



Developing a Water Allocation Plan for the Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area

The water resources of the Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area were prescribed on 7 June 2007. The prescription covers the groundwater (bores/wells) resources of the region, as shown in Figure 1. This does not apply to the use of water from wells for domestic purposes, including the irrigation of less than 0.4 hectares (backyard bores), or for watering stock.

What is prescription of a water resource?

Prescription of a water resource establishes a requirement for a water allocation and licensing system to protect the resource from overuse and to ensure water users are not adversely affected by other water users. It ensures the sustainability of water resources, provides more secure access to water supply for all water users, establishes a potentially tradeable statutory water right and recognises the environment as a legitimate user of water.

A water resource is prescribed when it is under stress or there is a risk that it will not be able to meet future demands without careful management. A water licence is then required for the use of water in a prescribed area. Generally water licences are not required for stock or domestic use. Water licences are issued under Water Allocation Plans.

What is a water allocation plan?

A water allocation plan (WAP) sets out how water resources are to be managed in a prescribed area. It ensures that water resources are managed sustainably for current and future users and sets out the 'rules' for the allocation, use and transfer of water in a Prescribed Area.

How is a water allocation plan developed?

The process to develop a new water allocation plan is clearly defined in the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (see Figure 2).

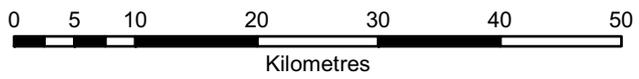
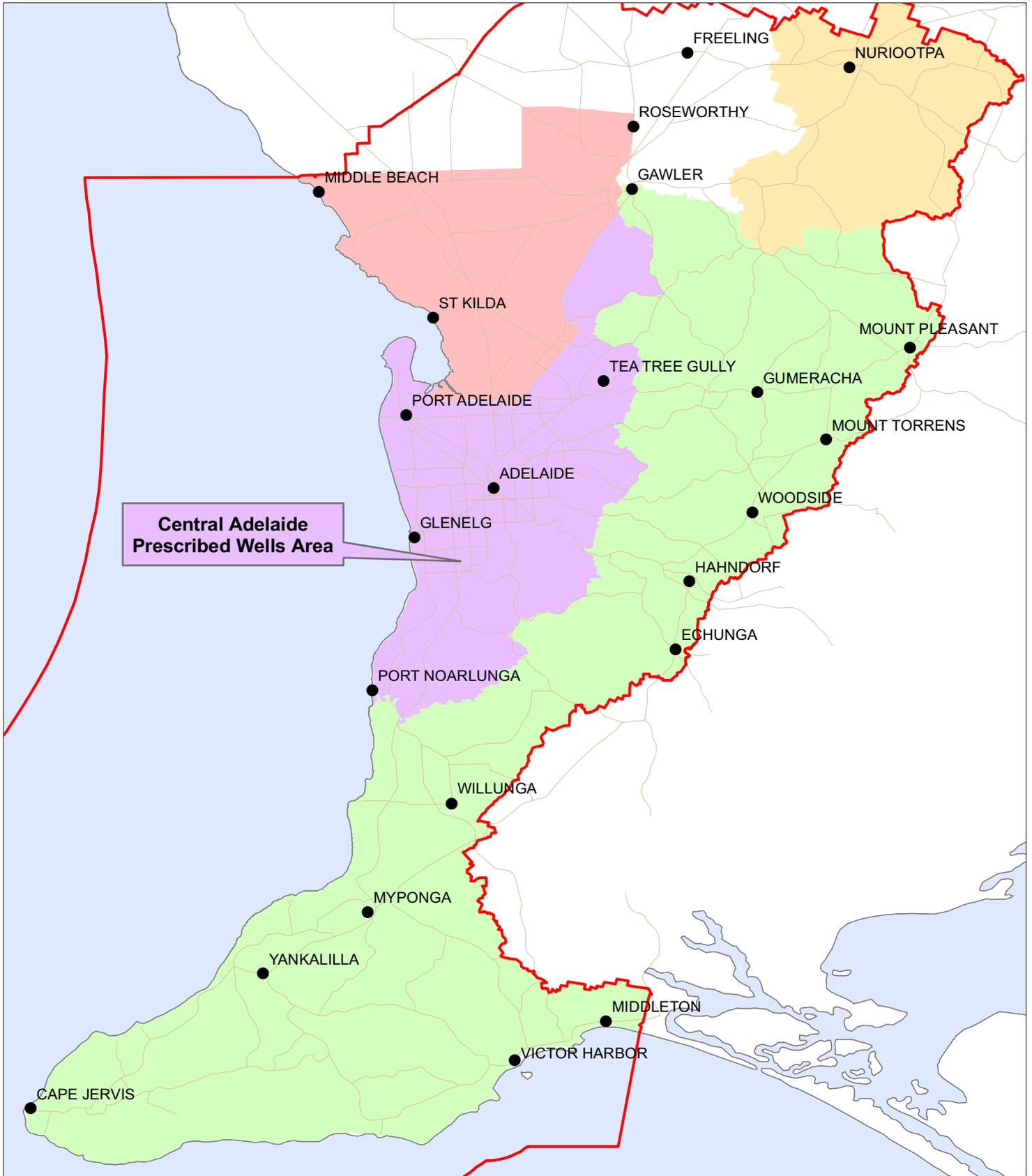
The concept statement is the first step in the development of a WAP. It sets out the proposed content of the WAP, the issues to be investigated and the consultation to be undertaken.

The concept statement does not explore issues in detail, or provide solutions, as this will be done as part of the process to prepare the water allocation plan.





Figure 1: The Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area



Legend

- AMLR NRM Board Boundary
- Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area
- Western Mount Lofty Ranges Prescribed Water Resources Area
- Barossa Prescribed Water Resources Area
- Northern Adelaide Plains Prescribed Wells Area



The Concept Statement

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board has prepared a concept statement for the Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area. This information sheet provides a summary of the concept statement. The full concept statement can be downloaded from the Board's website, www.amlrnrm.sa.gov.au.

The Board is currently consulting with the local community on the contents of the concept statement. Written submissions will be received until 28 March 2008.

What will be in the water allocation plan?

The concept statement is like a table of contents for the water allocation plan (WAP). A summary of the proposed contents of the WAP is provided below.

- A description of the water resources.
- Identification of water dependent ecosystems and their water requirements.
- An assessment of the effects of water use in the Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area on other water resources.
- An assessment of the capacity of the water resources to meet the demand.
- Policies on water allocation, including setting sustainable extraction limits.
- Policies for the transfer of water allocations.
- Policies for the issue of permits for water affecting activities, including:
 - > aquifer, storage and recovery, and
 - > use of effluent and imported water.
- An outline of monitoring requirements for:
 - > regional level monitoring (e.g. state of the resource), and
 - > property level monitoring.

Detailed investigations to be undertaken

The concept statement also outlines investigations that need to be undertaken before a water allocation plan is developed.

The Board has been undertaking a wide range of technical investigations that will provide important input to the development of the water allocation plan.

These investigations have included:

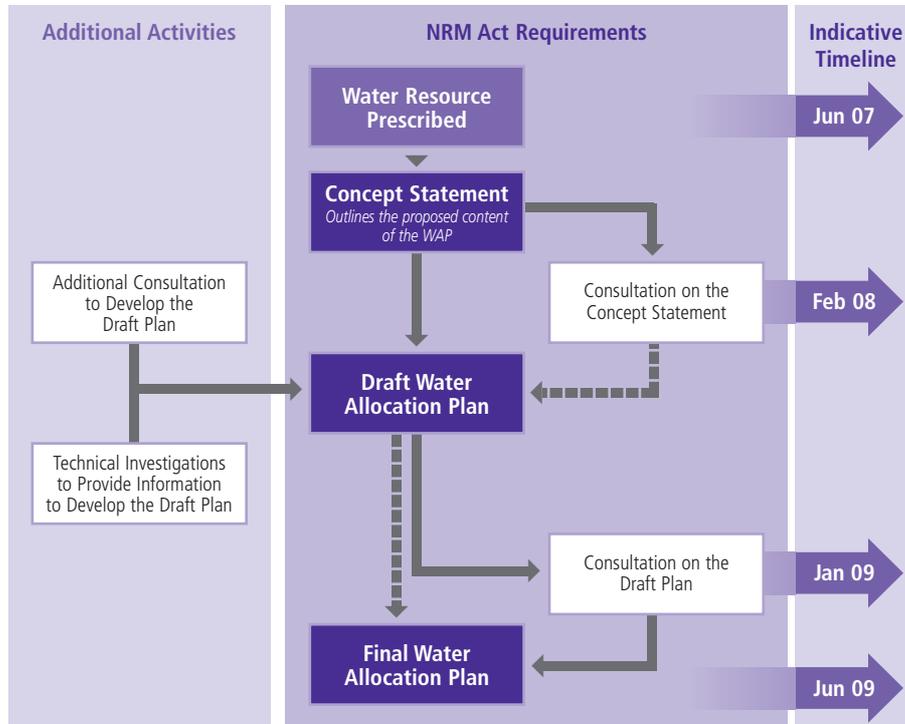
- assessment of the capacity of the groundwater resources
- assessment of the quality, quantity and timing of water required for ecosystems
- estimates of current levels of water use
- assessment of future demands and the capacity of the resource to meet those demands
- assessment of the effects of water use on other water resources (both within and outside the region)
- determination of sustainable yield of water resources
- monitoring resource condition, and
- determination of appropriate management area boundaries.

Developing the water allocation plan

The development of a WAP for the Central Adelaide Prescribed Wells Area will take some time, and will involve further investigations and extensive consultation with the local community. An indicative timeline is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Indicative timeline to develop the water allocation plan



Consultation with the community

The community will have a number of opportunities to get involved in the development of a water allocation plan (WAP) for the region.

WAP Reference Groups

The Board is intending to use community and industry reference groups throughout the development of the WAP to ensure that the WAP is locally relevant.

Discussion or Issues Papers

The Board is planning to develop a range of issues discussion papers, on topics relevant to the WAP. The discussion papers are intended to provide further information to the community and provide the opportunity for the community to make informed decisions and provide written submissions during the consultation process.

It is likely that the discussion papers will also form the basis of meetings/workshops on particular topics.

Workshops

The Board anticipates holding stakeholder workshops throughout the process to develop the draft WAP.

How to get involved

If you have any comments on the information presented in this fact sheet, would like to be involved in the development of the new WAP, or would like further information, please contact Marion Santich at the Board.

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