

# What we are doing as a result of feedback on the WAP

Under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the Act), the take of water from wells for prescribed purposes is regulated through the Water Allocation Plan (WAP) for the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas, and associated instruments. The WAP is a ten-year plan that was formally approved on 28 June 2016.

In the final consultation of the WAP in 2016, the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board (the Board) made a commitment to the community of Eyre Peninsula, to undertake a mid-term evaluation of the WAP.

The mid-term evaluation was intended to be a high-level desk-top evaluation only, that would provide the Board with sufficient information to enable them to determine how effective the WAP implementation had been to date, and whether there were amendments or improvements that needed to be made to the WAP or monitoring program either immediately or in line with a more formal comprehensive review process which is next due in 2026.

As this was not a legislative review, the process for community consultation was confined to seeking feedback from current water licensees, groundwater users within the prescribed wells areas and key stakeholders, such as the Regional Development Board Eyre Peninsula (RDAEP) and Local Government. Input was also sought from all parties who have implementation responsibilities for the WAP, which included various units within the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), as well as key Landscape Board staff.

As a result of this evaluation process, the Board will be implementing a range of short and long-term actions, including:

## Short-term actions

### Areas of improvement that can be implemented in the next 12 months:

- Update the WAP webpage to include water wise messaging for water users e.g. check for leaky infrastructure, install water metres, review storage capacity for dry times, water efficient appliances, essential water use only, etc.
- Publish annual updates on:
  - Water Allocations - including information relating to unallocated water, water allocations, new water issued or new consumptive pools created.
  - Seawater Intrusion (e.g. Uley South) monitoring, as data becomes available.
- Update the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the WAP, to include the following questions:
  - Can I 'bank' my allocation for use in drought times?

- Who do I contact if there are concerns about drilling occurring without appropriate approvals?
- Who do I contact if I have concerns about unauthorised water take?
- Under what circumstances do I not require a license? (E.g. stock and domestic use etc.)
- How was stock and domestic water use determined for the WAP?
- Why do I have to pay for my full share of the water even when my allocation is reduced?
- Who do I contact if I have concerns about my tap water quality?
- What do I do if I suspect someone is using water for a licenced purpose without a water licence?
- How does the water levy work in relation to licensed extraction?
- Amend the WAP communication strategy to include more frequent promotional activities around the Board's Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems (GDE) monitoring.
- Finalise the Red Gum GDE reports for 2021, and publish new reports cards for the Sleaford Mere, and Pillie Lake wetland sites, as soon as possible.

## Long-term actions

Areas of improvement, further investigation or research that will need to be considered to inform the comprehensive review process in 2026, include:

- Revisiting the WAP objectives to check they are still accurate and relevant.
- Consideration of any new science and data acquired during the life of the existing WAP.
- Future climate projections and climate variability when considering the best approach to determining allocations, and the likely impact these may have on water users.
- The impact on recharge to the aquifers of large scale natural vegetation regeneration, environmental plantings and carbon plantings.
- Analysis of data to determine if GDE health is being impacted by changes in extraction.
- Incorporating an allocation priority, similar to the River Murray, where water to meet critical human needs is provided a higher priority than water for all other uses.
- Reviewing water allocations available for each consumptive pool.
- Consideration of trends observed during the life of the WAP to be used in determining any amendment to the triggers.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the current triggers in meeting the objectives of the WAP.
- Revisiting non-licenced demand estimates to ensure these are still valid.
- Suitability of salinity triggers for the allocations of water in any future iteration of the WAP if there appears to be any benefit from this.

- Updating of the monitoring program to align with the comprehensive review of the WAP.
- Engagement with First Nations groups, so that a good understanding of cultural water and economic water needs is identified that can be included in the next WAP.
- Gaining a better understanding of the current connection of key GDEs to the groundwater, as their connection may have changed during the millennium drought and the most recent drier times.

On behalf of the Board, we would like to thank all of the people who took the time to participate in this process. The feedback provided has been instrumental in helping us to gauge how effective our WAP implementation processes have been, and importantly, how these can be improved moving forward.

## More information

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