

A photograph of a forest stream. The water is clear and flows through a bed of rocks and fallen branches. The banks are covered in lush green vegetation, including tall grasses and ferns. A large, moss-covered log lies across the stream. In the background, tall trees with dense foliage form a canopy. The overall scene is a natural, wooded environment.

Water Compliance Report and Plan

2023-2024



Government
of South Australia

Department for
Environment and Water

Background

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) supports the sustainable management of water resources in South Australia. This includes administering water licences in prescribed water resource areas, accounting for water usage, compliance monitoring and undertaking education and enforcement activities where appropriate.

In total, there are 13,744¹ water licences in 26 prescribed water areas throughout South Australia (refer map pg. 10).

Water licence holders have a legal obligation to comply with the conditions of their water licence and the requirements of the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (LSA Act) and associated regulations, including metering their water use and not taking more than their licensed water allocation. The Department monitors compliance through:

- Metering 93% of licensed water use (*refer report for further information*).
- Requiring meter reads quarterly for 26% of users in high risk water resources (e.g. the River Murray and other high demand areas) and annually for the remaining 74% of users.
- Performing desktop and site assessments to determine if usage is within allocations for all water licences.
- Visiting at least 10% of licensed sites as part of 'targeted compliance activities' including checking meter installations and water use compliance.

DEW undertakes compliance action where water users are found to be in breach of their legal obligations.

The Department also licences well drillers and monitors drilling, maintenance and decommissioning works on bores to ensure that bores meet legislated standards. These measures help protect South Australia's valuable groundwater resources.

This report fulfils commitment SA 2.6 in the Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact. It includes the compliance activities undertaken by DEW during the 2023-24 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.

¹ Note there is a decrease in the number of licences reported for 2023-2024 as licences with zero allocation were not included in the count.

Summary

Compliance activities undertaken across prescribed resources in South Australia in 2023-24 are outlined in Attachment A and primarily involved engaging with water licence holders regarding their metering obligations under the *South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specifications* and the *Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020* (LSA Water Management Regulations).

During 2023-24, DEW field officers visited 3,714 (30.4%) of the State's 12,221 licensed sites and assessed 6% of the sites visited as non-compliant with requirements.

In relation to water licence holder compliance with water allocations, DEW has a target of 95% compliance which is consistently achieved and exceeded each year. Compliance rates with water allocation in 2022-2023 were 99.2% (rates for compliance with water allocations for 2023-2024 are under investigation at the time of publication).

It should be noted that in 2023-24, there was a decline in the number of expiations issued for non-submission of meter reads across the State compared to the previous year and this is attributed to interim processes implemented during the transition to the State's new water register, *mywater* in mid-2024. Further, this report also saw a decrease in penalties for taking water in excess of allocation, reflecting the impact of widespread and extended periods of flooding on water meters in 2022-23. Lastly, funding granted to conduct meter inspections in the River Murray and Mallee prescribed areas accounts for the marked increase in compliance visits for 2024.

Contents

Tables 1 & 2. Compliance actions relating to water take and use for 2023-24	4 - 5
Table 3. Compliance actions relating to wells and well drillers licences in 2023-24	6
Attachment A: Targeted Compliance Activities for 2023-24	8
Attachment B: Targeted Compliance Activities for 2024-25	9
Map of prescribed areas	10

At a glance



26

prescribed
areas



13,744

licences



93%

of take compliance
monitored via
meters



36,807

education and other
communications sent



12,221

licensed water
meters



99.2 %

compliant with water
allocations (2022-2023)



3,714

site visits



94.4 %

of sites visited compliant



386

compliance
actions*

Tables 1 & 2: Compliance actions relating to water take and use for 2023-2024

Table 1 and Table 2 includes compliance actions and site visits undertaken between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, for business as usual and targeted compliance activities, as committed to in 2022-23 (refer Attachment A). Each compliance action recorded in this table relates to the following sections of the LSA Act or LSA Water Management 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 a water licence with allocation; or by diverting to an illegally constructed dam; or unauthorised taking of water for stock and domestic purposes);
- 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.

Table 1

Prescribed Area	Education, advisory comms (e.g. letters, email, SMS)	Final notice/direction letter issues	Administrative penalty issued for 2022-23 non-compliance water allocations)	Expiations (late submission of meter reads)	Criminal investigations in progress	Proceeding commenced	Finalised civil enforcement actions
River Murray	12,435	3	51	13			
Mallee	1,563		1				
Angas Bremer	266	2					
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges	4,580	6	3				
Marne Saunders	380		2				
Peake, Roby, Sherlock	12						
Clare	814		11				
Barossa	991	3	2				
Southern Basins & Musgrave	0						
Lower Limestone Coast	7,526		6	7			
Tatiara	1,498			4	1		
Tintinara Coonalpyn	520						
Padthaway	687						
Morambro Creek	15						
Northern Adelaide Plains	63	17	29				
McLaren Vale	1,102	3	3	3			
Central Adelaide	34	184					
Western Mount Lofty Ranges	4,184	13	8	12	1		1
Baroota	0						
Far North	0						
Other Statewide	137						
Total	36,807	231	116	39	2		1

Table 2

Prescribed Area	% compliant with water allocations 2022-2023 ¹	Site visits ²			
		Number of site visits	Number compliant	Number requiring compliance action ³	% visits compliant
River Murray	98.6%	1735	1538	197	89%
Angas Bremer	100%	13	13	0	100%
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges	99.7%	37	37	0	100%
Mallee	99.5%	212	204	8	96%
Marne Saunders	98.7%	17	17	0	100%
Peake, Roby, Sherlock	100%	0	0	0	
Clare	96.7%	50	50	0	100%
Barossa	99.5%	30	30	0	100%
Southern Basins & Musgrave	100%	0	0	0	
Lower Limestone Coast	99.8%	531	531	0	100%
Tatiara	100%	0	0	0	
Tintinara Coonalpyn	100%	0	0	0	
Padthaway	100%	2	2	0	100%
Morambro Creek	100%	0	0	0	
Northern Adelaide Plains	98.2%	1043	1042	1	99%
McLaren Vale	99.3%	4	4	0	100%
Central Adelaide	100%	10	9	1	90%
Western Mount Lofty Ranges	99.6%	30	29	1	97%
Baroota	100%	0	0	0	
Far North	100%	0	0	0	
Other Statewide	100%	0	0	0	
State totals	99.2%	3714	3506	208	94%

1 Represents the proportion of licensees taking water within their prescribed allocation for 2022-2023.

2 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.

3 The number of sites that had compliance issues and required further compliance action.



Table 3. Compliance actions relating to wells and well drillers licences in 2023-24

Each of the compliance actions undertaken in this table relate to the following sections of the LSA Act or LSA Water Management 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 or 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	0
Criminal investigation in progress	0
Proceedings commenced	0
Finalised - civil enforcement actions	0
Number of visits	36
Number compliant	30
Site visits ⁴	
Number that required compliance ⁵	6
% visits compliant	83%

⁴ Site visits include 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.

⁵ A site that had compliance issues and required further compliance action is counted as "1" in this column.



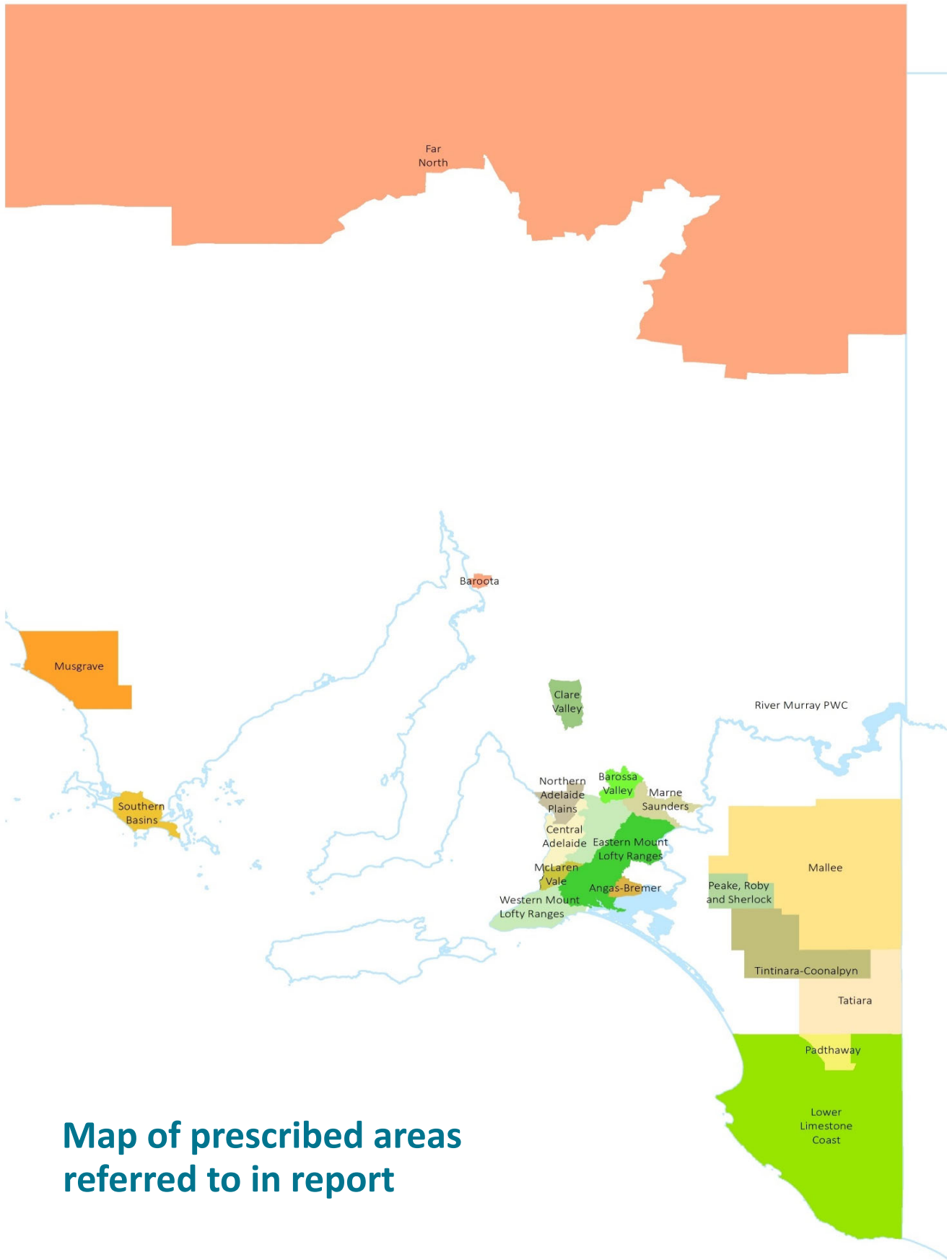
Attachment A: Targeted Compliance Activities for 2023-24

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

Attachment B: Targeted Compliance Activities for 2024-25

Prescribed Resource	Compliance Activity
Central Adelaide Prescribed Well Area	Obtain meter records for unrecorded sources.
Northern Adelaide Plains Prescribed Wells Area	Commence the transition of all licence holders to self-meter reads.
Western Mount Lofty Ranges PWRA	Conduct desktop satellite imagery assessment on high allocation deferred meters in at-risk high demand areas and follow-up site visits as appropriate.
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges PWRA	Conduct desktop satellite imagery assessment on high allocation deferred meters in at-risk high demand areas and follow-up site visits as appropriate.
River Murray PWC	Post flood meter reinstallation visits
Lower Limestone Coast PWA	Special conditions (272) require desktop and site inspections.
Tatiara PWA	Meter visits Tatiara Sterling management area.
Lower Limestone Coast PWA	Identify and investigate questionable meters reads
Statewide	Develop policy and procedure for escalation decisions for repeat or significant offenders
Statewide	Required annual BAU checks for alleged overuse, adjustments, non-submitted reads and anomalous reads.
Statewide	Onboard licensees to mywater online portal.
Statewide	Onboard validators and refine mywater online portal validation certificate.





Map of prescribed areas referred to in report



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