

2014 Regional Snapshot

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

The South Australian Arid Lands NRM region relies on groundwater for town water supplies and agriculture and mining industries. Groundwater also sustains a range of ecosystems, including the nationally significant Great Artesian Basin springs.

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 its levels to drop 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 the report on the [sustainable use of ground water](#) resources.



Trends in salinity and water levels for prescribed groundwater resources



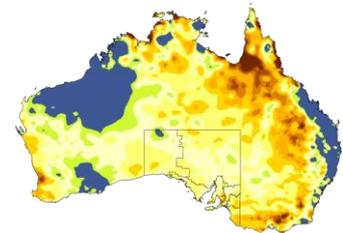
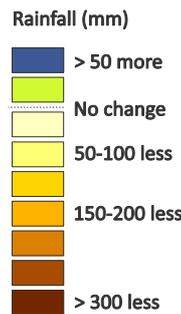
 **State target**
Maintain the productive capacity of our natural resources

Trend (2010–13)	Stable	Salinity and groundwater levels are within acceptable limits in the Great Artesian Basin aquifer
------------------------	--------	--

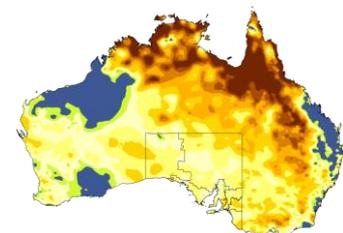
In the SA Arid Lands NRM region, ground water is predominately sourced from the [Great Artesian Basin](#) aquifer, which is primarily recharged by rainfall along the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range in Queensland and New South Wales, with minor localised recharge from rainfall in South Australia and Northern Territory. Groundwater levels and salinity vary in response to rainfall, which has declined across most of the recharge area (maps on right).

Since 2010, water levels and salinity in the Great Artesian Basin have varied within acceptable limits and remained stable over a long period of time. The Far North prescribed groundwater resource has 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 last 113 years



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

Where we are at (2013)	Good	The Great Artesian Basin aquifer is within acceptable limits
-------------------------------	------	--

Based on changes in salinity and water levels between 2012 and 2013, the 2013 [status](#) of the Great Artesian Basin aquifer is good. 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](#)