

Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan Review Process

August 2026 community sessions summary

In August 2026 the Limestone Coast (LC) Landscape Board held a community session and one-on-one opportunities as part of the review of the Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan.

Sessions were open to anyone interested in the process with the community session held in Tintinara. A feedback form was provided to all attendees to capture views and concerns. Opportunities to engage one-on-one were also provided at Keith and online. Feedback could also be provided following the community sessions.

This summary brings together what was heard during the session under key themes. A summary of feedback form responses and other feedback received is also provided. This summary is not intended to detail every comment or question asked but presents the key themes raised.

What was presented in the community session

A community session was held at Tintinara on Wednesday 12 August 2026. The presentation and supporting information provided at the session are publicly available:

- **August 2026 presentation**

Supporting information:

- **Key concepts overview**
- **Allocation and use**
- **Salinity monitoring summary**
- **Resource condition summary**

Purpose of the review

A brief overview of the purpose of the review was provided. The *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* requires a comprehensive review to be undertaken at least every 10 years. The current stage of the review is an evaluation of the Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan which commenced in April 2025. A recommendation of whether the Plan requires an amendment is required to be finalised by December 2026.

The evaluation has been supported by a **Stakeholder Advisory Group**. Group members and meeting minutes are publicly available.

Evaluation

An overview of the evaluation so far and where the evaluation is currently landing was presented. The presentation should be considered in conjunction with the **key concepts overview** for relevant detail on each focus area.

The evaluation key concepts / focus areas are:

- Sustainable management.
- Trade and transfer.
- Environmental provisions.
- Legislative and policy alignment.

Sustainable management

An overview of key sustainable management considerations under the current Plan was provided for each management area. This included allocation and use over the term of the Plan, how target management limits (TML) were set, resource management objectives and current resource condition trends.

A summary of **allocation and use** information was available as a handout at the session.

The presentation also provided a high-level overview of other sustainable management consideration such as delivery supplement, carry over and stock and domestic.

Trade and transfer

An overview of evaluation of trade and transfer principles was provided. There is a need to further understand how seasonal variability and rotational crop principles are being used by licensees.

Environmental provisions

The general approach to the environment and protection principles in the Plan was provided. It was recognised that there was additional work identified to be undertaken in the Plan which does not appear to have been completed.

Legislative and policy alignment

An overview was provided of parts of the Plan which no longer align to legislation or were time limited at the adoption of the Plan.

Next steps

An overview of the timeline for the remainder of the evaluation phase of the review process was provided. The community session was the second round of broader community engagement in the evaluation phase. Feedback on evaluation of the Plan was open until 21 September 2026.

Key themes raised by attendees

Monitoring

It was raised that groundwater level monitoring has generally been pretty good across the prescribed wells area. Attendees were concerned that the current level of salinity was not sufficient. It was recognised that salinity monitoring comes at a greater cost with the need to purge wells to ensure appropriate readings. Salinity monitoring has come up a lot in the process and the need for more monitoring.

Sustainable management

Allocation and use are by water use reporting year. Clarification was sought on the change in allocation through time for the Prescribed Wells Area (PWA). There are multiple factors that may have impacted allocation. In 2013 there was some reduction to allocation in transition of the Plan. In 2016 there may have been adjustments based on principles in the Plan that were time limited such as flood delivery supplement and the active and expeditious use principles.

There were differing views on level of use in response to dry times. Some felt the increased use was more than they expected as some industries are less variable in response to rainfall. Some production types are quite stable and don't necessarily increase in response to dry times. Other production types do increase. Other factors may also be influencing how much use has increased or stayed consistent such as fuel and electricity prices. Multiple factors influence whether use increases.

It was queried in regard to the risks identified if use were to increase or unused water activated. Given there have been reductions in the past why are there no mechanisms in the Plan to manage those risks. The reductions principles in the Plan don't allow further reduction after transition which was completed upon adoption of the Plan. It was queried whether the LC Landscape Board would implement further reductions. The evaluation stage is about identifying how the Plan has operated and whether it remains fit for purpose, however this was not something that had been raised as a focus area in the evaluation so far.

Legislative alignment

It was asked whether the LC Landscape Board was required to amend the Plan to align to legislation. Alignment with legislation is for the LC Landscape Board to consider however the current understanding is that existing Plans are operating under transitional provisions in the legislation.

It was queried how many holding licences there are in the PWA. There are none.

Environmental

It was queried if the groundwater dependent ecosystems in Boothby were to be impacted would the Boothby innovative purposes water be taken away. Currently no sign that impact

is occurring, groundwater levels have remained steady with no allocation or use in the management area during the term of the current Plan.

Summary of feedback form responses

Attendees

- Majority (over 85%) of session attendees who completed the feedback form were licence holders in the Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed Wells Area.
- Attendees rated their understanding of the current water allocation plan as average to good.

Areas of interest

Considering the current Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan and water resource management challenges that may occur in the future, the majority response was:

- Strongly agreed that allocation should remain the same until further science supported revision.
- Strongly agreed that monitoring of salinity is critically important. Consistent and increased monitoring should be prioritised.
- Agreed that the resource should be managed in a way that means it will be available for future generations.
- Agreed that the approach of cautiously managing the confined aquifer be maintained into the future.
- Agreed that some decline in groundwater is acceptable.
- Agreed that based on current knowledge environmental provisions are sufficient.
- Agreed or neutral that management of the resource could benefit from the ability to respond to change in resource condition.
- Agreed or neutral that use and/or activation of water will probably increase into the future.
- Agreed or neutral that increasing clarity on what trades and transfers can occur is needed.
- Agreed or neutral that seasonal variability and rotational crop principles could be managed through other mechanisms.

Opportunity for amendment

Of the attendees who completed the feedback form, 45% supported the Plan progressing to an amendment process with a focus on minor updates/improvements. The remaining 55% responded that they were unsure.

The **feedback form** was available to complete on the project page for those who were unable to attend the community sessions.

Summary of additional feedback received

Feedback on evaluation of the Plan was able to be provided following the community sessions and closed on 21 September 2026. A summary of additional feedback received is provided below.

Feedback raised concerns around:

- Opportunities to move volumes of water between aquifers and to alternate locations to the detriment of the resource or other users. Request to provide clarity on if this is possible and how this would be assessed.
- Whether an amendment would result in cut-backs to allocations when the previous Plan implemented reductions that some viewed as inequitable and unjustified.
- Insufficient monitoring and data to demonstrate whether the current system is unsustainable or whether changes to the Plan are needed.
- The information currently available identifies a number of uncertainties and information gaps rather than demonstrating that the existing Plan is failing and therefore in need of amendment. Based on the information provided to date, do not believe there is sufficient evidence to justify amendment to the existing Water Allocation Plan. Focus should be to address those gaps and obtain better information and data.
- Distinction between identifying a potential risk and having sufficient evidence to justify changing the rules that currently apply to water users.
- Further monitoring and information should be obtained before conclusions are made about the potential impact of groundwater extraction on groundwater-dependent ecosystems.
- Minor changes to reflect current legislation and policy can have unintended consequences or impacts on licence holders. Water licence holders should be given the opportunity to understand the full context of any legislative change before being asked to support the Plan being amended.
- Undertaking a formal amendment process is also a significant and costly exercise. Resources would be better directed towards addressing the identified gaps in monitoring and improving the information available about the groundwater resource.

Contact Us

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