

South Australia's draft Water Security Statement



The draft Water Security Statement provides an overview of our water resources, how they are used and strategies to make sure our water supplies are secure and reliable into the future.

Water in South Australia

South Australia has a history of adapting to a dry and variable climate and our water management capabilities are recognised across the world. Historical investment in water infrastructure and water resource management has ensured that much of the state has a high level of water security.

Sustainable water management enables ~\$110 billion of economic activity each year in South Australia. Water also supports valuable environmental sites, like our six wetlands that are internationally recognised under the Ramsar Convention. People, communities, industry and the environment all rely on ongoing and reliable access to water.

Water security is having an acceptable quantity and quality of water for people, industry, agriculture and the environment that is affordable – now and into the future.

Why have a Water Security Statement?

Water availability from natural sources is projected to decline across the state as the climate changes. There is also increasing demand for water to support growth in agriculture, mining and energy, as well as for growing towns and cities as our population grows.

It is important that we understand our water resources, how they are used and where there may not be enough water to meet demand so we can plan ahead. The draft Water Security Statement considers how we can make sure that we have the water we need to support the state's economic growth, a vibrant society and healthy environments.

Water security planning is part of preparing for future challenges and making the most of opportunities to use water in a way that supports sustainable growth.

How water secure is South Australia?

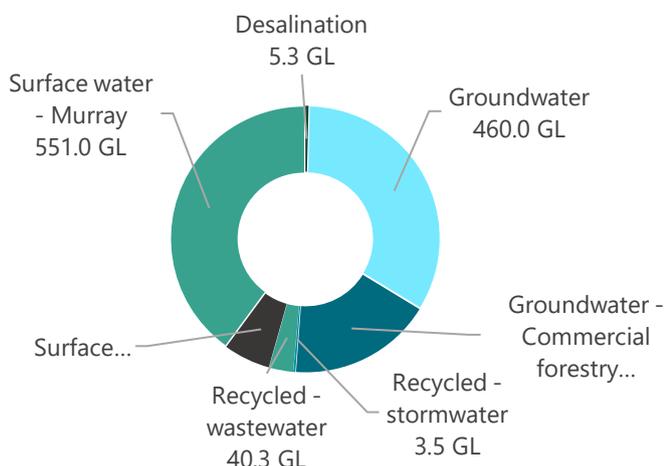
Past investments and water reform mean that most of South Australia currently has secure drinking water supplies. However, there is still more to do for some remote and regional communities and to make sure we are preparing for the changes that climate change will bring.

Water security in regional South Australia

As outlined in the draft Water Security Statement water security varies by region based on the water resources available, the industries they support and past investment in water infrastructure and water resource management.

The state government is working with stakeholders to develop targeted water security strategies for those industries or regions where potential water demands are at risk of exceeding available supplies. These strategies will build on traditional water allocation planning processes and link fit-for-purpose water supplies with existing and emerging water demands to support economic growth. In the first instance, this more targeted approach will be trialled in the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale, where discussions have begun with stakeholders about pathways for adopting new or augmented supplies to meet emerging demands and address climate risk.

Average annual volume of water used in South Australia by resource type (gigalitres – GL) (2015-16 to 2018-19)



Adelaide's water security

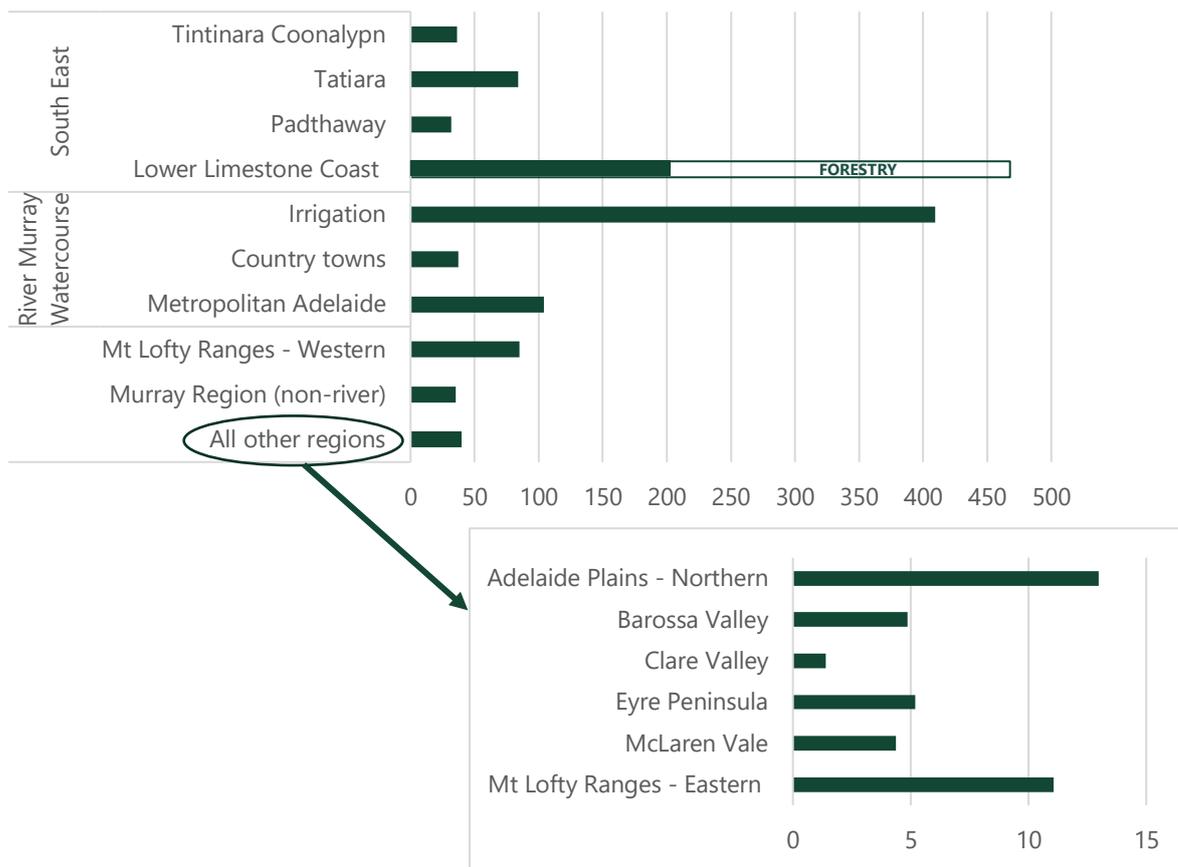
Adelaide has a high degree of water security as a result of its diverse portfolio of supply options, networked water distribution system, high proportion of climate independent water sources, highly capable water sector and public awareness about the challenges of drought.

Did you know more than 50 per cent of Adelaide's annual demand can be met with recycled or desalinated water?

Adelaide's average annual water use (GL) (2015-16 to 2019-20)



Average annual water use by Region (GL) (2015-16 to 2018-19)



What are we doing to improve water security in South Australia?

Key recent investments and developments outlined in the draft Water Security Statement include:

- Improving water affordability by reducing SA Water’s rates for South Australian families and businesses.
- Construction of desalination plants on the Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island.
- \$41 million in remote community water supply upgrades for regional areas including Yunta, Oodnadatta, Maree, Terowie, Marla, and Manna Hill.
- \$7.9 million to support water services in Aboriginal communities.
- \$14.7 million of investment in South Australia’s water licensing system to enhance users’ experience and support more efficient water markets.
- Investment in innovative water recycling projects, such as the Northern Adelaide and McLaren Vale irrigation systems, to expand recycled water use for horticulture.
- Locking in a 50 GL improvement in dry year water availability for South Australian River Murray irrigators, by increasing Adelaide’s reliance on its other sources, including desalination.

- Negotiating increased flexibility for SA Water’s River Murray license for Adelaide, allowing desalination production to support the trade of water to other River Murray water users.
- Amending water allocation reductions in the Lower Limestone Coast based on updated science and assessment of risks.
- Construction of floodplain infrastructure in the Riverland to enable natural flooding to improve floodplain health.

The key challenge now is to build on the state’s strong legacy of water investment and reform to grow the South Australian economy in a sustainable way. The draft Water Security Statement includes ten strategic priorities that build on previous investment and reform. They aim to further improve water security and meet the state’s growth targets while adapting to a changing climate.

The strategic priorities will form the state government’s water security program from now until July 2024. The state government will work with industry, key stakeholders and partners to progress the priorities.

Strategic Priorities

1. For key water resources or priority growth industries where there is the potential for water demand to exceed available supply, work with stakeholders, including SA Water and local communities to develop highly targeted water security strategies. Consistent with the state's *Climate Change Action Plan*, these strategies will consider projected future water demand and pathways for the adoption of new or augmented supplies from all viable water sources and the use of new water technologies.
2. As part of a new Climate Change Science and Knowledge Plan, improve the understanding of resource managers, water users and communities of the impacts of climate change on water resources and the reliability of water entitlements, to better inform decisions around current and future water use.
3. Building on the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* reforms and the \$15 million upgrade to the state's water licensing system, work with Landscape Boards and key stakeholders to ensure water planning processes operate efficiently, meet the information and other requirements of water users and maximise the productive use of available water resources.
4. Work with Landscape Boards and key stakeholders, including SA Water, to update the rolling three-year forward work plan for statutory water allocation planning to ensure that water resource management continues to be informed by science, that water resources are managed within sustainable limits and that water allocation plans are updated within timeframes that reflect risks to users and water resources.
5. In reviewing and updating individual water allocation plans, work proactively with water retailers and other stakeholders to ensure critical human water needs continue to be prioritised appropriately and that water planning processes support the setting of objective water security standards where required.
6. Building on SA Water's planned investments in remote communities out to 2024, further investigate the case for additional water security investments in self-supplied remote communities and continue to support the provision of potable supplies for critical human water needs in exceptional circumstances, where such communities have identified risks to existing supplies.
7. Continue to drive full implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan for a healthy River Murray – to meet critical human water needs in Adelaide and SA country towns, maintain vibrant river communities, meet the aspirations of First Nations and sustain internationally important floodplains and wetlands.
8. Develop an Urban Water Directions Statement that sets a state framework for optimising the use of all urban water sources – in a way that supports growth, greening and liveable towns and cities, more efficient and cost-effective water use, as well as the release of water for productive use outside of urban areas.
9. Progress the findings and recommendations of the review of the *Water Industry Act 2012* to further drive innovation and competition in the water industry sector.
10. Work with the South Australian water sector, including water retailers, and the research, innovation and education sectors to build the state's capacity to respond to future water challenges across the economy and capture a greater share of an expanding global market for water technologies and services.

Feedback

The state government is seeking feedback on the draft Water Security Statement until 5pm on Friday 18 June 2021.

Written submissions can be emailed or posted to:

Email: DEWWater@sa.gov.au

Post: Department for Environment and Water

Water Security, Policy and Planning

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Or visit the DEW website:

www.environment.com.au/water/water-security/water-security-statement