



Government of South Australia

Northern and Yorke Natural
Resources Management Board

Baroota Prescribed Water Resources Area

Concept Statement

Communications Strategy

September 2009

Introduction

This Communications Strategy is for internal use by the Northern and Yorke Natural Resources Management Board (the Board). The Board has commenced the initial stage of development of a draft water allocation plan (the draft plan) for the Baroota Prescribed Water Resources Area.

This strategy focuses on the first stage which is to prepare a concept statement.

The concept statement outlines the proposed content of the draft plan and the specific matters to be investigated by the Board before the preparation of the draft plan.

This Communication Strategy outlines a suite of initiatives which will inform and engage relevant stakeholders in the process of developing the draft plan.

Effective stakeholder engagement will drive the successful development of the draft plan, and help mitigate misconceptions which may arise as a result.

Background

The Baroota Prescribed Water Resources Area was prescribed on 19 June 2008. The Water Allocation Plan for the Baroota Prescribed Water Resources Area will be the first plan for water management in this area.

The draft plan will be prepared by the Board under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (the Act) in conjunction with the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation and will address the need for long term management of the water resources.

The draft plan will be consistent with the objects of the Act and will help achieve ecologically sustainable development in the region.

It will address concerns about the ability of surface water runoff to supply the Baroota Reservoir while protecting watercourses and dependent ecosystems through adequate watercourse flow.

It will also address concerns about falling groundwater levels, increases in groundwater salinity and acknowledge the connectivity between groundwater and surface water.

Objectives

The objectives of this communication strategy relating to the concept statement are to:

- involve stakeholders early in the development of the draft plan;
- build awareness and understanding of the draft plan and its development process;
- build awareness and understanding of the need for sustainable water management policies.

Stakeholders

Primary Stakeholders

People and groups who will be directly affected by the message or need to be exposed to the message.

Stakeholder	Impact	Involvement	Communication
Minister for Environment and Conservation	The concept statement flags a new management framework for environmental assets and consumptive use. Water Management Authorisations and permits will be issued as part of this management framework.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware that water allocation plan development process has commenced.
Water users	<p>Water Management Authorisations and permits to be issued. Likely reduction in available water for use.</p> <p>Social and economic impacts</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public notice re concept statement, call for comments. Will be made aware of concept statement and opportunities for involvement via direct mail-out and media. Will be made aware of the need for development of a draft plan via letter and media.
SA Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides State's domestic water supply. Changes in policy could affect the volumes extracted 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be encouraged to participate in consultation via public notice and media releases. Will be made aware of need

		from the Baroota Reservoir. SA Water extractions from reservoir will require a licence.		for development of a draft plan and the effects on the operation and management of the Baroota Reservoir.
Industry groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigators • SAFF • Southern Flinders Wine Industry Council • Grape growers • Olive industry • Horticultural industry • Regional Development Board 	Water Management Authorisations and permits to be issued. Likely reduction in available water for use.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be made aware of call for comment on concept statement, next steps, and opportunities for involvement via direct mail-out. • Will be made aware of need for development of a new draft plan and resulting benefits, via letter and media.

Secondary Stakeholders

People who should receive the messages and be aware of the process and people who influence the primary audience now or in the future.

Stakeholder	Impact	Involvement	Communication
Media	N/A	Use as vehicle to communicate key messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media release • Interviews upon request
General community	Long-term cost-benefits of sustainable water management. Potential social and economic impacts through changes to water policy.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public notice re concept statement, call for comments. • Will be made aware of opportunities for involvement in draft plan development and why plan is being developed.

Other Stakeholders

Other people or groups who might be directly or indirectly involved in, or affected by, or have a stake in the campaign. These could be peak bodies, community organisations, and government departments.

Stakeholder	Impact	Involvement	Communication
DWLBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DWLBC will undertake administration of water management authorisations and permits resulting from water allocation plan.Flow-on public perceptions.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has been directly involved in development of concept statement and will continue to partner in developing the plan.
Local Government (District Council of Mount Remarkable, Port Pirie and Northern Areas Councils)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implications for planning and development.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Will be encouraged to participate in consultation via public notice and media releases.Will be made aware of need for development of a draft plan and resulting benefits.
Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none">Board membersNRM Group membersBoard staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community information requests.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan objectives and principles, long-term cost-benefits and sound consultation processes.Education and promotional materials.

Special interest groups

Potential special interest groups that need to be considered include:

- Indigenous communities
- Non-English speaking people, especially irrigators
- Stakeholders with limited website access
- Stakeholders with special needs (ie: physical disability)

The Board will address the needs of these special interest groups by:

- Consulting with key Indigenous groups and individuals.
- Where people may require reading materials to be altered for useability (i.e. providing data CDs, poor sight, translation into another language other than English etc) the Board will address these requests on an individual basis.
- Providing all communication materials on the Board's website for those unable to attend public meetings.
- Posting letters directly to all licence holders informing them of the concept statement and opportunities for involvement.
- Provide community with phone and email contact details of Board and DWLBC staff with all communication materials to allow people to participate in the consultation process without having to attend meetings.

Requests from other un-identified special interest groups will be addressed on an individual basis.

Key messages

- The draft plan will deliver sustainable management of the available water resources for environmental, social and economic purposes;
- The draft plan aims to improve security of access to the available resource for all water users, including existing users and the environment;
- The Board will consult closely with stakeholder groups in the preparation of the draft plan;
- The key element of the plan will be the use of volumetric allocations.
- Transfers of water access entitlements and allocations will be probable under the new licensing system;
- Groundwater levels and surface water flows will be monitored and water allocations will be adjusted according to availability of water resources.
- The development of the draft plan will reflect the requirements of the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Water Initiative, in particular the need to address over use and the application of an unbundled water licensing system.

Issues

Any new process for water management may be received with some scepticism by stakeholders and perceived to be overregulation.

Issue/risk	Impact	Strategy
Negative response by stakeholders	Reluctance to embrace and participate in the process	Briefing papers indicating the state of the resource and the need for additional management
Negative media response	Ongoing resistance by industry groups to the plan	Brief media as part of the launch of the plan
Community angst regarding water management	May create concerns about future allocations	Media and use of community advisory committees to spread key

		messages
Lack of awareness of the draft plan and opportunities for involvement	May reduce public participation in consultation process on Concept Statement	Use media and mail-out efforts to heighten public awareness
Apathy within the community	May reduce level of public participation in concept statement consultation	As long as all opportunities are adequately advertised, people can decide their level of involvement. Ensure that all possible concerns of non-active sectors of the community are considered by staff and investigated where possible through other communication methods

Communication methods

The concept statement will be released to stakeholders via mail out to current irrigators, councils, government agencies and industry groups, as well as being lodged on the Board website.

A public meeting will be held to explain the content of the concept statement, outline the process for the plan development, and receive feedback on the concept statement.

The meeting will be advertised via direct invitations, promoted via media releases and information placed on the Board's corporate website.

Advertising

The Baroota PWRA concept statement will be promoted in advertising in local print media. Newspapers will include The Advertiser, Pirie Recorder, Flinders News and the Northern Argus, as well as Board advertising material. Advertising will occur in the week prior to the public meeting.

Media

A media release and media invitation will be dispatched in the week prior to the launch of the consultation period, promoting the Baroota concept statement, objectives and public meeting event.

Releases will target the Pirie Recorder, Flinders News, Northern Argus, Stock Journal and ABC North and West.

The newsletter of District Council of Mount Remarkable will be used to further raise the awareness in the local community.

Mail-out

Licensees and industry groups will be advised of the availability of the Baroota concept statement by direct mail. The letter will include an invitation to the concept statement public meeting and discussion papers outlining the resource management issues.

Public Meeting

All stakeholders will be invited to attend a public meeting. The intention of the meeting will be to provide further detail on the concept statement. People will also have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the concept statement. It is anticipated that the public meeting will be held at Port Germein.

Discussion paper

A discussion paper will look at the Baroota resource including:

- the context of, and projections for, the region's underground water resource;
- the purpose and implication of new water allocation framework for licensees and other stakeholders; and
- the processes by which the plan will be developed.

The discussion paper will be distributed via (1) direct mail launch invitations and (2) the Board's network of information carousels at libraries, information centres, rural agents and government offices.

Website

A copy of the concept statement, discussion paper, all media releases and the public meeting presentation will be made available on the Board's website. All details of the public meeting time and location will also be presented on the website, together with staff contact details and details on how to make submissions on the concept statement.

Education and engagement

A range of on-going education and engagement activities will be developed to support the process of the plan development, with advice and support to be provided by the Board's Water Officer.

Budget

Activity	Amount
Advertising	\$1,500
Mail out and postage	\$ 500
Discussion papers	\$1,000
Equipment	\$ 500
Postage	\$ 50
Printing (including adopted Water Allocation Plan)	\$1,000
Catering	\$ 500
Venue hire	\$ 100
Total	\$5,150

Evaluation

This communication strategy will be evaluated by:

- media monitoring
- attendance at public meeting
- interest in participation in the process (ie Water Plan Committee)
- number of written submissions received on the concept statement
- phone calls received

1. Action Plan

Activity	Plan	Responsible
Draft materials developed	April 20 2009	NYNRM Board
Board approval communication strategy	April 27 2009	NYNRM Board DWLBC
Communication strategy to DWLBC	June 24 2009	NYNRM Board
Communication strategy approved	September 2009	DWLBC
Discussion papers printed	September 2009	NYNRM Board
Letters printed and posted	September 2009	NYNRM Board
Press release issued	September 2009	NYNRM Board
Public Meeting and media briefing	October 2009	NYNRM Board

Attachments

1. Letter to stakeholders of public meeting advice
2. General poster of public meeting advice
3. Newspaper advertisement of public meeting advice