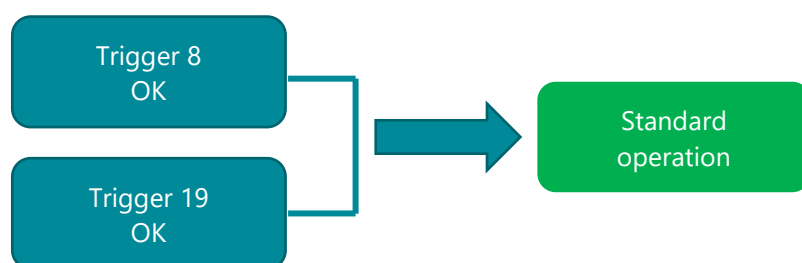


Anglesea borefield – Groundwater level and trigger update March 2020

This monthly update provides a status of groundwater levels against the threshold level for the two key bores - P8 and P19 - highlighted in Barwon Water's Bulk Entitlement for the Anglesea borefield.

In summary

- This report is for March 2020.
- Trigger components (P8 or P19) were not exceeded during this reporting period, and we are in a standard operation mode.ⁱ



- The perched water table trigger level (P8) is highly influenced by climatic conditions. Following regular rainfall over January and February and subsequent elevation of perched water table levels, a drier and warmer March resulted in a slight decline in the perched water table level (as shown in figure 1).
- Update reports are developed in the first week of each month, with the graphs containing data from the previous month.
- Monthly reports and extraction rates are available via the web page: www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/anglesea-borefield
- The status of the trigger components for this month is summarised below.

As part of our comprehensive monitoring and assessment program, we have 42 observation bores that monitor groundwater levels across the Anglesea catchment. These observation bores are located at different depths to monitor groundwater levels in different geological formations – in the Perched Water Table (PWT), Upper Eastern View Formation (UEVF) and Lower Eastern View Formation (LEVF). Barwon Water holds a bulk entitlement to extract groundwater from the LEVF.

Groundwater levels are recorded daily to ensure levels remain within the likely range of natural variation. This provides confidence that operation of the Anglesea borefield is not threatening groundwater dependent ecosystems.

Of the 42 observation bores, there are two key bores that are critical to ensuring groundwater levels can continue to support groundwater dependent ecosystems. These bores measure groundwater levels in the PWT (P8) in the Anglesea swamp and in the UEVF (P19), overlying the LEVF. It is the combination of groundwater levels in both of these bores that is important. If groundwater levels in both bores fall below a certain threshold level, then action must be taken – including reducing or ceasing pumping – to prevent any potential damage to groundwater dependent ecosystems.

The threshold level (also known as a “trigger”) is determined by comparison to a control bore, to account for climatic influences on groundwater levels. The control bore (P17) is located in the Salt Creek swampland which is deemed outside area of influence from operation of the Anglesea borefield. This means the control bore provides a useful comparison of the natural variation in groundwater levels due to seasonal conditions.

Operation of the borefield commenced on 1 November 2019, and ongoing monthly updates are provided to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the community.

Figures 1 and 2 below present an overview of the trigger levels observed each month.

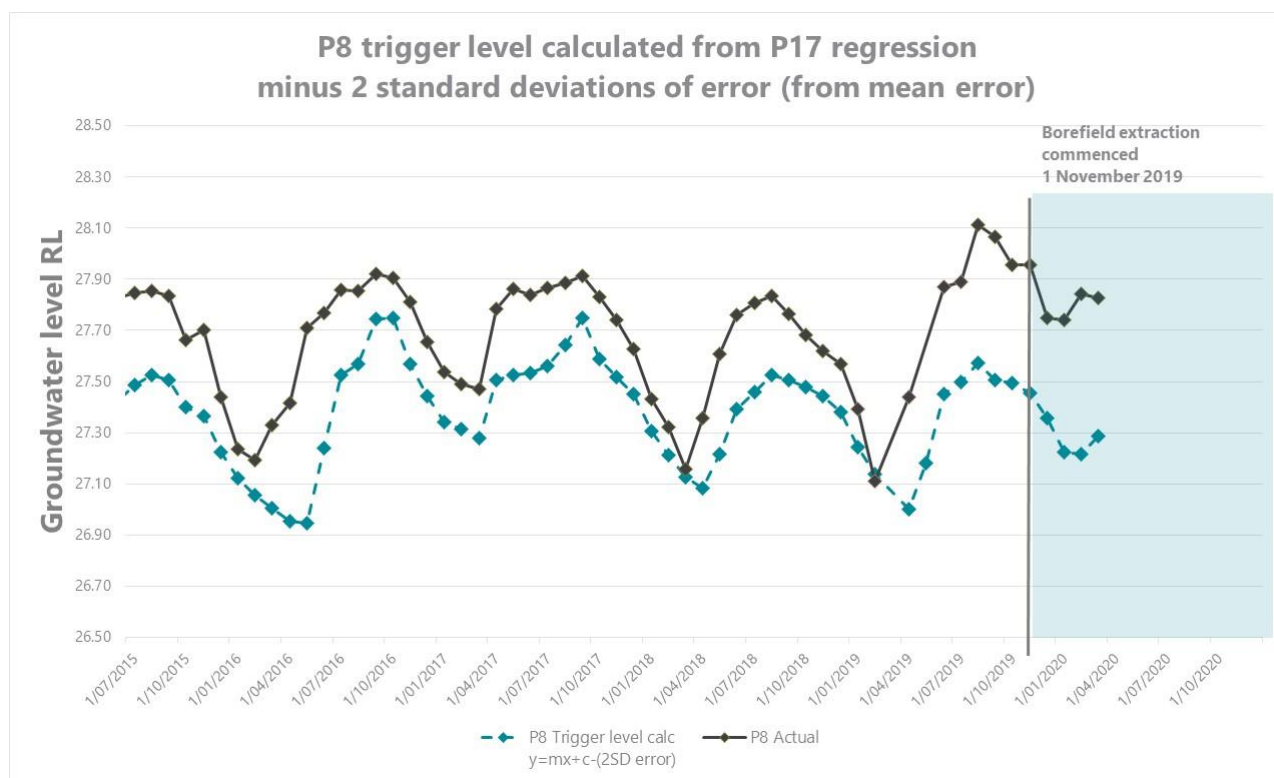


Figure 1. Groundwater level and the trigger level for P8 in the perched water table.

Note: From February to August 2019, the groundwater level data for P8 was collected by manual reads.

During February last year (2019), Barwon Water was not extracting water; however, based on the data available, P8 exceeded the trigger level. This followed the warmest January (2019) on record for Victoria, coupled with below average rainfalls across the state, with some areas like Aireys Inlet recording its lowest January rainfall on record. This shows the strong influence of climate on the triggers – hot, dry days in summer can lead to the triggers being exceeded without pumping.

This February (2020), regular rainfall resulted in elevated perched water table levels. During March 2020, reduced rainfall resulted in a slight decline in the perched water table level. Despite this, the actual groundwater level (black line) continues to track well above the trigger level (teal line).

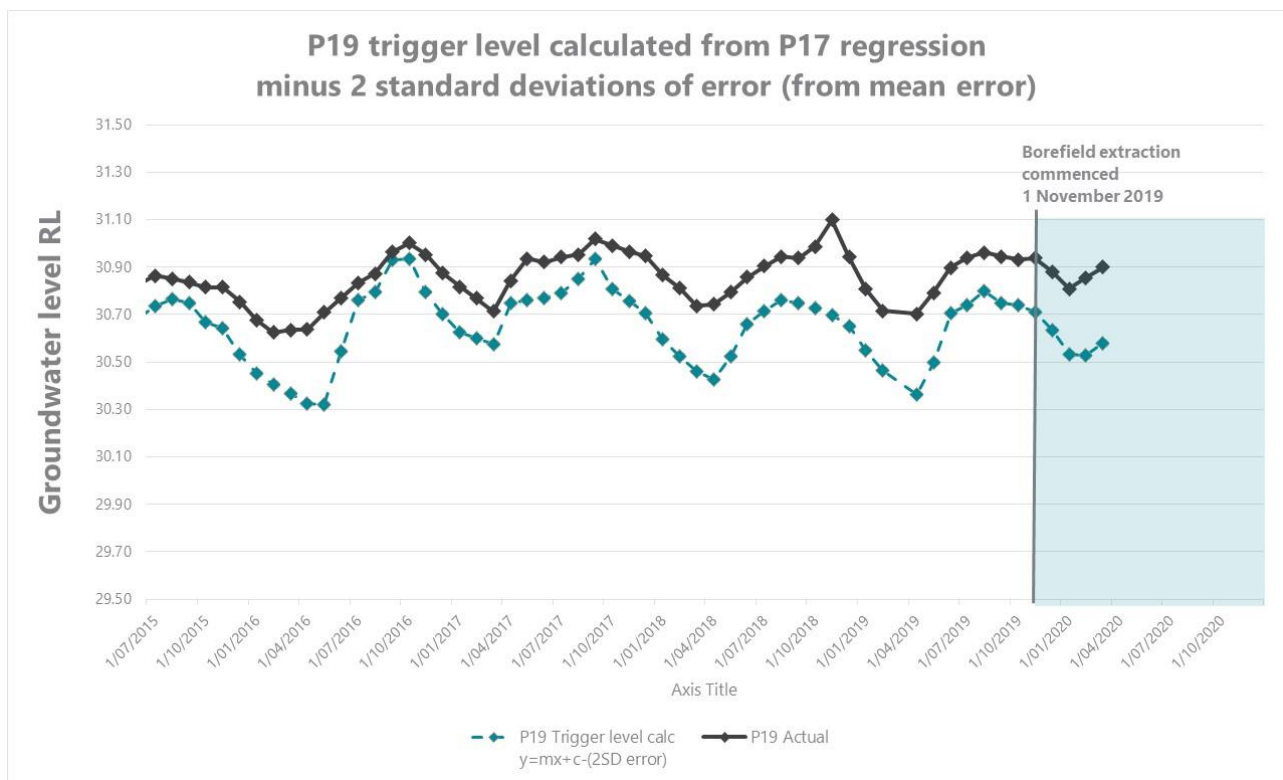


Figure 2. Groundwater level and the trigger level for P19 in the upper eastern view formation.

Figures 1 and 2 show that for the month of March 2020, trigger components (P8 or P19) were not reached.

For more information and ongoing updates, please visit the Anglesea borefield web page:

www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/anglesea-borefield

ⁱ Standard operation involves maintaining compliance with our Bulk Entitlement, issued by the Victoria Government. Under the terms of the bulk entitlement, we are licensed to extract a maximum of:

- 40ML in any day;
- 10,000ML in any year; and
- 35,000ML in any five-year period.

We will operate the borefield below these limits to ensure groundwater levels remain above the triggers that have been set to protect groundwater dependent ecosystems. For information on all scenarios please refer to the 'Anglesea borefield trigger approach information sheet'.