

The specific water resource objectives for each plan are based on the factors which triggered the need for the plan, such as high and competing demands for water.

Working with our stakeholders, we set water resource objectives (such as preventing further groundwater level declines or maintaining summer flow rates) by considering the water resource, trends in climate and demand, land use and water quality.

### How does the department decide allocation limits?

Setting allocation limits is a complex process, often involving trade-offs, and significant consultation.

We set allocation limits by considering scientific information (such as recharge or through flow and ecological water needs) and then balancing this against use information, such as current and future water demand.

Where there are a number of options for allocation limits we weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each option, against the plan objectives, to select a limit for each water resource in the plan area.

Our intent is to work with stakeholders to set limits that will support the plan objectives.

### What does a plan include?

A water allocation plan includes:

- objectives for the plan
- water allocation limits (as volumes)
- water for the environment (as volumes or regimes)
- water licensing policies
- arrangements for implementing and evaluating the plan.

### Is there more information available than just the plan?

Each of the plans we release is supported by more detailed information.

Two of the main supporting documents we publish are the allocation methods report, detailing how we set the allocation limits, and a statement of response, detailing how we addressed each of the comments we received in the public comment period.

### How can I get more information?

For more information on water allocation planning, current plans or planning priorities please visit

[www.water.wa.gov.au/allocationplanning](http://www.water.wa.gov.au/allocationplanning)

To be involved in a planning project that is underway in your local area, please contact your regional Department of Water office or email [allocation.planning@water.wa.gov.au](mailto:allocation.planning@water.wa.gov.au)



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Water**

## Water allocation planning in Western Australia

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A brief overview



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*Looking after all our water needs*

November 2011

## Water allocation planning

In Western Australia, we manage water abstraction from both surface and groundwater sources by issuing water licences under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*.

Our water allocation plans set out how much water can be abstracted from a resource through licences and how that abstraction will be managed (or controlled) now and in the future.

### Why is allocation planning needed?

Western Australia has over 14,000 water licences. We do water allocation planning to manage the impact of water abstraction at the collective scale. Allocation plans guide our decision making on water licences by setting out how much water is available for licensing and the conditions that will apply to water licences.

By doing allocation planning, we:

- maximise the amount of water that can be allocated for use
- maintain the water needed by existing users and the environment
- establish the water licence conditions for a local area.

### How does the department do water allocation planning?

Firstly, we prioritise where we will plan and how much we will invest in planning each year as part of programming. Programming is the trigger for us to begin an allocation plan for a particular area.

Once the need for a plan is triggered we follow a four-stage process: plan initiation, plan development, plan release and plan implementation and evaluation.

Plan development is the longest part of allocation planning. We assess detailed information, relating to the water resource and how it is used, then work with stakeholders to set objectives and allocation limits and define our management approach.

Once the plan is implemented, we regularly evaluate how well it is managing the water resources in the plan area and report publicly.

### How can I be involved in a plan?

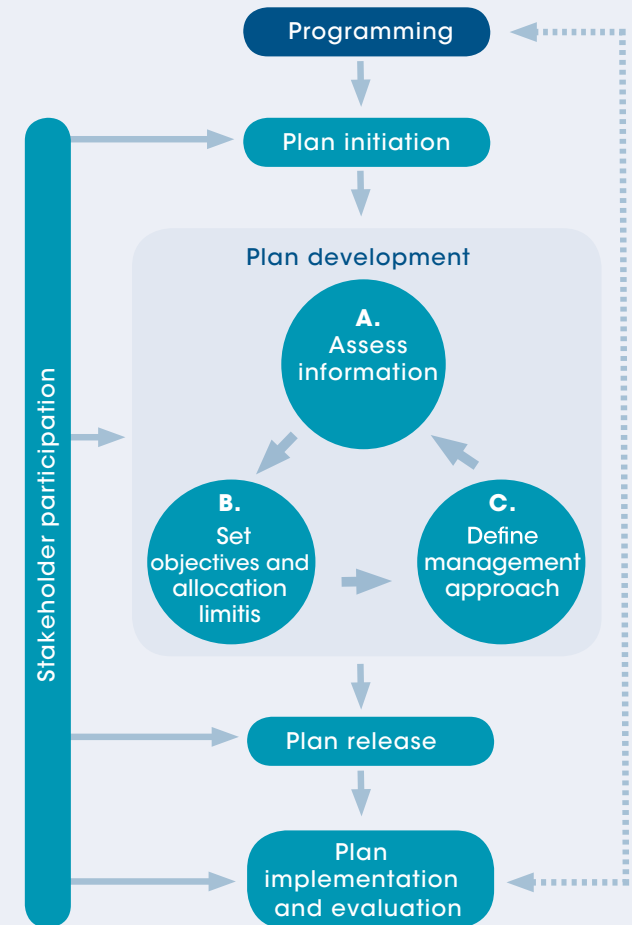
You are invited to work with us throughout the planning process. We will advise you when we begin to plan in your area, and how you may participate, by issuing a statement of intent.

During plan development you could:

- attend meetings or workshops to provide and gather information on local water resources, trends and issues
- input to our proposed plan objectives and allocation limits.

During plan release you could:

- participate in meetings, workshops or site visits to run through the proposed plan
- make a submission on the plan for public comment.



The water allocation planning model

### What does the department set out to achieve for water resources in a plan?

What a plan will achieve, as in the plan objectives, shapes the whole approach to planning and managing water in a plan area.