

Water Affecting Activities: Guidelines for Desilting Dams

Dams required regular attention to maintain their lifespan, water quality and quantity and to prevent costly structural failures. It is good practice to regularly inspect dams, spillways and catchment when they are full and dry, to plan for any required maintenance.



The *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* and SA Arid Lands Landscape Board's Water Affecting Activities (WAA) Control Policy requires a WAA permit for a range of activities that could impact on water resources, water dependent ecosystems and other water users.

The policy outlines the activities that require a permit and those which are exempt from requiring a permit.

These guidelines outline conditions under which you may be exempt when desilting your dam.

Regular dam maintenance is good practice

Dams require regular maintenance to maintain their lifespan, water quality and quantity and to prevent costly structural failures.

It is good practice to regularly inspect dams, spillways and catchments, when full and dry, and to plan for any required maintenance works.

Desilting a dam

Desilting a dam can be undertaken under the board's Water Affecting Activities Control Policy without applying for a WAA Permit. Specific conditions to undertake the works are outlined below.

It is important to note that any other works to dams may require a WAA Permit. To ensure you meet your legal obligations, please contact the board for advice prior to starting work.



Guidelines for desilting a dam

A permit is not required for desilting a legally constructed dam provided:

- a) Desilting only involves the removal of material deposited since construction of the dam or material deposited since the dam was last desilted, and
- b) the capacity of the dam is not increased beyond its original size, and
- c) any excavated material is not deposited within a watercourse, lake or floodplain of a watercourse, and
- d) measures are taken to prevent erosion and damage to any watercourses, lakes or floodplains and minimise impacts to water quality.

The ideal time to de-silt your dam is when it and the surrounding area is dry.

Duty of Care

In South Australia, all people have a general statutory duty under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* to act reasonably and responsibly in relation to the management of natural resources.

This includes an obligation to maintain and not damage a watercourse, floodplain, or lake.

Penalties may apply

Undertaking a WAA without a permit where a permit is required or breaching the principles of the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board's WAA Control Policy is an offence under the Act.

If you are unsure whether the works you are proposing will require a permit, please contact SA Arid Lands staff for advice before commencing any work.

Contact us

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