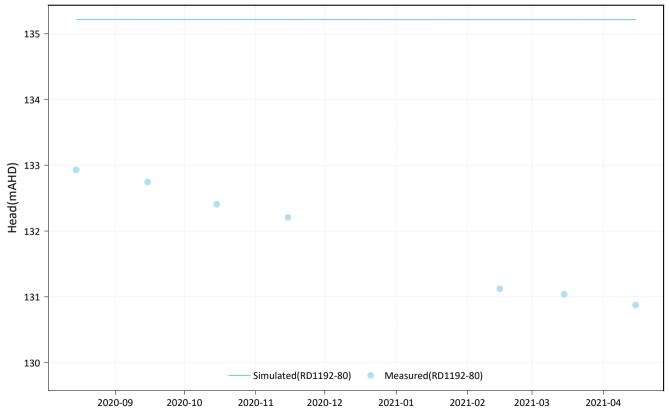
RD1192-148



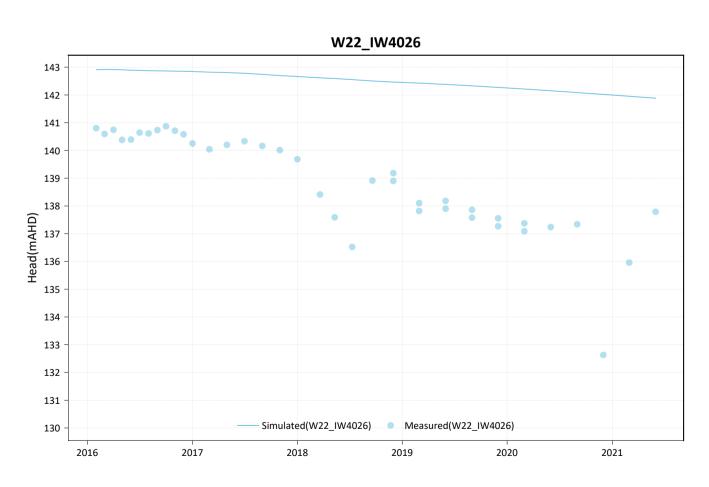
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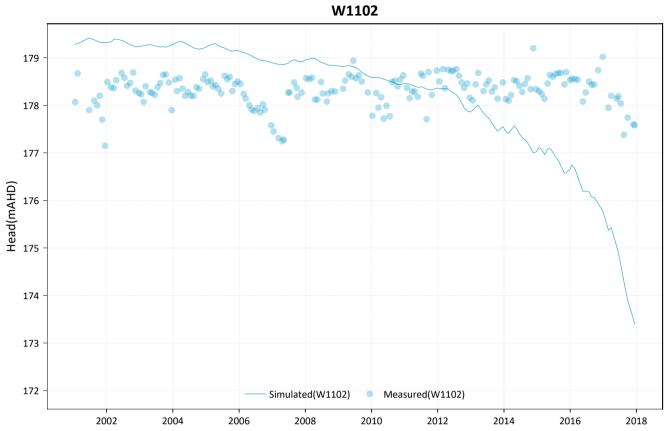






RD1192-61





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