



# Marne Saunders water management

## #1 History, licences & allocations

The Marne Saunders **Prescribed Water Resources Area (PWRA)** is located in the Murray-Darling Basin. It covers 743 km<sup>2</sup> and encompasses a wide range of climates, landforms, enterprises and water resources from the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges down to the River Murray. The water resources of the area support a wide range of social, economic, environmental, and cultural values.

An information pack has been developed as an outcome of the Cambrai Water Forum in February 2022. There are 6 papers in the series as supporting information developed for the upcoming meetings in November 2022:

- #1: History, Licences, and Allocations
- #2: Hydrological cycle in the PWRA
- #3: Water development and use
- #4: Resource and ecosystem condition
- #5: Frequently asked questions
- #6: How to address concerns

## Overview and history of the Marne Saunders PWRA

The Marne Saunders PWRA can be broadly divided into the hills zone (in the west, with high rainfall) and plains zone (in the east, with very low rainfall), as demonstrated in Figure 1 overleaf.

The Marne Saunders PWRA covers part of the traditional lands and waters of the Peramangk and Nganguraku people. The lower sections of the catchments are within the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee Region #2 Native Title Claim area.

Since prescription, a water allocation and licence is required for taking prescribed water resources within the PWRA for most types of use (including, irrigation, industrial use, intensive animal production, recreational use).

However, in the Marne Saunders PWRA, no licence or allocation is required for taking water for the following types of use:

- domestic use
- stock use (providing drinking water to stock that are not subject to intensive farming)
- a small group of exempted purposes, including non-commercial native title rights to take water.

See section 1.4 of the [Marne Saunders Water Allocation Plan \(WAP\)](#) for more information on exempted purposes.



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A history of key steps to the regulation of water taking in the Marne Saunders PWRA is provided in Table 1. This history is covered in more detail in section 1.4 of the Marne Saunders WAP:

**Table 1: Key steps in the process of regulating taking of water in the Marne Saunders Prescribed Water Resources Area (PWRA).**

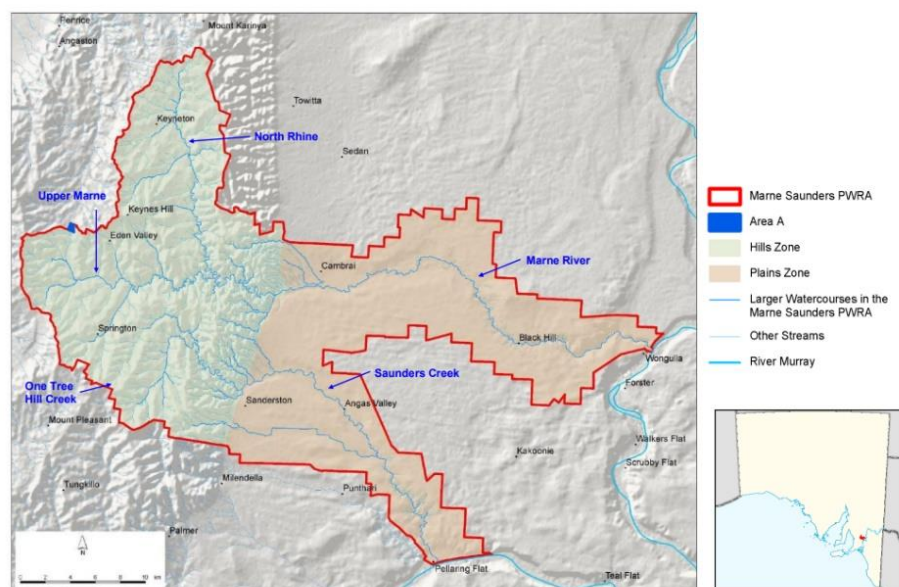
When	Event
May 1999 February 2002	Temporary moratorium prohibiting water resource development in Marne catchment (1999) and Saunders catchment (2002).
March 2003	Prescription of the Marne Saunders PWRA.
March 2003	Permit required for water affecting activities like dam construction in the SA Murray-Darling Basin (now known as the Murraylands and Riverland region), following adoption of the River Murray catchment plan.
January 2010	Adoption of the Marne Saunders WAP.
2010	Water licences start to be issued to existing users in the Marne Saunders PWRA.
Spring 2017	On-ground implementation of Flows for the Future program starts.
February 2019	Amendments made to the Marne Saunders WAP to include Aboriginal water interests.
December 2019	Review of the Marne Saunders WAP.

## Characteristics of water licences and allocations

A water licence in the Marne Saunders PWRA includes the allocation or maximum volume that can be taken by the licensee from each water resource, for each water use year (1 July – 30 June).

The licence also specifies the only sources that the allocation can be taken from (i.e. which wells, dams and/or watercourse diversions).

**Figure 1 (right): The Marne Saunders Prescribed Water Resource Area. Orange shading = Plains Zone; Green Shading = Hills Zone**



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Water allocations and licences are personal property rights that are separate from land. This right to take water may be transferred or traded between users, subject to the rules set out in the water allocation plan and approval by the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. An allocation can be transferred independently of a water licence. More information on rights to take and use water can be found on the Department for Environment and Water website:

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/water-markets-and-trade/water-rights>

It is important to note that having a water licence does not guarantee the ability to physically access the maximum allocation volume every year. Availability of water is influenced by climate, water movement and other demands.

It is also important to note that holding the right to take water does not automatically allow construction of an associated well or dam – this construction requires separate approval. For more information, see the section on '**Error! Reference source not found.**' in the information pack as factsheet #5 Frequently Asked Questions.



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<https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/water/water-allocation-plans/marne-saunders>



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