



5. Water Licensing under the draft Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan

After the draft Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan (the draft WAP) is adopted, your licence will look different to how it currently looks. The new water licensing system being adopted across South Australia is able to adapt to future changes in the availability of water, whilst protecting property rights and the environment.

Consumptive Pools

The new water licences will identify the consumptive pool to which they relate.

A consumptive pool is the pool of water that is available to meet the consumptive demands for water, which include:

- licensed water used for irrigation, industrial and recreational purposes (and in the Northern Adelaide Plains, stock and domestic use)
- non-licensed water use, such as water for stock or domestic use in Central Adelaide and Dry Creek
- water authorised by the Minister under section 105 of the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*.

The draft WAP proposes 13 consumptive pools, 11 of which are determined based on a geographic boundary and aquifer (Figure 1), while the managed aquifer recharge and cultural water consumptive pools are purpose-based and extend across the entire area managed by the draft WAP.

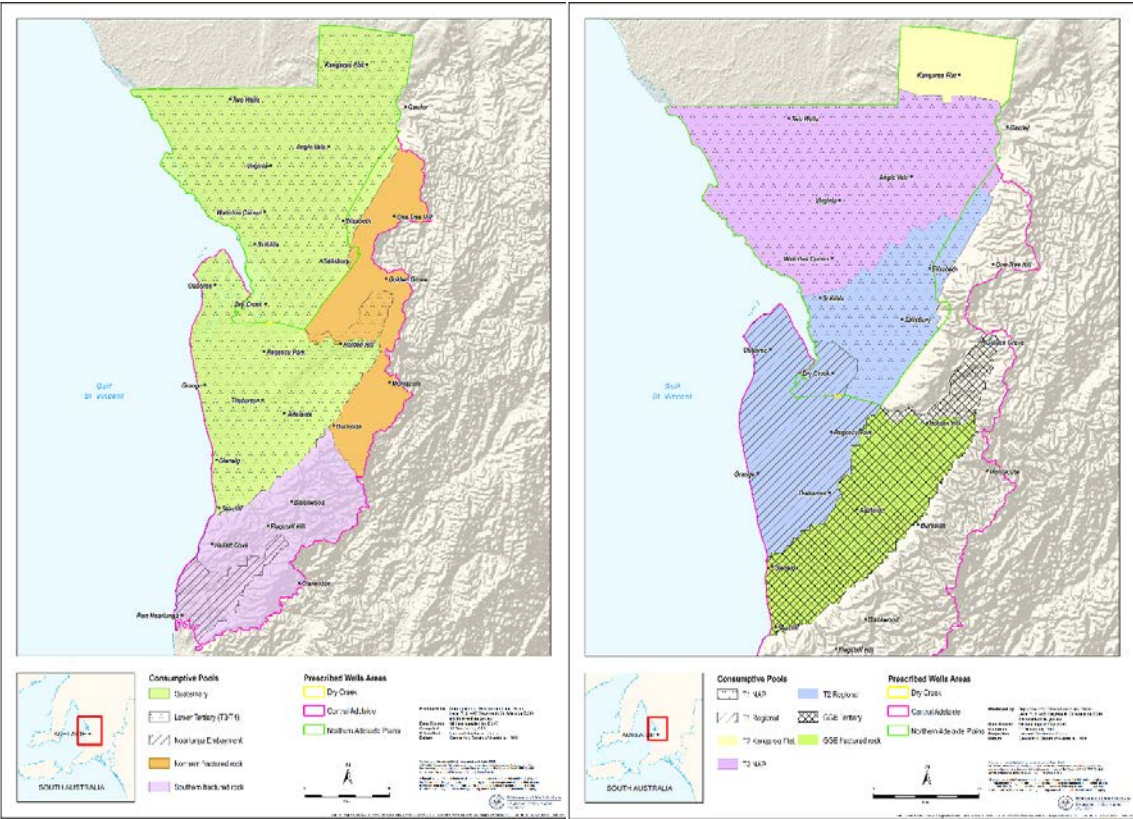


Figure 1: Consumptive pools defined by geographic area and aquifer



Water Management Authorisations

Currently, licensed water users across most of South Australia have a right to access water as set out on their individual water licence. The water licence may also list the conditions for the taking and use of water, including which wells the water can be taken from. All of these conditions can make a water licence very complex and make it harder to sell or lease the water, or specific components of the water, on the licence.

The new water licensing system separates these components of the licence and specifies them on separate authorisations (Figure 2). The benefits of the new licensing system include: greater flexibility for transfers and options for managing water sustainability and greater opportunity for water users to secure a mortgage against their water access entitlement. The new authorisations incorporate:

Water Licence: provides a ‘water access entitlement’ to the licensee.

Water Access Entitlement: is the right to access water from a particular consumptive pool. It is an asset (private property) that can be mortgaged, sold or temporarily transferred in part or in full. A water access entitlement is comprised of a specified number of ‘entitlement shares’ within the consumptive pool. With the exception of Managed Aquifer Recharge schemes (see “Managed Aquifer Recharge in the Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan” information sheet for more information), each existing licensee will be issued with the same number of entitlement shares as they currently have as allocation on their existing licence.

Water Allocation: is the volume of water issued annually to a licensee which can be taken in the particular water-use year. This is an asset that can be transferred. For most consumptive pools the water allocation will be the same volume that is currently allocated to the licensee. However in the T1 Northern Adelaide Plains and T2 Northern Adelaide Plains consumptive pools, the volume of water allocated if the groundwater condition has declined below identified thresholds may be less than the entitlement shares (see information sheet ‘Managing High Risk Areas under the Adelaide Plains Water Allocation Plan’ for more detail).



Water Licence

- ❖ Is personal property
- ❖ Relates to a particular consumptive pool
- ❖ Lists the wells through which water can be taken
- ❖ May contain other conditions
- ❖ Provides a Water Access Entitlement (WAE) to the holder and specifies the basis on which the WAE is determined

Water Access Entitlement

- ❖ Ongoing Authorisation issued under the Water Licence
- ❖ Mortgageable component
- ❖ Subject to the conditions on the Water Licence (such as the consumptive pool and the wells)
- ❖ For the Managed Aquifer Recharge Consumptive pool it relates to the "Available Balance"
- ❖ For the other consumptive pools is comprised of a number of Entitlement Shares and reflects existing licenced volume

Water Allocation

- ❖ Issued under a Water Access Entitlement
- ❖ Lasts for 12 months (except for carryover approved via the Plan)
- ❖ Subject to the conditions on the Water Licence (such as the consumptive pool and the wells)
- ❖ For the Managed Aquifer Recharge Consumptive Pool is the lesser of the "Available Balance" or the "Maximum Annual Recovery Volume"
- ❖ For most consumptive pools will be the same volume each year
- ❖ For the T1 Northern Adelaide Plains and T2 Northern Adelaide Plains consumptive pools, could be reduced in some years if the groundwater condition declines below identified thresholds

Figure 2: Water management authorisations for the new water licensing system

Existing licensees across the Adelaide Plains will be provided with a water licence, water access entitlement (specifying the number of entitlement shares) and a water allocation under the new WAP.

The Minister may grant new water licences with respect to the wells in the prescribed areas in accordance with the WAP and the taking and use of such water will be subject to the principles in the WAP. These principles are designed to ensure the taking of water will not cause undesired impacts to existing users of the resource, groundwater-dependent ecosystems or the aquifers themselves.