

Frequently asked questions – water licences and water allocations

Licences and water allocations are being issued to existing water users in the Kangaroo Flat area of the Northern Adelaide Plains Prescribed Wells Area to provide a sustainable future for the region's water resources. This information is relevant to an existing user of the resource.

What information is on my water licence?

Your water licence has a unique identification number which is referred to as a 'licence number' or an 'instrument number'. Your water licence also identifies who the licence holders are, the prescribed water resource that water can be taken from and the details of your allocation, including the volume and purpose that water can be used for. A sample licence is attached for your information.

How was my allocation determined?

Your allocation was determined based on your reasonable water requirements, based on metered water use between 1999-2000 and 2014-2015. There were seven existing users (out of 13 in total) with reliable meter readings during this period. These readings were compared to theoretical requirements provided for by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) paper 56 (FAO56) which considers the type of crop and the area grown during the establishment period (1 July 1998 to 12 June 2002).

The long-term metered usage, for all existing users with meters, was 37 percent of the FAO56 volume. For metered users, their individual long-term average use became their initial proposed reasonable requirement, and non-metered users were assigned 37 percent of the FAO56 volume for their crop types during the establishment period.

Feedback from existing users suggested these volumes were too low and did not provide enough water in dry years. The methodology was revised and the second highest metered readings were used as the basis for the calculation, rather than the average. This resulted in a 33 percent increase in the reasonable requirement volumes that were first proposed. Accordingly, the second highest meter reading was adopted as the reasonable requirement volume for metered users, and 33 percent was added to the first reasonable requirement volume proposed for non-metered users.

What can I use my allocation for?

Your allocation is the total volume of water (in kilolitres) that is permitted to be taken each water use year, for a particular water licence. A water use year runs from 1 July to 30 June, the same as a financial year.

Water allocations may be split into different purposes of use that specify what water can be taken for (i.e. 'taking', 'irrigation', and 'stock and domestic'). The purpose of your water allocation will be displayed (endorsed) on your water licence.

Will I always have this allocation?

The Minister has supported a staged proportional reduction scheme over five years. Assuming there is no change to the condition of the resource your licence will be varied and re-issued in July 2018 with an allocation of 90 percent of your reasonable requirement. On 30 June 2020, your water licence will be further varied, resulting in an allocation of 73 percent of your reasonable requirement. On 30 June 2022, the last variation to your water licence will occur so that the remaining allocation is 56 percent of your reasonable requirement, achieving the overall reduction target of 44 percent.

Note that further reductions can be implemented by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation at any time during the reduction schedule, should this be required for effective resource management.

What if I don't agree with my allocation?

Extensive consultation has been undertaken throughout the process to determine reasonable requirements. If you are not satisfied with the allocation that has been endorsed on your water licence, you have a right to appeal under section 202(1)(b)(ii) of the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*, to the Environment, Resources and Development Court. You will find further information in the enclosed appeals document.

What are my metering requirements?

Licensed underground water resources are required to be fitted with a meter that is compliant with the South Australian Licensed Water Use Meter Specification (the Meter Specification), including resources used for stock and domestic purposes. You are not required to install a meter until you receive your water licence. Once your water licence has been received you will have four months to install your



meters if a meter has not already been installed. You will find further information in the enclosed Meter Specification.

How and when is my meter read?

Meters in the Northern Adelaide Plains Prescribed Wells Area are read annually, in early June, by officers of this Department who are authorised by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation (the Minister) to read or inspect meters. As per the conditions on your water licence you are required to keep the area in the vicinity of the meter free from accumulations of sand, soil, vegetation or other material and to ensure that there is safe and convenient access to the meter at all times.

Can I transfer my water allocation?

All water allocations and/or licence transfers must meet the 'Transfer Criteria' set out in Section 6 of the Northern Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan. Note in Kangaroo Flat that temporary trades will need to align with the reduction schedule.

What if I use more than my water allocation?

Exceeding a water allocation is a breach of your water licence conditions.

Water licence holders that exceed their annual water allocation will be charged a penalty based on the volume of water that was used in excess of allocation. Penalty charges are calculated based on the gazetted levy rate. Copies of South Australian government gazettes are available to view online at www.governmentgazette.sa.gov.au or on the Department's website at www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/compliance/water-compliance/risk-based-water-compliance

In addition to a penalty charge, there are a number of compliance actions that may apply under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*.

What if I don't have enough water?

When you receive your water licence it will be managed under the rules of the Northern Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan. There are no carryover/ rollover provisions in the Northern Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan, but the plan does allow for the trade of water. This is a mechanism by which you may be able to access additional water. You may also be able to access alternate water sources e.g. mains water, water from the Water Reticulation Systems Virginia (WRSV) or water from the Northern Adelaide Irrigation Scheme (NAIS).

Can I rollover unused water to be used in subsequent years?

The Northern Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan does not allow for rolling over unused water from one year to another. Consideration is being given as to how this may be reflected in the Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan currently being developed, which will incorporate the Northern Adelaide Plains, Central Adelaide and the Dry Creek Prescribed Wells Areas.

The Water Allocation Plan is being developed by the Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board in collaboration with the community and supported by the community-based Northern Adelaide Plains and Central Adelaide WAP advisory committees. To stay informed, please subscribe to the newsletter by emailing DEWNR.AMLR@sa.gov.au

What are the ongoing costs of having a water licence?

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board collects a water levy from licensed water users in the Northern Adelaide Plains, Western Mount Lofty Ranges (except for licensed stock and domestic dams), Barossa and McLaren Vale prescribed areas.

Water management and planning activities for the entire region are funded through this levy support.

The NRM water levy in these areas is based on the water allocation, at a rate of 0.6c per kilolitre (\$0.006 per kilolitre).

For example, if you have a 10,000 kL Taking allocation and a 5,000 kL Taking stock and domestic allocation, your levy charge will be:

Taking Allocation (kL) x Levy charge (\$)

10,000 kL x 0.006 dollars = \$60.00.

The 5,000 kL stock and domestic water allocation is not levied and therefore not included in this charge.

All licensed water users in the AMLR's four prescribed areas pay the same NRM water levy, contributing to and sharing the responsibility for funding water management across the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges region.

For more information on the NRM Water Levy please visit the Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges website at www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au

For more information

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