

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Barossa Water Allocation Plan being amended?

The current Barossa Water Allocation Plan (WAP) was implemented in 2009. A review found the plan's policies need updating, with consideration of several factors:

- climate variability during and since the Millennium drought, and the impact on the reliability and condition of surface water and groundwater resources
- the environmental water requirements of ecosystems in a changing and variable climate
- maximum extraction volumes for sustainable use of surface water and groundwater resources
- the rules around storing and using imported and treated water, with alternate and new water investigations being considered
- water management zones (consumptive pools) and transfer rules to protect water users and ecosystems
- First Nations cultural objectives to be included in the plan, for the first time.

How does the amended plan interact with other Barossa water activities?

The amendments to the plan are in parallel, but separate, to the Barossa Water Security Strategy and Barossa Alternate/New Water projects.

The plan's specific scope and purpose is to provide a management framework for equitable and sustainable use of prescribed water resources to support consumptive use, the environment, and the cultural and social needs of the community.

The principles and policies of the plan have been drafted to facilitate the objectives and intent of the parallel water activities in the Barossa.

However, implementation of the plan is independent to these other activities:

- [Barossa Water Security Strategy](#)
- [Barossa New Water](#)

How have the management zones changed from the previous plan?

2009 plan	Amended plan
Surface/watercourse water management zones = 4	Surface/watercourse water management zones = 18 (Map below for reference). These are based on sub-catchment areas and hydrological monitoring site locations.
Groundwater management zones = 4	Groundwater management zones = 7 (Map below for reference). These are based on a combination of aquifer type and geographical location.

- Based on community feedback during the Barossa WAP review process, the size of zones have been reduced to provide a more localised management approach that is based on the likely influence of water extraction.
- In addition, two new purpose-based Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) Consumptive Pool and Captured Runoff have been established, covering the entire Barossa Prescribed Water Resources Area (PWRA). Water use from these pools is not part of the volume limits for the surface water and groundwater consumptive pools.
- The MAR Consumptive Pool is made up of the water that has been drained or discharged into aquifers as part of Managed Aquifer Recharge schemes, and not yet extracted again. This water becomes available for allocation in addition to the naturally-occurring groundwater.
- The Captured Runoff Consumptive Pool is comprised of water that runs off new roofs and hard surface areas, resulting in more runoff water available than there was previously. This water becomes available for allocation to be extracted from collection points (as specified on a licence) from new roofs or hard surface areas.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the proposed plan for transfer of surface water and groundwater?

Chapter 7 of the plan outlines the objectives and principles for the transfer (or trade) of water access rights including water licences, water access entitlements and water allocations. The aim of these principles is to provide flexibility of water use for social and economic purposes, while still protecting other water users and the environment.

Some key principles to achieve this are:

- there will be no net increase in the volume of water allocated from the groundwater or surface water consumptive pools. However, a new licence can be issued if needed. For example, to allow a licence holder to transfer some entitlement to a new water user
- licences or allocations can only be transferred within the same consumptive pool, subject to relevant principles to protect other water users and the environment
- there will be no net increase in the combined capacity of dams in a surface water consumptive pool
- any construction of new dams must not result in the capacity of dams on the property exceeding 30% of the annual property runoff
- surface water licences or allocations cannot be transferred upstream of the existing location of extraction, so as not to impact on other water users
- new or increased extraction of surface water or groundwater at a location must ensure the specified buffer distance between the proposed location of extraction and existing wells or water-dependent ecosystems
- new or increased extraction of water from watercourses can only occur above a specified threshold flow rate
- sources for extraction water must be managed in a way that provides for measurement of the extraction volume.

These are principles to be taken into consideration when assessing applications.

Note: In this plan, 'dam' means a dam, wall, weir, embankment or other structure placed on, or constructed across, a watercourse or flow path for the purpose of holding back and storing the flow of that watercourse or the surface water runoff flowing along that flow path. It does not include off-stream storage structures which do not capture any flows and are filled by pumping or siphoning from another water source.

What is the proposed plan for management of MAR and captured runoff water?

Recharge licences operate differently to other water licences. They can be issued when a new managed aquifer recharge (MAR) scheme is established, but can only be transferred as a change of ownership, for example, to a new owner of a MAR scheme. Annual recharge allocations can be transferred temporarily, subject to the relevant conditions. Such transfers are limited to locations within the geographic area of the groundwater consumptive pool which corresponds to the location of the MAR scheme.

Capture of runoff from new buildings and/or impervious surfaces with a water capture area of 500sqm or greater require a water licence, where the volume collected is greater than 1,500 kilolitres per annum. Capture may include a maximum of 85% of rainfall, allowing the remaining 15% (or relevant pre-existing runoff whichever is the larger value) to return through release or non-capture, back to the environment. Water taken must be directed into closed water storage facilities (e.g. holding tanks, storage dams) and if overflow occurs, this must be released to the environment through existing surface water drainage arrangements and must not be recaptured or redirected. New licences from the Captured Runoff Consumptive Pool can be issued, but transfers can only be to a new owner, not to another location.

What is the proposed plan for carryover of water?

Ten per cent of unused groundwater from a previous year can be carried over for use in the new water use year. Extraction must be metered for the whole previous year. In the new year, the carryover allocation is deemed as first use, before any other water take.

For surface or watercourse water, no carryover is permitted.

What are the major changes proposed for surface/watercourse water?

The major proposed surface / watercourse changes are to:

- Establish a larger number of surface water management zones (consumptive pool) based on the main sub-catchments across the area.
- Establish upper extraction limits for each pool equal to the

Frequently Asked Questions

total current volume allocated resulting in no new surface water/watercourse water volumes being available. This is in recognition of a 24% reduction in the average resource capacity and the likely ongoing and long-term decline in surface water availability as forecast by climate models.

- Convert existing water licences to a partially unbundled format to enable the Minister to enact variable annual water allocations. This aims to reduce the potential risks to the water resource and allow time for the resource to be restored, if sustainable use triggers are breached.
- Allow no net increase in dam capacity as the level of dam development is already very high.
- An exception to this is to include a specific policy allowing for capture and re-use of additional runoff from new roofs and hard surfaces (i.e. the pre-development runoff volume would need to remain in the system but volumes above that could be taken and used).
- Allow transfers of allocations within consumptive pools (subject to assessment) but no transfers between pools.
- Establish environmental flow and permanent pool metrics to monitor the condition of the water resource or water-dependent ecosystem. These will be used by the Minister to determine the most appropriate management response when thresholds are exceeded.
- In relation to the storage of imported water or effluent;
 - I. any storage facility for untreated water (imported or effluent) must have no natural catchment and be constructed to prevent leakage to the surrounding soils, e.g. impervious clay or plastic lining, (except in an approved aquifer storage and recovery scheme). This prevents overflow to surrounding land and into a watercourse
 - II. any storage facility for treated water (imported or effluent) must be located outside of a watercourse and minimise the risk of overflow into a watercourse
 - III. any water containing residual chlorine or other treatment chemicals must not be intentionally discharged into a watercourse.

What are the major changes proposed for groundwater?

The major changes proposed for groundwater are to:

- Establish an increased number of groundwater management zones (consumptive pools) based on aquifer type and any relevant triggers (e.g. water level)
- Establish upper extraction limits for each pool equal to the total current volume allocated resulting in no new groundwater volumes being available
- Allow transfers of allocations within consumptive pools (subject to assessment) but no transfers between pools
- Use buffer distances between new wells or increased extraction points, to protect existing wells or groundwater dependent ecosystems (e.g. when an allocation is transferred)
- Establish thresholds for recovered winter pressure level in the Upper Aquifer Central and Lower Aquifer Consumptive Pools. If the threshold is exceeded, all licensees in the pool will be notified and the total volume available for allocation may be reduced, as determined by the Minister. Reduced allocations would remain in place until the level recovers to above the threshold.

More information

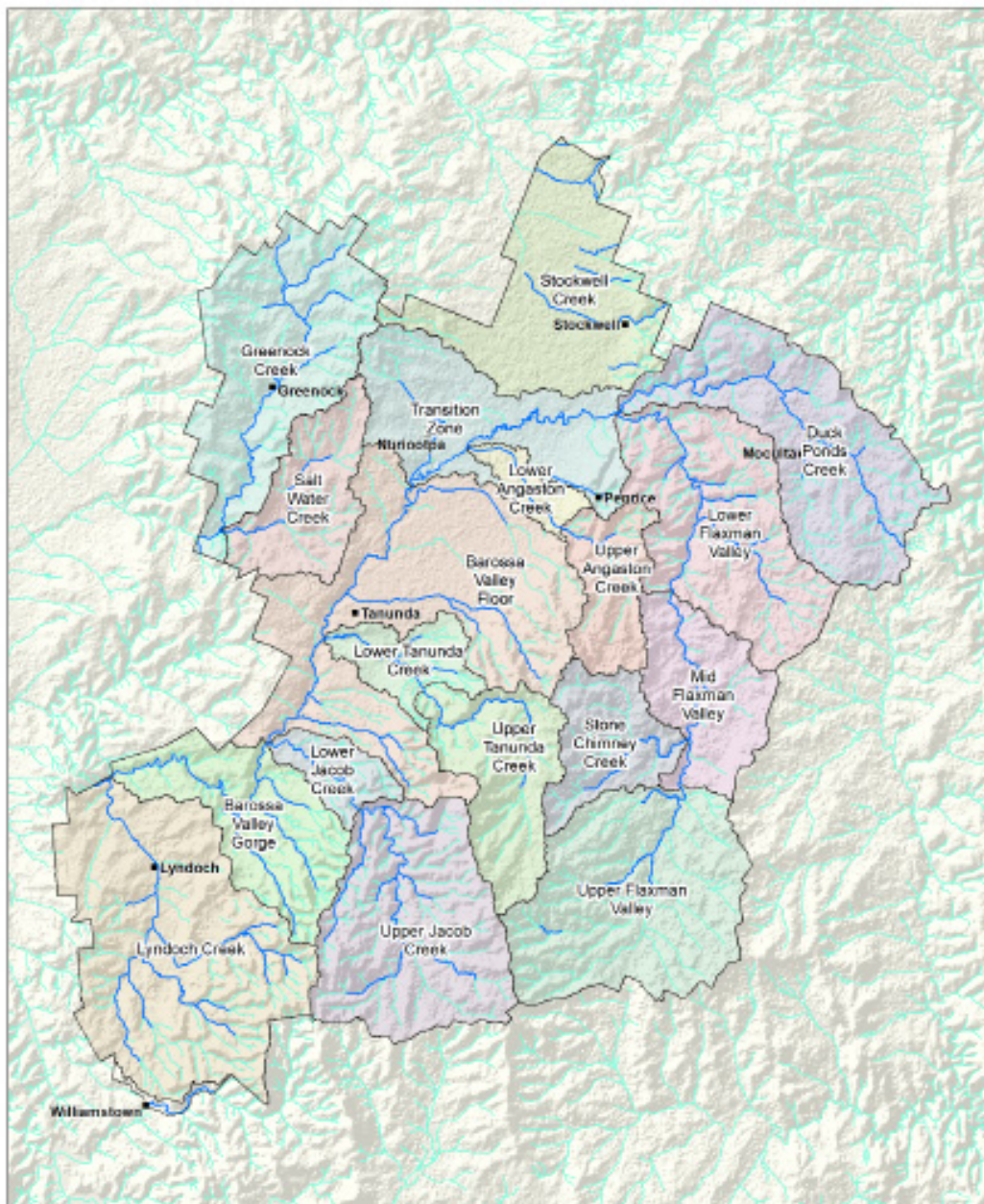
Contact Northern and Yorke Landscape Board:

E: ny.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au

P: 08 8841 3444

www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ny

Frequently Asked Questions



Surface/Watercourse Water Consumptive Pools of the Barossa PWRA

M:\Projects_SVW\LYR_Ranges\Barossa_PWRA\Map_Maps_2024\Figure_2_2_Demo_and_WCEs.mxd

- Locality
- Major stream (≥ 3 rd order)
- Minor stream (≤ 2 nd order)
- Management zone boundary

© Copyright Department for Environment and Water 2023.
All Rights Reserved. All works and information displayed are subject to Copyright. For the reproduction or publication of any part of this work, permission must be sought from the Department.

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information displayed, the Department, its agents, officers and employees make no representations, either express or implied, that the information displayed is correct or that it is for any purpose and no warranty is made as to the accuracy or completeness of the information displayed.

Produced by:
Map Creation
DWL

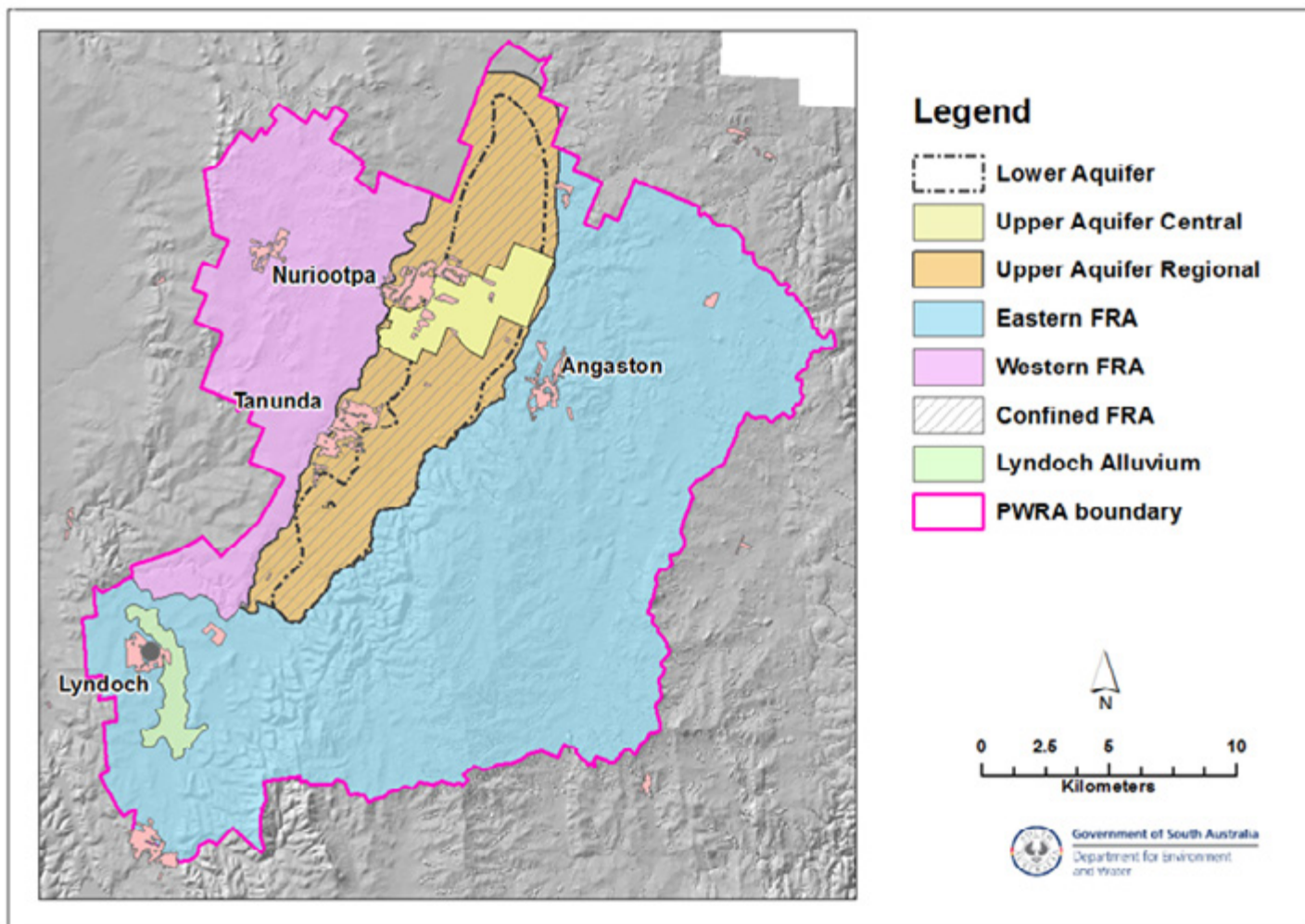


Water Science and Technology Branch
Regional Information - Water Science
Environment and Water
Department for Environment and Water

0 2 4 6 8 km



Frequently Asked Questions



Groundwater Consumptive Pools of the Barossa PWRA