

# Water Compliance Reporting and Planning

2022-2023



Government  
of South Australia  
Department for  
Environment and Water

# Background

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) supports the sustainable management of water in South Australia. This includes issuing water licenses and allocations to those who take and use water from prescribed water sources such as a dam, bore or watercourse (e.g., river or creek). In total, there are 14,253 water licenses in 26 prescribed water areas throughout South Australia.

Water licence holders have legal obligations to comply with the conditions of their water licence, including metering their water use and not taking more than their water allocation. The Department monitors compliance through:

- Metering 96% of licensed water use ([refer report for further information](#)).
- Requiring meter reads quarterly for 56% of users and annually for the remaining 44%.
- Performing desktop and site assessments to determine if usage is within allocations.
- Visiting at least 10% of licensed sites as part of ‘targeted compliance activities’ including checking meter installations and water use compliance.

Where water users are found to be in breach of their legal obligations, the Department may undertake compliance action.

The Department also licenses well drillers and monitors works on bores (drilling, decommissioning) and bore maintenance to ensure bores meet legislated standards. This helps to ensure that South Australia’s groundwater resources are protected.

This report relates to commitment SA 2.6 in the Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact. It includes the compliance activities undertaken by DEW during the 2022-23 water use year in relation to water take and use (water licences) and wells and well drillers. It also reports on compliance rates, where available. It does not include compliance actions for water affecting activity permits.

# Summary

The targeted compliance activities for 2022-23 are outlined in Attachment A.

The remainder of the compliance activities undertaken across the rest of South Australia primarily involved engaging with water licence holders regarding their metering obligations in accordance with the *South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specifications* and the *Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020 (LSA Water Regulations)* under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (LSA Act)*.

During 2022-23, there were 1,881 site visits conducted by DEW. In total, 12.1% of the 14,253 water licenses in SA received a site visit associated with a compliance activity, and 85% of those who received a site visit were found to be compliant.

In relation to water licence holders compliance with water allocations, DEW has a target of 95% compliance. This is consistently achieved and exceeded each year. Compliance rates with water allocation in 2021-22 were 98.8%. Rates for compliance with water allocations for 2022-23 are under investigation at the time of publication.

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# At a glance



**26**

prescribed  
areas



**14,253**

licenses



**96%**

of take compliance  
monitored via  
meters



**49,441**

education and  
communications sent



**98.8%**

compliant with  
water allocations  
(2021-2022)



**98.4%**

submitted meter  
readings on time



**1,881**

site visits



**86%**

found to be  
compliant at  
site visits



**591**

compliance  
actions

# Table 1. Compliance actions relating to water take and use for 2022-23

Table 1 includes compliance actions and site visits undertaken between 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, for business as usual and targeted compliance activities, as committed to in 2021-22 (refer Attachment A). Each compliance action recorded in this table relates to the following sections of the LSA Act or LSA Water Regulations:

- **Section 104(1):** Unauthorised taking of water from a prescribed surface water area, watercourse, lake or well (taking water without a section 105 authorisation or water licence with allocation; or by diverting to an illegally constructed dam; or taking water for stock and domestic purposes unless entitled to);

- **Section 104(7):** Contravening a condition of a water management authorisation or permit (conditions on water licences, section 105 authorisations and well permits);
- **Section 88(1):** Penalty for taking water in excess of allocation;
- **Regulation 12:** Failure to comply with 'Part 5: Meters' (Failure to comply with a direction to install a meter etc.); and
- **Section 230:** Interfering with a meter.

Prescribed Area	Education / Advisory comms (e.g. letters, emails, SMS)	Final Notice / Direction Letter Issued	Administrative penalty (for non-compliance water allocations)	Expiations (for not submitting meter reads on time)	Criminal investigation in progress	Proceedings commenced	Finalised - civil enforcement actions
River Murray	17,006	54	62	28			1
Mallee	1,730	5	0	28			
Angas Bremer	965	2	1	5			
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges	6,333	19	3	67			
Marne Saunders	562	0	0	5			
Peake, Roby, Sherlock	48	0	0	1			
Clare	1,112	5	13	9	1		
Barossa	1,753	6	5	12			
Southern Basins & Musgrave	147	1	0	0			
Lower Limestone Coast	7,563	50	19	39			
Tatiara	1,438	5	2	3	1		
Tintinara Coonalpyn	487	2	2	2			
Padthaway	464	0	0	2			
Morambro Creek	25	0	0				
Northern Adelaide Plains	1,213	6	42	0			
McLaren Vale	1,727	2	5	4			
Central Adelaide	474	10	0	2			
Western Mount Lofty Ranges	6,343	19	14	23	2	2	
Baroota	13	2	0	0			
Far North	28	0	0	0			
Other Statewide	10		0	0			
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,441</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>



Prescribed Area	% compliant with water allocations	% compliant with submitting meter reads on time	Site Visits <sup>1</sup>			
			Number of visits	Number compliant	Number that required compliance action <sup>2</sup>	% compliant
<b>River Murray</b>	98.4%	99.3%	276	269	7	97%
<b>Mallee</b>	100%	85.4%	68	68	0	100%
<b>Angas Bremer</b>	99.2%	96.0%	23	23	0	100%
<b>Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges</b>	99.7%	92.7%	83	81	2	81%
<b>Marne Saunders</b>	100%	96.9%	12	11	1	83%
<b>Peake, Roby, Sherlock</b>	100%	85.7%	0	0	0	
<b>Clare</b>	95.8%	97.1%	47	44	3	99%
<b>Barossa</b>	98.9%	97.3%	36	36	0	100%
<b>Southern Basins &amp; Musgrave</b>	100%	100%	1	1	0	
<b>Lower Limestone Coast</b>	99.3%	98.6%	43	43	0	99%
<b>Tatiara</b>	99.5%	99.2%	3	3	0	100%
<b>Tintinara Coonalpyn</b>	98.3%	98.3%	0	0	0	
<b>Padthaway</b>	100%	98.1%	265	260	5	100%
<b>Morambro Creek</b>	100%	100%	0	0	0	100%
<b>Northern Adelaide Plains</b>	96.8%	100%	969	744	225	93%
<b>McLaren Vale</b>	98.9%	99.2%	9	0	9	54%
<b>Central Adelaide</b>	100%	99.5%	9	9	0	100%
<b>Western Mount Lofty Ranges</b>	99.4%	98%	37	17	20	76%
<b>Baroota</b>	100%	100%	0	0	0	100%
<b>Far North</b>	100%	100%	0	0	0	
<b>Other Statewide</b>			0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>98.4%</b>	<b>1881</b>	<b>1609</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>95%</b>

1 Site visits includes both targeted site visits undertaken as part of activities outlined in Attachment A, and also business as usual or other compliance visits conducted as needed.

2 If a site had any compliance issues and required further compliance action, then this is counted as "1" in this column.



## Table 2. Compliance actions relating to wells and well drillers licences in 2022-23

Each of the compliance actions undertaken in this table relate to the following sections of the LSA Act or LSA Water Regulations:

- **Section 115(4) and Regulation 25:** If the holder of a well driller's licence contravenes or fails to comply with a condition of the licence
- **Section 104(3)(a):** Drilling, plugging, backfilling or sealing a well;
- **Section 104(3)(b):** Repairing, replacing of altering the casing, lining or screen of a well;
- **Section 119(1):** Obligation to maintain a well; and
- **Section 120 (1), (2) and (3):** Requirement for remedial or other works.

Education /Advisory comm's (e.g. letters, emails, SMS)	2	
Final Notice / Direction Letter Issued	0	
Administrative sanctions or expiations	0	
Compliance breaches reports	16	
Criminal investigation in progress	0	
Proceedings commenced	0	
Finalised - civil enforcement actions	0	
Site Visits <sup>3</sup>	Number of visits	79
	Number compliant	72
	Number that required compliance action <sup>4</sup>	7
	% compliant	81

<sup>3</sup> Site visits includes both targeted site visits undertaken as part of activities outlined in Attachment A, and also business as usual or other compliance visits conducted as needed

<sup>4</sup> If a site had any compliance issues and required further compliance action, then this is counted as "1" in this column.



# Attachment A: Targeted Compliance Activities for 2022-23

Outlined below are the targeted compliance activities that were committed to for 2022-23. The site visits undertaken and level of compliance has been reported in Table 1 and 2 of this report.

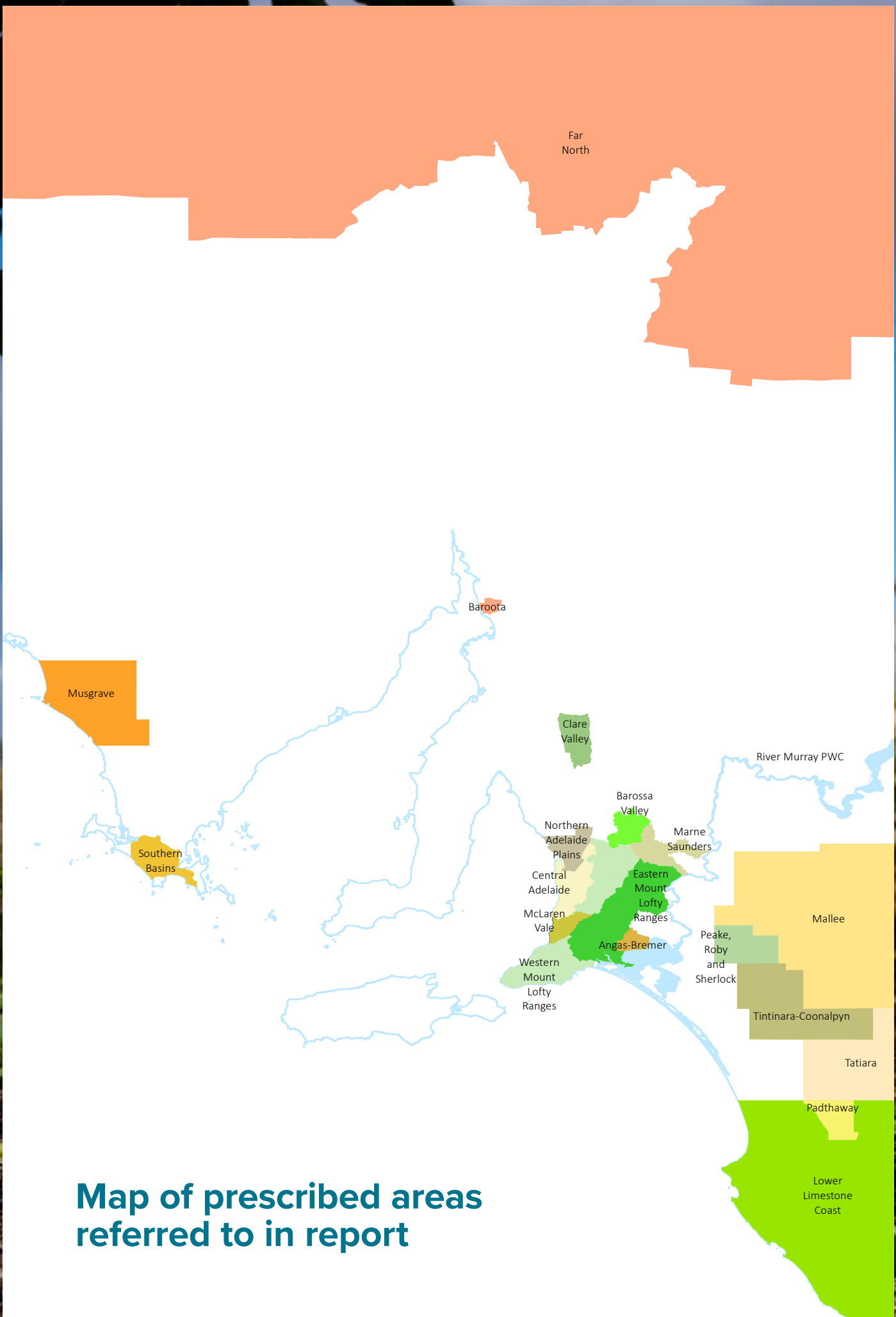
Prescribed Area	Deliverable activity	Description
<b>Central Adelaide PWA</b>	Field visits to occur for metered sites, with a focus on sites missed in the 2021-22 CAPWA program.	Follow up on outstanding meters. Visit sites to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspect current installation and maintenance of meter to check compliance with the South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specification, the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 and Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020; and</li> <li>Take an authorised meter read.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Adelaide Plans PWA</b>	Field visits to occur for metered sites, with a focus on determining that water is used for licensed purposes.	Unannounced visits to certain NAP licensees. Visit sites to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspect current installation and maintenance of meter to check compliance with the South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specification, the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 and Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020; and</li> <li>Take an authorised meter read.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Adelaide Plans PWA</b>	Field visits to occur for metered sites, with a focus on determining that water is used for licensed purposes.	Stock and domestic allocation holders - audit to see if use is legitimately stock and domestic
<b>Western Mount Lofty Ranges PWRA</b>	Field visits to occur for 10% of metered sites, with a focus on sites identified as having broken meters that have been replaced or on meters greater than 5 years old.	Visit sites to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspect current installation and maintenance of meter to check compliance with the South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specification, the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 and Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020; and</li> <li>Take an authorised meter read.</li> </ul>
<b>Little Para PWC</b>	Field visits to occur for select metered sites, with a focus on licenced use	Metering of Little Para PWC licences and follow up of potential unlicensed users
<b>Multiple regions</b>	Field visits to occur for select metered sites, with a focus on licenced use of recently constructed wells	Follow up on recent wells constructed for CAPWA, MLV & WMLR, ensure S&D bores are not being used for licensed purposes
<b>Multiple regions</b>	Field visits to occur for metered sites, with a focus on licenced use of recently constructed wells	Checking and metering of generic sources on licences
<b>Multiple regions</b>	Review licenses claiming stock estimates - (where stock deduction is greater than metered usage)	Unmetered RM domestic allocation holders - desktop assessment to see if use is legitimately domestic



Prescribed Area	Deliverable activity	Description
<b>River Murray PWC</b>	Visit select RM PWC sites to locate and define undefined sources	RM undefined sources defined
<b>River Murray PWC</b>	ELMA Licence reissue - Meter compliance check	
<b>River Murray PWC</b>	Field visits to occur quarterly for select metered sites, with a focus on licenses recording nil use or stock estimate	Nil usage and estimate - check for illegal water take & issue directives
<b>Multitple regions</b>	Review licences and visit sites in all prescribed areas with suspected faulty meters	
<b>Barossa Valley PWRA</b>	Conduct a desktop assessment of non-working surface water meters in Barossa	An opportunity for this activity will come at the end of the 2022/2023 as most dams in the Barossa and Clare are full as at August 2022, hence there should be significantly more SW usage recorded in the 2022/2023
<b>Multitple regions</b>	Check meter details in WILMA for completeness - where details are incomplete add meter make & model, etc	
<b>Padthaway PWA</b>	Field visits to occur for 90% of metered sites, with a focus on sites identified as having broken meters that have been replaced or on meters greater than 5 years old.	Visit sites to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect current installation and maintenance of meter to check compliance with the South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specification, the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 and Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020; and</li> <li>• Take an authorised meter read.</li> </ul>
<b>Lower Limestone Coast PWA</b>	Field visits to occur for 10% of metered sites, with a focus on sites identified as having broken meters that have been replaced or on meters greater than 5 years old.	Visit sites to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect current installation and maintenance of meter to check compliance with the South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specification, the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 and Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020; and</li> <li>• Take an authorised meter read.</li> </ul>

# Attachment B: Targeted Compliance Activities for 2023-24

Prescribed Area	Deliverable activity
<b>Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area</b>	Assessment of all unmetered sites that are required to be metered and issue directives. Field visit if necessary.
<b>Northern Adelaide Plains Prescribed Wells Area</b>	Transition to 'self reading' program – develop communications material and undertake site visits if necessary.
<b>Western Mount Lofty Ranges PWRA</b>	Field visits to sites with nil use or stuck meters.
<b>River Murray PWC</b>	Field visits to high risk sites with nil or low use, backwards reads or meter deferrals, targeting the oldest meters first to check if the meter installation complies with meter specifications.
<b>River Murray PWC</b>	Where telemetry has been directed, ensure telemetry is installed and check quarterly reads against telemetry reads. If necessary, undertake site visit.
<b>River Murray PWC</b>	Ensure meters in the Lower Murray swamps (ELMA) requiring re-installation post flood have been re-installed.
<b>Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area and Northern Adelaide Plains Prescribed Wells Area</b>	Ensure those licence holders that are in multiple consumptive pools have selected allocations from each pool.
<b>River Murray PWC</b>	Undertaking meter audits to ensure comprehensive dataset of River Murray meters, assess meter condition and compliance and collect information on telemetry readiness.
<b>Barossa Prescribed Water Resources Area and Clare Prescribed Water Resources Area.</b>	Field visit to high risk surface water meters
<b>Lower Limestone Coast PWA - Zone 3a</b>	This is an area of high intensity usage in the border zone. Check meter compliance, collect meter read and check for tampering.
<b>Tatiara PWA - Stirling</b>	This is an area with many Mace Rotoflo meters and is a cone of depression so a high risk area. Target MACE rotoflo meters to check meter compliance, collect meter read and check for tampering.
<b>All PWA's in the South East region</b>	Desktop process to investigate nil/no use and stuck/faulty meters and if required, undertake site visit and/or issue direction letter.
<b>All regions</b>	Send communication to validators to educate regarding filling out validation certificates accurately and timely delivery of validation certificates



**Map of prescribed areas referred to in report**



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