

Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan Review Stakeholder Advisory Group Minutes

Meeting No. 2, 21 August 2025, 2:00 – 4:30 pm
Coorong District Council Board Room, Tintinara

Objectives

- Provide an overview of the observation well network.
- Review the updated resource condition information as provided by DEW.
- *Understand the structure and key features of the Water Allocation Plan (agenda item deferred due to time).*
- Develop understanding of licence authorisations and components including allocation and use over the term of the Plan.
- Provide input into the proposed upcoming community sessions and engagement opportunities.

Attendees:

Group Attendees – Dr Jonathon Sobels (Chair), Tracey Strugnell, Campbell Foote, Graham Gates, James De Barro, Jim Rowntree, John Young, Adam Zacker

LC Landscape Board Staff Attendees – Sue Botting, Chelsea Burns, Ryan Judd

Apologies – Rodney Lush

Welcome and acknowledgement of country

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

Agenda check and confirmation of minutes

Meeting 1 minutes confirmed as true and correct with no changes.

Moved by: Graham Gates. Seconded by: James De Barro. All were in favour.

Monitoring network

Ryan Judd provided an overview of the monitoring network in the Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed Wells Area.

Discussion:

- The Group discussed the current monitoring network and program. It was raised that around 2014 there was a shift away from independent 'consultants' doing monitoring for the network with the assumption that DEW had picked this up. LC Landscape Board to confirm with DEW the current monitoring program and what is committed to ongoing.

- There was discussion around water loggers. It was raised whether they can be dropped down below/near screen to capture water passing through. Considered better to pump wells first to have fresh groundwater coming through, preferred option is an equipped bore because it is constantly refreshing.
- It was raised as to who decides which well is an obswell and whether they are specifically for that purpose or are in existing irrigation bores for example. There are lots of bores on private land. DEW determines the obswells in the broader context of the coverage, availability, access etc. CTLAP have existing salinity readings where samples used to be brought in so could provide that data to the department.
- It was raised as to what area or distance from an obswell does the data become irrelevant or no longer representative. Generally, water levels across the management area can have similar trends but lots of factors such as geology, salinity tends to be more variable and more localised.
- There was group discussion on the costs associated with additional monitoring bores and putting in telemetry. Roughly around \$3k for logger plus cable and telemetry, dependent on cable length and quality of the logger. Some don't cope with commercial bores and salts can cause issues. It can also be an issue in some bores where freshwater lays on top, want to measure groundwater not rainfall coming in.
- It would be good to get people's thoughts on the coverage of the network - is it sufficient, do they think the coverage and program has community confidence?
- Through discussion, there was a general agreement of the Group that the current salinity monitoring shown in the DEW trends data is not sufficient to understand trends to make informed decisions in the review. Nor for people to make economic decisions or community confidence.

Resource condition update

Chelsea Burns presented an overview of updated resource condition information for the prescribed wells area.

Discussion:

- The Group raised that for Tintinara Coonalpyn, key point is that declining trends are not always bad. Area has had to try reducing groundwater levels in areas to improve or prevent dryland salinity.
- When looking at the groundwater level declining trends it will be important to determine whether this is driven by salinity or irrigation or climate or both. Context for the data and trends is critical. Understanding where obswells are located and whether they are near irrigation, relevant land uses or vegetation clearance. Development of maps to see this spatially would be really useful.
- It was raised as to how many bores were drilled specifically for the use of monitoring in comparison to wells which are obswells but equipped for stock and domestic or irrigation. Information can be looked at and confirmed at a future meeting.
- Some discussion around context for MKN001 (Hundred of Makin). Groundwater increase after 1980 and then declining again. Around 2000s started to ramp up onion production. Monitoring increased or commenced when pivots started popping up.
- Confined bores around Coonalpyn water levels increasing may be due to olives being removed and using less use in the last few years. Cost of diesel and electricity is generally a limitation for use. Could there be something happening to the west of LVG002 that is leading

to the groundwater levels rising ie an impediment. Runaway holes could also be considered. LC Landscape Board to follow up with DEW.

- Group members raised that it is unfortunate that there aren't enough salinity readings. There was discussion around whether it is mandatory and worth it to have licensees taking salinity samples during the irrigation period when bores are being pumped. Salinity monitoring is not good enough to be comfortable making educated decisions.
 - Request to add a list of topics separate to the minutes which come up so can be revisited or into recommendations for the review.
- Could mandatory salinity readings be provided in the meter read process? Some members viewed that water level monitoring should be done through telemetry and salinity should be done by irrigators. It was raised that in the Mallee must provide a salinity sample annually but not always practical as some bores not used for a number of years.

Overview of Water Allocation Plan

- *Agenda item deferred due to time.*

Licensing components

Sue Botting provided an overview of the Tintinara Coonalpyn licensing authorisation and components.

Discussion:

- It was raised as to whether under the current Plan or licensing authorisation system if able to legally restrict use? Mechanisms to restrict or reduce allocation are either through the water allocation or the power of the Minister under the Act.
- It was raised as to whether the Plan allows for inter-PWA transfers. Both the incoming and outgoing Plan would need to include principles to allow for that to occur. This has been raised from Murraylands Riverland Landscape Board for consideration as part of TC review.
- There was discussion on whether the carryover timing issue from last year had been addressed following the transition to mywater. Timing of administrative processes such as carry-over, are important. Bore permits are also taking a minimum of 6 weeks which is much longer than previously. Quick turnaround of these can be critical for business operations particularly for rotational crop industries.
- The Group discussed delivery supplement – flood:
 - It was raised as to whether carry-over applies to both tradeable and delivery supplement, it does apply to both.
 - There is a principle in the current plan which reads that the delivery supplement was only for the life of the Plan. Group members involved in previous iterations recall it may have been around the position of transition away from flood irrigation but that hasn't been the case, generally flood irrigation areas have remained status quo.
 - Reasons to retain flood irrigation vary but often where pivots aren't really an option due to trees or powerlines. Areas with higher salinity use flood irrigation as a salinity management tool.
 - Some irrigators have narrowed flood bays or clay spread so water use is more efficient. This has potentially been more so done outside of TCPWA.
 - Flood irrigation can be quite variable at scale. Areas which are sandy may require a lot more water to get to the end of the bays but water less often, whereas harder or

more rock might need less water but more frequently. Difficult to work out how much delivery is required on that paddock scale.

- Delivery component principles for how volumes were calculated given depending on systems and the complexities of the delivery supplement – flood in the current Plan can be confusing.
- Is there a need to review if delivery supplement be taken out of the plan for simpler understanding and administration? Important that in the management of salinity it can be beneficial though. Topic to be added to list to revisit as part of review.

Allocation and use

Sue Botting presented allocation and use data for the Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed Wells Area.

Discussion:

- There was Group discussion around the levels/trends of licence allocation and use. Interest in how allocation is so much higher than actual use as expected use to be much closer to allocation, was this a result of licences being provide more than they needed historically with volumetric conversion.
- It was raised that it would be useful for the Group for the allocation and use data to be further broken down/analysed. For example, is the difference in allocation and use due to people having large licences and only using part of it or is it due to people holding licences that are not being used. Need to understand if there is a risk of unused licences being activated and risk to the resource. Heat maps to understand extraction spatially would be useful.

Proposed community sessions

Chelsea Burns facilitated a discussion on the proposed community sessions.

Discussion:

- The Group raised that a key to the sessions is to unearth concerns from within the community. Need to work out how to draw that out of people that hold the general view is that resource is in a good condition and there are not major issues.
- CTLAP previously would have people approach them regarding stock and domestic bores going dry and salinity/water quality issues but not many enquiries or issues raised regarding this for a number of years.
- It was raised that it would be beneficial to add an additional session and communication material at Keith for those in the PWA who have that as their main centre. Mindful of Tatiara water allocation plan amendment also currently underway but could be managed appropriately.
- It was raised that people will want to see the resource condition and data information. Mapping of change to depth to groundwater would be useful and interesting. It was raised as to why is there no observation wells within Ngarkat or in Victoria near the border? LCLB to follow up with DEW.

Other business

- Nil items raised.

Next meeting date

- Next meeting date: Meeting 3 scheduled for Thursday 30 October 2025 at 2.00pm.

Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 4.45pm

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 2 Update
1.1	To be provided to Group Members: • Presentations from Meeting 1 • Endorsed ToR and ground rules	Complete	
1.2	Provide further break down of TML allocation and use to show delivery supplement		Allocation and use data by management area presented in Meeting 2. Further break down of allocation and use data requested for future meeting. Action 2.3.
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. Resource added to SAG page
2.1	To be provided to Group members: • Presentations from Meeting 2 • Acronyms list		
2.2	Map of obswell locations for context of data and trends		
2.3	Confirm obswell bore purpose within the monitoring network ie specific obswell bores vs irrigation bores		
2.4	Allocation and use data breakdown/analysis including % use of licences. Heat maps of extraction (if able to be provided from DEW).		
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. • Decrease in number of wells for 10 year and static salinity trends. • Hydrogeology to west of PWA that could be contributing to rising water levels in Coonalpyn/Tauragat. • Observation wells in Ngarkat.		

