



Warrion WSPA

Groundwater Management Plan

Annual Report
2023-2024



Status	Date	Comments	Author
Draft	20/08/2024	Final draft version completed	A Spring/M Hudson
Approved	02/09/2024	Approved – Manager Statutory Functions	P Winbanks
Approved	02/09/2024	Approved – Manager Groundwater and Rivers Operations and Compliance	R Tomlin
Approved	18/09/2024	Approved – General Manager Service Delivery	S Wilkinson
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Forward

This report is submitted to the Minister for Water and Corangamite Catchment Management Authority in accordance with s32C *Water Act 1989*. A copy of this report is available by contacting Southern Rural Water at srw@srw.com.au or by calling 1300 139 510. A notice of report availability will be published as required by s32D of the *Water Act 1989*.

The purpose of this report is to detail Southern Rural Water activities implementing the groundwater management plan along with documenting information that is required to be reported under that plan.

Area Summary

Area	Warrion Water Supply Protection Area
Segment	Groundwater
Area Declared	August 2000
Plan Approved	30 August 2010
Permissible Consumptive Volume	14,086 ML
Scheduled Plan Review	A review was completed in 2018. Further reviews will be undertaken on an as-needs basis.
Implementation Authority	Southern Rural Water
Relevant CMA	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
Report Period	1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

1. Executive Summary

The Warrion Groundwater Management Plan (GMP) was prepared under Division 3 Part 3 of the *Water Act 1989* for the Warrion Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) and relates to the groundwater resources of the protection area. The Warrion GMP was approved by the Minister for Water in August 2010. A review of the GMP in 2018 identified that no changes to the plan were needed at that time.

The objective of the management plan is to ensure that the water resources of the area are managed in an equitable manner and to ensure the long-term sustainability of those resources.

Southern Rural Water (SRW) is the authority responsible for managing and administering the plan, which includes the preparation of an annual report to demonstrate compliance. The annual report summarises licence information, metered usage and monitoring data collected for the reporting period in accordance with the recommendations given in the Warrion GMP.

The Warrion GMP Annual Report for 2023-24 demonstrates that SRW has complied with the requirements of the plan.

Monitoring and metering indicate no significant changes in the condition of the resource or water usage patterns. The water resource is being managed in accordance with the plan and the resource condition is consistent with the objectives of the plan.



Simon Wilkinson
General Manager Service Delivery
Southern Rural Water

2. Introduction

This report summarises the licence information, metered usage and monitoring data collected for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 in accordance with the Warrion GMP.

The groundwater of the Warrion WSPA encompasses the Quaternary sand aquifer and the Upper Tertiary basalts. The principal aquifer in the Warrion WSPA is unconfined and is predominantly composed of fractured basalt and scoria material occurring around the eruption centres of Warrion Hill, the Red Rock Complex and Robertson's Hill. The basalts are relatively thin and generally less than 30 metres thick. The Hanson Plains Sand aquifer underlies the volcanic material, and although it is limited in extent, it may be hydraulically connected to the basalts.

Groundwater in the Warrion WSPA is used for irrigation, commercial and domestic & stock purposes. The dairy industry is the dominant water dependant farming enterprise within the Warrion WSPA with water used for fodder irrigation, dairy shed water, and stock requirements.

The area includes a range of high value environmental assets within the Victorian Volcanic Plain. Of note, the Warrion WSPA occurs within Western District Ramsar site. The Warrion WSPA includes many seasonal wetlands.

The objective of the management plan as set out in the *Water Act 1989* is to make sure that "*the water resources of the area are managed in an equitable manner so as to ensure the long-term sustainability of those resources.*"

The plan requires SRW to:

- Coordinate groundwater level monitoring and metering programs.
- Review monitoring and metering data.
- Administer groundwater licensing within the prescriptions of the plan.
- Review and report annually to the Minister administering the *Water Act 1989* on the implementation of the plan; and
- Periodically review the plan and if, in its opinion, amendments are necessary or desirable, make recommendations to the Minister accordingly.

The success of the Warrion GMP is measured through a number of licensing, metering, and monitoring objectives. These include:

- All consumptive use to be metered and recorded in line with both State Government and Corporation metering policies.
- Groundwater usage is to be maintained within licence volumes.
- Water levels and water quality (salinity) is to be monitored to maintain acceptable levels and to ensure the long-term sustainable use of the aquifer(s).
- Transfer of existing licences occurs in accordance with all relevant provisions of the *Water Act 1989* and/or any supplementary rules adopted for the Warrion WSPA documented in the Groundwater Management Plan; and
- No new groundwater licences will be issued if the total of all groundwater licence entitlements would exceed the PCV declared for the Warrion WSPA, unless in accordance with prescriptions 5 & 6.

Further information can be obtained from the Warrion WSPA Groundwater Management Plan. A copy can be found on Southern Rural Water's website: www.srw.com.au

3. Key Observations

3.1 Rainfall

Rainfall during the reporting period was 404mm (measured at Colac airport), 192mm lower than the long-term average of 596mm.

3.2 Water Levels

Groundwater levels are monitored in ten (10) observation bores, targeting the Shallow Alluvial, Newer Volcanics and Dilwyn aquifers (see figure 1).

Figure 1 – Location map of Warrion WSPA showing State Observation Bores



All hydrographs are presented in Appendix 6.2. Figure 2 shows an example hydrograph from Bore BHID 142668 within the Warrion WSPA.

Groundwater levels across the Warrion WSPA are stable and in line with historical trends. The groundwater data indicates that several bores (57697, 142703, 142705, WRK963393, and 142668) show a general rising trend after above average rainfall in the previous 2022-23 season. Bore 142668 had a historic high of 116.7m AHD in February 2023, and seasonal drawdown is still above average water levels for this bore.

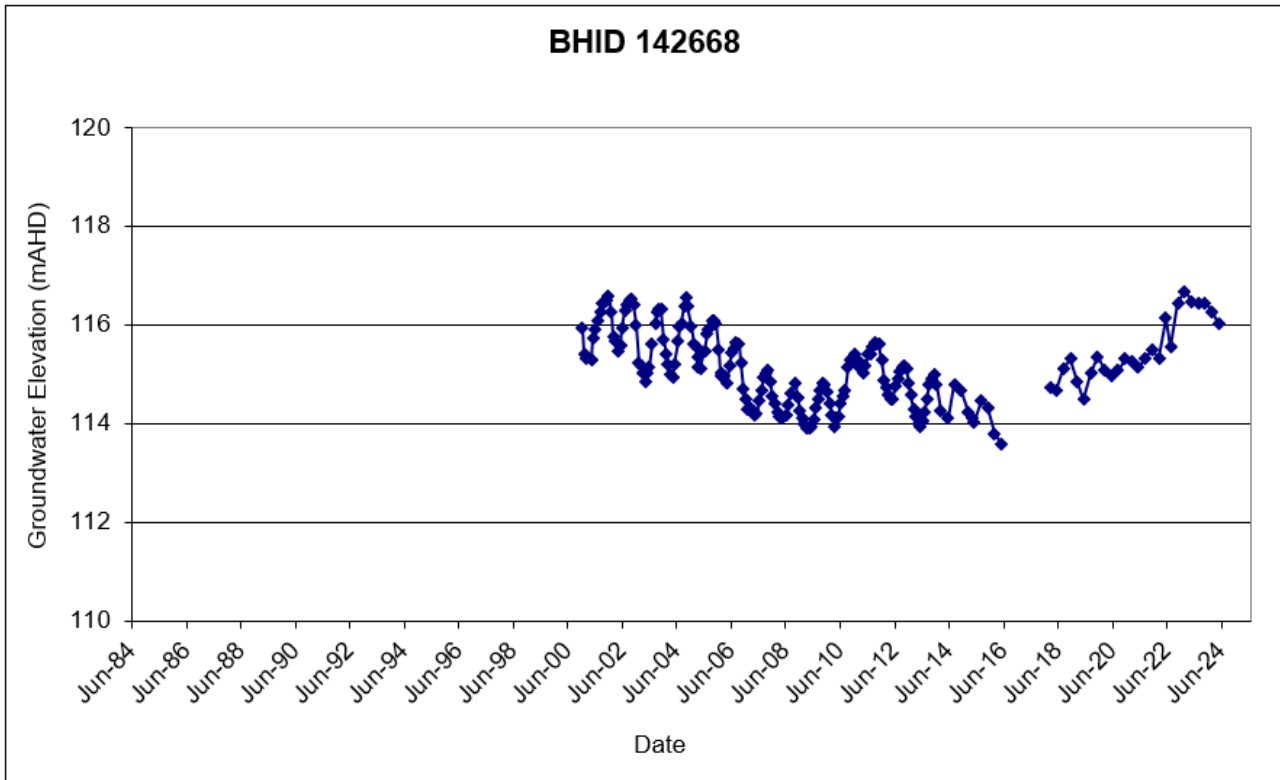


Figure 2 – Example hydrograph using data from bore 142668

3.3 Groundwater Salinity

Water quality monitoring is conducted on observation bores near Lake Corangamite to determine if saline water below the lake is moving towards the Warrion WSPA. Salinity has been measured intermittently in the area since 1988, but it has only been regularly measured since September 2008.

Salinity is regularly measured in five of the State Observation Bores in the Warrion WSPA, and the results from two of these bores can be seen in Figure 3. As shown in Figure 1, these two bores are located on the edge of Lake Corangamite, with the bores collecting data from different levels in the aquifer, with the higher salinity readings being from the deeper bore.

Salinity has remained stable over the past 12 months and measurements are within historical ranges. All salinity graphs can be found in appendix 6.3.

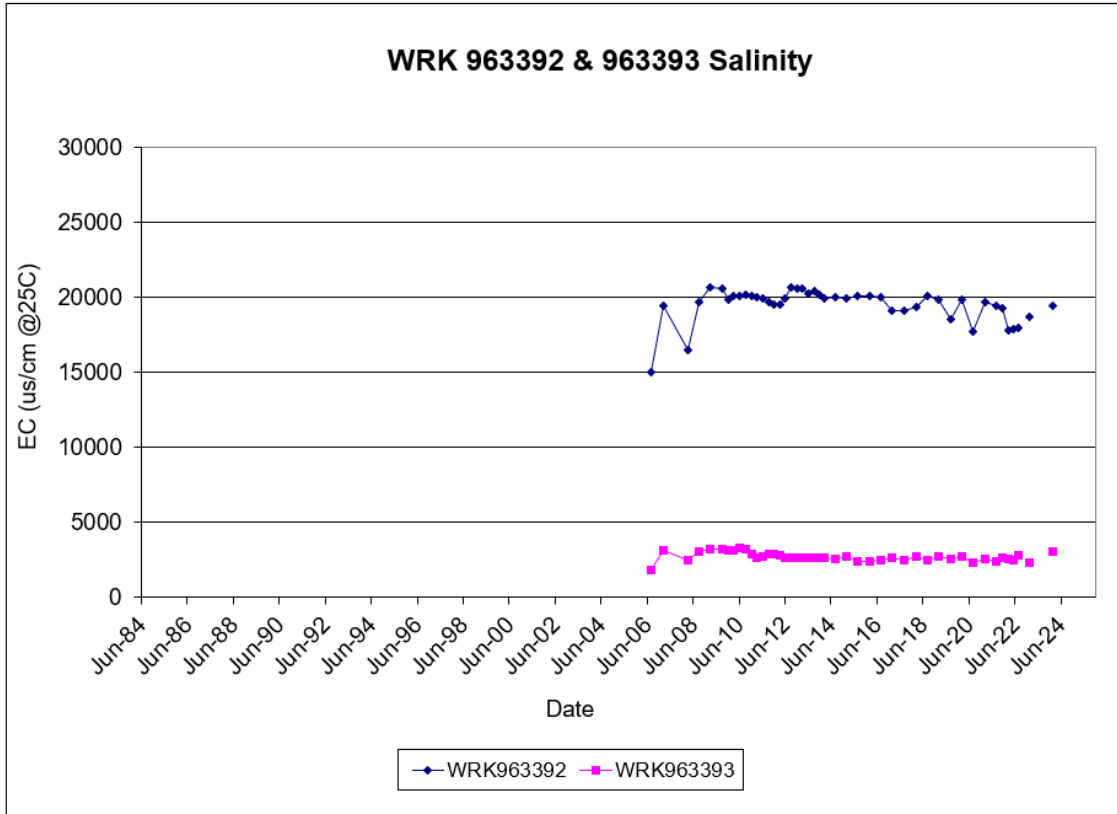


Figure 3 – Example groundwater salinity trends in the Warrion WSPA

3.4 Water Use

Figure 4 and Table 1 provide details on water use in the 2023-24 year as compared to four previous years. The total number of licences has reduced over time due to customers amalgamating multiple licences held into one licence, however licence numbers have remained relatively stable for the preceding four years.

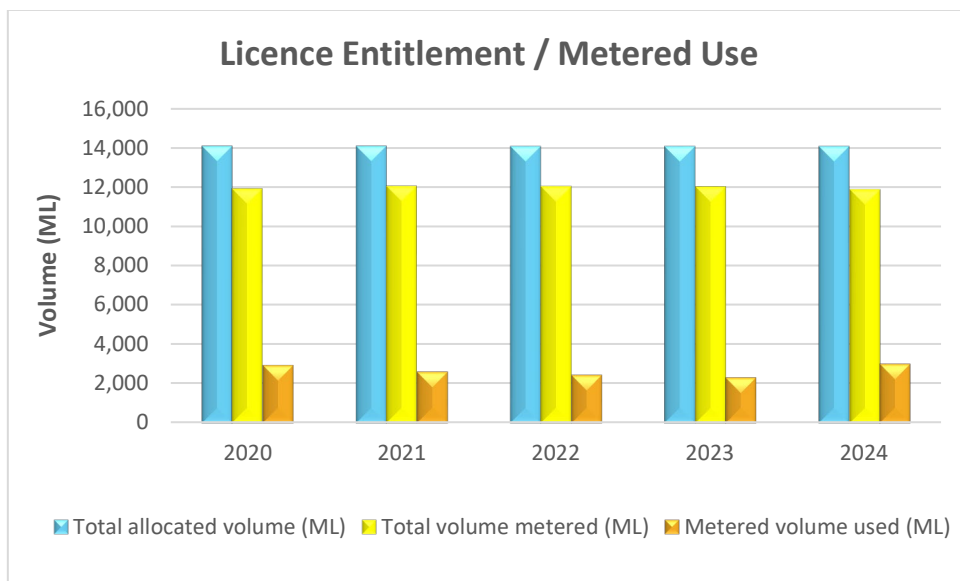


Figure 4 – Licence entitlement compared to metered volume and usage

At 30 June	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
No. of licences	131	130	128	128	124
Total allocated volume (ML)	14,075.4	14,075.4	14,073	14,073	14,073
No. of metered licences	87	87	82	78	77
Total allocated volume metered (ML)	11,913.6	12,033.6	12,028.3	12,009.3	11,864.3
Metered volume used (ML)	2,912.9	2,586.3	2,419.2	2,296.6	2,976.2
Metered use of allocation (%)	21%	18%	17%	17%	22%
No. of licences with unauthorised take ¹ at 30 June 2023 (refer to section 3.5)	2	0	1	0	0
Permissible Consumptive Volume (PCV)	14,086	14,086	14,086	14,086	14,086
Metered use as a % of PCV	21%	18%	17%	16%	22%
No. of D&S bores ²	118	113	113	113	113
D&S bores estimated use ²	177	170	170	170	170
Estimated D&S use from licenced bores ³	197	195	192	192	192

Table 1 – Water use and total resource summary for the past 5 years

¹ Unauthorised Take of Non-Urban Water

² Taken from the Victorian Water Accounts. Note that the D&S bore count for 2023-2024 was unavailable at the time of issue – therefore the last count in 2020-2021 was assumed

³ Estimated 1.5ML per licence 2013 onwards

3.5 Non-Compliance

The Victorian Government and SRW have a zero-tolerance approach to unauthorised take of non-urban water. SRW is responsible for ensuring water users in southern Victoria comply with their licence conditions.

Further information regarding Southern Rural Water and State Governments approach to compliance is provided in appendix 6.4

SRW investigates all compliance issues and considers several factors such as the seriousness of the breach and impact on the resource and other users, prior to deciding on the most appropriate action. The action taken by SRW can include the use of direction notices, warning letters and prosecution.

No compliance issues were identified in the Warrion WSPA during 2023-24.

3.6 Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

Several lakes in the area are likely to be connected to groundwater (see GMP for further details). No issues have been identified during the year regarding the impact of groundwater extraction on groundwater dependent ecosystems.

4. Plan Implementation

4.1 Monitoring

Prescriptions

Table 2 below details the requirements of the management plan in relation to monitoring

Plan Requirement	Activity / Reference	Complies
<p>11. The Department must ensure that monitoring bores are properly maintained and replaced if necessary; and</p> <p>12. The Department and the Corporation must ensure that data collected from monitoring bores are entered into the groundwater management system, within 60 days of them being received.</p> <p>13. The Department and the Corporation must ensure that water level monitoring is carried out at appropriate locations throughout the Protection Area to:</p> <p>a) assess annual and long-term impact on water levels from groundwater pumping.</p> <p>b) monitor regional and local seasonal drawdown; and</p> <p>c) provide information for future resource assessments.</p>	<p>The monitoring bores are owned and managed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).</p> <p>All bores have minor maintenance carried out annually which includes site clearance, rust removal, painting, and ensuring the bore is secure and safe.</p> <p>DEECA carries out targeted maintenance on bores that have been identified as needing maintenance following field inspection.</p> <p>DEECA upload all data collected within the 60-day period of being received.</p> <p>SRW works closely with DEECA to ensure that the monitoring program meets the requirements of the Plan.</p> <p>SRW regularly reviews the groundwater level monitoring program and data. All 10 bores are currently monitored monthly.</p> <p>If SRW identifies bores of particular interest, monitoring may be undertaken in addition to DEECA's monitoring program.</p>	Yes
<p>14. The Corporation must ensure that water quality monitoring is carried out at appropriate locations throughout the Protection Area to provide information that allows the necessary assessment of any changes in the salinity of the groundwater.</p>	<p>Salinity measurements are currently being taken in 5 of the 10 observation bores on a biannual basis. The program and data are regularly reviewed.</p>	Yes

Table 2 – Monitoring plan prescriptions

4.2 Metering

Prescriptions

Table 3 below details the requirements of the management plan in relation to metering.

Prescription	Activity	Complies
8. All meters will comply with the national standards as adopted in State Government and Corporation metering policy.	<p>SRW has completed a Metering Action Plan that outlines how our metering fleet will comply with the required metering standards.</p> <p>A number of meters have been identified as requiring investigation and potential replacement.</p>	Yes
<p>9. The Corporation must:</p> <p>a) ensure all meters within the Protection Area are read twice per year, in or around January and June.</p> <p>b) determine the volume of water extracted from the bore since the meter was last read; and</p> <p>c) within 30 days after the meter is read, record the amount of water used on a database.</p>	<p>All meters were manually read twice, with ongoing works to install Automated Meter Reading (AMR) technology on all metered bores. This will provide customers and SRW with access to near-real time meter readings.</p> <p>Meter readings and usage data are recorded and stored in SRW's metering system. Usage is also recorded in the Victorian Water Register.</p>	Yes
<p>10. The Corporation may request the Licensee to read a meter and to provide Corporation with the meter reading:</p> <p>a) the Licensee must comply with the request; and</p> <p>b) for the purposes of this clause the Corporation must provide a phone number, email address, pre-paid mail, or similar method for the licensee to lodge the meter read.</p>	SRW did not request any licensees to read their meter and provide the meter reading.	Yes

Table 3 – Metering prescriptions

Metering Activities

Meters are installed on active licences greater than 10ML. Details of meter activity are shown in Table 4 below. Some meters are removed from inactive licences in line with criteria set out in the SRW metering action plan.

	Year to 30 June 2024	Total for WSPA at 30 June 2024
Number of metered licences issued	-1	77
Number of meters installed	-2	115
Number of meters repaired, or maintenance activity conducted.	0	0
Meters replaced	1	1
Meters read mid-year (date range)	Jan/Feb 2024	
Meters read end of year (date range)	May/June 2024	
Number of estimated readings	0	0
Meters fitted with Taggle (telemetry)		77

Table 4 – Summary of meter details for Season 2023-2024 and overall

4.3 Restrictions on Licensing and Licence Transfers

Prescriptions

Table 5 below details the requirements of the management plan in relation to licencing

Plan Requirement	Activity / Reference	Complies
1. All groundwater licences in the Protection Area will be migrated to the Victorian Water Register within 6 months of ministerial approval of the Management Plan.	All licences are recorded in the Water Register.	Yes
2. No new groundwater licences will be issued except as described in Prescriptions 4, 5 and 6.	No new licences were issued.	Yes
3. The total licence entitlement in the Protection Area must not exceed 14,086ML (PCV Increased. Ref Gazette G32 8 Aug 2013) or any volume adjusted in accordance with Prescriptions 4, 5 and 6.	Licence entitlements total 14,073 ML.	Yes
4. If a groundwater licence is surrendered, revoked, or not renewed the total entitlement in Prescription 3 will be reduced by that licence volume and capped until such time as a review of the management plan and sustainable yield is undertaken. After which, the PCV will be reduced accordingly, or the volume will be available through a public process.	No licence has been surrendered or revoked in the period.	Yes
5. The Corporation may issue a licence which may lead to the total groundwater licence entitlement in Prescription 3 being exceeded to overcome an administrative oversight or other anomaly, provided it does not exceed the PCV (increased to 14,086ML Ref Gazette G32 8 Aug 2013).	No licences issued under this clause for the period.	Yes
6. The Corporation may issue or amend a groundwater licence in accordance with any state-wide policy. The volume described in Prescription 3 and the PCV (by application to the Minister) will be adjusted accordingly.	No new licences. All amendments have been in line with policy and no additional entitlement volume allocated.	Yes
7. The Corporation must report the details of any licence referred to in Prescriptions 4 to 6 in the annual report.	Refer to appendices for licence details.	Yes

Table 5 – Prescriptions from GMP

Compliance and Exceptions

Activities undertaken during the reporting period comply with the requirements of the Plan.

Issues Affecting Implementation

No issues to report.

4.4 Licensing Activities

Table 6 shows that there have been no changes to groundwater licensed within Warrion WSPA in the 2023-24 year.

Year to 30 June 2024	No.	Volume ML
New licences issued	0	0
Additional volumes on existing licences	0	0
Licences revoked	0	0
Permanent transfers	0	0
Temporary transfers	0	0
D&S Bores notifying use	0	0

Table 6 – Licensing activities in 2023-24

Issues Affecting Implementation

There are no issues to report

5. Conclusions

The objective of a management plan, as set out in the Act, is to make sure that the water resources of the area are managed in an equitable manner as to ensure the long-term sustainability of those resources.

Monitoring and metering indicate no significant changes in the condition of the resource or water usage patterns compared to previous years.

Implementation of the plan, including the absence of special zones indicates that the resource is shared equitably with trade permissible across the Warrion WSPA subject to site conditions including consideration of other users including the environment.

The Warrion GMP Annual Report for 2023-24 demonstrates that SRW has complied with the requirements of the plan.

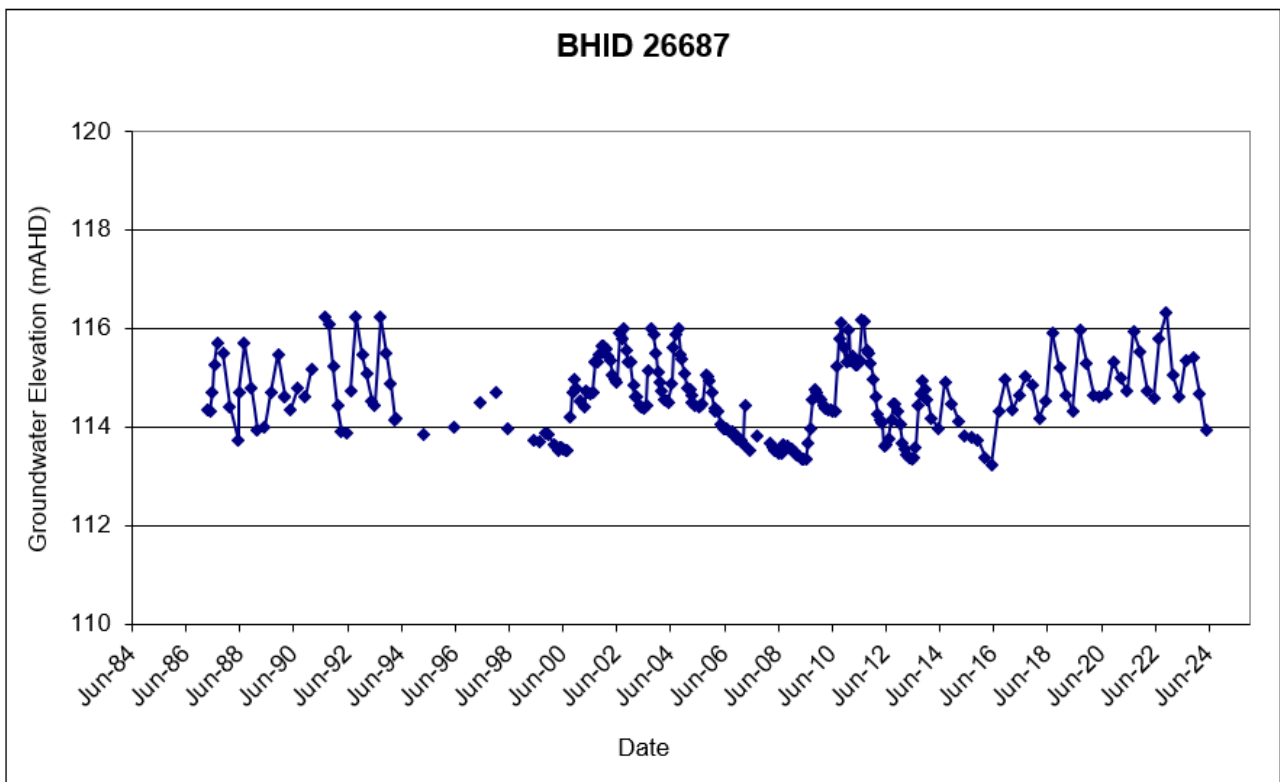
6. Appendices

6.1 Licence Details

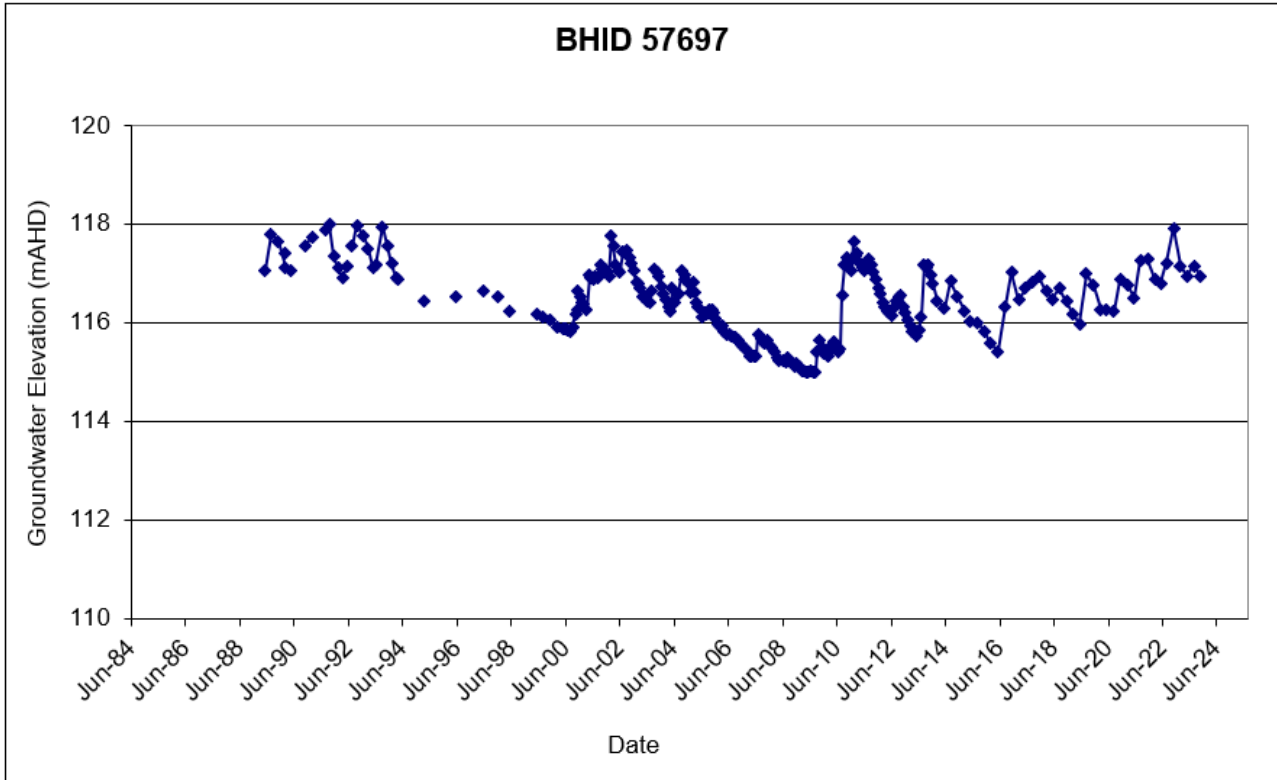
Water trade details for the 2023-24 season can be found at:

<http://waterregister.vic.gov.au/water-trading/take-and-use-licence-trading>

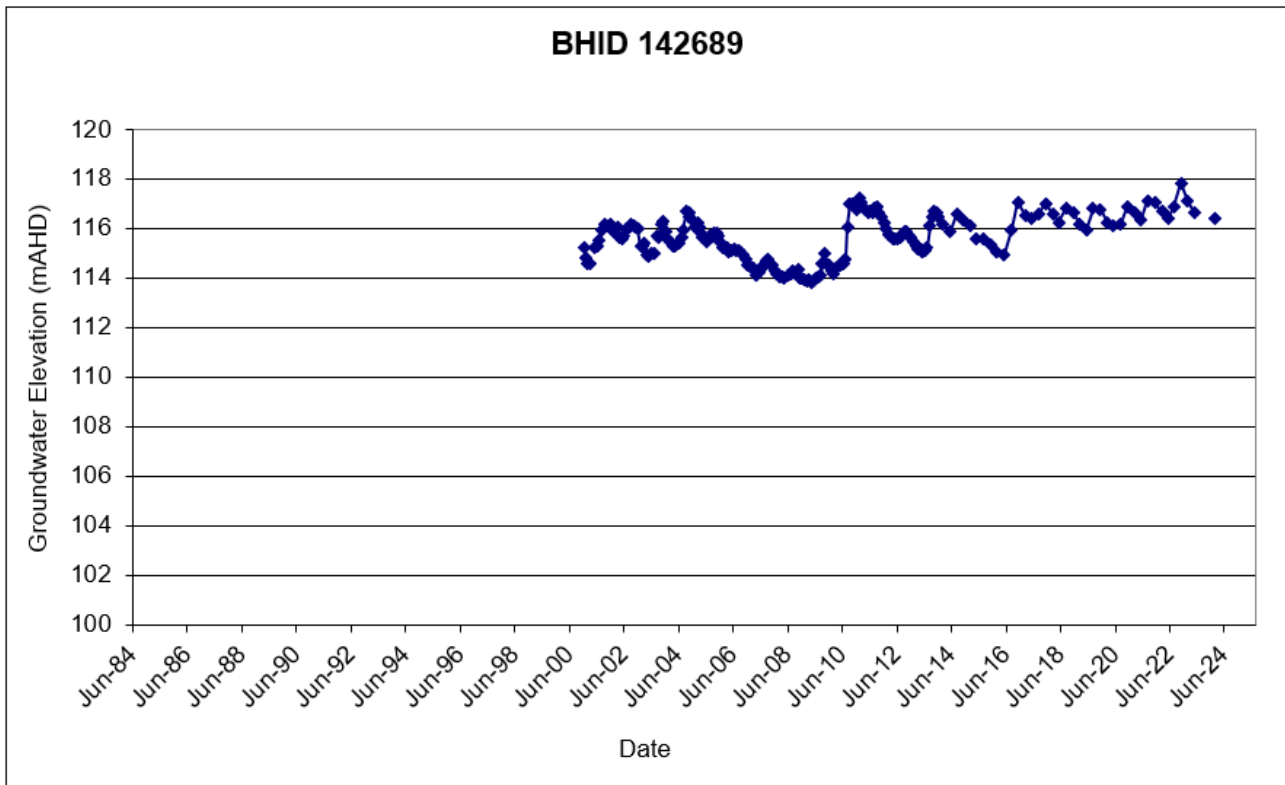
6.2 Hydrographs



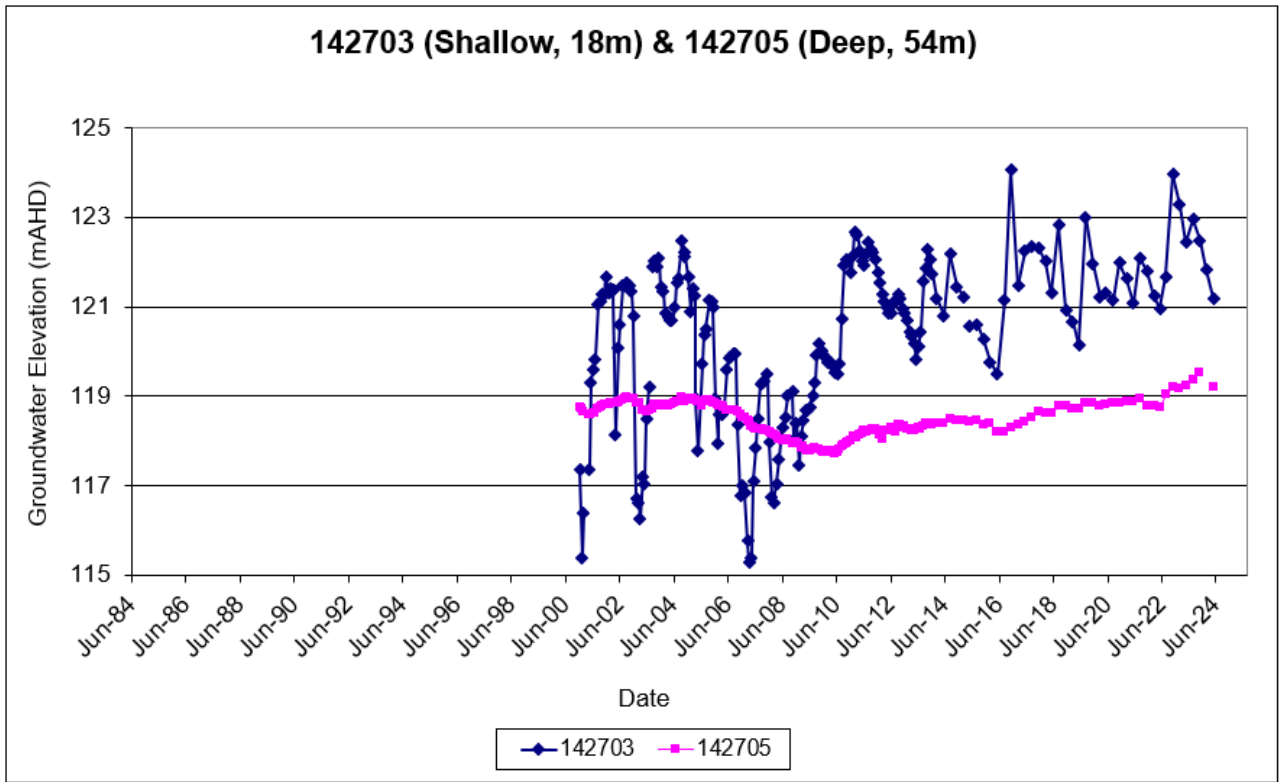
Note: Bore 26687 monitors the alluvium



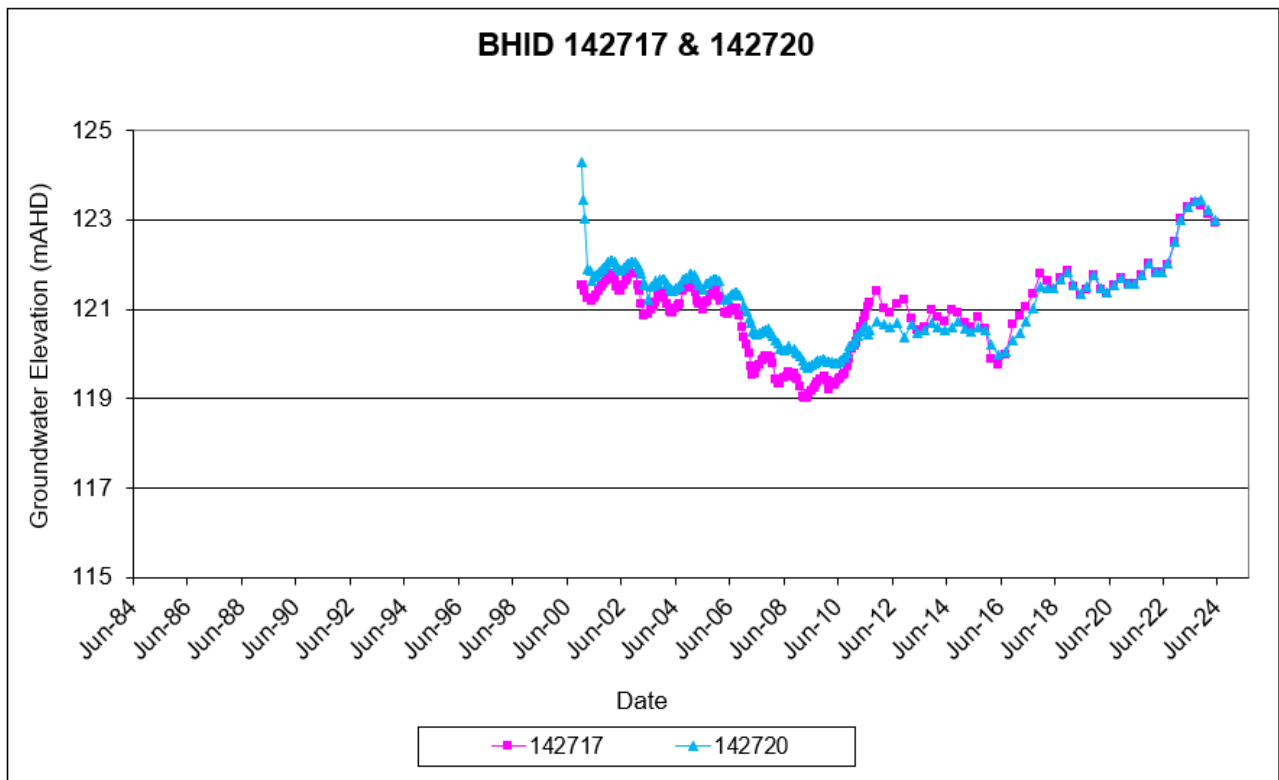
Note: Bore 57697 monitors the Newer Volcanics



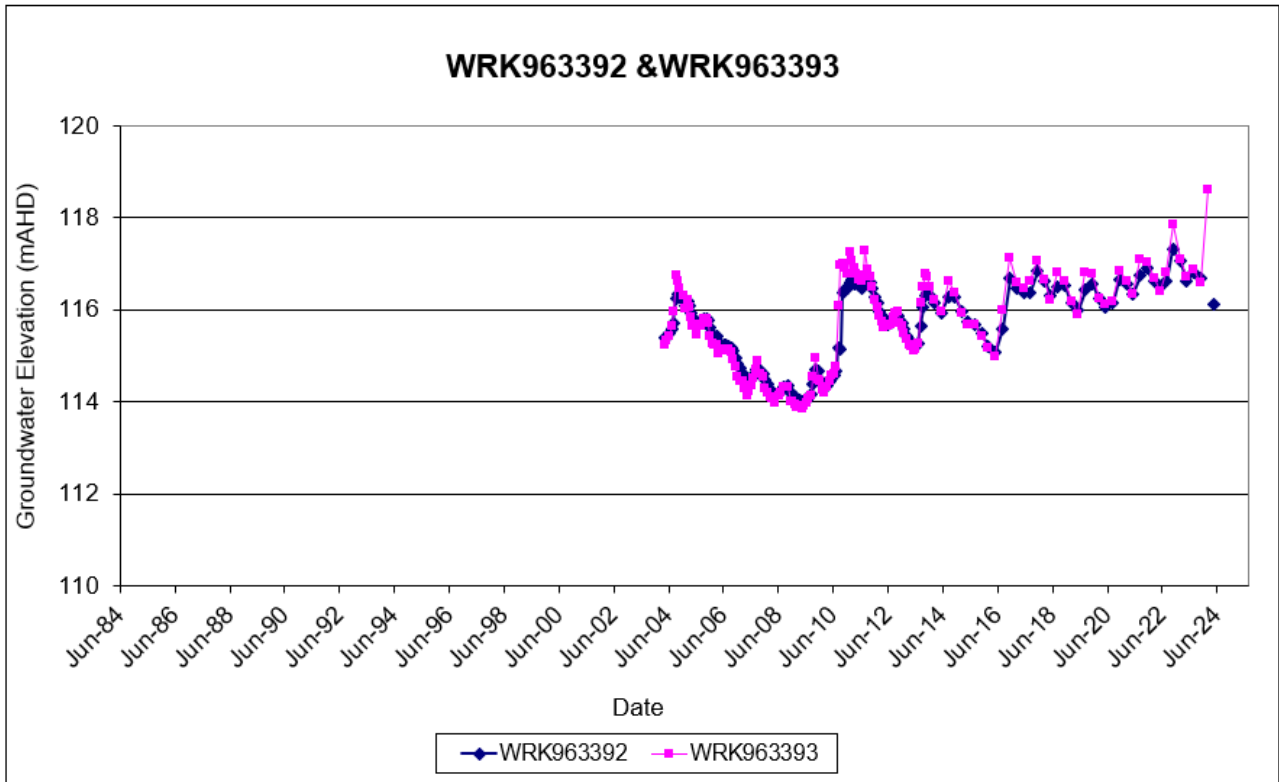
Note: Bore 142689 monitors the Newer Volcanics



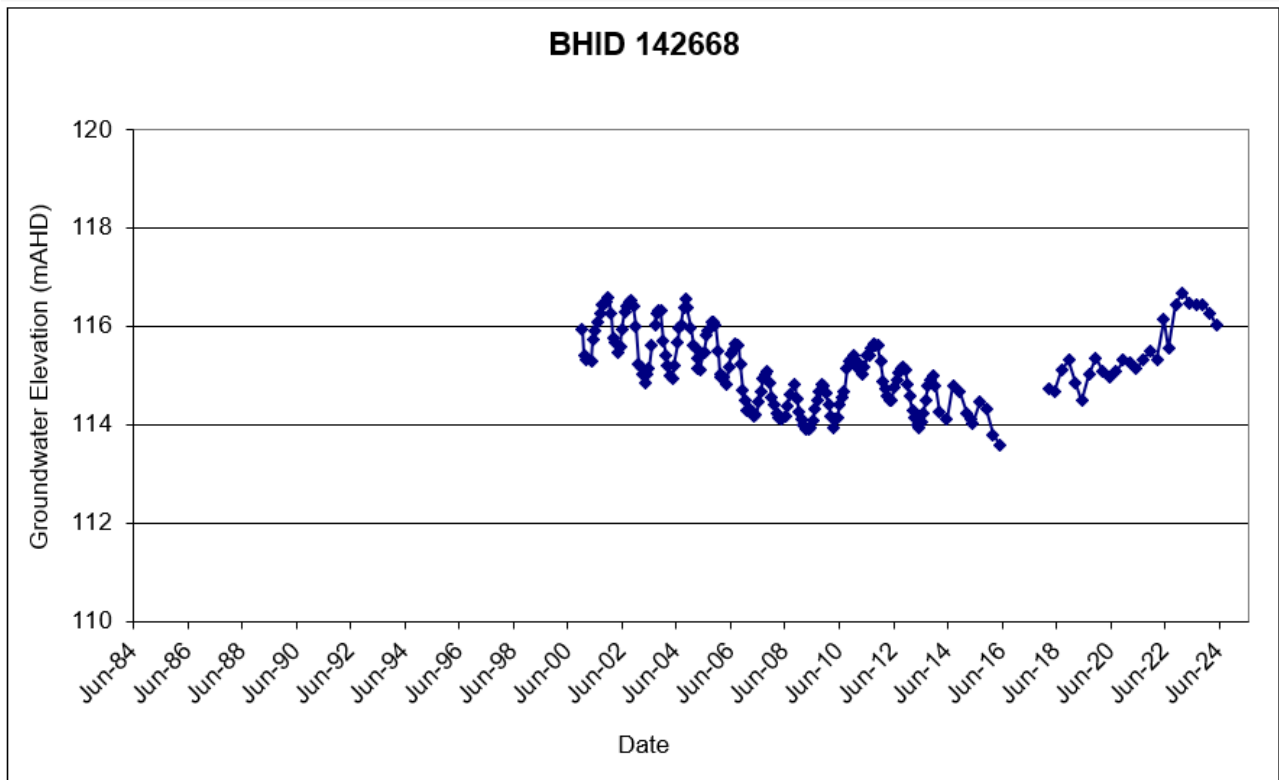
Note: Bore 142703 and 142705 monitor the New Volcanics



Note: Bore 142717 monitors the New Volcanics; Bore 142720 monitors the Dilwyn formation.

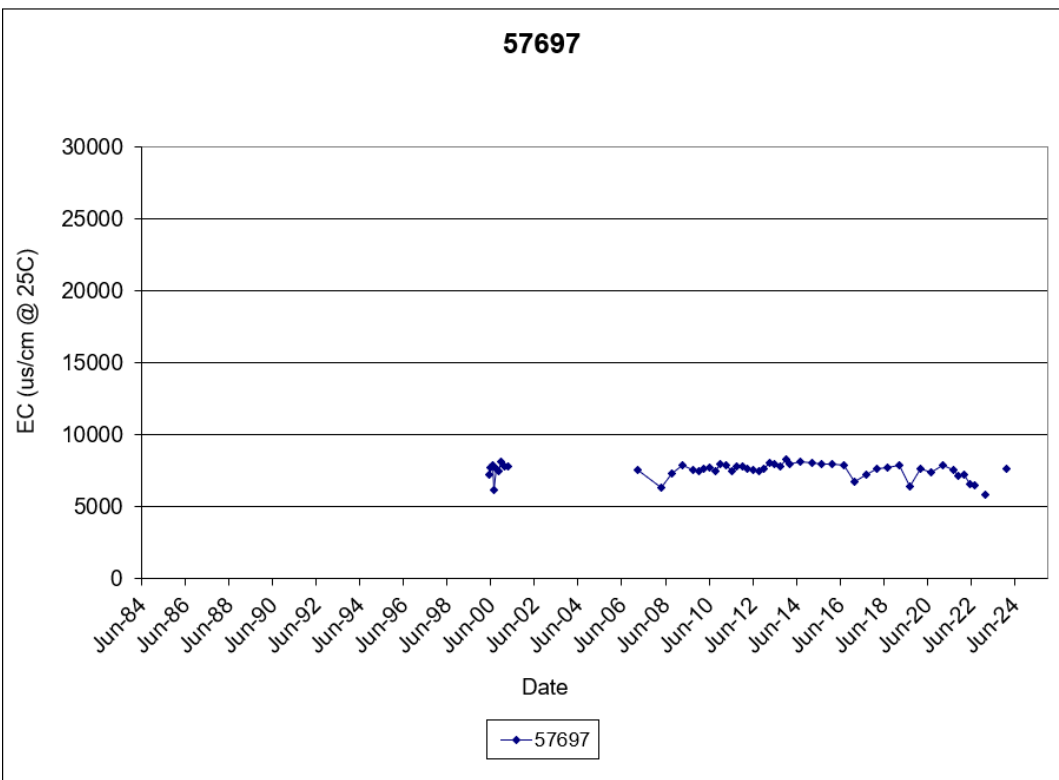
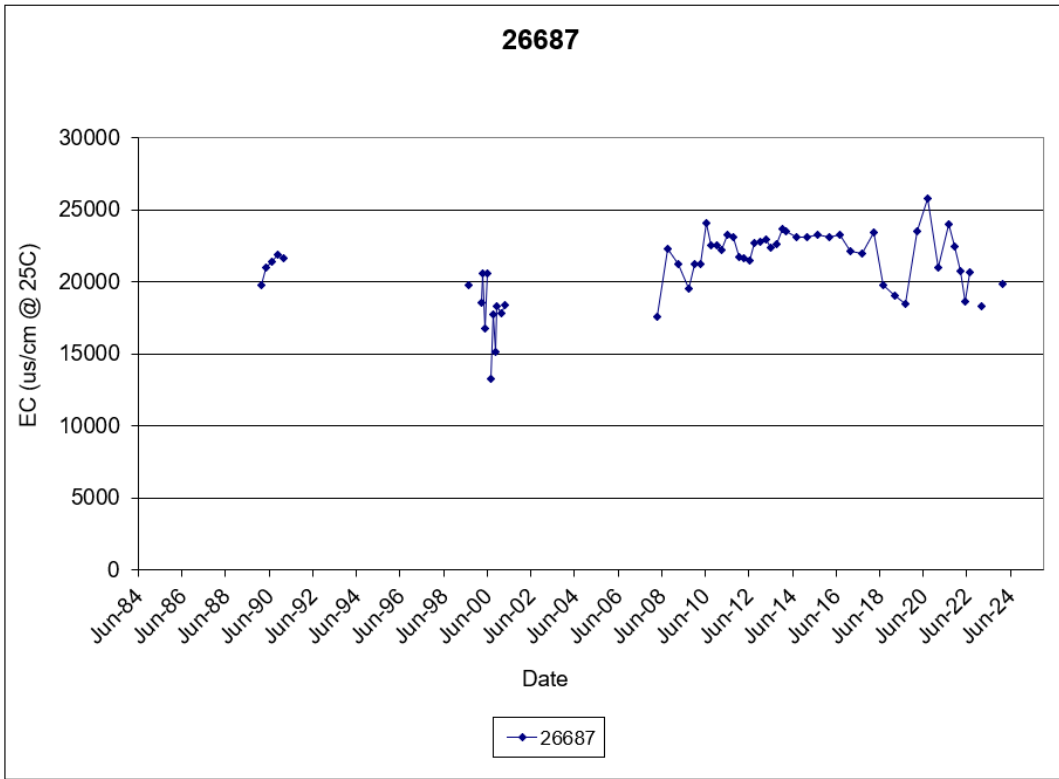


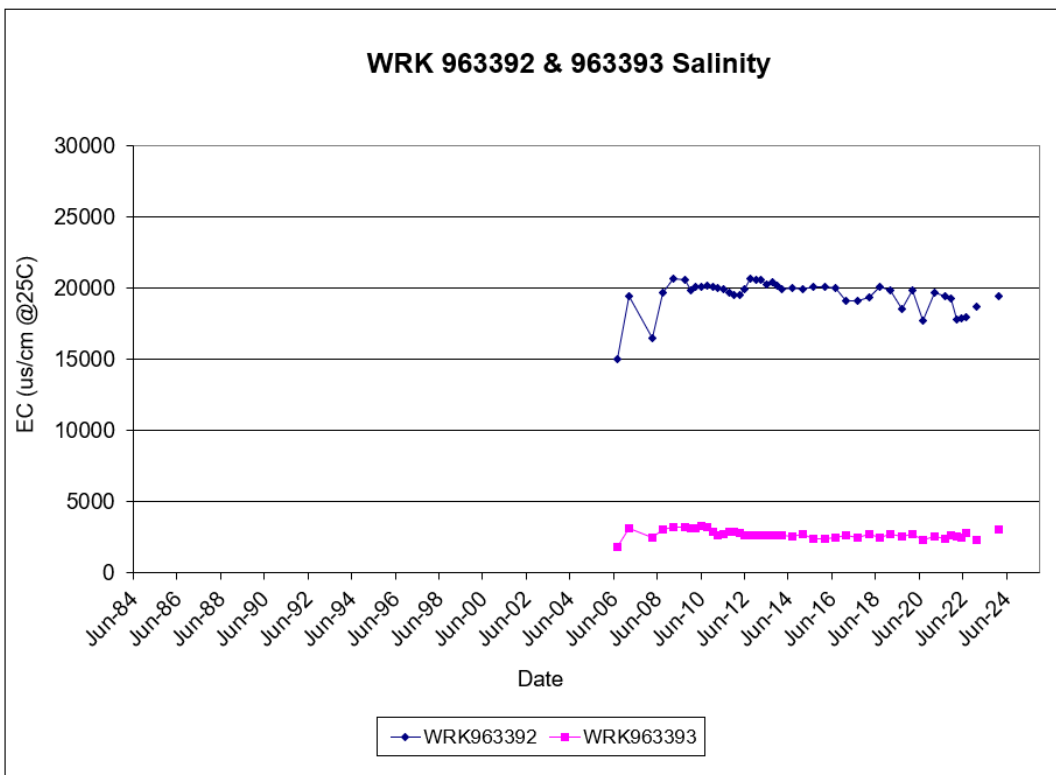
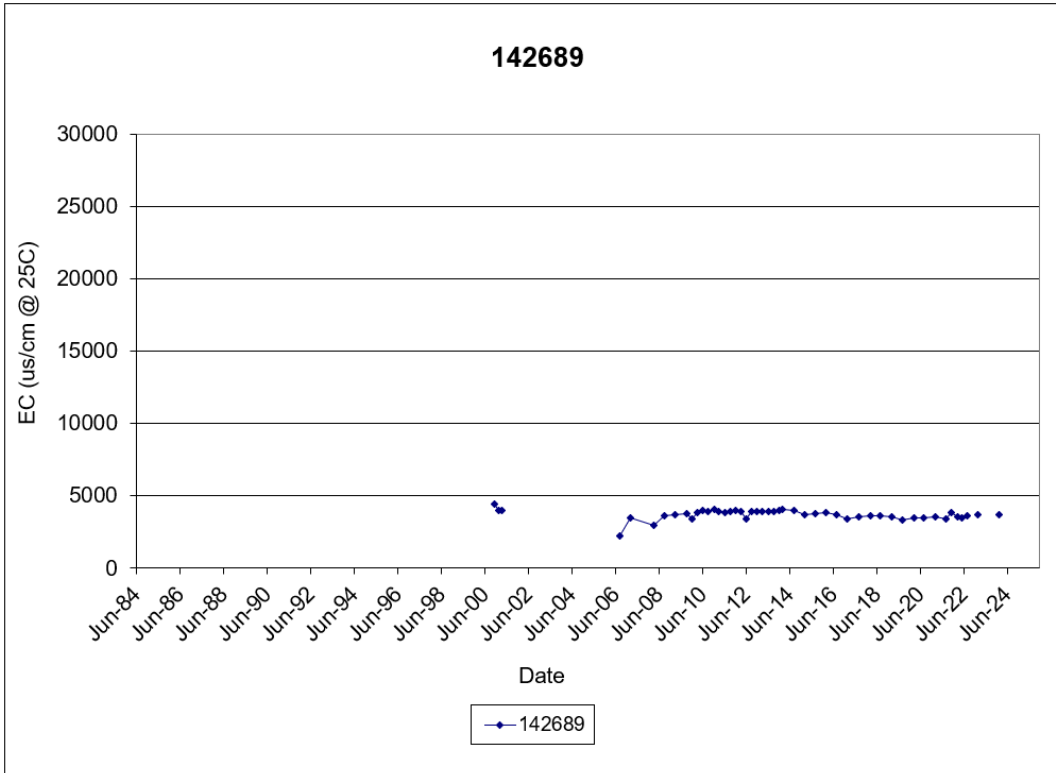
Note: Bores WRK963392 and WRK963393 monitor the Newer Volcanics



Note: Bore 142668 monitors the Newer Volcanics

6.3 Salinity





6.4 Links for Compliance

[Zero Tolerance To Water Theft In Victoria | Premier of Victoria](#)

[Compliance | SRW](#)

[Non-urban water compliance and enforcement in Victoria](#)