

Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse Consumptive Pools



Background

The River Murray is a limited resource and it is important to make sure the available water in the river is shared between all water users, including the environment.

The Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse (the Plan) sets out a number of consumptive pools for the river, which allows water to be allocated to water users within sustainable limits. Different rules apply to each consumptive pool, including whether the water can be traded or 'carried over'. Water users hold water access entitlements (shares) in the consumptive pools and these can generally be traded allowing water rights to move around between individual users.

There are four consumptive pools, with one of the pools containing five classes. This recognises the need for different rules and a purpose for each consumptive pool. The consumptive pools can be managed differently when necessary (for example in dry periods where less water is available in the system), or where the water is required to be used for a specific purpose (for example – wetland management). The consumptive pools still refer to classes so that water can be prioritised between the classes in dry conditions.

Water management authorisations were reissued in 2018 to reflect the new terminology. The consumptive pools do not change the number of water access entitlements (shares) held by licence holders. Water management authorisations include water licences, water resource works approvals and site use approvals.

What are the consumptive pools and how do these relate to the previous 'classes'?

Table 1 below shows the consumptive pools, purpose and classes compared to the previous classes. The number of shares available from the River Murray has not changed but the classes have been grouped where characteristics are shared (with the exception of ELMA). If you had water access entitlements in the previous classes, when licences were reissued you would still have the same number of entitlements in the new consumptive pool and class.

Each consumptive pool has one or more classes, reflecting the previous classes which water users were familiar with.

Separating the All Purpose Consumptive Pool into classes is important to allow the different classes to be prioritised during dry periods. Class 1, 2 and 5 are recognised as being for critical human water needs and these will be prioritised first in a dry period after dilution and loss (see Fact Sheet: Allocating Water from the River Murray). The Metropolitan Adelaide Consumptive Pool (Class 6) is also for critical human water needs. More information about critical human water needs is provided under the heading 'Critical Human Water Needs'.



The former Class 9 is now contained in two consumptive pools – the Wetland Consumptive Pool and the Environmental Consumptive Pool. The water access entitlements currently on licence are included in the consumptive pools as they relate to wetlands that can be managed through regulating infrastructure. The remaining water for unmanaged wetlands is not included in the consumptive pools; the total of the managed and unmanaged wetland water is 200 GL. Managed wetlands arise from the construction of regulating infrastructure on wetlands, for example through the Riverine Recovery Project (RRP).

The Wetland Consumptive Pool relates to the volume required to operate South Australia’s managed wetlands. The Environmental Consumptive Pool relates to the volume of water savings as a result of installing the regulating infrastructure – this volume is managed by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

The number of water access entitlements in both consumptive pools are likely to increase as more wetlands are managed through the RRP. The increase is absorbed within the 200 GL originally set aside for wetlands.

A total volume of 6.2 GL has been included in the All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 1 – 6.1 GL) and the All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3 – 0.1 GL) to reflect the unlicensed demand. This water use was previously a part of the unassigned portion of Entitlement, however it should be included in a consumptive pool. As an allocation is not required for these water uses, a water access entitlement and unit shares are not applicable.

Why have the classes been grouped this way?

Classes have been grouped based on characteristics, such as whether they are eligible for carryover and if they can be traded, with the exception of ELMA. The consumptive pools also help prioritise water when South Australia is facing dry conditions. ELMA has been included in the All Purpose Consumptive Pool to reduce the complexity of providing guidance to the Minister around prioritising water in dry times. Table 2 outlines the characteristics of each class/consumptive pool.

Table 1: Consumptive Pools

New Consumptive Pool	New Purpose	New Class	Previous Class	Previous Purpose (2002 Plan)
Metropolitan Adelaide	<i>Water supply purposes to Metropolitan Adelaide and associated country areas</i>	Class 6*	Class 6	Water supply purposes to Metropolitan Adelaide and associated country areas
All Purpose	<i>All purposes including, but not limited to:</i> - <i>Licensed purposes such as country towns, stock and domestic, industrial, dairy, irrigation, recreational, ELMA</i> - <i>Unlicensed stock and domestic use</i> - <i>Purposes permitted under section 128 authorisations such as road making and firefighting</i>	Class 1*	Class 1	Stock & domestic
		Class 2*	Class 2	Urban water use – country towns
		Class 3	Class 3a	Irrigation (non-Qualco)
			Class 3b	Irrigation (Qualco)
			Class 4	Recreation
		Class 7	Environment	
Class 5*	Class 5	Industrial & Dairy		
Class 8	Class 8	ELMA		
Wetlands	<i>Management of wetlands within the 1956 flood boundary that can be managed through a wetting and drying regime</i>	Class 9	Class 9	Wetlands
Environmental	<i>Environmental purposes as specified by the Water Act 2007 (Cth)</i>	Class 9	Class 9	Wetlands

*These classes are recognised as Critical Human Water Needs (CHWN)



Table 2: Characteristics of each Consumptive Pool

Consumptive Pool & Class	Previous Class	Characteristics				Change from Class characteristics
		CHWN	Tradeable	Eligible for Carryover	Specific Purpose on Use	
Metropolitan Adelaide Consumptive Pool (Class 6)	Class 6	Yes	No (pursuant to the MBD Agreement)	No	Yes - Water supply purposes to metropolitan Adelaide and associated country areas	No change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 1)	Class 1	Yes	Yes	No	No	No Change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 2)	Class 2	Yes	Yes	No	No	No Change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3)	Class 3a	No	Yes	Yes	No	No Change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3)	Class 3b	No	Yes	Yes	No	No Change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3)	Class 4	No	Yes	Yes	No	No Change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3)	Class 7	No	Yes	Yes	No	No Change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 5)	Class 5	Yes	Yes	No	No	No Change
All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 8)	Class 8	No	No (pursuant to the MDB Agreement)	No	To be used for protecting environmental land assets in the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area	Clarity provided that these water rights cannot be traded
Wetland Consumptive Pool (Class 9)	Class 9	No	Yes	No	Yes - Management of wetlands within the 1956 flood boundary that can be managed through a wetting and drying regime	No change – tradeable but must be used for specified purpose
Environmental Consumptive Pool (Class 9)	Class 9	No	Yes	No	Yes - Environmental purposes as specified by the Water Act 2007 (Cth)	No change – tradeable but must be used for specified purpose



Critical Human Water needs

The Metropolitan Adelaide Consumptive Pool and classes 1, 2 and 5 of the All Purpose Consumptive Pool are recognised as being for Critical Human Water Needs (CHWN). These consumptive pools have the highest priority in a period of low water availability after dilution and loss (see Fact Sheet: Allocating water from the River Murray for information about allocation decisions in dry times).

How will consumptive pools affect water trading?

The consumptive pools and classes do not impact on water trading. The same trading rules that apply to the previous classes apply to the consumptive pools and classes.

The transfer criteria clarifies the existing policy that ELMA water rights cannot be transferred. There is no change in practice however the transfer principles are now explicit and make this clear. This is because ELMA is specifically for land management in the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Areas and is not able to be transferred under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement.

Examples

1. I used to hold class 3a shares on licence. What does this mean for me?

You will now hold the same number of shares in the All Purpose Consumptive Pool (class 3).

2. I used to hold class 1 shares and class 3a shares on licence. What does this mean for me?

You will now hold the same number of shares in the All Purpose Consumptive Pool (class 1 and 3) respectively.

3. I am looking to buy additional allocation on the market for my irrigation development. What water can I buy?

You can buy allocations from classes 1, 2, 3 or 5 within the All Purpose Consumptive Pool.

I want to find out more about....

Information about my water management authorisations, please contact the DEW Berri Office:

T: (08) 8595 2053

E: dewaterlicensingberri@sa.gov.au

How water is allocated from the River Murray, please visit the Natural Resources SAMDB website and look for the 'Allocating Water from the River Murray' fact sheet:

www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/rivermurraywap

The Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse:

T: (08) 8463 6877

E: rmwap.feedback@sa.gov.au

Or visit:

www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/rivermurraywap

