

# Accounting for Groundwater Take in the Far North Prescribed Wells Area

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Introduction

#### Background

The accounting for groundwater take in the Far North Prescribed Wells Area (FNPWA) has been developed in response to community concern, raised during consultation on the Water Allocation Plan, about the potential impact of water metering on pastoral businesses in the Far North.

The State has a policy, the [South Australian Licenced Water Use Metering Policy](#), that requires licensed water to be taken through a meter approved by the Minister or in such a way that the Minister is satisfied that the taking of water is consistent with the relevant meter implementation plan. Alternatives to water metering can be considered and documented within a meter implementation plan; for the Far North this plan is referred to as the Water Accounting Implementation Plan.

The project is initially being established for 18 months to investigate and trial metering, measuring and accounting options that maybe suitable for the Far North and can be used to support development of the water accounting implementation plan.

The advisory group is being established to support the project through the provision of advice regarding identification of water accounting projects, contributing to project assessment and assisting in overseeing the conduct of trials. The advisory group will consist of community and industry members with an interest or experience in groundwater management and managing water for livestock enterprises and representatives from the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board and the Department for Environment and Water.

#### What is water accounting?

Water accounting is the recording and reporting of water take.

#### Who can apply to be part of the Advisory Group?

Anyone with experience in groundwater management and managing water for livestock can submit an expression of interest.

#### How will expression of interests be assessed?

Assessors will consider the applicants responses to the following criteria:

- Local knowledge of and/or experience in managing water infrastructure in the Far North of South Australia
- Knowledge and experience in managing water for a livestock enterprise
- Knowledge of water infrastructure services and equipment providers suitable for the Far North, and
- Community participation and willingness to share information.

#### Why do we need to account for water use?

Accounting for water take is key to management of the groundwater resources. You cannot manage what you don't measure.

All licenced water users in South Australia are required to account for their water use in line with the conditions of their water management authorisation.

#### What is a Water Accounting Implementation Plan?

A publicly available plan for the implementation of water accounting measures for a particular prescribed water resource. In other prescribed areas this is known as a Metering Implementation Plan.

South Australia's default policy is that all licensed water use shall be metered. However, the policy allows for implementation to be sufficiently flexible to recognise on-ground regional implementation issues. Meter (water accounting) implementation plans are the mechanism used to document and consistently apply any exemptions or alternative methods of measurement. It is acknowledged that there are a number of complexities associated with metering in the FNPWA, such as artesian conditions and measuring water at high pressures and temperatures. The Department will work with the board and water users to determine how water take can be accounted for in a reasonable manner. This feedback will be considered in the development of a Water Accounting Implementation Plan for the FNPWA.

### **What is the Accounting for Groundwater Take in the Far North Prescribed Wells Area (FNPWA) project?**

It is acknowledged that metering is a complex issue for the FNPWA and further work is required to determine the best approach to water accounting. The accounting for groundwater take project will investigate water accounting options to provide the evidence to enable the development of the Far North Prescribed Wells Water Accounting Implementation Plan. The investigation into water accounting options will be undertaken through field trials led and conducted by the pastoral community.

### **What is the role of the Water Accounting Advisory Group?**

The advisory group is responsible for providing advice to assist in the selection and conduct of water accounting trials. The group will:

- Provide advice to the project management team with regard to:
  - Identify water accounting investigation projects
  - Identify water accounting trial participants
- Assist with monitoring and reporting on individual project performance;
- Assist in the development of individual project plans;
- Review individual trial progress and in consultation with the participant make recommendations for amendments as required;
- Address concerns raised by participants;

### **What is expected of me as an Advisory Group member?**

As an advisory group member you will be expected to participate and contribute in the advisory group meetings and assist the group to meet its role and responsibility's.

Meetings will initially be monthly with the first meeting expected to be in late October 2021. Once projects are confirmed meetings will be every 10 weeks or as-needed.

Membership is on a volunteer basis and as such meetings will be conducted on-line (MS Teams) where possible to reduce time and travel commitment.

The board will reimburse out of pocket expenses as a result of membership of the advisory group for attending face to face meetings.

A Terms of Reference will be provided to successful applicants.

### **What is the role of the Trial Participants?**

The project trial participants will work closely with and under the guidance of the advisory group and project management team.

The participants will have involvement in the in-field trials including designing the project and delivery in accordance with the project plan. The project plan will outline the

activities including data collection, monitoring and reporting of results.

### **Can I be on the Advisory Group and run a water accounting trial?**

Yes, it is possible to be a member of the advisory group and a trial participant however there will be limitations on your involvement in assessing and making recommendations on your own water accounting project.

### **How do I apply to be on the Water Accounting Advisory Group?**

To lodge an expression of interest in being involved in the advisory group

<https://landscape.smartygrants.com.au/SAALwateradvisory>

### **What additional information do I need to provide to support my expression of interest?**

Anything you consider relevant to support your expression of interest such as referees, qualifications etc can be included and will be considered.

### **How do I apply to conduct a water accounting trial?**

A call for expressions of interest in conducting an accounting trial is expected to open in December 2021. SAAL Water staff are keen to hear from people ahead of this time and you are encouraged to make contact (see contact details below).

### **What are the key dates for submitting an expression of interest for the Advisory Group?**

- Advisory group expressions of interest close: 10am, 5/10/2021
- Notification to applicants on or before 12/10/2021
- Advisory group expected date of first meeting: 21/10/2021
- Trial participant/project expression of interest open: 16/12/2021
- Trial participant/project expression of interest close: 31/01/2022
- Estimated project set-up and start: March/April 2022

### **Where can I find out more information?**

Should you wish to discuss this opportunity further, please contact Aaron Smith by email [aaron.smith3@sa.gov.au](mailto:aaron.smith3@sa.gov.au) or phone 0417 643 956 or Melissa Horgan by email [melissa.horgan@sa.gov.au](mailto:melissa.horgan@sa.gov.au) or phone 0409 896 402.

For information on the state-wide metering policy and other relevant policies visit

[www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/waterlicences-and-permits/metering-water-use](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/waterlicences-and-permits/metering-water-use)