

# Marne Saunders PWRA

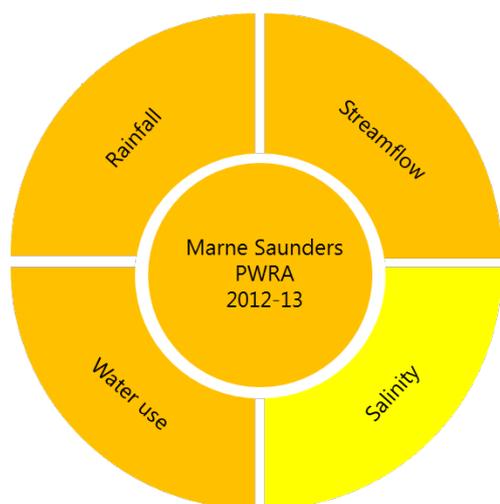
Surface water status report

2012–13



**Government of South Australia**  
Department of Environment,  
Water and Natural Resources

# 2012–13 Summary



The Marne Saunders Prescribed Water Resources Area (PWRA) has been assigned an amber status for 2012–13:

## Adverse trends indicating medium risk to the resource eventuating in the short-term

This hydrological status for 2012–13 is supported by:

- below average rainfall at 3 of 3 rainfall analysis sites
- below average streamflow at Marne River
- variable salinity at 2 salinity analysis sites
- extremely high water use compared to annual streamflow.

This status report provides a snapshot of the surface water resources in the Marne Saunders PWRA for the financial year 2012–13. Surface water status reports are limited to reporting on the hydrological status of the PWRA. Available data on climate, streamflow, salinity and water use is summarised and compared with recent and long-term data to provide an indication of the hydrological status of its water resources. Each element is discussed with reference to recent or more long-term trends where, if at all, they are present in the data. These status reports seek to support informed policy-development and management decisions by resource managers and those responsible for, or reliant on, the water resources. Status of the prescribed resource for the previous years is shown below.



This status report does not seek to evaluate the sustainable limits of the resource, nor does it make any recommendations on management or monitoring of the resource. These actions are important, but occur through separate processes.

The Marne Saunders PWRA is located approximately 60 km north-east of Adelaide (Figure 1). Surface water (including within watercourses) and groundwater resources in the PWRA have been prescribed under South Australia's *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*. A Water Allocation Plan (WAP) was developed by the South Australian Murray–Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board in 2010, which seeks to provide for sustainable management of water resources.

## Status symbols

 No adverse trends, indicating a stable or improving situation (green)

Trends are either stable (no significant change), or have improved over the reporting period, indicating that there is insignificant risk of impact to the beneficial use of the resource.

 Adverse trends, indicating low risk to the resource in the short-term (1 to 3 years) (yellow)

Observed adverse trends are gradual and if continued, are unlikely to lead to a change in the current beneficial uses of the surface water resource in the short-term.

 Adverse trends, indicating medium risk to the resource eventuating in the short-term (amber)

Observed adverse trends are significant and if continued, moderately likely to lead to a change in the current beneficial uses of the surface water resource in the short-term.

 Adverse trends, indicating high risk to the resource within the short-term (red)

Trends indicate degradation of the resource is occurring. Degradation will very likely result in a change in the beneficial use (e.g. reduced ability to access surface water entitlements and/or decline in the condition of environmental assets).

 Unclear (grey)

Trends are unable to be determined due to a lack of adequate information on which to base a sound judgement of status.

Data from the same stations summarised in previous reports are used in analysis, for comparison of annual trends. Three long-term meteorological stations were selected for analysis of rainfall trends; Keyneton (M023725), Cambrai (M024513) and Mount Pleasant (M023737) (Figure 1). Rainfall was below average across the three rainfall analysis sites in 2012–13.

Data from two gauging stations were selected for analysis of streamflow and salinity trends; Marne River at Marne Gorge (A4260605) and Saunders Creek in Gorge\* (A4261174) (Figure 1). Streamflow was well below average at Marne River in 2012–13. Salinity was variable in 2012–13 when compared to the range of salinity for the previous year.

*\*Saunders Creek streamflow data does not contribute to the status of the PWRA due to limited data availability*

Water use was extremely high in 2012–13 when expressed as a percentage of the total available streamflow in 2012–13.

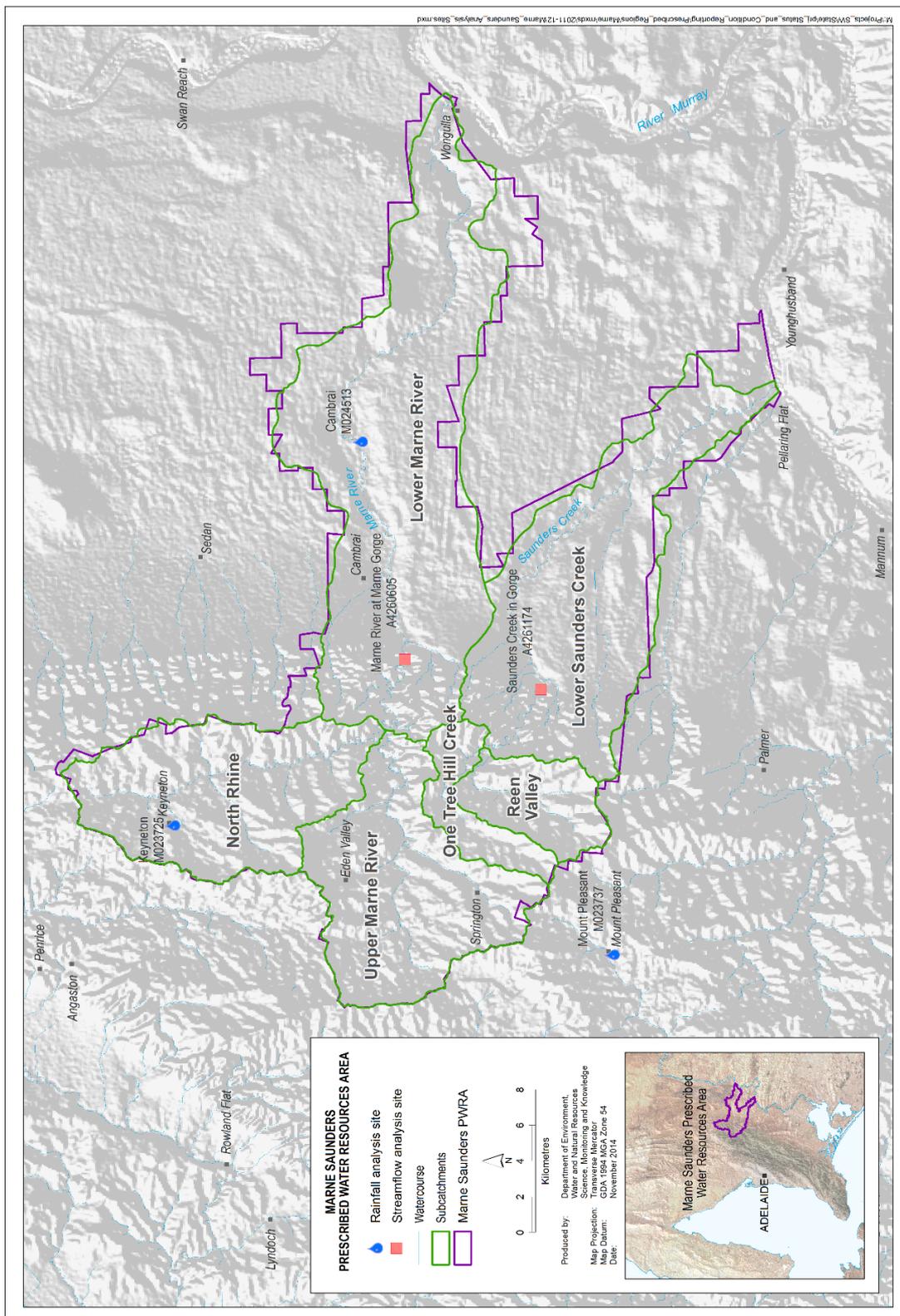


Figure 1. Monitoring analysis sites as used in the Marne Saunders PWRA Surface water status report

# Rainfall

Status	Degree of confidence	Comments on recent historical context
Below average	High: good coverage of rainfall stations representing the rainfall variation across the region	Below average rainfall at Keyneton after average rainfall the previous year. Below average rainfall at Cambrai after above average rainfall the previous year and the second year of below average rainfall at Mount Pleasant.

1. Average Rainfall (1900-2012)

2. 2003-12 Rainfall

3. 2012-13 Rainfall

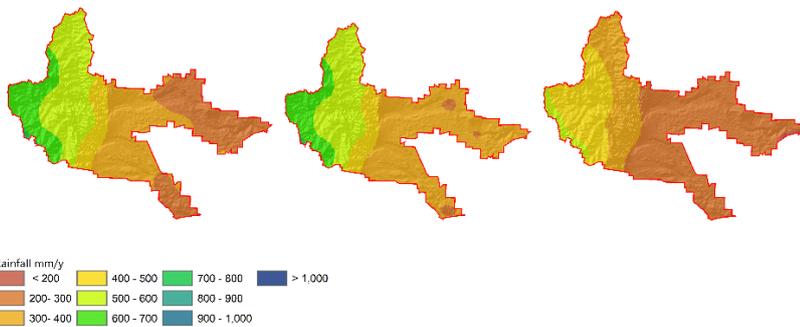


Figure 2. Annual rainfall distributions for the Marne Saunders PWRA

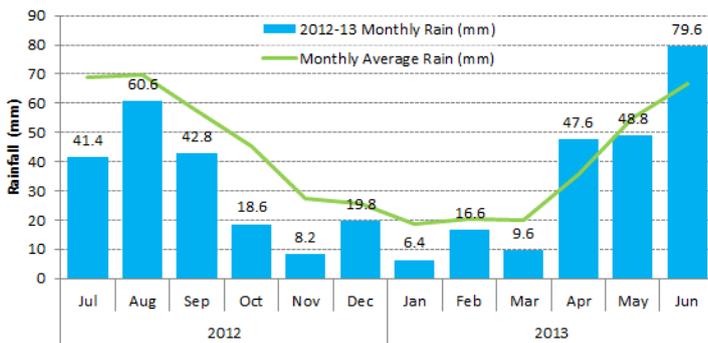


Figure 3. Monthly rainfalls at Keyneton (M023725)

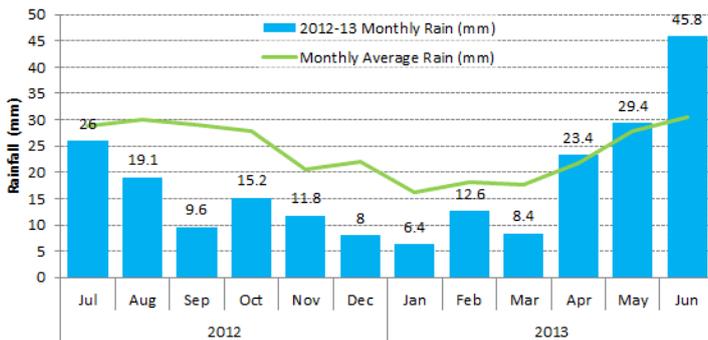


Figure 4. Monthly rainfalls at Cambrai (M024513)

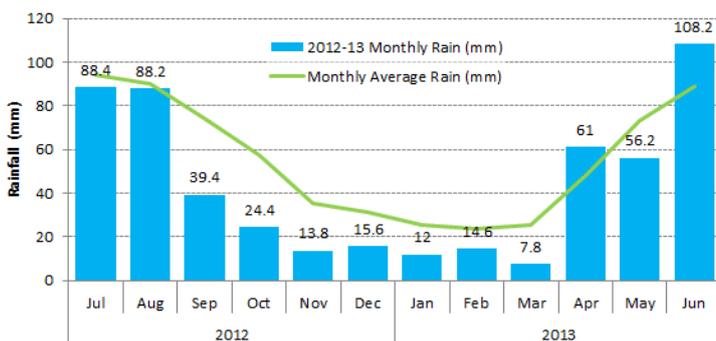


Figure 5. Monthly rainfalls at Mount Pleasant (M023737)

Rainfall in the Marne Saunders PWRA typically varies from less than 300 millimetres (mm) in the east to over 700 mm in the west (Figure 2). The three panels of Figure 2 indicate that rainfall was lower across the entire PWRA for the year 2012–13 (panel 3) in comparison to the long-term and short-term averages (panels 1 and 2).

Keyneton Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) rainfall station received a below average rainfall of 400 mm in 2012–13 in comparison to its long-term average of 511 mm (Figure 3). Above average rainfall was experienced in 2 months across 2012–13 with October, November, January and March receiving less than half the monthly average rainfall.

Cambrai BoM rainfall station received a below average rainfall of 216 mm in 2012–13 in comparison to its long-term average of 291 mm (Figure 4). Above average rainfall was experienced in 3 months across 2012–13 with September, December, January and March receiving less than half the monthly average rainfall.

Mount Pleasant BoM rainfall station received a below average rainfall of 530 mm in 2012–13 in comparison to its long-term average of 668 mm. Above average rainfall was experienced in 2 months across 2012–13 (Figure 5). The months of July to March were consistently below average across all rainfall stations summarised.

# Streamflow

Status	Degree of confidence	Comments on recent historical context
Well below average streamflow at Marne River	High: data derived from long-term gauging station	Second year of below average streamflow at Marne River after well above average streamflow recorded in 2010–11

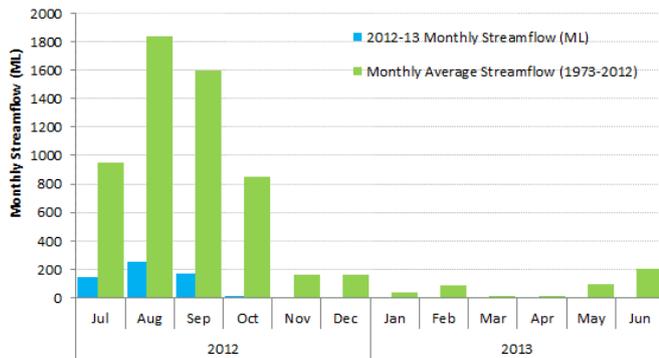


Figure 6. Monthly streamflow at Marne River (A4260605)

Marne River at Marne Gorge gauging station (A4260605) experienced a below average annual streamflow of 590 megalitres (ML) for 2012–13 (90% lower than the 6014 ML long-term average). The monthly breakdown of streamflow for 2012–13 (Figure 6) highlights that all months received below average streamflow. No streamflow recorded from November to June.

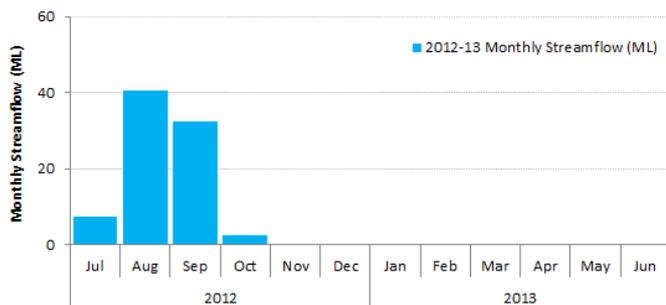


Figure 7. Monthly streamflow at Saunders Creek (A4261174)

Saunders Creek in Gorge gauging station (A4261174) experienced an annual streamflow of 83 ML for 2012–13 slightly higher than the 57 ML recorded the previous year. As this station has only a few years of streamflow data, an average streamflow is not provided. The monthly breakdown of streamflow for 2012–13 (Figure 7) highlights the majority of streamflow was recorded during the months of August and September. No streamflow was recorded from November to June.

# Salinity

Status	Degree of confidence	Comments on recent historical context
Variable	High: data derived from long-term salinity monitoring at Marne River Medium: data derived from short-term salinity monitoring at Saunders Creek	Salinity trend at Marne River is increasing compared to the previous year whereas the salinity trend at Saunders Creek is comparable to 2011–12 for the limited data that is available

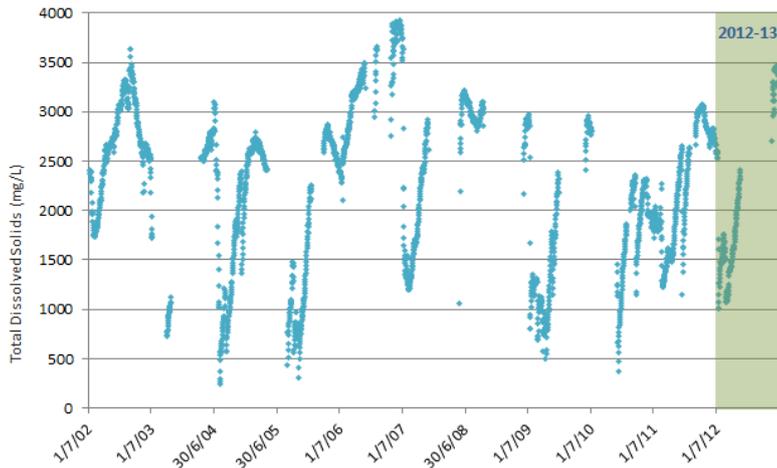


Figure 8. Salinity data at Marne River from 2002–2013

Of the total record for Marne River, 8% was recorded as <1000 mg/L, 45% of the record was between 1000–2500 mg/L and 47% between 2500–4000 mg/L. The salinity range in 2012–13 is higher compared to the previous year but less than the high salinity levels recorded around 2007.

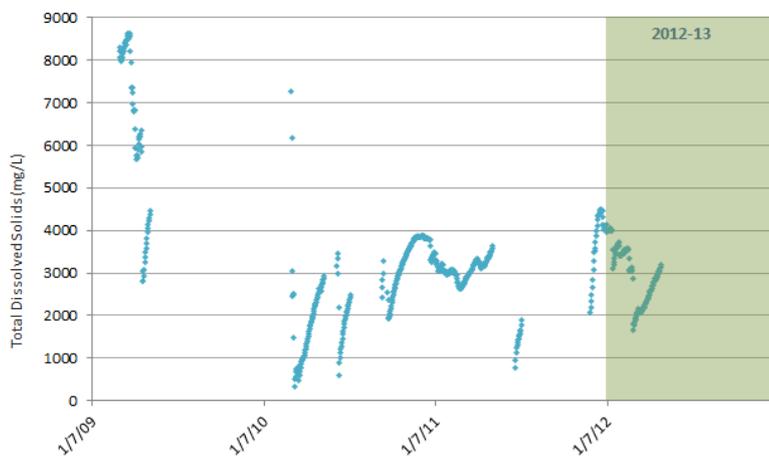


Figure 9. Salinity data at Saunders Creek from 2009–2013

For Saunders Creek, 4% was recorded as <1000 mg/L, 22% was between 1000–2500 mg/L, 59% between 2500–4000 mg/L and 15% of the record >4000 mg/L. The salinity range in 2012–13 is comparable to the previous year and less than the high salinity levels recorded around 2009. Salinity data was not recorded from November to June as the salinity probe was above the water level due to no streamflow during this period.

# Surface water use

Status	Degree of confidence	Comments on recent historical context
Extremely high use compared to annual streamflow	High to medium: high confidence in metered data, medium confidence in estimated data	Water use from licensed surface water resources rose during 2012–13

Surface water use is summarised by licensed extractions and estimated non-licensed demand (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of surface water use in the Marne Saunders PWRA

Marne Saunders PWRA surface water use (ML)	■	Licensed surface water extractions (dams)	521
	■	Licensed watercourse extractions	42
	■	Estimated non-licensed water demand	496
<b>Total water extractions (ML)</b>			<b>1059</b>

Water usage from licensed surface water sources in 2012–13 totalled approximately 563 ML (521 + 42), which is up from the previous year's total of 441 ML.

Existing stock and domestic dams are not managed through the Marne Saunders WAP (i.e. the volume taken from them is not limited to an allocated volume and they are not metered) therefore an estimate is used to report on non-licensed water demand. The estimated non-licensed water demand is 496 ML and this volume equates to approximately 30% of the existing stock and domestic dam capacity. As long as the estimated non-licensed dam capacity remains unchanged from one year to the next, so too will the estimated non-licensed surface water demand, irrespective of variations in annual rainfall and streamflow. As such, the limitations of this estimation method should be kept in mind when considering estimated non-licensed surface water demand.

The distribution of water use across the PWRA from 2009–13 is shown in Figure 10.

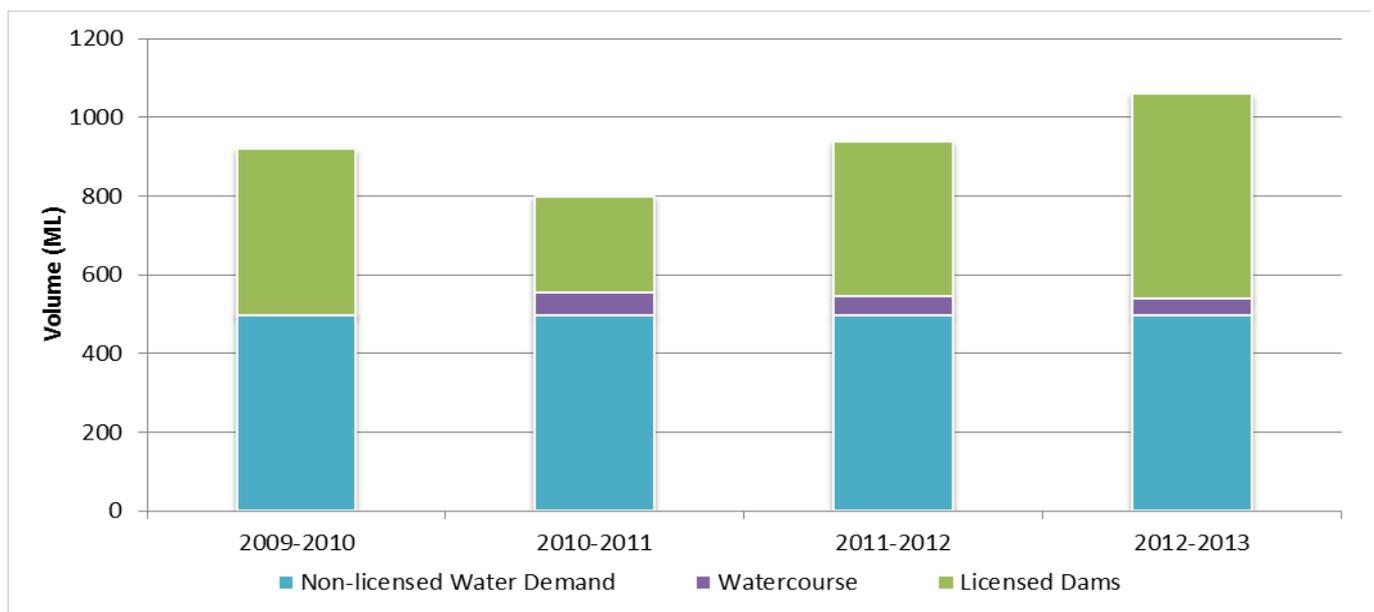


Figure 10. Surface water use in the Marne Saunders PWRA from 2009–13

Recorded streamflow for the PWRA in 2012–13 was approximately 673 ML (combined streamflow of Marne Gorge and Saunders Creek), with approximately 1059 ML (sum of licensed and non-licensed extraction) recorded or estimated as being extracted. As such, of the 1732 ML (673 plus 1059 ML) total estimated PWRA streamflow volume for 2012–13 (not including evaporation from farm dams), it is estimated that 61% was extracted for use (48% in 2011–12).

The PWRA has been assigned a use rating of 6 (Extremely high use) for 2012–13.

Table 2. Use rating system

<b>Rating</b>	<b>% of resource capacity used in current year</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	0 – 10 %	Negligible use
2	11 – 20 %	Low use
3	21 – 30 %	Moderate use
4	31 – 40 %	High use
5	41 – 50 %	Very high use
6	Greater than 50 %	Extremely high use

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ISBN 978-1-922255-89-1

#### Preferred way to cite this publication

DEWNR 2015, *Marne Saunders PWRA Surface water status report 2012–13*, Government of South Australia, through Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Adelaide.

This Surface water status report is available online at <http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au>

To view the *Marne Saunders PWRA Surface water status report 2010–11*, which includes background information on location, rainfall, streamflow, salinity, water use and relevant water dependent ecosystems, please visit the Water Resource Assessments page on [WaterConnect](#).

For further details about the Marne Saunders PWRA please see the *Water Allocation Plan for the Marne Saunders PWRA* on the Natural Resources South Australian Murray–Darling Basin [website](#).

Gridded rainfall data was sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM). Station rainfall data was sourced from SILO and is Patched Point Data. Further information on SILO climate data is available at: <http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/silo/index.html>.

Streamflow and salinity data are available via WaterConnect: <http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au>.

