

Developing a Water Security Strategy for the McLaren Vale Region



A water security strategy is being developed for the McLaren Vale Region in partnership between government, businesses including the wine industry, First Nations and the local community.

Why a water security strategy?

Climate change is expected to impact on the availability of water in the region as well as increase the demand for water into the future. A growing community and the need to maintain local industries and businesses, as well as a healthy environment, means that long-term planning is critical to ensure water security.

A community advisory group has highlighted that developing a water security strategy provides an opportunity to look at all water sources, to consider the potential impacts of climate change on these sources and identify potential water security solutions for the region.

A water security strategy can help to provide confidence to business and the community that there will be sufficient water security to support the future vision for the McLaren Vale Region. Once in place, the strategy will guide both short-term and long-term decision-making around investment in infrastructure and management.

The project area

The water security strategy will likely cover the McLaren Vale GI Zone (see Figure 1). The area includes the wine region as well as urban areas to the north of the zone. The water security strategy will consider the economic, environmental, social and cultural needs for water within the area. It is closely aligned with City of Onkaparinga boundaries.



Figure 1 - McLaren Vale GI Zone

Water sources in McLaren Vale

Water for irrigation purposes is sourced from local groundwater and recycled water from the Christies Beach and Aldinga Wastewater Treatment Plants, with small volumes provided by surface water (see Figure 2). Approximately 6,000ML – 7,000ML of recycled wastewater is supplied each year, with groundwater providing the bulk of the remaining water required. Access to recycled water has taken pressure off local groundwater resources and has enabled irrigated areas to expand.

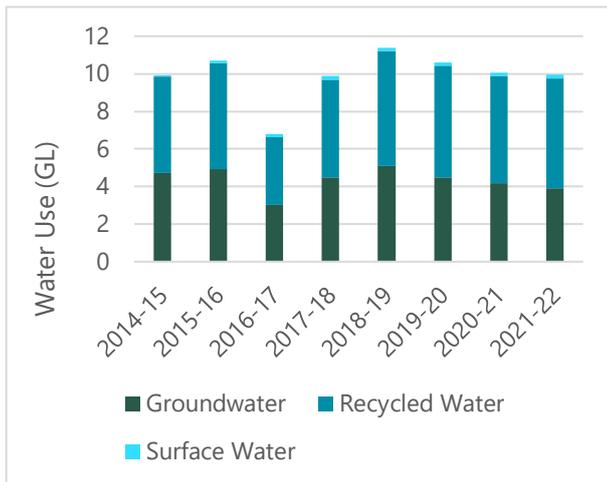


Figure 2 – Irrigation Water Use by source from 2014-15 to 2021-22

The process

The process to develop a water security strategy will apply a strategic foresight and resilience based planning approach. Community workshops will be held to:

- develop a shared vision for the McLaren Vale Region, as well as supporting water security goals
- create plausible future scenarios
- identify options and actions to achieve the shared vision under the range of plausible future scenarios.

Water security options identified through the workshops will be assessed under a range of future climate scenarios to determine which ones are most effective in contributing to water security.

Scenarios of the future will also be developed so that uncertainties facing the region can be planned for and their impact on supply and demand of water considered. This will ensure that the final strategic actions are as robust as possible.

The project approach and timeline is set out at Figure 3.

Project Timeline – McLaren Vale Regional Water Security Strategy



Figure 3 - Project approach and timeline

Water projects underway

A number of water related projects are currently underway in the McLaren Vale Region (see Figure 4).

McLaren Vale Water Allocation Plan

A review of the McLaren Vale Water Allocation Plan was completed in 2022 and found that amendment will be required. More information on the review findings and next steps can be found [here](#).

The amendment process will commence in early 2024 once further information required to support this process is available. At this time, the McLaren Vale Water Allocation Plan will be amalgamated with the Western Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plan to ensure integrated water resource management.

In the short-term, the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board is working closely with groundwater users in parts of McLaren Vale where increasing salinity trends have been identified.

Further information about the water allocation plans is available on the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board [website](#).

A new recycled water storage in McLaren Vale

A business case is being developed for a new recycled water storage to allow additional volumes of recycled water to be provided to McLaren Vale via the Willunga Basin Water Company.

As part of the business case development, a demand assessment will be undertaken between November 2022 and May 2023.

How to get involved

To find out more about the McLaren Vale Regional Water Security Strategy, how to be involved and for regular progress updates, please visit:

www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/water-security/mclaren-vale-water-security-strategy

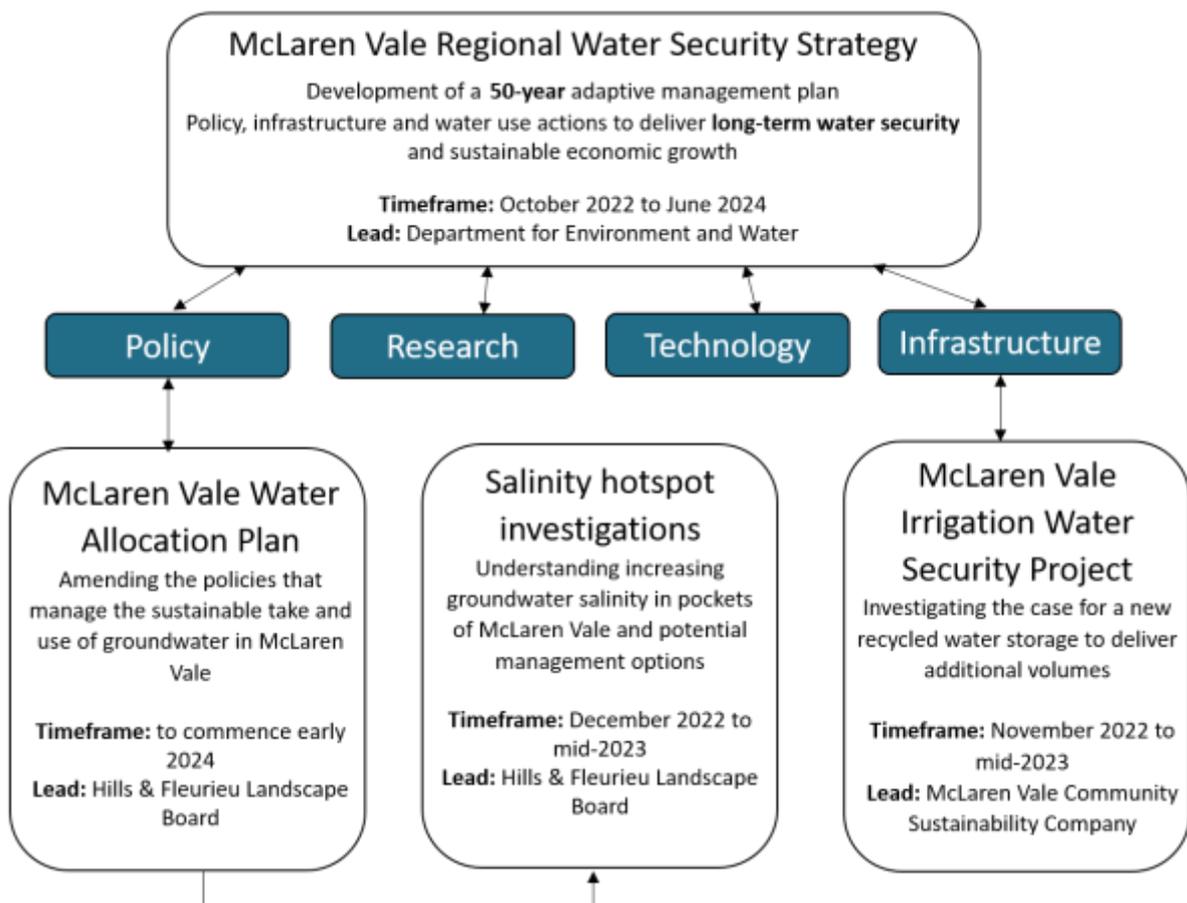


Figure 4 - Water projects underway in the McLaren Vale Region