

Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed wells area

Water Allocation Plan review

Key concepts overview

The Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan (the Plan) is currently under review. The Stakeholder Advisory Group (the Group) has considered a range of concepts and information to support an evaluation of the current Plan.

As the evaluation phase of the review is nearing completion, community feedback on key concepts will inform the recommendation to the Limestone Coast (LC) Landscape Board and whether the Plan will be amended.

This overview document provides supporting context. Key concepts have been grouped as:

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

This overview is provided for general information purposes only and does not represent a decision of the Group or of the LC Landscape Board.

Further information including Stakeholder Advisory Group minutes are available on the project page: [Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan review | Engage Limestone Coast Landscape Board](#)

Sustainable management

Monitoring

Salinity monitoring and the monitoring network have been a key focus area during the evaluation. Salinity monitoring was also raised by the community in the first round of community sessions in October 2025. Salinity management is an important part of the current Plan and moving forward.

A summary of current monitoring is provided as separate documents:

- **Salinity monitoring.**
- **Resource condition summary.**

Key discussion overview:

- It is viewed that there are gaps in the monitoring network's spatial distribution in both the confined and the unconfined aquifer, for both salinity and groundwater level.
- Salinity monitoring has reduced over time for a variety of reasons such as external funding sources or projects, delivery models and Department for Environment and Water (DEW) monitoring network changes.
- Given the importance of salinity management, including dryland salinity, additional salinity observation wells would be of benefit. This would support better understanding and higher confidence in decision making. Options could be explored as to how this is delivered or achieved through DEW monitoring network and/or in collaboration with licence holders.

Carry over, Target Management Level (TML) and sustainable allocation

The *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the Act) requires that a water allocation plan set out principles associated with the determination of water access entitlements and for the taking and use of water so that an equitable balance is achieved between environmental, social and economic needs for the water; and the rate of the taking and use of the water is sustainable.

Resource condition and salinity monitoring summaries are provided as separate documents. Allocation and use information supporting consideration of sustainable allocation are also provided:

- **Allocation_Use_summary**

There were some inconsistencies in the Plan about the aims or objectives in managing the resource and differing hydrogeological considerations for each management area. In some parts of the prescribed wells area it was considered that some declines of the resource were encouraged to manage salinity. This was not always clear in the Plan.

It is viewed that current resource condition is generally stable at current use. Limited monitoring in some areas makes it difficult to understand whether the resource is being impacted, and as there is no current groundwater model the understanding of whether allocation is sustainable moving forward is limited.

Use/extraction has remained fairly consistent over the term of the current Plan, with the lowest use year in 2023 (33% use) and highest use year in 2025 (55%).

Key discussion overview:

- Limitations to significant activation of unused water were considered, but there is an inherent risk to the resource if use/extraction were to increase.
- The 'innovative purposes' target management level for Boothby management area has not been allocated or activated during the term of the Plan. As a concept it continues to remain relevant.
- There was interest in exploring management of risks to the resource through mechanisms such as adaptive management with the support of groundwater modelling. A new model would need to be developed which would use the best available data and science. This would commence if the Plan were to be amended.
- The current Plan approach to the confined aquifer of 'cautiously manage' and/or responsibly manage this resource remained a reasonable approach. Localised declines and/or resource trends in the confined aquifer require further investigation.

Delivery Supplement – Flood

Delivery Supplement (DS) – Flood volumes are excluded from the Target Management Level (TML) as a proportion is considered to return to the aquifer. The allocation for DS-Flood is 5,858 ML and approx. 8% of total allocation. There are 15 licences with a DS-Flood allocation, with the majority being in the unconfined aquifer Tintinara management area (refer [Allocation_Use_summary](#)).

DS-Flood (principles 12-20) included a timeframe for any delivery supplemented to be issued and stated that no new delivery supplements will be issued for the life of the Plan after that date.

It is viewed that DS-Flood remains a relevant component and the practice of flood irrigation remains relevant for salinity management. DS-Flood is broadly considered low-risk at the current allocation and the existing principles remain appropriate.

Stock and domestic

Stock and domestic use is an unlicensed and unmetered water use. It is managed through the Water Affecting Activities principles within the Plan and an estimated allowance is included within the Target Management Level (TML) for each management area. There are no current licences for public water supply within the prescribed wells area.

The current Plan included an allowance of 1,500 ML in total being <2% of the water account. The stock and domestic estimate in the current Plan was based on 1996-97 data.

Key discussion overview:

- Minimal stock and domestic issues heard of or reported for some time throughout the prescribed wells area.
- Low volume and low risk overall to impact on the water resource noting water quality limitations to use in parts of prescribed wells area.
- Updated estimate from URPS report (1,958 ML) is slightly higher than current Plan (1,500 ML). If needed, volume allowance could be updated.

Trade and transfer

Transfer criteria and principles for the unconfined aquifer (section 7) and confined aquifer (section 9) provide Plan objectives and provide for both temporary and permanent trade. An overview of the hydrogeological effects and assessment was considered in context of trade and transfer.

During the term of the current Plan, both permanent and temporary trade has been undertaken across the prescribed wells area. Community feedback indicated that it is unclear what can or cannot be done. The trade data indicates that from 2013-2023 an average of 3 permanent transfers and 2 temporary transfers were registered per year. No inter-management area trades have been undertaken during the term of the Plan.

The principles to support transfer of allocation from the confined to unconfined aquifer have been used during the term of the Plan.

Key discussion overview:

- Trade and transfer principles rely on the administrative processes to support and implement them including DEW and mywater.
- The absence of obswell monitoring in some areas may mean the current approach for the hydrogeological effects and assessment is not appropriate.
- Trade principles remain partially relevant for the prescribed wells area with some inconsistencies and redundant principles.

Seasonal variability and rotational crop

Temporary transfers to manage seasonal variability (principle 88-89 and 155) provide for a licensee to transfer up to 15% of their annual allocation in 3 of every 5 consecutive years. The transfer is exempt from the hydrogeological effects and assessment principles ('hydro test'). Licensees in broader community sessions indicated that these principles are being used by some.

Rotational crop principles for the unconfined aquifer (58-61) provide for industry that require an inter rotational break of 3 years. Key discussion overview:

- Licensing data to understand the extent of use of these principles was unable to be obtained.
- There are mixed views on the seasonal variability and rotational crop principles, both in intent and practice. While it provides a flexibility for licence holders, the existing principles could be reviewed and/or there may be other ways to reach a similar outcome.

Environmental provisions

The Plan includes an assessment (Section 2) and objectives to manage environmental needs and protect the environment generally. There are a diverse range of dependent ecosystems within the prescribed wells area, however the current Plan was not able to quantify ecosystem requirements. Protection principles include TML, Dependent Ecosystems (DE) equation, the hydrogeological effects and assessment and water affecting activity principles.

Key discussion overview:

- Not much has changed in the term of the Plan and the risks appear to remain consistent. The Plan identified additional work was needed which doesn't appear to have been undertaken.
- Gaps and additional work identified in current Plan still relevant.
- Groundwater levels generally stable in Boothby where groundwater dependent ecosystems are present. Improvement in salinity monitoring around known groundwater dependent ecosystems may be needed.

Legislative and policy alignment

During the term of the current Plan the *Landscape Act South Australia Act 2019* commenced. As a result, some references and structures of the current Plan are inconsistent with current legislative requirements. These were discussed across different concepts during the evaluation process.

The other Limestone Coast water allocation plans are examples of where changes have been implemented, or are proposed, to align with current legislation.

The LC Landscape Board are consolidating water affecting activity principles previously contained in Water Allocations Plans for each prescribed wells area, into the Water Affecting Activity Control Policy. This is occurring as water allocation plans are reviewed.

Key discussion overview:

- Consumptive pools, classes of water access entitlements and water affecting activities were viewed to be primarily administrative or terminology change. Simplification of the Plan was supported where possible.
- Holding licences are not a separate authorisation instrument under current legislation and are considered a water (taking) licence without a point of take.
- Generally, the existing management area boundaries remain appropriate and relevant given their alignment with hydrogeological zones and geography.
- Partial unbundling was considered. An overview of these authorisation instruments is provided in a separate document: **Overview_of_water_management_authorisations**.
- There may need to be administrative change to align with legislation. If change occurs there should be an aim to allow the Plan to operate largely as it does now.

Active and expeditious use of water and holding licences

Active and expeditious use of water principles (45-48, 126-129) in the current Plan were a continuation of principles from the previous/original iteration of the Plan. The intent of the principles was to support continued development of the water resource following prescription while reducing rising water levels to minimise dryland salinity.

The active and expeditious use principles also extend to the development of allocation before transfer principles (90, 163) and includes reference to water (holding) allocations (holding licences). There are no current water (holding) allocations in Tintinara Coonapyn Prescribed Wells Area.

Key discussion overview:

- Active and expeditious use principles included a 3-4 year timeframe from adoption of the Plan in 2012. Timeframe has passed and principles are now redundant.
- These principles were to support the infrastructure development, allocation and management of the resource at that time. It is not known if any compliance was undertaken to ensure the principles/Management Plans were appropriately implemented.
- It was viewed that the resource and associated infrastructure is now developed to a stage that these principles are no longer relevant and add unnecessary complexity to the Plan.

Next steps

The Stakeholder Advisory Group will consider any feedback received from the community and LC Landscape Board Governing Body throughout August and September. Written feedback on the evaluation can be provided through the **project page** or to landscapesa.tcwap@sa.gov.au and will be open until 21 September 2026.

The LC Landscape Board Governing Body will formally consider the evaluation and supporting information at its October 2026 meeting. As the designated authority under the legislation to develop, review and amend water allocation plans, the LC Landscape Board will consider whether the Plan remains fit for purpose or requires amendment.

To wrap up the evaluation process, both the community and Minister will be informed of the outcome. It is anticipated this will be finalised by December 2026.

Further information

Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan review

Check out the project page and click +Follow to receive updates as the review progresses:

<https://engage.lclandscapesa.com.au/tintinara-coonalpyn-water-allocation-plan-review>

Water monitoring wells

Check out groundwater level and salinity monitoring from observation wells in the Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed wells area:

- Observation well map with graphs: <https://engage.lclandscapesa.com.au/tintinara-coonalpyn-water-allocation-plan-review/observation-wells-tintinara-coonalpyn-prescribed-wells-area>
- Waterconnect (DEW) <https://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/>

Contact Us

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