

Managing water in the Border Zone

Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan | November 2013 | Factsheet 8

The groundwater resources of the Lower Limestone Coast are unique and precious, and underpin the region's people, townships, industries and environment.

The Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation adopted the Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan (the WAP) to ensure the long term sustainability of the region's water resources.

A number of management areas in the Lower Limestone Coast are located within what is commonly referred to as the Border Zone. Water allocated within this area is subject to an agreement between South Australia and Victoria on how to manage this shared resource.

This factsheet describes the Border Zone and the WAP's impact on Border Groundwater agreements.

WHAT IS THE BORDER ZONE?

The Designated Area (commonly known as the Border Zone) is a 40 kilometre wide strip, divided into zones centred on the border of South Australia and Victoria and extending for its full length. The Border Groundwaters Agreement applies to this area, and was established by the Governments of South Australia and Victoria in 1985 with the aim to equitably manage the groundwater along both sides of the border.

To ensure the sustainable use of water resources on both sides of the border, there are limits to the volume of water permitted to be extracted from licensed wells within the Border Zone each year.

These limits are known as the Permissible Annual Volumes (PAVs) and are set by the Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee.

The allocation of water to commercial forests is not subject to the PAVs under the Border Groundwaters Agreement, as commercial forests do not extract water from wells.

This agreement has been enacted by Parliament in both states and therefore takes precedence over any water allocation plan.

HOW DOES THE PROPOSED WAP POLICY RELATE TO THE BORDER GROUNDWATERS AGREEMENT?

The WAP contains policies regarding the way water is allocated and managed in the Border Zone.

A key aspect of the Border Groundwaters Agreement is that no new allocations can be granted, or temporary

allocations renewed, for extraction from wells, where the PAVs would be exceeded. The WAP converts existing area based licences to volume-based licences. This conversion process, however, does not create new allocations or renew temporary allocations, and therefore can occur even where the resulting level of allocation will exceed the PAV.

The WAP proposes that existing commercial forests will be allocated a forest water licence in the Prescribed Wells Area. The allocation of water to commercial forests is not subject to the PAVs under the Border Groundwaters Agreement.

As a precautionary approach, while the Border Groundwaters Agreement is under review (see below), delivery supplements for flood and spray irrigation will be based on the greatest area irrigated during the 2009/10-2011/12 water use years.

The transfer of water into the Border Zone from outside the Border Zone, may only occur if it does not cause the sum of water taking allocations to exceed the relevant PAV.

In addition, within the Border Zone licensees will be able to transfer allocations between irrigation activities or to a forest water licensee, subject to the transfer rules set out in the WAP. However, the transfer of water from a forest water licensee to an irrigator can only occur provided that the PAV is not exceeded.

Finally, the Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee has established sub-zones for the further protection of the groundwater in the Border Zone. These sub-zones also have a limit to the volume of water permitted to be extracted from licensed wells in the sub-zone, referred to as the Allowable Annual Volume or AAV. In the Lower Limestone Coast, the Donovans management area constitutes sub-zone 1A South and the Frances management area constitutes sub-zone 6A North. The transfer of water into a sub-zone of the Border Zone, may only occur if it does not cause the sum of water taking allocations to exceed the relevant AAV.

WHAT IS THE LIMIT TO WATER LICENCES IN THE BORDER ZONE?

The limit for water licences inside the Border Zone will be calculated in the same way as outside the Border Zone.



In order to achieve sustainable water use across the region, the WAP contains Target Management Levels (TMLs) which outline how much water can be sustainably allocated in each management area. Where demand for water from irrigators, commercial forestry, industry, public water supply, farm forestry and stock and domestic users, exceeds the TML in a management area, the WAP implements reductions to both forestry and non-forestry licences. This also applies to other management areas of the WAP outside the Border Zone.

WHAT'S CHANGED AS A RESULT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION?

No changes have been made to the policy for managing water in the Border Zone, as a result of community consultation.

A number of changes have been made to other parts of the WAP. Please refer to the other fact sheets available on our website for details on these changes.

WHAT IF I NEED MORE INFORMATION ON THE WATER ALLOCATION PLAN?

If you have questions about the WAP and how it will operate, you will find further information on our website:

www.senrm.sa.gov.au

If you are a licensee, you will also shortly receive further information including application forms from our licensing staff.

Assistance is also available from Natural Resources South East. Contact **08 8735 1177**

FURTHER READING

Guide to the WAP

- Factsheet 1 - Sustaining our region through water allocation planning
- Factsheet 2 - Changes to how water is allocated
- Factsheet 3 - Forest water use
- Factsheet 4 - Protecting vulnerable water resources
- Factsheet 5 - Water trade and transfer
- Factsheet 6 - Protecting groundwater dependent ecosystems
- Factsheet 7 - Managing the confined aquifer
- Factsheet 8 - Managing water in the Border Zone
- Factsheet 9 - Farm forestry



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