

Recommendation on the accreditation of the proposed Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges Water Resource Plan

Meeting No. 136 of the Authority

Recommendation

1. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (‘the Authority’) has considered and assessed the proposed Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges Water Resource Plan (‘proposed WRP’) for the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges WRP area (‘WRP area’) (**Attachment A**) provided by South Australia on 14 August 2019.
2. The Authority is satisfied that the proposed WRP is consistent with the relevant Basin Plan (*Basin Plan 2012* (Cwlth), version F2018C00451, registered on 11 July 2018 and in force at the time of this recommendation (‘Basin Plan’), as is required by section 55(2) of the Act including:
 - a. the requirements for water resource plans (‘WRPs’), and
 - b. the long-term annual diversion limits (‘SDLs’) for the water resources of the WRP area.
3. In considering consistency the Authority has had regard to the legislative framework within which the proposed WRP operates, as is required by section 55(3) of the Act.
4. In exercising its powers and performing its functions, the Authority has had regard to the Basin Plan and the extent to which the proposed WRP is consistent with the Basin Plan (in accordance with section 56(1)(a) and (b) of the Act).
5. The Authority notes that the proposed WRP is based on a revised estimate of the BDL for the surface water resources of the Marne-Saunders SDL Resource Unit (SS12). The revised BDL re-estimate for the Marne-Saunders SDL resource unit is 3.0 GL/yr, an increase of 0.1 GL/yr from the Basin Plan 2012 BDL estimate of 2.9 GL/yr. This is the result of a change from 0 to 0.1 GL/yr for net take by commercial plantations, where information about the area of commercial plantations as at 18 January 2010 (the adoption date of the Marne Saunders WAP) is now available.
6. In addition, there are minor boundary anomalies relating to small differences between the Basin Plan boundaries and the boundaries applying under state water management law. The Authority has assessed the impact of these anomalies and considers that these result in negligible water resource management issues. It is recommended that the proposed WRP be progressed on the basis of the proposed boundaries.

7. The Authority notes that the proposed WRP has not included the proportion of take that is measured in accordance with agreed metering standards (AS4747) as recommitted to in the Basin Compliance Compact. South Australia recognises in the proposed WRP that it does not have this information, and since the Basin Compliance Compact was endorsed has demonstrated recommitment to improved metering by amending its state regulations to ensure all new and replacement meters from 1 July 2019 are in line with the agreed standards. The Authority expects that following accreditation of the proposed WRP and implementation of the state regulations, South Australia's on-going commitment to the Basin Compliance Compact will ensure that information regarding the proportion of take that is measured in accordance with the agreed standard will be available in the future.
8. **On this basis the Authority gives the Minister the proposed WRP and recommends that the Minister accredit the proposed WRP.**
9. The Authority's detailed reasoning is set out in the document titled 'Water Resource Plan assessment report, proposed Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges Water Resource Plan', October 2019.