

Groundwater opportunities in the south west region



Groundwater in the south west of Victoria

A vital resource for the future

Southern Rural Water's operational area

South west region



Supporting an agricultural industry worth **\$4.6 billion per year**

120 GL total groundwater currently licensed
Around 50 GL of groundwater use per year

1000 + groundwater licences

Southern Rural Water acknowledges and recognises Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters on which we work and live, and we respect their deep and ongoing connection to Country.

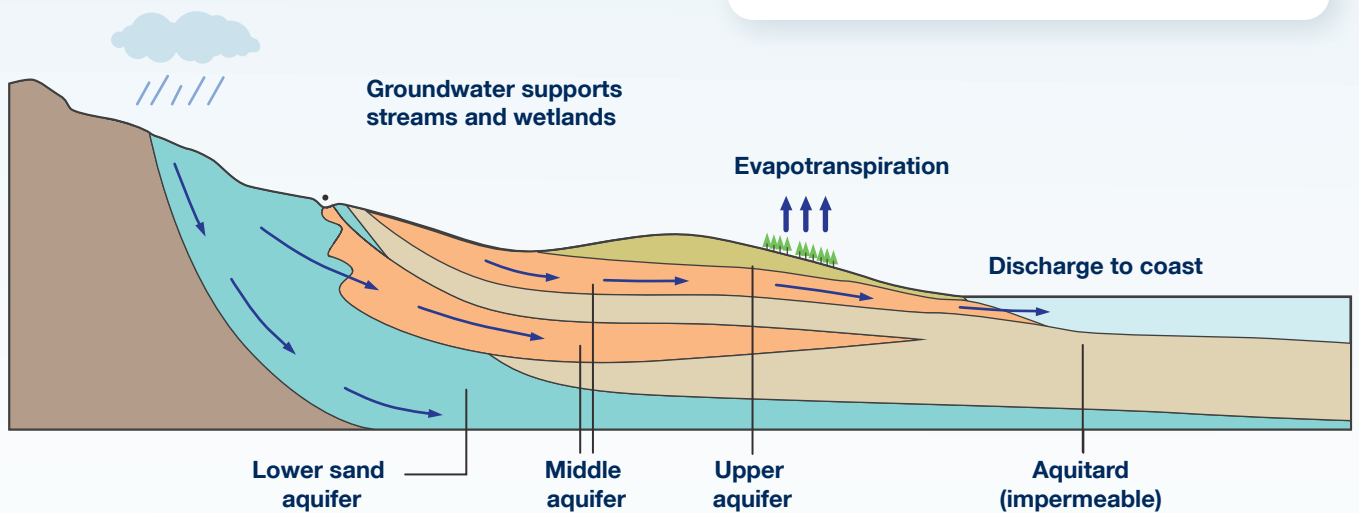
Upper, middle and lower aquifers

The groundwater resources can be grouped into upper, middle and lower aquifers

The upper aquifers (basalt and bridgewater sands)

These aquifers are important locally but pumping often has a high risk of impacting the environment. New applications are discouraged where deeper groundwater is available in the limestone.

Aquifers in the south west region



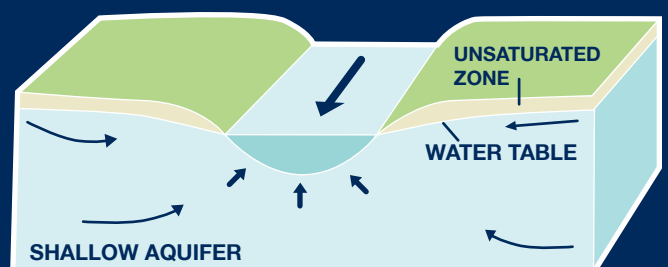
Groundwater is the major water resource in the south west

Groundwater provides a vital source of water for agriculture, urban water supply, industry and stock and domestic use.

Groundwater is also a fundamental part of the water cycle, supporting important rivers, springs, lakes and wetlands.

Southern Rural Water is the responsible resource steward, which:

- protects existing users, the environment and the social and cultural values, that depend on groundwater, and
- enables the sustainable use of water.



Many rivers and creeks depend on groundwater

The middle aquifer (the limestone)

The major groundwater resource in the south west

The limestone aquifer is fully allocated, however, groundwater can be accessed by trading entitlement subject to local zone rules.



Use is only 30 – 50% of entitlement so there are large opportunities for trade



Carry over of unused entitlement is allowed up to 30% of entitlement per year



The Local Management Plan defines the rules for accessing entitlement

Groundwater management

The Minister sets the cap on individual groundwater Permissible Consumptive Volumes. Southern Rural Water is responsible for developing local management rules for equitable and sustainable use, including:

- trade rules, zonal caps;
- metering and licence compliance;
- monitoring of intensive use areas; and
- water sharing arrangements in droughts.

Southern Rural Water is also responsible for assessing licence and trade applications in accordance with the requirements of the *Water Act 1989*.

Applications can only be approved if they can be shown to have no adverse impact on the environment and existing users.

The lower aquifers (Dilwyn sandstone)

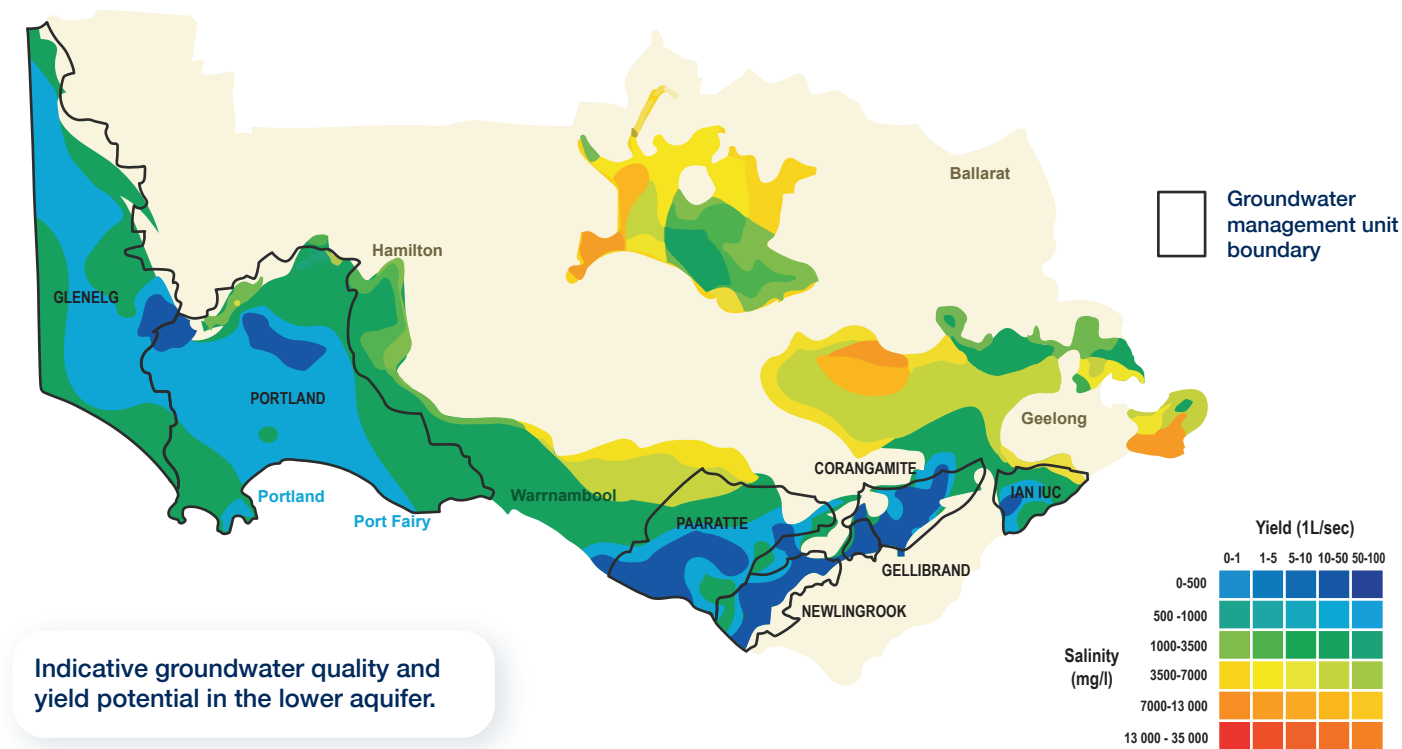
The aquifer is not fully utilised, with 5 GL currently available in the Warrnambool area. Additional water may be available in other zones in the future.

Challenges

Water quality is variable, the aquifer is deep and drilling costs are relatively high.

The future

Specific zone management rules need to be developed, and investigations are required to confirm the total available resource.



Improving groundwater management



Southern Rural Water is working with DELWP to simplify the groundwater management arrangements.



Southern Rural Water is working with Food and Fibre Great South Coast to support growth in the value and capacity of the industry.



Southern Rural Water is updating groundwater information on its website.

How can you obtain more information?

- Visit the [groundwater page](#) of the SRW website
- Read the [South West Limestone Groundwater Local Management Plan](#)
- Contact Southern Rural Water to obtain advice and provide feedback
- View the latest educational material on trading opportunities (limestone aquifer) at www.srw.com.au
- Existing customers can access real time usage data through the customer portal

To provide feedback on groundwater management plan improvements, contact Southern Rural Water.

1300 139 510
www.srw.com.au

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