

2016 State Report Card

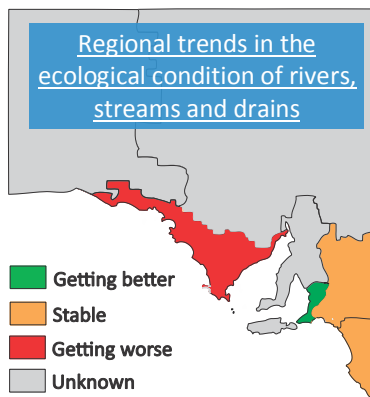
What is the ecological condition of our rivers, streams and drains?

Our rivers, streams and drains provide water for agriculture and domestic use, habitats for native plants and animals, places for recreation and are culturally important for Aboriginal people.

Aquatic plants and animals function together as ecological communities and improve water quality in rivers, streams and drains. These ecosystems are impacted by nutrients, sediments and pollutants in agricultural runoff and wastewater discharges. Fresh waterways are also impacted by weeds, grazing and trampling of vegetation by feral and domestic animals, and reductions in flow, due to dams, weirs, droughts, and [consumptive use](#).

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has assessed the condition of streams and drains in South Australia, based on water quality and the condition of invertebrate and plant communities. Assessments have been made at 418 sites, across 18 catchments, spread across all NRM regions except Alinytjara Wilurara. This report card summarises the information by catchment basins.

This report card does not address the condition of wetlands or the River Murray. The [water quality](#) and [ecological condition](#) of the River Murray are reported separately.



State target
Improve the condition of terrestrial aquatic ecosystems

Trend (2008–15)

Stable

River, stream and drain conditions were assessed between 2008–15

Data collection is a cumulative process: water quality is tested in the regions over time, it is not tested at daily or monthly intervals. The trend presented is based on our knowledge at two different points in time. Average statewide stream condition has remained stable (see trend map above and graph on right). Future monitoring will give a better indication of the condition of our rivers, streams and drains. The Government of South Australia and the regional NRM boards are investing to improve water quality and the condition of aquatic ecosystems. Management focuses on controlling feral animals and weeds, fencing stream edges, working with land holders to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff and, where possible, restoring more natural flows.



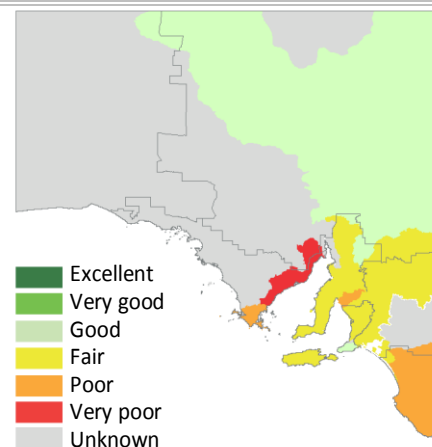
Where we are at (2015)

Fair

Substantial investments are required over many years to improve water quality, and the condition of aquatic invertebrate and plant communities

On average across the State, our rivers, streams and drains are in fair condition (map on right). The catchments for our rivers, streams and drains are in very poor condition in the Eyre Peninsula, poor or fair condition in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, South East, Northern and Yorke, Kangaroo Island and SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM regions, and the catchments in the SA Arid Lands NRM region are in good condition (map on right).

Rivers, streams and drains that are in poor condition typically have elevated levels of nutrients, salt and fine sediment as well as sparse vegetation and abundant weeds along their banks. Our use of aquatic environments for economic and recreation purposes has affected the features that make them so attractive and valuable. Excessive consumption of [surface water](#), along with runoff and vegetation loss can degrade our waterways. These issues are intensified during droughts. It is crucial that we continue to protect our water resources and improve the condition of our waterways.



Reliability of information



Very good

Further information: [Technical information for this report card](#) and [EPA ecosystem condition reports](#)



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Government of South Australia