

Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan Review Process

October 2025 community sessions summary

In October 2025 the Limestone Coast (LC) Landscape Board held a round of community sessions as part of the review of the Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan. Sessions were open to anyone interested in the process and were held in Coonalpyn, Tintinara and Keith. A feedback form was provided to all attendees to capture views and concerns. Each session presented the same information. Opportunities to engage one-on-one were also provided at Coonalpyn and Tintinara.

This summary brings together what was heard at all sessions under key themes. A summary of feedback form responses from the sessions is also provided. This summary is not intended to detail every comment or question asked but presents the key themes raised by attendees.

What was presented in the sessions

The presentations are publicly available:

[October 2025 presentation – Purpose and PWA](#)

[October 2025 presentation – Plan and Next Steps](#)

Purpose of the review

An 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. A recommendation of whether it requires an amendment is to be provided to the Minister by the end of 2026.

The review is being supported by a [Stakeholder Advisory Group](#). The Group were appointed following an expression of interest and assessment process in April 2025. Group members and meeting minutes are publicly available.

Prescribed wells area

This presentation was a basic introduction to the Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed Wells Area (PWA). The PWA is divided into four management areas for the unconfined aquifer and three management areas for the confined aquifer. Each management area has a Target Management Level (TML) set by the Plan with various licence components and purposes of use.

A graph was provided for each management area to show allocation and use over the term of the current Plan (2013-2023). The average use for the PWA is 43% of allocation.

Groundwater resource condition

Groundwater resource condition uses data from the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) observation well network. Observation wells within the network are generally monitored twice annually in autumn and spring (winter recovered). This data is used to show water levels and trends for each aquifer.

An overview of resource condition based on 2024 spring levels was presented for the PWA. Salinity monitoring and available data was also presented. The 2024 resource condition update was provided as a handout to attendees.

[2024 Tintinara Coonalpyn PWA water resource update](#)

Water allocation plan

An overview of the Tintinara Coonalpyn Water Allocation Plan was presented. This included the key features that a water allocation plan must include and what the current Plan set out to achieve.

The presentation focused on key concepts such as stock and domestic, allocation and trade and transfer. Attendees were also encouraged to think about areas for continuous improvement or opportunities they would like to see considered as part of the review process.

Next steps

A high-level overview of the review process timeline was provided. These sessions were the first round of broader community engagement with a number of ways to get involved. A second round of community sessions is proposed to be held by May 2026 to provide an opportunity to provide feedback on the progress of the review.

Key themes raised by attendees

Allocation and use

Some attendees indicated that the level of use being well below allocation was surprising and would have anticipated use being higher. Some attendees commented that there had been changes in land use in parts of the PWA resulting in changes in water use. It was raised that some attendees viewed that the last two years of use data will be important based on the dry years.

There was discussion on historical reductions to allocation that resulted in 20% reduction in allocation in Tintinara and Tolmer. Anecdotally the rationale was given to maintaining hydraulic gradient and flow through of salts. Some licences had been area limited which was removed at the same time as the reduction. Some licence holders were impacted more than

others. Some viewed the outcome as unfair or inequitable and noted it caused angst for impacted licensees but also between licensees. There were some alternate views within the sessions. The current Plan is not clear on the detail of reductions or when or how these were implemented.

Carry over was discussed at some sessions with attendees not often using the volume but stating there is comfort in knowing that additional water is available if needed.

Confined aquifer

A query was raised around the three sub aquifers (upper, mid, lower) within the confined aquifer in Tauragat management area. Each licence is assigned to the confined aquifer and the conditions of the licence may identify specific aquifers and/or may not require reporting against the different confined sub aquifers. Attendees indicated they thought there may only be a couple of licences accessing the lower confined aquifer.

There was some concern that change in use of licence allocation or transfer of licenses has resulted in changes to levels in the confined aquifer. Anecdotal examples were given in Tauragat of water level decline from 40 ft to 26 ft and some requiring pump upgrades to continue to access the confined for stock and domestic use.

Salinity monitoring

Attendees queried the reduced monitoring of salinity over the past 10 years. There were a number of factors which contributed to this change over time. It was emphasised by attendees the need to have more data and ongoing monitoring to inform salinity management. These views were in alignment with the Stakeholder Advisory Group's feedback.

Attendees queried whether water licence holders could do their own testing for salinity or get testing done. There is no formal program currently in place beyond what is being monitored by DEW as part of the observation well network. Coorong Tatiara Local Action Plan (CTLAP) as part of Council were raised as potentially still offer some salinity testing services. Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) used to offer this from Keith but it is no longer available.

It was raised that in the Plan it is a licence condition that water licence holders supply salinity data with their annual water use return. It was raised that this requirement had not been asked of licensees as part of the DEW reporting process for some time. This is similar with other Plans in the region. Annual water use returns now focus on use via meter readings only.

It was also raised by some attendees that they are required to have salinity monitoring as part of industry accreditation or compliance requirements. Dryland salinity was also raised as a concern and potential issue for some parts of the PWA.

Stock and domestic

Attendees raised that practice changes have occurred that mean greater efficiency in stock and domestic use. Such as shift from windmill to solar and other technology such as leak detection and water level sensors.

In some areas there were concerns of having to deepen stock and domestic bores due to increased irrigation or new irrigation infrastructure in the surrounding area. In other areas, attendees viewed that the volume allowance in the current Plan seemed sufficient and there hadn't been much deepening of bores required. Initially some of the shallow bores that were installed following vegetation clearance needed to be deepened. If bores need to be replaced they are often deepened for future proofing more than out of need.

Majority of attendees were 90-100% dependent on groundwater in comparison to SA Water supply for stock and domestic. It was raised that although there is an expense to public water supply, some choose to maintain a connection to use as a backup when or if needed. Both the unconfined and the confined aquifers are being accessed for stock and domestic groundwater with salinity being one of the key drivers of suitability.

Trade

Attendees queried who is responsible for providing clarity on what is possible around a trade. It was also raised as to whether the current Plan is transparent enough that people can understand what is possible. Attendees also raised that processes could be put in place to better support new water licence holders to understand what their licence was for, what their responsibilities were and what they could do with a licence.

Transfers

Attendees indicated there is some use of the seasonal variability principles. Some use of these principles is because water is not available on the market. A query was raised that as there is a lot of water not being used, is there possibility to increase above the 15% for seasonal variability during good years.

It was raised that a lot of land and water hasn't been developed and so is contributing to the use being well below allocation. If use isn't impacting resource condition, could more water be activated and how. There was some interest in activating more of the unused water as long as it was sustainable.

Adaptive management

Attendees had some interest in the adaptive management framework in the revised Padthaway Water Allocation Plan 2025 and were provided a brief overview of how adaptive management is being introduced in other PWAs.

Summary of feedback form responses

Attendees

- Over 75% of session attendees were licence holders in the Tintinara Coonalpyn Prescribed Wells Area.
- More than 70% of attendees rate their understanding of the current water allocation plan as average to very low.

Areas of interest

- Areas that attendees are interested in hearing more about (ranked order):
 1. Salinity
 2. Allocation
 3. Resource condition
 4. Licensing
 5. Use
 6. Trade/transfer
 7. Climate
- Over 70% of respondents believe that the current water allocation plan is managing or partially managing the water resource so that it is available in a similar quantity and quality into the future (24% were unsure, 6% responded no it is not).
- When considering water resources in the PWA, respondents viewed the primary issue/s to be addressed were (ranked order):
 1. Long term water security
 2. Increasing salinity
 3. Declining water levels
 4. Declining water quality generally

Trade and transfer

- Over 75% of respondents had not traded water in the last 10 years (bought, sold or leased).
- Around 30% of respondents were seeking to either buy or lease water in the next 10 years.
- Seasonal transfers or rotational crop principles are being used (either often or rarely) by approximately 30% of respondents.

The [feedback form](#) is available to complete on the project page for those who were unable to attend the community sessions:

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