



## GABCC Meeting Communiqué No 2, October 2015

The Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee (the Committee) convened in Sydney on 15 & 16 October. The Committee continues to provide advice to governments with responsibilities for the GAB on its efficient, effective and sustainable whole-of-basin management and to coordinate activity between stakeholders to that end. The Committee does not have a resource management or lobbying role. Operational matters for basin management are primarily the responsibility of the state/territory agencies.

The Committee is composed of members who represent the Australian government, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Northern Territory governments, communities, industries and other sectors with interests in the Basin. Please refer to the Committee's website at [gabcc.gov.au](http://gabcc.gov.au) for a full list of the current members and a copy of the Committee's Operating Arrangements.

### Summary of Meeting Outcomes

This is the second Communiqué that the Committee has prepared and is seen as a vital step in encouraging communications at a broader level with all GAB stakeholders and communities. We encourage you to seek further information on any of the items raised by either contacting the Secretariat or members of the Committee.

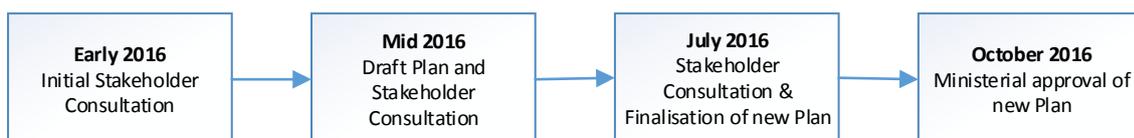
### GAB Strategic Management Plan

The review of the current Strategic Management Plan (SMP) was completed in 2015. The Committee discussed the findings of the review and provided considerable insight and feedback on the findings to facilitate the development of the new Strategic Management Plan (the Plan). The Plan will be developed by the Australian, state and territory governments in consultation with the Committee, national organisations and water users.

An initial consultation seeking stakeholder's views on key issues in the GAB will occur in early 2016. Figure 1 illustrates the timeline for the new Plan's development. Information on the consultation process will be updated on the Committee's website as information becomes available.

[www.gabcc.gov.au](http://www.gabcc.gov.au) or visit <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/environment/great-artesian-basin/strategic-management-plan>.

**Figure 1 Timeline for the Strategic Management Plan**



The Committee members will continue to consult with their respective organisations and we encourage all stakeholders to participate in the Plan's development process. The Plan will identify the key goals and objectives for the whole of basin management of the GAB for the next 15 years.

A thought provoking discussion paper from the South Australian Community Representative entitled “Do God Given Water Rights Include God Given Responsibilities?” is on [www.gabcc.gov.au](http://www.gabcc.gov.au) and we encourage all stakeholders to read this and other information that becomes available as the process unfolds.

## Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative 4

The current GABSI program announced in 2014 has \$14.5mill of remaining funds to spend prior to the programs completion in June 2017. Despite a slow start to getting programs on the ground all basin governments have signed the GABSI agreement and will commence rolling out works.

With only eighteen months of the program remaining it is essential that stakeholders who are interested in participating in capping and piping works apply as soon as possible. This type of infrastructure works take considerable time and involve planning for the matching funds required; a difficult task for many landholders currently affected by drought. Currently there is no provision for GABSI 4 being extended as has occurred in the past. For this reason we strongly urge stakeholders to utilise the current funding available by contacting your state government agencies.

## Great Artesian Basin Bore Data

The long term maintenance requirements of the bore assets within the GAB are an ongoing issue and the Committee has sought information on the status of bores within the Basin. To determine the scale of the issue for consideration in the future Strategic Management Plan state governments were requested to collate bore data on the age of all bore assets and drilling within and through the Basin.

The bore stocktake includes all bores drilled into and through the Basin, including recharge and non artesian areas however more information is required to ensure all bores within the Basin have been accounted for. The Committee will continue to develop the bore data information as it is essential to understand the location, age, type and status of bores within the Basin to design successful future bore asset management programs. A copy of the report is available on the Committee’s website.

## Economic Output of GAB Sectors

The review of the SMP identified a need to better understand, assess and report on the social and economic values of Basin water resources. The Committee also highlighted at its 2013 GAB Futures workshop a need to value Basin water use. Given the significant data gaps for Basin water use, it is currently difficult to accurately determine the contribution of Basin water to the industries that depend on the resource.

Work is progressing to develop a report on the economic output of groundwater dependent sectors in the Basin and will be available in early 2016. The report will provide clarity around current and future water use and users in the Basin and the value of the industries or sectors dependent on Basin water.