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ASSESSMENT OF GROUNDVATER RESOURCES

IN THE STATE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL -DEPT. OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This report, with plan attached, is a brief description of the groundwater resources within the State of South Australia, prepared in schedule form.

Since almost all the significant water supplies are confined to sedimentary basins, these have been individually described and shown on the plan, even though they fall within the larger previnces adopted in the Journal of the Geological Society of South Australia, Vol. 5, 1957.

The Journal has been departed from in two areas. One is the Otway Basin, which here is shown separately and not as part of the Kurray Basin Province. The other is a slight modification of the southeastern lobe of the Great Artesian Basin Province, and a corresponding extension of the Nt. Lefty - Clary Province morthward.

Since drilling in this State is not subject to licence previaiens, there is no accurate knowledge of bero densities in many districts, and it has been found impossible to assess the amount of vater withdrawn in any one year. However, with the possible exception of the Otway Basin, the conclusion drawn is that there is very little reserve of water available for future development.

PLAN: 62-675

DEPARTMENT OF MINES SOUTH AUSTRALIA

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY HYDROLOGY SECTION

UNDERGROUND WATER ASSESSMENT

A. SEDIMENTARY BASINS - PRESSURE WATER

1. Great Artesian Basin

Apprex. Area:

120,000 square miles

Bore Beneity:

Bores sparsely scattered

Supplies available:

Variable up to 106 g.p. day

Quality:

Good stock; often demostic; unsuitable

for plants.

Development:

Posrly developed. Large grazing preperties enly, except in far northeastern corner of the State, where land has not been

settled.

Sources

Recharge vater comes through main aquifor system from the eastward. There is considerable local recharge along the vestern margin, and around expected bedrock highs such as the Peake & Demison Ranges.

Reserves

Not calculated, but very large if used for stock purposes.

2. Nurray Basin

Approx. Area:

16,500 square miles in S.A.

In conjunction with the adjoining Otway
Basin, economically probably the State's
most important source of groundwater.

Bore Demsity:

Approx. \$.000 recorded beres.

Supplies available:

Individual beres yield as much as 29,000 gallons per hour. However, it has been calculated that under prevailing hydrodynamic conditions, irrigation water is

available in extremely limited volumes

if gradual devatoring is not to eccur.

There is enough stock water to water

2 sheep per acre ever the whole of the
usable water zone.

Quality:

North of the River Murray the water is saline and frequently unusable even for sheep. This is also the case along a variable but usually narrow some south of the River. Elsewhere the quality varies, improving in a southeasterly direction to a minimum salinity of about 60 grains per gallon. Inland from the Coorong coastline, the water is caline unless refreshed by local intake from surface sources.

Sources

Intake area is in Victoria, to the southeast of the main basin area in S.A. There are a few small and localised marginal intakes in the west, south and southwest.

3. Otway Basin

Apprex. area:

3,500 square miles.

Bere Demeity:

Apprex. 2,500 recorded bores.

Supplies available:

Extremely variable. In some places shallow limestones yield as much as 100,000 gallens per hour of water for flood irrigation of pastures. In one district deep flowing bores are providing 20,000 to 30,000 gallens/hour, but these supplies are declining.

Floowhere the water is in plentiful supply for eteck, and usually for industrial purposes.

Source:

This is a karst type tepography, and local intake is deminant. Pressure water eccurs at depth, but ever much of the area shallow non-pressure waters are used.

Reserves

Not calculated, but very large. As a whole, the area is believed to have considerably more groundwater potential than has as yet been developed.

4. St. Vincent Basin

Approx. area:

1,550 square miles.

Bore Demsity:

Approx. 2,500 beres, almost all lecated in the southern half of the basin.

Supplies available:

Some bores yield as much as 20,000 gallems/ hour, but the usual supply is 5,000-10,000 gallems/hour.

Quality:

South of the Gawler River, generally suitable for market garden use. The water has in the past been used to augment the Adelaide metropolitan supply. Some upper saline waters occur.

North of the Gawler River the quality deteriorates very rapidly until it becomes too saline for stock use.

Development:

Fairly well developed for industrial uses in the suburban districts. Probably becoming ever developed in the market garden area north of Adelaide, as far north of the Gawler River. There is believed to be a danger of future salt water incursion consequent upon everpumping.

Source

Recharge is from surface runoff along the hilly eastern margin. North Gawler, where the hill masses are lew and the

Reserves:

rainfall light, recharge is very small.

Groundwater use in the city area is declining, and could probably be increased considerably for emergency demostic use.

Elsewhere, reserves ever and above present usage are considered quite limited.

5. Pirie-Torrene Basin

Approx. area:

3,800 square miles.

Bore Density:

Apprex. 500 beres. Mostly in central part.

Supplies available:

A few bores yield 3,000 - 5,000 gallens per heur, but large supplies are difficult to develop in fine sands, and windmills are the usual pumping unit.

Quality:

Over most of the basin, stock quality or saline water occurs. Along one part of the eastern margin some irrigation supplies have been developed for market gardens, but the water available is limited. Towns, which are along the coast, have no usable groundwater available.

Development:

Except for a few market gardens watered from beree, the area has been developed for stock waters only, where these are available. The merthern and southern ends of the basin have mostly caline waters.

The petential is small.

Source:

Intake is restricted to a marrow zene marginal to the Flinders Ranges on the eastern flank, where rainfall and surface runoff are relatively higher than elsewhere.

The original saline waters of deposition have been only partly replaced from this searce, and the salinity quickly increases with distance westward.

Reserves

Plentiful stock water where the calinity is satisfactory, but little scope for other development.

6. Villumes Basin

Apprex. Area:

60 square miles

Bore Density:

Apprex. 250 bores.

Supplies available: Some substantial yields, varying up to as much as 20,000 gallens/hour, have been obtained, but these are difficult to develop in the generally fine silty aguifers. The more usual expectation is 2,000-3,500 gallons/keur. which can be used for limited irrigation.

Quality:

Excellent water in the interior part of the basin, increasing in salinity towards the ceast. In the coastal third, the water is toe saline for other than stock use.

Development:

There is some scope for further development of limited irrigation, but this will probably be restricted by ecomonic considerations rather than the actual availability of groundwater.

Sources

Marginal intakes exist on the north, east, and south flanks, the most important being to the east and northeast.

Reservent

Probably sufficient for some further develepment, but the basis has no potential as a source of irrigation water on any large scale.

7. Willechra Basin

Approx. Area:

350 square miles.

Bere Density:

Approx. 400 beres.

Supplies available: Goed windmill supplies are obtainable everywhere, and many of the bores flev in sufficient volume for stock purposes. Theeretically it should be possible to develop quite large supplies by the censtruction of screened bores, but this has not been done because of the expense. and other factors.

Quality:

Poor stock water in the north, the salinity improving in a southerly direction to less than 200 grains per gallon in the southern central part, and domestic quality water in the extreme south.

Development:

Probably developed for stock water as much as it will ever be.

Source:

Intakes have been proved along the hill mass to the southwest and south, and probably also in the southeast from a creek system. They are believed to be rather limited.

Reserves

Sufficient for present stock use, but there is not enough for any widespread irrigation.

8. Valloway Basin

Apprex. Area:

250 square miles.

Bore Density:

Apprex. 120 beres, and pessibly 100 wells.

Supplies available:

Bores along the levlying central axis usually flew in small amount, enough for stock use.

No general irrigation practised. The aguifer is a fine sand which has proved very difficult to develop by the use of screens, and the beres used for irrigation prebably number less than five. One of these is the Orrores township water

supply.

Quality:

Variable, depending on prezimity to intake. Over part of the basin area, the water is of stock quality only.

Development:

Vell developed for stock use, but there is believed to be very little extra water available for irrigation.

Source:

Local intake from Pokina Crook in the northern part, and from several small watercourses in the south.

Reserves:

Adequate for all stock purposes, but little potential as a source of irrigation water.

9. Barossa Valley

Area:

72 square miles.

Bore Density:

400 approx.

Supplies Available: A few supplies of 10,000 gallens/hour, and a fairly large number of 1,500-3,000 gallons/hour. A substantial properties of bores drilled has resulted only in stock supplies being ebtained.

Quality:

Part of the area has water suitable for irrigation, and vines and vegetables are watered. Elsewhere the water varies greatly in quality, being too saline even for sheep, in the extreme northern end of the basin.

Development:

Already developed to what is almost its full capacity.

Source:

Local intakes along the river and from smaller water courses on the eastern flank.

Reserves

Small. The possibility of artificial recharge is at present under investigation. Covell Basin

Approx. Area:

635 square miles.

Bore Demaity:

Yery few bores.

Supplies Available:

Vindmill supplies are sometimes available along the western margin at points adjacent to intake from surface sources. Elsowhere the water is too saline for stock.

Quality:

Feer, mostly unusable.

Development:

Very little development possible.

Sources

Connate saline waters, with a few localised intakes from creeks on the western flank.

Reserves

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11. Bucla Basin

Apprez, Areas

16,500 square miles in S.A.

Bore Demoity:

Very sparsely scattered bores.

Supplies available: " Stock supplies in some areas only.

Quality:

The groundwater itself is saline, but in some places the limestones are cavernous, and surface runoff intermittently reaches and refreshes the upper groundwater surface.

Pressure waters are usable for stock mear the marginal intakes.

Development:

Almost completely undeveloped, because of the nature of the country and the quality of the groundwater.

Sources

Connate saline waters are refreshed by scattered marginal intakes in comidesert country to the north and northeast, and in places by local rainvator penetration in cavernous limestenes.

Reserves:

Yery small.

12. Hypenga Basin

Apprex. Area:

20 square miles

Bere Density:

less than 100

Supplies available:

In one restricted area mear Mypenga township, individual bores yield as much as 20,000 gallens/hour. Elsewhere, good

stock supplies are obtainable.

Quality:

Excellent, less than 80 grains per gallen.

Development:

In such a restricted area very little
further development is likely. The water
is used at present for pastures and pea

growing.

Source:

Local intake from the valley flanks.

Reserves

Small.

B. SEDIMENTARY BASINS - NON-PRESSURE VATER

13. Port Lincoln Area

This is a system of small individual or partly interconnecting shallow depressions infilled with Tertiary marine sediments and recent acclianite, with a karst topography.

Apprex. Area:

150 square miles

Bore Density:

Apprex. 450 test beres drilled by the Government. About 20 town water supply

beres.

Quality:

Excellent quality water almost everywhere,

underlain at depth by sait water.

area being a waterworks reserve.

Development:

Not developed for private use, much of the

Supplies available:

Large supplies, up to 20,000 gallens/hour, are available in selected localities, and the whole area is being developed as an auxiliary source of water for the West Coast supply system from Ted River Reservoir. The Uley-Vanilla area has been everpumped for some years, and water levels are declining.

Source:

Intake from local surface runoff.

Reserves:

The whole area, including Uley-Wanilla is believed to be capable of yielding 150,000 gallons per hour.

14. Polda Basin

Approx. area:

200 square miles. This is probably an underestimate, as the district has not yet been adequately test drilled.

Bore Density:

A few wells only, and about 100 test beres drilled by the Government. Test drilling is proceeding.

Supplies available: Vindmill supplies for stock purposes. The country is considered unsuitable for irrigation.

Quality:

Variable, but some of the water is usable for demestic purposes.

Development:

At present under active investigation by test drilling for the Engineering and Vater Supply Department. Pumping at a rate of 60,000 gallons per hour from a central trench will commence in the spring of 1962, to augment the Ted River mains. It is keped that the ultimate permanent yield will be in excess of this figure.

Seurces

Local intakes after rain, there being practically no surface runoff from the karss topography.

Reserves

Not accurately known, but believed to be sufficient to warrant development as a permanent auxiliary source of mains water for the West Coast supply system.

C. MINOR SEDIMENTARY BASING - PRESSURE AND MON-PRESSURE VATERS

Several of these exist, including the Rebinson, Bumbunga, Cygnet River, Georgetown, Imman Valley and Mypenga areas, which are either intramentane depressions filled with fluviatile or fluvioglacial material, or small saucer-shaped areas of shallow Tertiary-Recent marine or acclimatic sediments.

In these places, a few of the more fertunate landholders have been able to develop irrigation supplies, but there is little or no potential for large scale development.

A poculiarity of the State South Australia is that there are no water-charged river alluvials such as occur in other parts of Australia, from which irrigation supplies can be developed to support either intensive market gardening, or pasture irrigation for dairying.

D. OTHER AREAS

Much of the State is underlain by folded Preteroseie or elder metasediments or granitic type rocks, semetimes with a thin covering of recent sands, limestones, or acclimates.

The occurrence of groundwater in these rocks is dependent not only on the rock type, but also various local factors such as rainfall and topography, and generalised comment only is possible.

Merthwest Province

Where watercourses exist, occasional stock water supplies are available, but in the absence of local intake from surface sources, the groundwater is saline when it is found to occur at all. Bedrock usually occurs at shallow depth.

Contral Province

Excluding the eastern part covered by sediments belonging to the Great Artesian Basin system, groundwater is generally saline or of poor stock quality.

Byre Peninsula Province

Bedrock eccurring usually at fairly shallow depth is commonly Archaean gueiss, or granitic in type.

Some landholders find it possible to obtain stock supplies of stock quality water in depressions in the bedrock surface, when surface intake is available. Occasionally, isolated pockets of good water occur in acclianites.

Over most of the area, however, the groundwater is tee saline for stock use, and landholders rely on excavated earth tanks where water supply mains are not available. This is a low rainfall area, and tanks cannot be relied on.

Flinders Ranges Province

Groundwater conditions are very variable in this lev rainfall area, and stock quality water is often not obtainable except near watercourses where intake is higher than elsewhere.

Irrigation supplies de met eccur.

Mt. Lofty - Olary Province

In the south-central part, where rainfall is fairly good, stock supplies and sometimes small irrigation supplies are obtainable from some of the metamorphic rocks.

Kangaroo Island is an exception to this, as because of unfavourable rock types, even stock quality water is difficult to obtain, and is not available on many properties.

In the northern half of the province, groundwaters are saline, excepting for isolated bores sited in large gullies or depressions.

Yorke Peninsula

Poor stock quality or saline groundwaters are the rule, with eccasional demostic quality waters in shallow travertine limestone in the extreme southwest of the penimeula.

SUMMARY

The only area where large volumes of excellent quality water are available is in the Otway Basin in the extreme south east.

The southern part of the St. Vincent Basin has substantial supplies which are being used for vegetable growing, but which are thought to be in danger of everdevelopment, which may cause deterioration.

The existing stock water supply mains serving Byre Peminsula Province, can probably be fed wholly or very largely from groundwater reserves new being developed but no irrigation water is available.

Good stock water and occasional small irrigation supplies occur at selected sites in the south-central Mt. Lefty Province, and in part of the Pirie - Torrens Basin.

In the southern half of the Murray Basin, excluding the Gtway Basin, ample stock water and town water supplies can be obtained, but any extensive irrigation development is expected to deplete reserves. The morthern half of the Basin has saline or very poor stock water only.

Elsewhere, ever mest of the State outside the Great
Artesian Basin, stock water is found only in favoured localities,
and is not available on many properties.

E. P. O'Briscoll Semior Geologist MYDROLOGY

EPO'D; AGK 11/10/62

	NORTH - WEST	PROVINCE	OODNADATTA		ARTESIAN	STRALIAN BASIN	LAND
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Hard Noch. So igne om, Muta Marke ome had deald Soft Roch. Delneons + dem com brad, Cureston. -Mucomobiolo had: Cultural rom Cacalom.