2014 Regional Snapshot

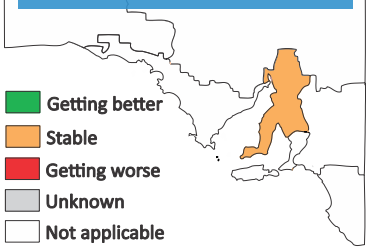
Are the water levels and salinity of our prescribed groundwater resources improving?

The Northern and Yorke NRM region relies on groundwater for its town water supplies and agriculture industry. Groundwater also sustains a range of ecosystems.

Groundwater is mostly recharged when rainfall percolates down through the soil to the watertable. Groundwater levels naturally change in response to seasonal rainfall, droughts and climate change. Excessive use can cause levels to fall and salinity to increase, which can impact the communities, industries and ecosystems that are dependent on groundwater, particularly if climate change impacts rainfall patterns and reduces the rainfall needed to recharge groundwater.

This report summarises whether changes in groundwater levels and salinity of prescribed groundwater resources are within acceptable limits. This report should be read alongside reports on the sustainable use of ground water and surface water resources.

Trends in salinity and water levels for prescribed groundwater resources



State target

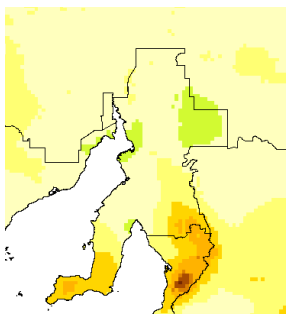
Maintain the productive capacity of our natural resources

Trend (2010–13)	Stable	Salinity and groundwater levels are within acceptable limits in both of our prescribed groundwater resources

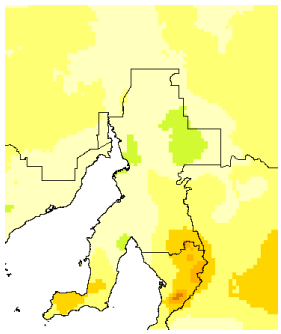
Groundwater levels and salinity are largely driven by rainfall and are therefore naturally variable. Rainfall in 2013 was less than long term averages (maps on right). Water use in 2013 was therefore expected to be higher.

Since 2010, both of the prescribed groundwater resources have stable or improving water levels and salinity (map above), according to groundwater level and salinity reports.

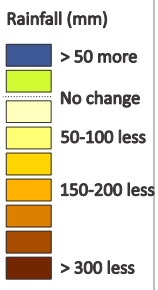
Rainfall anomaly maps:



How rainfall in the last 12 months compares to the long-term average



How rainfall in the last 12 months compares to the last 10 years



Where we are at (2013)	Good	Both groundwater resources are within acceptable limits

In the Northern and Yorke NRM region there are 2 prescribed groundwater resources. Based on changes in salinity and water levels between 2012 and 2013, the status of both groundwater resources is good. There have been increases in salinity in both of these resources, and gradual declines in water levels in the Baroota aquifers, but these changes are still within acceptable limits based on the needs of the primary users and the natural variation of each resource.

Managing our groundwater resources relies on consistent and timely measurements of groundwater levels, salinity and water use.

Reliability of information	★★★★☆	Very Good

Further information:
Technical information for this report and reports on the status of South Australian water resources

This report is a work in progress. As resource monitoring improves, so too will our ability to describe trends in condition.

Government of South Australia