

Barossa water resources heading towards critical thresholds

Some water users across the Barossa are being advised to prepare for reduced water allocations in the next water use year, as new surface and groundwater data show the supply is under serious threat.

Recent data confirms that current extraction levels are no longer sustainable in parts of the region, and the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board is taking urgent steps to safeguard the region's water supply through an amended Barossa Water Allocation Plan.

Currently open for public consultation, the Plan incorporates new science, greater flexibility, and updated risk triggers to safeguard the long-term water security for the region.

"There's a real need to act now," said Northern and Yorke Landscape Board General Manager Tony Fox.

"Water available for use in both surface and groundwater systems is declining. If this trend continues, the volume of water available for licence holders will need to be reduced to avoid irreversible damage to the resource and the environment.

"The updated Water Allocation Plan will provide a new flexible management approach, enabling more responsive reviews and adjustments to allocations when trigger thresholds are reached."

The partially unbundled licensing model introduced in the Plan will allow annual allocations to be adjusted independently of long-term entitlements - providing flexibility to respond to seasonal conditions while protecting the overall integrity of the resource.

Eden Valley grape grower and Barossa WAP Advisory Group Chair Leon Deans encouraged locals and water users to take the time to review the new data, amended Plan and have their say.

"Reduced water allocation is not what we want, but we can't keep taking water when the fact is clear that we have had decades of declining rainfall affecting the long-term sustainability of our supplies," he said.

"This Plan will provide industry with a quicker response to environmental conditions, so the resource recovers quickly and remains sustainable for the future - both economically and environmentally."

Water monitoring data collected across the Barossa will continue to be collated and assessed between December and February each year. Based on

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the assessment, a management response will be recommended to the Minister in March 2026.

Locals and water users can have their say on the amended Plan via the YourSAy website, with the consultation open until the end of August 2025.

More information: bit.ly/BarossaWAP