

# Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan Review Stakeholder Advisory Group Minutes

Meeting No. 3, 30 October 2025, 2:00 – 4:30 pm  
Coorong District Council Board Room, Tintinara

## Objectives

- Revisit monitoring, allocation and use information as per listed Actions.
- Consider the feedback and themes from the community sessions held in October.
- Start to consider key concepts and principles from the Water Allocation Plan to commence recommendations as part of the review evaluation process.

## Attendees:

**Group Attendees** – Tracey Strugnell (Proxy Chair), Campbell Foote, James De Barro, Jim Rowntree, John Young, Adam Zacker, Rodney Lush

**LC Landscape Board Staff Attendees** – Sue Botting, Chelsea Burns

**Apologies** – Ryan Judd, Graham Gates, Dr Jonathon Sobels (Chair)

## Welcome and agenda

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked Group members and staff for their attendance and gave an acknowledgement of country.

## Agenda check and minutes

Discussion:

- Request for amendment to Meeting 2 minutes re Group discussion on Delivery Supplement. Clarification that sandy soils may take longer to water but generally water less often so overall use would be comparable to other soil types.
- Actions listed in the minutes will be addressed throughout this meeting.

Meeting 2 minutes with amendment confirmed as true and correct Moved by: James De Barro.  
Seconded by: Jim Rowntree. All were in favour.

## Revisit Allocation and Use

Chelsea Burns presented additional information on monitoring, allocation and use as per Actions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

Discussion:

- The Group discussed the additional information and maps of the DEW observation well network. It was raised that it would be useful if the maps were in satellite imagery view to see

if there are pivots nearby. At a static map level this is difficult to show. The interaction observation well map on the Group members page/public page is shown as aerial imagery and can zoom in to specific bores so would be the best way to explore this.

<https://engage.landscape.sa.com.au/tintinara-coonalpyn-water-allocation-plan-review/observation-wells-tintinara-coonalpyn-prescribed-wells-area>

- When discussing the purpose of use of bores across the current monitoring network, it was raised whether the DEW monitoring team could confirm purpose of use of bores or provide commentary if listed incorrectly during next round of monitoring.
- When discussing the map of current observation wells for the confined aquifer monitoring map, it was raised that there are no wells to east side of Carcuma and north of Geranium Road where irrigation infrastructure/development has been happening.
- The Group discussed the map of current observation wells for the unconfined aquifer. It was noted there are very few in in Coonalpyn management area. Not high use of unconfined in Coonalpyn due to salinity increase over time. Some areas in Carcuma have good access to water and good quality eg just north of LEW12. It was raised that it would be valuable to have more obswells in this area to help understand salinity trends, movement, changes etc.
- Salinity monitoring over time was discussed and some of what may have led to changes. It was raised that the moratorium (1997ish) would be when lots of people put in own samples which were analysed both locally and by DEW. Some of the self sampling provided was not that good. It was noted that some bores need to be run for hours to remove sand to get a better sample which many just wouldn't do. It was also raised that it used to be a condition on licences to provide a salinity reading and/or a sample but this is no longer happening or requested on the DEW annual return even though it is still in the Plan.
- A key outcome of discussion is in the disappointment that the program reduced over time. There was strong support for licensee program to provide salinity samples and/or readings as well as strong support to analyse samples. It was raised whether licence holders would have concerns of sample results being publicly available but the Group view was there would be no issues with data being made available. Strongly, the Group viewed that salinity is an important issue that needs to be managed. Monitoring programs should reflect that and gaps need to be filled.
- It was raised whether the review should seek licence holder samples taken in February during peak irrigation season. It was noted that this could misrepresent salinity variability and wouldn't show a trend as such but would at least provide a set of point in time data to get a picture of the PWA at scale.
- The Group discussed their concerns in making policy decisions with the level of data available. It was discussed that recommendations or decisions on policy still need to be made even if data availability is less than desirable as can't go back in time to collect data but can provide recommendations for moving forward. It was raised by staff that the Act includes the use of best available data and absence of data doesn't negate decision making. Monitoring needs to be for a purpose or to answer a question for funding/resource/support so need to be clear on what it is that is needed and why.
- The Group raised that if the Board makes a decision which isn't defensible based on a lack of data then it would not be popular. Group members felt strongly that it is important decisions are understood. If decisions made impact business, asset value, capacity etc then people need to know why and monitoring program needs to support that. It was discussed how these concerns could be escalated through DEW.
- The Group discussed the use/extraction data maps and noted that a single extraction point is a meter or bore which could cover a very large area or a very small area. It was suggested that

seeing the hydrographs of observation wells a layer over the extraction point maps would be useful.

- There was general discussion around the % use graphs for each management area as there was no clear pattern or trend of licence use. The % use of licences varies across all licence sizes and some licences are not using any allocation. For example, in Coonalpyn management area about a quarter have 0% use which is likely due to high salinity or water not being fit for purpose.

## Community Sessions

Chelsea Burns presented on the community engagement opportunities held across the area in October 2025.

Discussion:

- A summary of the feedback from all community sessions will be provided to Group members. The summary will also be made publicly available. The community sessions strongly aligned to the Group's comments about the importance of salinity management including monitoring.
- Dryland salinity was also raised through the sessions with some areas of the PWA being impacted already. The current Plan does recognise the risk of dryland salinity and there was some discussion around how it fits within the scope of the Plan and where policy can support the issue.
- The Group had some discussion around dryland salinity. It was raised that where the water is rising in the trends is not where the primary dryland salinity problem is. It was also raised that possibly irrigation from confined aquifer could impact dryland salinity. It was noted that there is a balance between preserving the current use or use it before it is no longer fit for purpose.
- Of the evaluation responses from attendees of the community sessions, it was noted that 58.82% of respondents answered yes that the Plan is managing the water resource to be available in a similar quantity and quality into the future and this is quite a good response. This was noted in the context of over 70% of respondents identifying their understanding of the current Plan as being average or very low.
- It was raised that at adjoining PWA community sessions a DEW hydrogeologist presented on resource condition and requested for DEW to present/report on the TC PWA resource condition to the Group in the first instance. LC Landscape Board to follow up with DEW for this to occur and who might be best placed to do this noting the retirement from the Department of Steve Barnett who had previously been the principal hydro for this area over the previous iterations of the Plan.

## Water Allocation Plan

Chelsea Burns facilitated a discussion on the key features of the Water Allocation for the Group to commence review of key concepts/principles within the Plan.

Discussion:

- The key objectives of the current Plan were discussed. Broadly they still felt relevant for the PWA. The concept of previously plans using 'over allocation' was raised and how this is approached when there isn't full use.
- There was general discussion on the confined aquifer as the Plan has to cautiously manage as 'an ancient resource with limited recharge'. It was raised that the confined does not recharge at all. Recharge is from the Grampians, estimated to be thousands of years old so not recharging locally or via rainfall to replenish extraction. It was raised that cones of drawdown were a concern and potentially bringing saline water back from the west of the PWA, in both

aquifers but more so confined. It was also raised that the Plan allowed for transfer of allocation from confined to unconfined to support the resource and this had occurred for at least one allocation of a reasonable volume.

- Innovative purposes in Boothby were included in Plan as there is water available but hypersaline. If someone could come up with a use of that water by whatever means not going to stand in the way. There is no use west of Boothby and it is saline so wouldn't cause any issues down gradient but assumed if there was use it would need to be innovative.

Discussion on key concepts of the Plan:

Holding licences | Active and expeditious use

- The Group discussed the principles in the Plan around 'holding licences' and whether these are still relevant for the area or how these are being used. It was discussed that the legislation doesn't call them 'holding' licences but more an entitlement/allocation without a point of take. The volume is still accounted for in the TML of the management area.
- Group members raised that holding licences were originally associated with moratorium and links with 'active and expeditious use' principles in the Plan. It was raised as to potential benefits of converting a taking to a holding, and whether it was to allow for a hydro test pass.
- It was noted that even though there are no holding licences currently in the PWA, where there are taking licences that have zero use these are essentially acting like a holding licence. Zero use is also essentially self-management as these are often in saline areas.
- Some members viewed that these can be seen as a risk to the resource if they were activated and whether the resource could cope. Example of last couple of years of low rainfall might have more activation. There is also a risk with the current principles of the Plan that if you were to take unused water people might activate it so as not to lose it and then it is impacting the resource. There was previously the 'use it or lose it' mentality/approach. It was raised that forcing people to pump water for the sake of pumping water is not good for aquifer, environment or business.
- Broadly the Group viewed that:
  - Current Plan principles regarding holding licences are no longer relevant and there are other ways to manage the intent, which would also align more to legislation.
  - Active and expeditious use principles were specific to what was happening at that time and are no longer relevant. Potentially adds complication to Plan.
  - Worth revisiting with summary of this concept to make a recommendation for the review.

Delivery Supplement - Flood

- The Group discussed the principles in the Plan around 'delivery supplement' (DS) for flood and how this was working the current Plan.
- DS was introduced in the current Plan and allocated to those already using flood and no new DS was available after the original timeframe for application. There was some discussion around the history/intention of DS only being allocated for the term of this Plan as discussed during previous meeting.
- It was raised that Boothby might need to be allocated DS there if innovation purposes allocation was used but noted that lack of DS doesn't limit use of water to flood. DS was provided at the time to recognise those already using flood. It was not an available component for new flood irrigation.

- It was raised that not everyone using flood can convert to pivot and different reasons why (e.g. flushing salts, crop requirement, retain native or paddock trees). It would also have a substantial impact on businesses. It was noted that Tatiara PWA are retaining DS flood as has benefits and need.
- It was raised that compared to total allocation DS is only about 8% so is fairly minor in the big picture but plays a role.
- Broadly the Group viewed that there is still a relevant need to retain DS for flood moving forward so should stay in the Plan and should continue to be 'non-tradeable'. Worth revisiting with summary of this concept to make a recommendation for the review.

### Next meeting date

- Next meeting date: Meeting 4 scheduled for Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 2.00-4.30pm.

### Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 4.37pm

The Chair thanked the stakeholders and staff for attending.

Confirmed

**Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan review**  
**Stakeholder Advisory Group**  
**Action Table**

| Action | TC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Status   | Meeting 3 Update                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.1    | To be provided to Group Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations from Meeting 1</li> <li>• Endorsed ToR and ground rules</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Complete |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 1.2    | Provide further break down of TML allocation and use to show delivery supplement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Complete | Allocation and use data by management area presented in Meeting 2.<br><br>Further break down of allocation and use data requested for future meeting -Action 2.3. Presented in Meeting 3 |
| 1.3    | Delivery supplement explanation and licence example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Complete | Presented in Meeting 2                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1.4    | Licence authorisations (bundling/unbundling) explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Complete | Presented in Meeting 2.<br>Resource added to SAG page                                                                                                                                    |
| 2.1    | To be provided to Group members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations from Meeting 2</li> <li>• Acronyms list</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Complete |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2.2    | Map of obswell locations for context of data and trends                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Complete | Presented in Meeting 3.<br>Resource added to SAG page                                                                                                                                    |
| 2.3    | Confirm obswell bore purpose within the monitoring network ie specific obswell bores vs irrigation bores                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Complete | Presented in Meeting 3.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2.4    | Allocation and use data breakdown/analysis including % use of licences.<br><br>Heat maps of extraction (if able to be provided from DEW).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Complete | Presented in Meeting 3.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2.5    | To be followed up with DEW: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current monitoring program in TCPWA, and what are they actually committed to doing as part of the regional program.</li> <li>• Further explanation/reason for decrease in number of wells for 10 year and static salinity trends.</li> <li>• Seek advice on potential influence and/or risk of hydrogeology to west of PWA and whether that could be contributing to rising water levels in Coonalpyn/Tauragat.</li> </ul> | Ongoing  |                                                                                                                                                                                          |

| Action | TC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Status | Meeting 3 Update |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------|
|        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm locations of observation wells in Ngarkat Conservation Park or explanation if none present in this area as part of network</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |        |                  |
| 3.1    | <p>Salinity monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be raised at LC Landscape Board level and/or DEW water steering committee.</li> <li>Continue ongoing liaison with DEW Science and Monitoring on salinity data availability and application, potential gaps and opportunities.</li> <li>Request monitoring team to confirm purpose of use of obswell bores during next round of monitoring.</li> <li>Seek DEW feedback on coverage and representativeness of current obswell network in TC PWA as part of evaluation/review.</li> </ul> |        |                  |
| 3.2    | LC Landscape Board to request DEW hydrogeologist to present to Group to report on the TC PWA resource and condition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |        |                  |
| 3.3    | <p>Summary of key concepts to revisit recommendations for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holding licences</li> <li>Active &amp; expeditious use</li> <li>Delivery supplement - flood</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |        |                  |

