Water affecting activities

Water resources in the SA Arid Lands are precious and need to be managed sustainably as some activities can have an adverse impact on the health and condition of water resources, on other water users and the ecosystems that depend on our water resources. These activities are called water affecting activities and the administration of water affecting activities (WAAs) is guided by the Water Affecting Activities Control Policy (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/SAAL_WAA_Control_Policy_Final_15March2021_Wel , a regulatory requirement under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* to ensure the Board meets its role in the responsible management of water resources.

Why manage our regional WAAs?

Looking after water resources is important to ensuring the health of the plants, animals and people who rely on them now and into the future. This is particularly critical in our arid environment. These water resources include watercourses with rivers and creeks often consisting of braided channels, waterholes and broad floodplains, lakes that range from typically dry salt beds, clay pans through to temporary waterholes, rock holes, wetlands and springs, including the iconic Great Artesian Basin mound springs. Managing activities that may affect these water resources is important to protecting and maintaining the health of these resources and requires a commitment from everyone.

Where can I find information?

Whether you are a landowner, manager or a contractor, you can find out what you need before starting work, in our fact sheets.

- Guide to applying for a WAA Permit (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/WAA_Guide-apply-WAA-permit_SAALBoard_2026.pdf)
- WAA Fact Sheet (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/FactSheet_WAA_ControlPolicy_Feb2025.p
- WAA FAQs (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/FactSheet__WAA_FAQs_July2026.pdf)
- WAA Contractor Obligations (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/FactSheet_WAA_ContractorObligations_Fe

What activities require a permit?

WAAs that may require a permit include (but are not limited to):

- the construction or enlargement of dams, or other structures that collect or divert water
- building or placing of structures, including the placing of objects to control erosion, construction of water crossings or dumping of material in or near a watercourse, lake or

wetland
- excavating or removing rock, sand or soil from a floodplain, watercourse, lake, waterhole or rock hole, e.g. excavating or cleaning, soaks, waterholes, rock holes or dams.
- draining or discharging water into a watercourse or lake, or building infrastructure that will convey this water into a watercourse or lake.

Do I need a permit?

If you plan to undertake any activity that diverts water or alters or prevents flows from a natural watercourse within the region or potentially impacts on the landscape in a way that threatens the health of existing ecosystems, you need to apply for a permit.

The process of applying for a WAA permit is detailed in the guide to applying for a WAA permit. The application form is required to be completed and submitted along with the prescribed fee. The cost of a standard WAA Permit is $71.50

The time taken to assess an application for a permit will vary depending on the complexity of the activity. A simple application will take about two months, however more complex applications can take more than three months if there is a range of scientific assessments, native title requirements or engineering reports to consider. It is however, recommended that you apply at least three months before you propose to undertake the activity.

If you have any questions about whether you need to apply for a permit, or the permit application and process, please contact us on 8429 9666.

Further information

- Guidelines for Desilting Dams (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/FactSheet_Desilting_Dams_Feb2025.pdf)
- All you need to know about waterpoint approvals on SA pastoral land (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/images/saal/Get-up-to-date-with-waterpoint-approvals-on-SAs-pastoral-land-October-2024.pdf)
- WAA appeal process (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/AppealsProcess_Info_WAA_SAAL_2022.pd

Permit application forms

- WAA application form - dam (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/WAA_Application-Form-dams_SAAL_2026_27.pdf)
- WAA application form - other works (https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/saal/WAA_Application-Form-other-works_SAAL_2026_27.pdf)

More information

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LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA SA ARID LANDS

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