

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Why is Barwon Water reviewing its bulk entitlement?**

Barwon Water operated the Anglesea borefield from 1 November 2019 until 30 June 2020 to supplement drinking water supplies during dry conditions, with the borefield currently in standby mode.

The review is a requirement under the bulk entitlement, due to be provided to the Minister in 2024 – five years from the date that groundwater extraction recommenced. An updated groundwater model and more than a decade of environmental monitoring data will help inform the review.

## **Is the borefield currently operating?**

With water storages in a healthy position the Anglesea borefield is currently in standby mode, and we are not extracting any groundwater. The pumps were removed from the bores in June 2023. To view historical groundwater extraction data, please visit the Anglesea borefield web page.

Environmental monitoring will continue, even while the borefield is not in use. We are committed to keeping the community informed about the borefield and our monitoring program, and this will continue when the borefield is in standby mode.

## **Is Barwon Water planning to use the borefield in 2024?**

We constantly monitor water storage levels to ensure there is enough water to meet demand. Future use of the Anglesea borefield to supplement supplies for customers will be based on a number of factors, including time of year, volumes of water in our various water storages, climate forecasts and conditions of the water supply catchments. Based on the current storage levels and forecasts, we will not need to switch on the borefield in 2024.

## **Will there be any adverse impact on the Anglesea River in the event of potential future groundwater pumping?**

Based on the past 12 years of environmental monitoring data, we believe there is no adverse impact to the river as a result of Barwon Water borefield operations.

Conducting the bulk entitlement review will confirm how much water we can continue to take sustainably, and ensure the ongoing protection of groundwater-dependent ecosystems into the future.

We have 12 years of environmental monitoring data, and a comprehensive Monitoring and Assessment Program. However, the climate is changing and the review will allow us to check if anything in our management plan for the borefield needs to shift to cater to future climate scenarios. This will ensure we can continue to operate the borefield in a careful and considered way, so that we don't have an adverse impact on groundwater dependent ecosystems.

**How does this differ to the Barwon Downs borefield?**

Barwon Water operates the Anglesea borefield under a bulk entitlement issued by the Victorian Government. This includes environmental triggers and an extensive monitoring and assessment program designed to protect groundwater dependent ecosystems, which is overseen by the community through the Anglesea River Working Group.

The management of the Anglesea borefield is very different to the Barwon Downs borefield, which was operated and managed under a groundwater licence, fixed for 15 years, and did not include the same level of environmental monitoring or the adaptive management approach for protection of the environment.

The triggers for Anglesea borefield are conservative and designed to prevent impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems before they occur.

The below table details the different approach to both borefields:

Barwon Water’s Anglesea borefield	Past management of Barwon Downs borefield
Bulk entitlement, issued by Victorian Government	Fixed 15 year licence issued by regulator, SRW
Adaptive management approach	Non adaptive management approach
Extensive Monitoring and Assessment Program (MAP) to protect the environment	Groundwater levels, surface water flows and 5-yearly vegetation studies
MAP triggers are conservative and designed to prevent impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems before they occur	Fixed licence had triggers to <i>offset</i> impacts (i.e: reduced flow in Boundary Creek), rather than triggers to prevent impacts. Provision of supplementary flow to Boundary Creek as a licence condition did not adequately protect the downstream environment
10 years of data on groundwater, surface water, acidic sulphate soils, subsidence and ecological values	Additional monitoring undertaken to better inform remediation