

WATER SECURITY PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR THE MCLAREN VALE REGION

The McLaren Vale region's first water security strategy is underway as part of a collaboration between government, businesses including the wine industry, First Nations and the local community.

Around a year ago, a McLaren Vale Regional Water Security Strategy Advisory Group (the Advisory Group) was formed. This group started planning the process needed to address water security concerns by looking at current water sources and considering the projected impacts of climate change and potential solutions for the region.

While the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) has recently taken the lead in the co-ordination and delivery of this project, the Water Security Strategy will be designed from the ground up and will be informed by members of the McLaren Vale regional community. More details on upcoming workshops and how you can be involved are included at the end of this article.

The Advisory Group has identified the Geographic Indicator (GI) Zone as a suitable boundary for the water security strategy (see Figure 1), with a focus on the included wine regions whilst building understanding of water issues for all users across the full GI zone.



Figure 1: McLaren Vale GI Zone as the boundary for the McLaren Vale Regional Water Security Strategy.

Jock Harvey from the McLaren Vale Community Sustainability Company, and member of the Advisory Group, said “This will be the first time that we will have a plan to ensure the sustainability of our businesses including our world class wine industry, our beautiful environment and precious ecosystems as well as building the resilience of our communities”.

The McLaren Vale region is unique with its stunning beaches, successful local businesses and tourism, our wine industry, national parks and open spaces and a growing community which is passionate about the environment.

The region is also unique with access to multiple water sources, including recycled wastewater, water from the desalination plant, groundwater, recycled stormwater and of course River Murray water stored in the local reservoirs.

We all know that climate change is expected to increase average temperatures as well as decrease the amount of rainfall in the region. Coupled with a growing community and the need to maintain our important industries and businesses we need to think strategically about what the future will look like.

The aim of this project will be to develop a water security strategy for the McLaren Vale region. This strategy will provide the opportunity to develop a shared vision for the future of the region and provide confidence to business and the community that there will be sufficient water security to support that vision.

The project will consider:

- the availability of surface and groundwater resources in a changing climate;
- changes in groundwater quality, including increasing salinity;
- existing and future demand for water;
- the ability of all water sources to meet current and future demand in 2070;
- uncertainty in future water availability and demand, and how to plan for it; and
- technical and economic feasibility of new or augmented supplies and the use of new water technologies.

While the strategy will need to explore the technical and science-based aspects of water availability it will also need to draw upon the aspirations of the community it will serve and will draw upon the First Nation’s knowledge of the cultural significance of water in the region.

Three community workshops will be held to develop a vision for the region and identify key components of an adaptive plan. Outcomes of each workshop will inform the options to be developed and included in the water security strategy.

The first community workshop will be held on Wednesday 1 February 2023 in McLaren Vale. This initial workshop will focus on the development of a vision, objectives and goals (what does the future McLaren Vale Region look like to you?). If you would like to be involved, please visit the [DEW website](#) for more information or use the contact details below.

A [survey](#) is also available to provide input into the early stages of the project and community members are encouraged to have their say.

For more information contact project leader Peta Brettig on peta.brettig@sa.gov.au or visit the [DEW website](#).