



La Grange groundwater allocation plan: Evaluation statement 2010–2011

This statement evaluates the extent to which the objectives of the *La Grange groundwater allocation plan* were met since its release in February 2010.

Evaluation statements are part of the Department of Water's adaptive management process and allow us to continually review and improve management of water resources.

1 Allocation status

1.1 Changes in allocation status

To date there are no changes to the allocation status of the Canning-Broome (Broome Sandstone) aquifer in either subarea since the release of the plan. However, the volume of water licensed in each groundwater subarea in the Canning-Broome aquifer increased by:

- La Grange North: 2.6 GL/yr in November 2009 to 9.8 GL/yr in July 2011 (28% allocated and committed)
- La Grange South: 1.1 GL/yr in November 2009 to 4.6 GL/yr in July 2011 (31% allocated and committed)

Water is still available for licensing in both subareas.

For a full list of up to date water availability in all resources contact the Kimberley Regional office in Kununurra on (08) 9166 4100 or see our water register, <www.water.wa.gov.au/ags/WaterRegister>.

2 New allocation issues

Four new allocation issues were identified in the plan area (*Table 1*).

Table 1 New allocation issues that were raised during evaluation period

New allocation issue	Our response
Remote community water supplies	As outlined in the draft Kimberley Regional Water Plan, we will continue to work with state agencies (such as Department of Housing) and Indigenous representative bodies to support the improvement of water services and water source protection in remote communities.
Indigenous engagement strategies	We will continue to work with the Kimberley Land Council and the Karrajarrri Traditional Land Association to support the development of Indigenous engagement strategies.
Reliability of the current allocation limits	The allocation limits for both subareas will be reviewed against monitoring data, hydrogeological information and environmental water requirements when the plan is replaced. This review will be triggered when use reaches more than 50% of the available water licensed.
Allocating water for cultural flows	When the allocation limit review is triggered we will incorporate our improved understanding of cultural water requirements (flows) into the decision-making process for any new allocation limits.

3 Implementation actions

We committed to progress or complete the following actions identified in the plan by the 2010–2011 reporting period (*Table 2*). As identified below, several of the actions were completed and others ongoing with significant progress made.

Table 2 Summary of progress towards actions for implementing the plan

Action	Status	Evaluation
1 We will request bore logs and pump test data from bore owners. Holders of mineral and petroleum bore logs will also be contacted for further information.	In progress	Bore logs and pump test data for existing and new bores were received from licensed bore owners. We will continue to request this data for any new licensed bores. Mineral and petroleum bore logs will be requested in 2011 and reported on in the next evaluation statement.
2 We will identify the local investigations required to determine an ecological water requirement.	In progress	In partnership with the Kimberley Land Council and the Karrajarrri Traditional Land Association, we carried out a remote sensing wetland classification project, which included the La Grange area. We will continue to identify future research opportunities to determine ecological water requirements and where possible undertake such projects in partnership with the Karrajarrri Traditional Land Association.

	Action	Status	Evaluation
3	Before this plan is reviewed, we will report on sites with <i>in situ</i> water dependent values.	In progress	We are working with the Kimberley Land Council and the Karrajari Traditional Land Association to improve identification of sites with water-dependent values through research opportunities, the licensing process and ranger training. The information collected through these opportunities will be reported before this plan is replaced.
4	Our Kimberley Regional office will survey unlicensed use and exempt water use to refine the estimates used in the plan.	Met	A survey was undertaken in April 2010 to identify unlicensed usage. Two previously unlicensed commercial operations are now licensed.
5	The department will continue to work with other state agencies through the Indigenous Implementation Steering Committee and with Aboriginal communities to identify ways that good water management can assist with Aboriginal economic and social development.	Met	We will continue to support open dialogue with Indigenous representative bodies, such as the Kimberley Land Council and Northern Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance, regarding indigenous access to water for commercial use in Western Australia.
6	Action 6 is met each year as part of implementing this plan		
	Score:	5/5	
	Rating:	Good	

3.1 Management triggers

None of the management triggers (section 7.2 of the plan) were breached during this evaluation period.

The current level of water use is less than 50% of the allocation limit.

We did not receive any monitoring reports from licensees or other information from interested parties of adverse effects on to water quality, cultural sites, community water supplies or groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

The largest groundwater licence request received in the reporting period was for 10% of the available water. The application is currently being processed in accordance with the plan.

4 Plan performance

We rated the performance of the plan and its implementation by reviewing the performance indicators and assessing the extent to which the plan objectives were met .

4.1 Objectives

The current status of each of the plan’s objectives is listed in *Table 3* (Section 2.2 of the plan).

Table 3 Objectives and their status

	Objectives	Status	Evaluation
1	Maintain the saltwater/ freshwater interface to avoid impacts on existing near-coastal water-users, water-dependent values and community water supplies.	Met	Management rules for the Coastal management zone and relevant licensing policies in the plan were applied, including those relating to the submission of hydrogeological information and the preparation of operating strategies and monitoring programs. The current licensee monitoring data collected showed no evidence of impacts on the saltwater/ freshwater interface.
2	Manage groundwater allocation to avoid impacts on Mandora Marsh and the flow at Mandora springs.	Met	During the reporting period, no licence applications were received that would affect this area.
3	Minimise the impact of water abstraction on all water-dependent values.	Met	Management rules and relevant licensing policies were applied to licensees. Monitoring data indicates that abstraction impacts were minimal.
4	Manage new licence applications to avoid impacts on reliability of water supply for other users.	Met	No reports were received about other water users an having adverse affect on water supplies. All new licence applications were assessed for potential impacts on other users in accordance with the plan.
5	Conduct the licence assessment process in recognition of Native Title holder’s rights.	Met	New licence applications were referred to Native Title interests in accordance with licensing policy 17 in the plan.
	Score:	5/5	
	Rating:	Good	

5 Evaluation of the management approach set out in the plan

The plans' objectives were met through the processing of licence applications in accordance with the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*, the licensing policies set out in the plan and the management rules for the Coastal and Mandora Marsh management zones. We are continuing to meet our action commitments and addressing new allocation issues as they arise.

The volume of water currently licensed (allocated and committed) increased since the plan's release, but there is still 70% available for licensing across both subareas.

The monitoring data collected by licensees indicates that the level of water use is low and that there were no adverse impacts on regional groundwater levels or water quality. At this stage, licensee reporting is the only mechanism for monitoring changes in water quality and levels in the plan area. As stated in the plan, once the system reaches 50% of the allocation limit we will evaluate the need for regional groundwater monitoring.

We will continue to look for opportunities to support training for stakeholders, including pastoralists, the Karrajarrri Traditional Land Association and the Kimberley Land Council, in the management of water resources in the La Grange area.

6 Response to this evaluation

We identified through this evaluation that the *La Grange groundwater allocation plan* is suitable to be in place until the next evaluation. The plan is not scheduled for replacement, as the current management approach is meeting the plan's objectives. The need to replace the plan will continue to be considered each year through the evaluation process and in line with the management triggers.

6.1 Work required to improve our performance implementing the plan

We identified work required to improve our implementation of this plan. We will:

- Finalise the wetland mapping project and provide the final maps to any interested stakeholders.
- Continue to work with Department of Housing to license water use in Remote Area Essential Services Program communities, including Bidyadanga.
- Encourage early consultation by landholders in the process of planning their developments to ensure that water-related issues and licensing requirements are adequately considered.
- Continue to support an open dialogue between the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, Karrajarrri Traditional Land Association, Kimberley Land Council and pastoralists on diversification activities and water

management in the La Grange area. This will ensure the department is engaged in land-use planning activities with significant water requirements.

- Identify research opportunities to assist with meeting the objectives of the plan and provide additional support for any future replacement of this plan when a review of the allocation limits is triggered.

6.2 Work required for the next plan

There are particular components of the plan that will require consideration when the plan is replaced. They are:

- Establish ecological water requirements for groundwater-dependent ecosystems.
- Identify cultural values associated with the water resource.
- Review the allocation limits with reference to monitoring data, and ecological and cultural water requirements to ensure the limits are sustainable.
- Review the need for a regional groundwater monitoring program.

Rating system:

Rating	Description
Good	70 to 100% of performance indicators, objectives and/or actions met
Adequate	40 to 70% of performance indicators, objectives and/or actions met
Poor	Less than 40% of performance indicators, objectives and/or actions met
