

## Loddon Highlands Water Supply Protection Area

### Groundwater management

The Loddon Highlands Water Supply Protection Area (the WSPA) extends from Newlyn, Learmonth and Waubra in the south to Maryborough and Dunolly in the north. Groundwater resources are managed under the *Loddon Highlands Water Supply Protection Area Groundwater Management Plan* (the Plan), which was approved by the Minister for Water in November 2012.

The Plan provides protection to existing licence holders and the environment through caps on licence entitlement and restrictions on the take of groundwater when triggers are reached. It also provides licence holders with flexibility to manage their entitlements through trading and carryover.

### Allocations

Under the Plan, trigger levels have been established for the Ascot, Blampied, Newlyn and Waubra management zones where there is a higher density of licence entitlement volume, and seasonal groundwater

level drawdown is greatest.

In the 2019/20 year, all management zones had an allocation of 100 per cent of licence entitlement volume, except for the Newlyn Zone where a 75 per cent allocation was set.

Allocations have been announced for the 2020/21 year based on the highest groundwater levels to 31 August 2020. The allocations for each management zone are the same as those in 2019/20 (Figure 1).

Groundwater levels will be monitored throughout the year; if there is sufficient recovery in the Newlyn Zone trigger bores by 30 November, allocations may be increased for that zone.

### Carryover

There was a total of 2,865.3 ML carried over by licence holders in the WSPA for use in the 2019/20 water year. A total of 2,996.9 ML was then carried over for use in the 2020/21 water year.



Figure 1. Average maximum groundwater recovery levels to 31 August 2019, compared to trigger levels

## Groundwater use

Total recorded use in the WSPA was 6,115.9 ML in 2019/20, which is 30 per cent of the total licence entitlement volume (Figure 2). In the Newlyn Zone, where an allocation of 75 per cent was set, recorded use was 27 per cent of licence entitlement volume (810.8 ML).

Recorded use was greatest (by volume) in the Ascot Zone at 2,831.4 ML. Blampied Zone recorded the greatest use as a percentage of licence entitlement volume at 54 per cent.

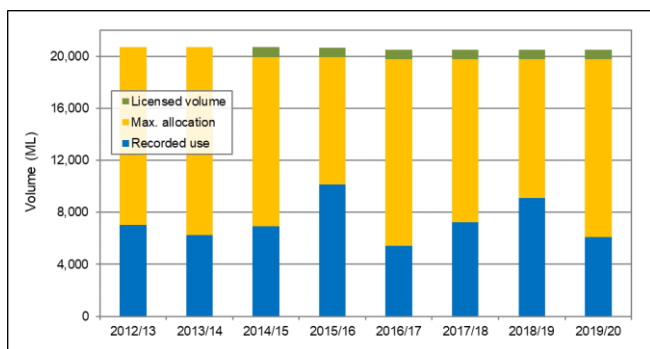


Figure 2. Recorded groundwater extractions

## Groundwater trading

During the 2019/20 water year there were seven temporary transfers for a total of 632.8 ML, and five permanent transfers for a total of 187 ML/yr (Figure 3).

The majority of transfers occurred between licence holders within the same management zones. There was one temporary transfer between management zones (1 ML from Ullina to Talbot).

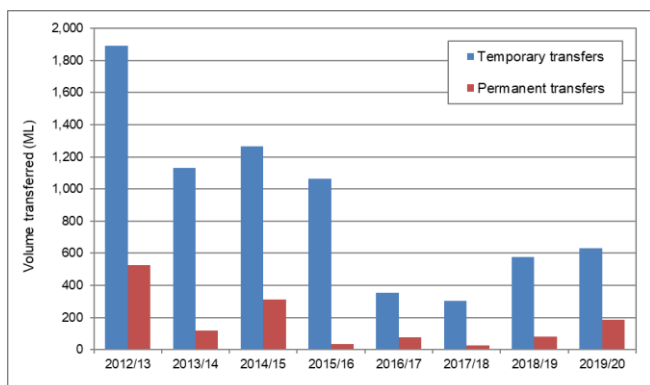


Figure 3. Groundwater trade activity

Licence holders are reminded not to extract more than their allocated volume without written approval from Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW).

Licence holders seeking to trade groundwater licence entitlement should visit *Watermatch*, an online trading forum for people to buy and sell water: [www.watermatch.com.au](http://www.watermatch.com.au)

## Groundwater levels

GMW, in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), monitors groundwater levels in 59 state observation bores, located across the WSPA.

Seasonal drawdown during 2019/20 was typically less than 8m, however larger drawdowns were observed in the Ascot Zone: drawdown up to 13 m was recorded in bore 64880 at Coghills Creek (Figure 4).

Groundwater recovery levels have declined since 2012/13, however they are currently within historic ranges.

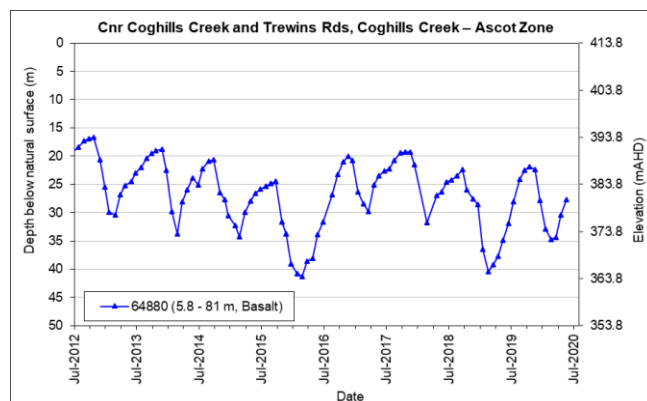


Figure 4. Groundwater levels at Coghills Creek

## Groundwater quality

Groundwater quality is monitored in nested state observation bores located near Campbelltown in the Ullina Zone, and Bung Bong in the Talbot Zone. Results from samples collected in November 2019 indicate that groundwater salinity in the shallow Basalt aquifer continues to be more saline than in the Deep Lead aquifer at these sites, which is consistent with previous results (Figure 5).

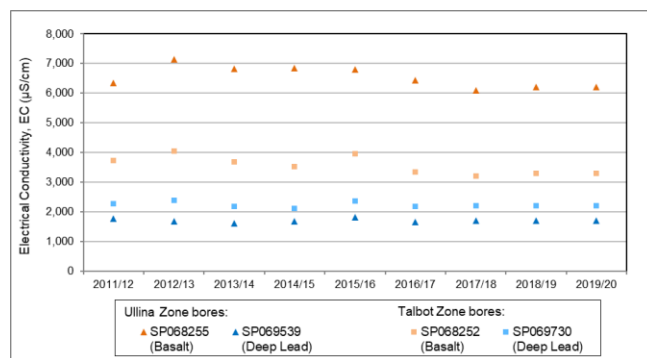


Figure 5. Groundwater salinity in key nested bores

## Where can I get more information?

You can download a copy of the Plan or the 2019/20 annual report from the GMW website at [www.gmwater.com.au](http://www.gmwater.com.au) or phone 1800 013 357.