

Draft Barossa Water Allocation Plan amendment

Consultation Plan

June 2025

This Consultation Plan has been prepared to guide engagement and communication activities during consultation on an amended water allocation plan covering the Barossa Prescribed Water Resources Areas. This plan has been prepared in partnership between the Department for Environment and Water and the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board.

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1. BACKGROUND

This consultation plan (the plan) has been prepared to guide the implementation of all engagement and communication activities for the statutory consultation, in accordance with section 55 of the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the Act) of the draft amended Barossa Water Allocation Plan (WAP) covering the Barossa Prescribed Water Resources Areas (Figure 1).

The purpose of the draft amended WAP is to set out the management arrangements for the allocation and use of water resources within the Barossa. It replaces the existing Water Allocation Plan for the Barossa Prescribed Water Resources Area (2009).

The purpose of this plan is to allow stakeholders the opportunity to review the draft amended WAP and to provide feedback on matters which may affect or interest them, or suggestions for alternative or amended approaches. All feedback will be considered in finalising the draft amended WAP before being submitted to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water with a recommendation for adoption.

The draft amended WAP has been developed in accordance with the Act, legal advice, scientific information and administrative feasibility. However, there is an opportunity for stakeholders to provide comment about the mechanisms used to address policy issues and risks in balancing social, economic and resource management factors, as outlined in the draft amended WAP.

After the WAP is adopted, engagement will continue during the implementation phase, so that stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities and are informed about the outcomes of the WAP policies.

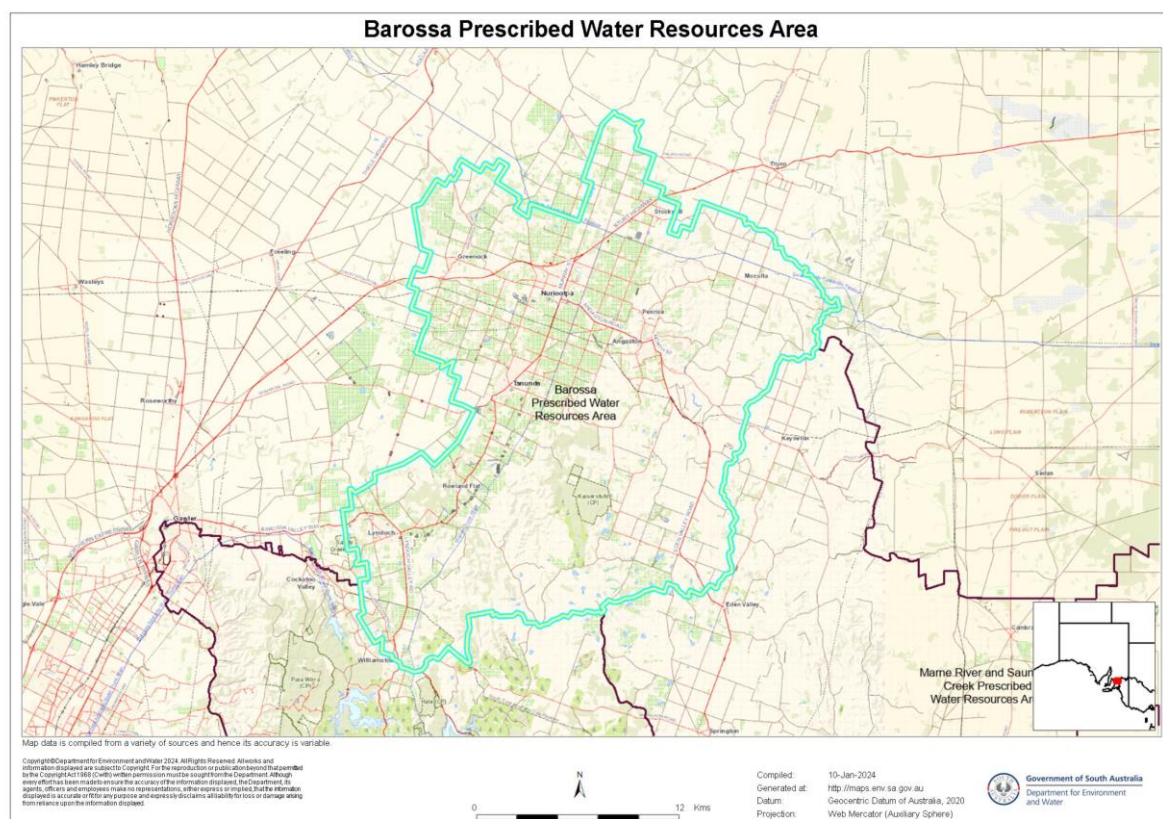


Figure 1: Prescribed Water Resources Area covered by the Barossa Water Allocation Plan

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the consultation plan are to:

- Ensure statutory consultation requirements outlined under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* are met and engagement is consistent with Government policy
- Build common understanding of the science and policy that underpins the new draft amended WAP with the community
- Provide multiple opportunities for any interested stakeholders to participate in consultation and engagement activities or forums
- Raise awareness of the proposed draft amended WAP and the opportunities for input through a range of formats and platforms.

3. ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

As outlined in this plan, opportunities will be provided for the general community to contribute through the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board and YourSAy websites, provision of online and written supporting materials and public invitation to provide submissions. The plan proposes the primary activities will involve consulting with key stakeholders through direct discussions either individually or via peak bodies, with a smaller focus on consulting through in-person drop-in sessions. It is believed that this will better tailor the consultation to the needs of each stakeholder or stakeholder group.

There will be a focus on engagement with the three First Nations of the Barossa area, to continue to build on previous collaboration for the drafting of the inaugural First Nations Water chapter of the WAP.

It is proposed that consultation will be separated into two phases:

Phase 1 – Early engagement with key players - January – June 2025

Purpose: To inform key players who have had a significant role in the development of the draft amended WAP that it is ready for release for the statutory consultation.

- Inform the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board of the impending release of the draft WAP for statutory consultation and offer a briefing on the draft amended WAP.
- Hold discussions with the members of the Water Allocation Planning Advisory Group to highlight the differences between the 2009 WAP and the draft amended WAP which they helped to develop.

Phase 2 – Statutory consultation – July - August 2025

Purpose: To engage with stakeholders about specific aspects of the draft amended WAP, hear their views on the proposals and seek their feedback through:

- Written communication to water licence holders and other key stakeholders
- Written communication with relevant state and local government bodies
- Individual discussions with key stakeholders
- Drop-in sessions at key locations in the area
- Discussions with Ngadjuri First Nation group through their governing board
- Discussions with Peramangk First Nation group through their governing board
- Discussions with Kurna First Nation group through their governing board
- Seek written submissions – It is a statutory requirement to seek written submissions from community on the draft amended WAP
- Web presence – use of 'YourSAy' website as well as the NYLB website with links to supporting material.

3.1 KEY MESSAGES

Key messages to be emphasised during consultation are:

- provide an overview of the WAP
- explain the process of partially unbundling licences
- describe the consumptive pools for all resources
- outline the proposed management approach for all resources including triggers
- confirm carryover and transfer rules
- explain the proposed management option of variable allocations in some consumptive pools in order to provide a 'safety net' to protect the condition of the groundwater resource (the 'safety net' scheme will minimize the risk of unacceptable impacts to the targeted groundwater resource by temporarily reducing allocations within particular areas if the condition of the groundwater resource has deteriorated to a certain level, allowing time for the groundwater resource to recover)
- explain the proposed management option of variable allocations in order to provide a 'safety net' to protect the sustainability of the surface water resources (the 'safety net' scheme will assist to reduce the negative impacts to the surface water resources by temporarily reducing allocations within particular consumptive pools if the condition of the minimum flow metrics are not being met, allowing the water resources time to recover if the required climate conditions occur)
- highlight that environmental water provisions will be addressed through the use of extraction limits and buffer zones around ecological assets, in particular the permanent pools, that will be monitored for health and condition
- highlight the changes to regulations for storage and use of imported water or treated water (effluent) in order to reduce barriers to current and future alternate water supply projects

Written and online material will be prepared for a number of the key messages including:

- Overview of the draft amended WAP
- How partially unbundled water licences will look under the amended WAP
- Summaries of trends in water resources and links to climate
- Features and role of permanent pools as WDEs and flag-ships for system condition
- How the 'safety net scheme' and options for variable allocations in the targeted groundwater consumptive pools works
- Description of how options for the variable allocations and use of flow metric requirements in the surface water consumptive pools works

3.2 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Further detail of key stakeholders and the proposed method of consultation with each group is provided below

Project Stage	Key stakeholders	Purpose	Method
Phase 1 -Early engagement with key players	Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, Dept. for Environment and Water	Inform of the release of the draft WAP for statutory consultation Consult on the draft WAP	Letter to the Minister for Environment and Water Offer a briefing on the draft WAP
	Members of the Water Allocation Planning Advisory Group (WAPAG)	Inform and explain the differences between the 2009 WAP and the amended draft WAP which they helped to develop.	Meeting discussions
Phase 2 - Statutory consultation	Water license holders	To inform of the release of the draft WAP for statutory consultation and provide the opportunity for feedback on the draft WAP	Written communication to licensees, online information, supporting written materials on key topics, individual discussions as required Letter – FYI with input opportunities (<i>contact: DEW WL</i>) Online – NYLB website (<i>contact: C&E team</i>), Your Say (<i>contact: direct</i>), DEW (<i>contact: DEW comms</i>) Fact sheets (<i>contact: NYLB/DEW comms</i>)

	Key industry groups, conservation and environment peak bodies: - Barossa Australia (<i>contact: Nicki Robins</i>) - Barossa Improved Grazing Group (incl. some Ag. Bureaus) (<i>contact: Janie Evans, Alice Tilley (Comms), Georgie Keynes (A EO), Peter Mitchell(Chair)</i>) - SA Drought Hub (<i>contact: Tony Randall</i>) - Non-licensed water users - Barossa Infrastructure Limited (<i>contact: Simon Schutz</i>) - Bunyip Water Scheme (<i>contact: Helen from Seppeltsfield, Light Regional Council</i>) - Regional Development Australia (organization and board (<i>contact: Jennifer Lynch, CEO</i>)) - Primary Producers SA (NRM Committee (<i>contact: Ben Zander, Greg Cock</i>)) - PPSA (Wine Grape Council of SA) (<i>contact: Lisa Bennier CE, Adrian Hoffman Pres.</i>) - PPSA (Livestock SA) (<i>contact: Travis Tobin CEO, Joe Keynes Pres.</i>) - PPSA (Grain Producers SA) (<i>contact: Brad Perry CE, John Gladigau Pres.</i>) - PPSA (SA Forest Products Assn) (<i>contact: Nathan Paine CEO</i>) - PPSA (Horticultural Coalition of SA) (<i>contact: Angelo Demasi</i>) - PPSA (SA Dairy Farmers Assn) (<i>contact: Andrew Curtis CEO, Rob Brokenshire Pres.</i>)	To inform of the release of the draft WAP for statutory consultation and provide the opportunity for feedback on the draft WAP	Written communication, selected drop-in sessions, individual and small group discussions as required Letter – general FYI with no actions Fact sheets Existing network communications Existing meetings and events Conferences Leader newspaper Stock Journal newspaper ('On the Land' edition) Town newsletters Info graphics PPSA bodies – direct comms from NYLB to body reps and incl. Greg Cock
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	- Local Government (Barossa (contact: <i>Jake McVicar</i>), Light Regional (contact: <i>Andrew Philpott</i>), Mid Murray (contact: <i>Gary Mavrinac</i>)) - First Nations (Ngadjuri, Peramangk, Kaurna (<i>contact: C&E team, FN Boards</i>)) - Ag Ex Alliance – (BIGG are pt of this) - Ag Bureau SA (Mark Grossman ex Chair) – check re local groups and contacts - Alliance Business Groups – WAPAG - Barossa Residence Association - Landcare Association of South Australia Inc - Sustainability Groups - Barossa Bushgarden – <i>contact: Kate Jenkins</i> - Lyndoch Landcare/Altona Group - Friends of Kaiser Stuhl CP - 'Informal Group' (<i>contact Annie Heinke, (sugg. By AM on WAPAG)</i>) - Landmark (contact Vicki Fawcett – Nutrien Ag Solutions, landmark.fawcett@bigpond.com) - Irrigation suppliers - Feed distributors and transport - Sports groups - Sheep Connect SA (<i>contact: Georgie Keynes</i>) - Nature Foundation SA		
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	First Nations (<i>contact: C&E team</i>) - Ngadjuri Nation Aboriginal Corporation - Peramangk Aboriginal Corporation - Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation	Finalise First Nation Water chapter content and provide overview of draft WAP	Meeting discussions with the governing board of each Nation
	Wider public (<i>contact: C&E team</i>)	To provide the opportunity for feedback on the draft WAP	Public invitation to provide submissions via: Online – NYLB website, YourSAy, DEW Leader newspaper Stock Journal newspaper ('On the Land' edition) Town newsletters Info graphics
	Other State Government agencies, MPs, local government: - SA Water (<i>contact: Steve Kotz</i>) - Stormwater Management Authority (<i>contact: Belinda Skilton</i>) - PIRSA, Rural Solutions SA - Department of Education & Children's Services - EPA - LGA - The Barossa Council (<i>contact: Jake McVicar</i>) - Light Regional Council - Mid Murray Council (<i>contact: Gary Mavrinac</i>) - Relevant members of state parliament	To inform of the release of the draft WAP for statutory consultation and provide the opportunity for feedback on the draft WAP	Written communication, online information, supporting written materials on key topics, offer face to face or online discussions

3.3 MANAGING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

As the primary consultation activities involve providing information and supporting materials online and local drop-in sessions, with focused discussions with individuals and smaller groups as required, it is considered that it can be undertaken by a combination of DEW and Landscape Board staff.

Personnel who would contribute to the consultation process include:

- Northern and Yorke staff –, to coordinate and implement the activities of this plan, to provide support as required to produce communications materials, and to provide a conduit to the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board
- Green Adelaide Water Planning staff – to support the discussions with stakeholders as they have a historical understanding of the process to develop the draft amended WAP and have existing community linkages
- DEW Water Policy staff – to provide a broader DEW view, statewide perspective and explanation of recent changes to the draft amended WAP if required, and also information regarding other Barossa water projects, strategies and activities
- DEW Water Licensing staff – to respond to any licencing or administration related questions if required, particularly regarding implementation of partial unbundling
- DEW Water Science staff – to provide water science technical information if required.

Local drop-in sessions will be scheduled at key locations to run as day and evening sessions for designated times on the same or consecutive days. DEW staff involvement will be agreed prior to the dates and will include the most appropriate representative from each team.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

The highest risks identified as part of this process, and suggested mitigation strategies are:

Identified risk	Mitigation strategies	Stakeholders and communication methods
Licensees misunderstand the nature of partially unbundled licences.	Emphasise that the partial unbundling of licences will not affect existing entitlements, will streamline approval processes for transfers, and support flexible management	Licence holders - via online support materials, personal discussions, with additional explanation added online in response to queries
Lack of interest in the process due to 'consultation burnout'	Highlight the key changes from the 2009 WAP – including partial unbundling, climate impacts, consumptive pools, adaptive management via triggers and responses, options for variable allocations	Licence holders - via online support materials, personal discussions, with additional explanation added online in response to queries Key stakeholder agencies – via existing networks and events
Conflicting interests relating to use of water	Targeted messaging relevant to the interests of the focus groups, highlight equity of proposed approaches	Licence holders - via online support materials, personal discussions, with additional explanation added online in response to queries Key stakeholder groups – via existing networks and events

Identified risk	Mitigation strategies	Stakeholders and communication methods
Licensees perceive that the groundwater safety net scheme of triggers and responses in the draft WAP is a threat to their water rights	Emphasise that the safety net scheme is a targeted adaptive management approach for those resources that have been identified at risk of negative impacts if sustained use is not managed, and if action is required will not impact their ongoing entitlement. The alternative to this adaptive management approach would be reductions to their water entitlements.	Groundwater licence holders in all consumptive pools – via online materials, personal discussions, additional explanation added online in response to queries
Licensees perceive that the activation of surface water management options in response to flow metric triggers in the draft WAP is a threat to their water rights	Emphasise that current flow metric triggers indicate that variable allocations are likely to be used in all consumptive pools, however if favourable climate conditions return and extractions remain within sustainable levels, full allocations may be restored. If variable allocations are required, the management action will not impact on their ongoing entitlement. The alternative to this adaptive management approach would be reductions to their water entitlements.	Surface/watercourse water licence holders in all consumptive pools – via online materials, personal discussions, additional explanation added online in response to queries
Key messaging related to environmental water information is misunderstood	Provide clarity regarding the proposed monitoring and modelling activities and the links to current and future projects and activities including the draft Environmental Water Strategy for voluntary managed water releases from key large storages	Licence holders, non-licensed users, and wider community – via personal discussions, additional explanation added online in response to queries
The three First Nations groups don't agree on the final content for the First Nations Water section	Prioritise targeted engagement to each of the First Nations governing bodies during consultation, and include some collaborative discussion to confirm final content, highlight aligning activities outside of the WAP as opportunities to address issues raised	Focused discussions with each of the governing bodies, as well as collaborative discussions with representatives of all three groups

Identified risk	Mitigation strategies	Stakeholders and communication methods
Stakeholders unable to provide a submission within the consultation period	Offer additional time to stakeholders for further discussions or written submissions beyond the statutory 2 month period	Contact the stakeholders who indicated their concern

Triggers for further communication and engagement actions are:

Trigger	Response
Negative or confused comments in YourSAY	More detailed information provided in responses in YourSAY
High number of phone calls and/or high level of dissatisfaction from licence holders and stakeholders	Extra information provided verbally to individuals, and in YourSAY. Provide opportunity for suggestions of alternative approaches. Possible consideration of revised policies in WAP
Negative media attention	To be dealt with by NYLB C&E team on a case by case basis
Written submissions raising issues or problems with the proposed policies	Discussion with submitters, discuss alternative approaches, possible consideration of revised policies in WAP
Stakeholders unable to provide a submission within the consultation period	Offer additional time to stakeholders for further discussions or written submissions beyond the 2 month statutory period
Negative comments from First Nations re the engagement	Actively seek input from each of the governing bodies and share with the other groups. Seek opportunities to 'co-engage' and address the cultural objectives as part of aligned projects and activities

5. INDICATIVE TIMELINE

Phase	Dates	Activity
Phase 1 – early engagement with key players	January to June 2025	Inform the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board of the release of the draft amended WAP for statutory consultation and offer briefings on the draft WAP Provide a summary and key reference materials to the members of the Water Allocation Planning Advisory Group to highlight the differences between the 2009 WAP and the draft amended WAP which they helped to develop
Phase 2 - Statutory consultation	July to August 2025	• Written communication to water licence holders, key stakeholders and relevant state and local government bodies • Individual discussions with key stakeholders • Drop-in sessions at key locations in the area • Discussions with Ngadjuri First Nation group through their governing board • Discussions with Peramangk First Nation group through their governing board • Discussions with Kurna First Nation group through their governing board • Seek written submissions – It is a statutory requirement to seek written submissions from community on the draft amended WAP • Web presence – use of ‘YourSAy’ website as well as the NYLB website with links to supporting material.