

Groundwater

What is groundwater?

Groundwater is water that has seeped from the surface into the ground and collects within the porous spaces between the layers of sands, gravels and fractured rocks that occur at various depths beneath the earth's surface. These can range from vast flooded sand beds to small fractures in the rock strata.

Areas of sand, gravel and fractured rocks that hold a usable quantity of groundwater are commonly called aquifers. The depth at which the porous spaces between the layers of sand, gravel and fractured rock becomes fully saturated is commonly called the watertable.

The quality and quantity of groundwater extracted from aquifers can vary widely.

Groundwater is replenished from rainfall. It is a finite resource and needs to be managed sustainably to ensure that the aquifers, existing licence holders and the environment are protected.

How is groundwater accessed?

Groundwater is most commonly accessed from a groundwater bore.

A bore is usually a drilled hole constructed by a licensed driller for the purposes of obtaining groundwater, but may also include a well or artificial excavation used for the purpose of collecting, storing or taking groundwater.

Any person who wishes to construct a groundwater bore must have a Bore Construction Licence, and in most cases a licence is required to take and use groundwater for any purpose other than domestic and stock use. For further information see the Bore Construction and Groundwater Licensing links to the left.

Groundwater management in Southern Victoria

Southern Rural Water's Groundwater and Rivers Business has a fundamental role in helping to protect and manage water resources across Southern Victoria in a region stretching from the South Australian border to the New South Wales border south of the Great Dividing Range.

Entire agricultural sectors and rural communities are built around these resources, including intensive dairy farming operations in South Western Victoria and the Gippsland region.

Vegetable and other horticultural crop production throughout Southern Victoria also relies on these vital water resources.

The Groundwater and Rivers Business manages licences to take and use groundwater and has a number of responsibilities in accordance with the Water Act 1989 which include:

- Licence Management; ensuring that existing water users are complying with licence conditions to protect the resource, the environment, other users and stakeholders.
- Works Approvals; ensuring that proposed bores are properly constructed and sited.
- Water Allocations; assessing applications according to policies, environmental sustainability, and impacts on Victoria's water resources.

There are various rules, standards and regulations which apply to water users in Victoria.

All water users including irrigators, commercial and domestic and stock users should be aware of Victoria's water rules.

The Water Act 1989 is the Act of Parliament under which Southern Rural Water operates and provides the basis for the rules under which Victoria's water users can access and take and use water.

Southern Rural Water aims to promote equitable management and access to Victoria's water resources for all water users, the community and the environment.

The Groundwater and Rivers Business also supports the development and implementation of Groundwater Management Plans. These plans document all existing licensed entitlements and identify proposed activities for managing restrictions, rosters and extraction limits. Further information about Groundwater Management is available by [clicking here](#).

Southern Rural Water has conducted several groundwater resource appraisals. To see these reports, [click here](#).

For more information, please [contact us](#).

Links

External Web Links

- [SRW's groundwater fact sheets](#)