

Friday, 8 October 2021

PLANNING OUR WATER FUTURE FOR THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS

The Victorian Government is securing the water future for our state, meeting the challenges of a warmer and drier climate, changing demands and population growth.

Minister for Water Lisa Neville today released the draft Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy that will address the impacts of these challenges on water security for cities, towns, agriculture and Traditional Owners and the health of our rivers and waterways.

For the first time in such a Strategy, the Government has partnered with Traditional Owners in developing the plan, which includes proposals to increase Traditional Owner access to water entitlements. With a key focus on preserving and boosting water supplies, the Strategy outlines options that mean no water will be taken from existing entitlement holders.

As the climate gets drier all options need to be considered – including increasing the use of recycled water for non-drinking purposes, desalination and saving more water across households, industry, agriculture, sporting fields, parks and gardens. Even now, without the desalination plant, Melbourne’s demand would be outstripping supply by 70 billion litres every year.

By 2065, the Melbourne and Geelong region will be relying on manufactured water for an estimated 75 per cent of its supplies. This discussion paper seeks the community’s views on options to meet this increasing demand in a drying climate.

This paper also includes options such as:

- Strengthening the water grid through increasing capacity of the Melbourne Geelong interconnector;
- A regional-scale stormwater harvesting system at Sunbury
- Using more recycled water for irrigation in the region west of Melbourne to free up water for rivers and drinking supplies; and
- Changing the maximum water-use target of 155 litres per person per day to 150 litres per person per day

We are now looking for public feedback to inform the final strategy, that will be released next year. You can have your say on the draft strategy at: engage.vic.gov.au/central-and-gippsland-region-sustainable-water-strategy

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

“Thanks to the desal plant our water storages are currently healthy, but we know we have to do more into the future including saving water and providing extra supply including by recycling water and using stormwater.”

“We need to meet the challenges of climate change and increased demand for water – our rivers need extra flows, we need to continue supporting agriculture, industry and jobs and ensure we have water for communities and recreational use.”

“This is the first time we have partnered with Traditional Owners in developing a Sustainable Water Strategy, continuing our commitment to increase cultural access to water.”