

# 2016 State Report Card

## How much of our wastewater and stormwater is recycled?

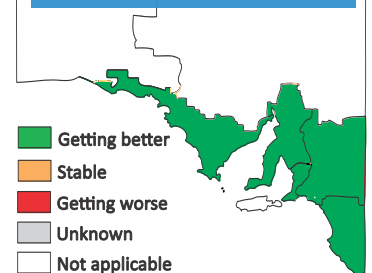
Water is one of our most precious natural resources. It is fundamental to life and supports our economy, lifestyle and environment. With our population expected to increase and rainfall projected to decrease across southern Australia due to climate change, it is critical we use our water wisely.

Recycling water reduces pressure on our traditional freshwater resources such as reservoirs, the River Murray and groundwater. Wastewater (sewage systems) and stormwater (drainage systems) can be treated – fit for purpose – for use in industry, watering parks and gardens, and agriculture – the biggest consumer of water in South Australia. Recycling water also provides a number of environmental benefits. It decreases the amount of sediment, nutrients and pollutants going into waterways, leaves more water for our native plants and animals and provides wetland habitats in urban areas.

This report card summarises most of the water that is recycled around the state. This report card covers the amount of wastewater recycled from treatment plants managed by [SA Water](#) and [TRILITY](#) and the amount of stormwater stored in aquifers for later use in the greater Adelaide region. Some [local councils](#) and private businesses recycle additional water, but these are relatively small amounts and are not included in this report card.



State trend in the amount of water recycled



State target

Maintain the productive capacity of our natural resources

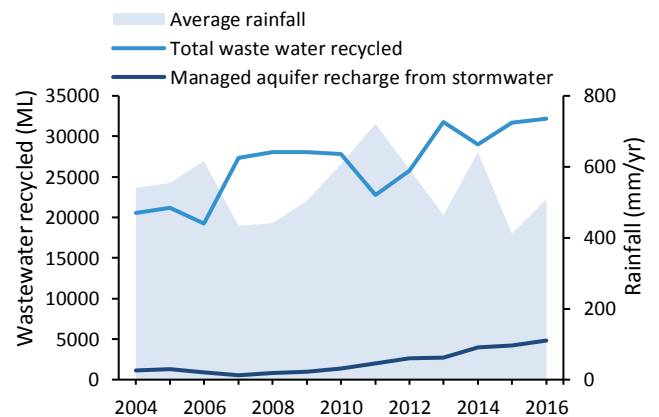
### Trend (2012–16)

Getting better

The recycling of wastewater and stormwater is increasing

The amounts of wastewater and stormwater recycled are increasing (graph on right). The amount of wastewater recycled each year is influenced by rainfall patterns and the demand for recycled water. In wet years farmers may not use as much recycled water because their needs are met from the rain and their [water allocations](#). For example, when the drought broke in 2011 the amount of wastewater recycled declined (graph on right).

The amount of stormwater that can be recycled is also related to rainfall. Stormwater is only available following rainfall events, where it can be treated and stored underground in natural aquifers for future uses such as irrigation, restoration of river flows and domestic use. If rainfall is too intense our capacity to store it limits the amount that can be recycled.



### Where we are at (2016)

Good

In total, about 37 gigalitres of wastewater and stormwater were recycled

In 2016, a total of 32.2 gigalitres (or billion litres) of wastewater was recycled across the state by SA Water and TRILITY, and a total of 4.8 gigalitres of stormwater was stored in aquifers around greater Adelaide.

The amount of water recycled is influenced by demand and rainfall, but it is also limited by the capacity. Currently South Australia has the capacity to recycle about 70 gigalitres of wastewater per annum. This exceeds the [wastewater](#) recycling capacity target of 50 gigalitres per annum by 2025 which was set in 2004.

The Government of South Australia are also making progress to meet our stormwater recycling capacity targets by developing stormwater harvesting wetlands to pump stormwater into underground aquifers when it rains. Some of these schemes are not at full capacity. In 2015-16, our capacity to recycle stormwater was about 16 gigalitres per annum. Roughly 19 gigalitres short of the 2025 [target](#) of 35 gigalitres per annum.

### Reliability of information



Very good

Further information: [Technical information for this report card](#), Information on [stormwater](#) and [wastewater](#) recycling in South Australia

