

Padthaway WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Minutes

Meeting No. 1, Thursday 12 September 2019, 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Farmer's Leap, 41 Hodgsons Road, Padthaway, SA 5271

Objectives

- Provide some background on how the current Water Allocation Plan (WAP) was developed, including the use of the numerical groundwater model.
- Detail the hydrogeology of the region and the current condition of the resources.
- Gather Group feedback.

Attendees:

Graham Gates (Chair, SE NRM Board), Faith Coleman (proxy Chair, SE NRM Board), Daniela Conesa (Team Leader, Water Policy and Planning, NRSE), Cameron Wood (Senior Hydrogeologist, DEW), Ryan Judd (Senior Project Officer, Water Policy and Planning, NRSE),

Community members: Scott Longbottom, Tim Hoare, Krysteen McElroy, John Summers, Carolyn Brown, Phil Brown.

Welcome & agenda

The Chair welcomed everyone and discussed the proposed agenda. Thanked advisory group members and staff for their attendance.

Overview of the Hydrogeology of the Management Areas and Resource Conditions

Cameron Wood discussed the hydrogeology region of the two management areas: Padthaway Range and Padthaway Flats. Overview of the historic and current resource conditions (groundwater levels and salinity).

Key Points:

- Groundwater levels generally stable, with some declines in Padthaway Range
- Salinity still increasing in some areas, stable in others
- Resource condition dependent upon rainfall, recharge and extraction
- Still some unknowns in salt accession (paddock scale variability)
- Long term dry conditions may exacerbate adverse trends
- Model simulates current conditions well in some areas, not so well in other areas
- Model assumptions and data availability
- Other processes not captured by the model (e.g. presence of geological formations).

Data compared to Resource Condition Limits RCLs

- The Acceptable Level of Extraction set out in the WAP has been determined using the groundwater model and ensuring that the level of allocation will not cause one or more of the RCLs to be exceeded. The three RCLs were set with community input.
 1. RCL: no increase in groundwater salinity
 - Current conditions: groundwater salinity still rising in some areas, may be related to continued flushing, salt cycling under irrigation
 2. RCL: Water tables no lower than June 2004

- Current conditions:
 - Water tables no lower than June 2004 on flats, but some wells lower than limit in the Ranges
 - Groundwater levels in Ranges still re-adjusting following rise as a result of clearance of native vegetation - reaching new equilibrium.
- No reduction in lateral through-flow (maintain flushing of salt from Ranges)
 - Data suggests through flow is being maintained, can be tested further with model.

Overview of the Padthaway Water Allocation Plan

Daniela Conesa discussed the review to date of the Padthaway WAP, including 2016 community consultation on what was working / not working in the WAP, the amalgamation of Upper South East WAPs and the best ways to engage with stakeholder in reviewing and amending WAPs.

Overview of Padthaway Stakeholder Advisory Group Terms of Reference

See Terms of Reference document for detail.

Noted that there is no reference to quality of groundwater, just quantity. **ACTION:** amend and bring to next meeting.

Discussion

- Tim Hoare highlighted that there is granite outcropping that acts as a localised barrier to groundwater flow (from the 500 to Angle Rock)
- There is a lack of monitoring data for salinity and a loss of historic observation wells and this is an issue for future management
- Discussion around transfer and purchase of water for frost protection
- WAP should provide for return of water or other positive action, under the right conditions, and not just reductions
- Discussed unbundling – **ACTION:** presentation at the next meeting
- Stakeholder Advisory Group requested copies of the presentations **ACTION:** forward both Daniela and Cameron's presentations to the Group.

Next steps

- Re-run Padthaway model with current groundwater use data
- Implement some recommendations (e.g. surface elevation, extraction data)
- Use model to predict future projections
- rainfall/recharge scenarios and extraction scenarios

Next meeting date

- Next meeting date: 17 October 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
- Commence going through WAP policies to identify further issues for discussion and potential change

Close of meeting

The Chair thanked the stakeholders and staff for attending.