

Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan Review Stakeholder Advisory Group Minutes

Meeting No. 7, 16 April 2026, 2:00 – 4:30 pm
Coorong District Council Board Room, Tintinara

Objectives

- Work through key concept of sustainable allocation as part of the evaluation of the current Plan.

Attendees:

Group Attendees – Dr Jonathon Sobels (Chair), Graham Gates, James De Barro, Jim Rowntree, Rodney Lush, Tracey Strugnell

LC Landscape Board Staff Attendees – Sue Botting, Chelsea Burns

Apologies – John Young, Campbell Foote, Adam Zacker

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:

- No changes were requested to the minutes as circulated.

Meeting 6 minutes confirmed as true and correct Moved by: Graham Gates. Seconded by: Rodney Lush. All were in favour.

Sustainable Allocation

Sue Botting presented on TML, resource condition, allocation and use to support discussion on sustainable allocation.

Discussion:

Sustainable allocation

- The Group had a discussion around 'sustainable'. Group members had differing views of what sustainable or sustainable allocation could be defined as and isn't straightforward. Sustainable could include economic sustainability or business viability, resource adaptability through technology or efficiencies, salinity and water levels, acceptable impact ie chase the water deeper or when is it no longer economically viable. For the resource,

salinity recycling and salt movement also important for sustainability. Social/cultural values and expectations might also be considered.

- It was raised that sustainable can't really be discussed or defined without information or data being available. There are too many unknowns which can result in speculation. Is there risk in unused allocation as the resource doesn't appear to be seeing huge declines. Decline versus stabilisation at a new level was also raised as a consideration. Sustainable could also mean that the resource is still available for many generations to follow.
- It was raised that there is a perception that water users doubled their use in 2025 and without having the 2024 and 2025 data this process is ineffectual. An indicative/prelim use at PWA level was presented to the Group showing that use was higher in 2025 but not hugely. Group members raised that at licence level, some licence holders did use into carryover.

TML, allocation and use

- When looking at TML in the current Plan and how they were developed in the previous/original Plan, Sherwood MA didn't a lot of development at the time of PAV. There were quite a few pivots but not all used at one time due to rotational crops. Changes to TML in Tintinara MA took into account what people had committed to.
- It was raised why is allocation different to TML. Some viewed that TML needs to be higher than allocation as a buffer. Returned water from active and expeditious use principles may also have impacted allocation being less than TML, particularly in Coonalpyn/Tauragat.
- When looking at influences on annual PWA volume used, it was raised that cost of energy, market drivers and enterprise economics also all impact on licensee behaviour/use.
- When looking at allocation and use information, the Group was interested in further understanding the breakdown of licence % use/allocation to understand patterns of behaviours to inform risk. Irrigation type/crop was also of interest however this level of detail is not available through purpose of use on licence information. There is some information in the Social and Economic report developed by URPS. This will be made available on the members page.

Resource condition and risk

- A Group member raised that unconfined salinity was expected to see much higher increases than current levels are showing. With salinity and water level, some members view that trends need to be considered over hundreds of years as opposed to 5-10 years. It was also raised that salinity in the confined aquifer, lower appears to be fresher so some view flowthrough to moving faster in lower part of the aquifer. There was discussion around the confined aquifer recharge, location and flow through.
- The Group discussed the obswells which met the triggers under the current Plan and raised concerns around the lack of management actions with these. It was raised that in some areas, decline isn't necessarily a bad thing for salinity and might be an aim for some areas in the PWA. But that isn't reflected in the Plan and no management actions to be implemented. It was raised as to who is responsible for looking at the triggers to make an assessment of whether it is ok or not. The Plan needs to be clear on how this is managed.
- It was raised by the Group the importance of communication with licence holders. Resource condition shouldn't be a surprise when it comes to review process. Example of an annual resource condition update/status. This would support understanding, awareness and also for businesses informed decision making. LCLB to send example of how this has been introduced in revised Padthaway Plan.

- When looking at what are the risks, governance was raised as an additional and real risk. Particularly in resource condition triggers, oversight, responsibility and implementation of management actions. It was raised that in conversion to volumetric there was a level of overallocation across all irrigation development. This is not limited to TCPWA. A risk lies in future unknown event which may not even happen ie new crop.

Summary

- The Group to continue this topic next meeting with more of a deep dive into licence use per management area.

Next meeting date

- Meeting 8: Thursday 28th May 2026 2.00-4.30pm.

Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 4.40pm

The Chair thanked the stakeholders and staff for attending.

Confirmed

Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan review
Stakeholder Advisory Group
Actions Table

Action	TC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions	Status	Meeting 7 Update
2.5	To be followed up with DEW: - Current monitoring program in TCPWA, and what are they actually committed to doing as part of the regional program. - Further explanation/reason for decrease in number of wells for 10 year and static salinity trends. - 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. - Confirm locations of observation wells in Ngarkat Conservation Park or explanation if none present in this area as part of network	Partially complete	Salinity monitoring summary provided to Group members and available on Group member portal. Further detail on historical salinity change provided at meetings 3 and 4. Hydrogeology influence from west of PWA and observation wells in Ngarkat raised as part of DEW presentation at meeting 6.
3.1	Salinity monitoring: - To be raised at LC Landscape Board level and/or DEW water steering committee. - Continue ongoing liaison with DEW Science and Monitoring on salinity data availability and application, potential gaps and opportunities. - Request monitoring team to confirm purpose of use of obswell bores during next round of monitoring. - Seek DEW feedback on coverage and representativeness of current obswell network in TC PWA as part of evaluation/review.	Partially complete	Presentation to LC Landscape Board in December 2025. Salinity monitoring summary provided to Group members and available on Group member portal.
3.3	Summary of key concepts to revisit recommendations for: - Holding licences - Active & expeditious use - Delivery supplement - flood	Ongoing	
4.2	Summary of key concepts to revisit/recommendations for principles of: - Carry over - Seasonal variability - Rotational crop	Ongoing	

Action	TC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions	Status	Meeting 7 Update
5.2	To be followed up with DEW re hydro test: • If the assessment uses the previous 5 years, if there is not enough obs wells or not enough nearby that are relevant, how do they do the hydro test usefully. • What is the recharge value used for the management areas. • With rotational crops is the rotational allocation accounted for in a hydro test if a neighbour is bringing in water. • Example or more detail on how hydro test is applied.	Ongoing	Being considered as part of broader discussions on hydro test across PWAs.
5.3	Summary of key concepts to revisit/recommendations for principles of: • Trade	Ongoing	
6.1	Question on notice for DEW: • Sub aquifers in the confined aquifer. Risk and management. • Rate of recharge used in current or previous Plan.	Ongoing	
7.1	Provide as follow up data to Group: • Example of Padthaway annual resource condition update • Additional breakdowns of licence % use/allocation • URPS Social Economic Profile report		

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Items identified to be revisited and/or for recommendation

Item number	TC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group	Status	Meeting raised
1.	Salinity monitoring 10 year trends to 2025 from DEW only showed 2-3 obswells. This is insufficient for educated decisions to be made.	Revisit for formal recommendation	2
2.	Consider need for mandatory salinity readings/returns from licence holders.	Revisit	2 3
3.	Consider whether Delivery Supplement (DS) is still needed as a component or whether it could be simplified. DS-Flood still considered a relevant need and component for TC PWA. View to retain existing DS-flood allocations with no new.	Revisit Revisit for formal recommendation	2 3
4.	Holding licences no longer relevant and not current in PWA. View to manage intent through other mechanisms more aligned with legislation.	Revisit for formal recommendation	3
5.	Active and expeditious use no longer relevant for the PWA and was time specific. View to remove these principles.	Revisit for formal recommendation	3
6.	Carry over is highly valued. View that it remains appropriate as per current principles unless resource condition warrants more in depth review.	Revisit for formal recommendation	4
7.	<i>Seasonal variability principle is likely to remain appropriate in intent. Consideration of being available 2 years out of 5.</i> Revisit discussion: principle may warrant further review or redundancy based on view to sustainably manage the resource, reducing complexity of the Plan and other ways to manage business risk in established farming systems.	Revisit for formal recommendation	4 5
8.	<i>Rotational crop principle is likely to remain appropriate noting it is expected to have low use or expansion.</i> <i>Engage with industry groups prior to formal recommendation</i> Revisit discussion: subject to industry engagement, principle may warrant further review or redundancy	Revisit for formal recommendation	4 5

Item number	TC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group	Status	Meeting raised
	based on view to sustainably manage the resource, low use and opportunity for expansion based on water quality in PWA, reducing complexity of the Plan and other ways to manage business risk in industry related to rotational crop principles.		
9.	Trade principles remain partially relevant for the PWA with view that the principles: • had some inconsistencies and redundant principles • may benefit from revision including how trade could be considered in an adaptive management framework linked to resource condition • should be revisited in consideration of sustainable allocation and resource condition.	Revisit	5