The $2.6million Middle Gascoyne water investigation project will define the scale and quality of the alluvial aquifers between Rocky Pool and the Kennedy Ranges 40 to 130 kilometres upstream of the Carnarvon horticultural district.

While water security for the Carnarvon horticultural precinct remains a priority, this project aims to define potential new upstream water sources that may ultimately allow diversification and expansion of the region’s economy.

The aquifer systems and the quality and quantity of groundwater beyond Rocky Pool is not fully understood and this work will help determine where the Gascoyne region can ultimately head as an agriculture-based economy.

The investigation will include stakeholder involvement to develop an agreed strategic direction for the Carnarvon horticultural industry, consistent with the draft Gascoyne Regional Development Blueprint.

A critical component of the Middle Gascoyne project is to establish a pathway for pastoralists to convert parts of their holdings to more flexible land-use tenure, rather than be restricted to grazing only.

It is hoped the combination of tenure change and potential new groundwater may provide the pastoral sector with the opportunity to link with third-party investment capital, whether it be for the establishment of feed-on facilities or in high-value cropping.

- Groundwater investigations
- Pastoral station diversification options
- Agricultural growth and diversity
- Regional economic development opportunities
- Investment attraction.
Proposed Middle Gascoyne – water investigations timeline

- **January 2015**: Detailed desktop review of geology, hydrogeology and ecosystems
- **July 2015**: Installation of monitoring bores; stakeholder communication meeting
- **May 2015**: Aerial electromagnetic survey
- **September 2015**: Exploratory drilling; establishment of groundwater bores
- **May 2016**: Groundwater dependent ecosystem analysis
- **August 2016**: Agricultural soil capability survey
- **November 2016**: Agricultural assessment finalised
- **February 2017**: Investor information package finalised
- **January 2017**: Water supply options assessment
- **August 2016**: Water supply options assessment