

Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

FACT SHEET 1 - Overview of the process and requirements for new irrigation developments

This fact sheet outlines the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines (the Guidelines) and provides an overview of the process.

PART ONE: WHERE TO START

All developers of new irrigation developments (and significant re-developments) within Gippsland must comply with the Guidelines.

Contact the Irrigation Development Coordinator

West Gippsland CMA (WGCMA) employs an Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) in Gippsland to provide information about the Guidelines and to guide developers through the approvals process.

The IDC service is provided at no charge and can save developers considerable time and resources. The IDC works closely with Agriculture Victoria irrigation extension staff and other agencies as required.

Contact Southern Rural Water (SRW)

To commence the process, developers must contact SRW who will be able to advise on likely requirements and provide you with the relevant application forms.

The completed application forms provide the basis for preliminary assessments. Once SRW receive a complete application with payment, the process is started. SRW will typically then refer the application to all relevant referral authorities. At this point, SRW, the IDC and referral authorities will typically undertake a desktop analysis to examine readily known issues which may prevent the development from going ahead and/or have a large impact upon the viability of the development. A site visit may be required to clarify development issues that may require further investigation.

Following this step, SRW will typically notify you if any further information is required.

PART TWO: WHAT TO SORT OUT

Developers are urged to contact the IDC as early as possible to discuss their proposed irrigation development activity. A preliminary discussion with an IDC will provide the developer with a thorough understanding of the potential complexity of the assessment process, the information needed to be collected, the potential costs involved and any issues which may impact on the time required to gain approvals and/or impact on the project cost structure.

NB: The onus of responsibility is on the Landowner to ensure that all relevant licences, permits and approvals are obtained prior to commencing works.

1. Licences, permits and delivery shares.

After the preliminary discussion with SRW and the IDC, the developer will have an understanding of the licences and permits they require. The three key licences are a 'works licence', 'take and use licence' and/or 'water-use licence'. In the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) developers may also require delivery share.

1.1 Delivery share

For developers planning irrigation developments or redevelopments on properties supplied from the Macalister Irrigation District (MID), water delivery shares are required. This ensures that there is enough capacity in the channels and pipelines to deliver water to the property in a timely manner. Delivery shares are tied to land and may come with the property purchase. They can be purchased from existing irrigators with spare delivery shares or issued from Southern Rural Water.

For more information on delivery shares please contact SRW.

1.2 Works licence

A works licence is required to construct and operate water delivery infrastructure (pumps and pipelines) across Crown Land to deliver water to the property boundary. A works licence will not be issued in isolation from the water-use licence or take and use licence. The two licences are interdependent.

Private diverters, (those proposing to irrigate outside the MID) will need to follow the approvals process for the associated works licence. It is recommended that this process is pursued in parallel with the approvals process for the water-use licence or take and use licence.

Storage dams

If a storage dam is required to be constructed on-farm, the approval for these works is required under a works licence (not the water-use licence).

Please contact SRW regarding works licences.

1.3 Water-use licence and take and use licences

All irrigated properties must have either a 'water-use licence' or a 'take and use licence'¹ to enable water to be applied to land for the purpose of growing crops/pasture. SRW are responsible for issuing these licences. One of the considerations in granting a licence is whether the proposed water use is consistent with the water-use objectives.

Water-use objectives

Water-use objectives (Victorian Water Act 1989) are aimed at minimising the impacts of water use on other persons and the environment.

These include:

- Managing groundwater infiltration
- Managing drainage disposal
- Minimising salinity
- Protecting biodiversity
- Minimising the cumulative impacts of water use.

In considering the water-use licence application, the Water Corporation must have regard to issues relevant to the associated works licence application. A water-use licence will not be issued in isolation from a works licence.

Annual Use Limits and Maximum Application Rates

There is a maximum amount of water that can be applied to land in a 12-month period from 1 July to 30 June. These amounts are known as annual use limits. They are specified on the water-use licence as a condition of use. Annual use are based on a set of maximum application rates and are measured in megalitres (ML) per hectare per year.

In the Macalister Irrigation District, the maximum Annual Use Limit is 9 ML/ha.

For take and use licences, the licenced volume is the maximum annual application rate.



1.4 Licence assessment process summary

The approvals process for the issue of a new licence, (or for expansion/intensification of irrigation requiring a change to an existing water-use licence), may involve any or all of the assessments listed below:

- Irrigation and Drainage Plan (IDP)
- Flora and fauna assessment
- Environmental risk assessment
- Aboriginal cultural heritage requirements.

Not all of these may be required. It depends on the risks involved at the site, and the complexity of the issues.

1.4.1 Irrigation and Drainage Plan

An application for a new water-use or take and use licence or a major variation to an existing licence must be accompanied by an Irrigation and Drainage Plan (IDP). The key purpose of an IDP is to match the way land is irrigated and drainage disposed of, with the characteristics of the land and soil, to meet the objective of minimising harmful side-effects, including to the environment. The standards are described in Schedule 1 of Ministerial Determination for [Standard Water Use Conditions](#).

The Irrigation and Drainage Plan consists of:

- a. A map of the proposed development
- b. Soil assessment - soil profile survey depending on the proposed irrigation system
- c. Irrigation design and management
- d. Arrangements for drainage disposal
- e. Biodiversity protection arrangements

On approval by SRW, the Irrigation and Drainage Plan becomes a condition of the water-use licence or take and use licence.

¹ A water-use licence authorises the use of water from declared regulated surface sources (e.g. Macalister river) for the purposes of irrigation on the land specified in that licence.

A take and use licence applies to either a fixed term or ongoing entitlement to take and use water from an undeclared waterway, catchment dam, spring, soak or aquifer (e.g. Avon River, unregulated streams, groundwater). Each licence has conditions set by the Minister for Water which are specified on the licence.

There are certain situations where Irrigation and Drainage Plans are not required or are not required in full. Further advice should be sought from the IDC and in the Irrigation and Drainage Plan fact sheet.

1.4.2 Flora and Fauna Assessment

Where the presence of stands of native vegetation, and/or the presence of threatened species, has been identified a formal flora and fauna assessment and a native vegetation management plan may be required.

These must be undertaken by suitably qualified professionals and will inform the biodiversity protection arrangements of the Irrigation and Drainage Plan.

Refer to fact sheet: Impacts to Native Vegetation.



1.4.3 Environmental Assessment

In cases where the proposed water-use licence poses direct and ongoing risks to wetlands, native vegetation, or the habitat of native animals, the Irrigation and Drainage Plan must specify suitable preventative arrangements, recording/auditing requirements, and specify corrective action as appropriate.

The arrangements may include the need for groundwater monitoring bores, which must be built and maintained at standards specified by SRW.

For developments where the environmental risks are deemed by SRW to be very high, a hydrogeological, water quality, or other risk assessment will be required. These are completed by a qualified expert and are usually desktop studies based on existing information. Field investigations may be required if insufficient information exists.

This report guides the establishment of buffers adjacent to stands of native vegetation where deemed needed.

Refer to the fact sheet 'Buffer standards'

1.4.4 Aboriginal cultural heritage

Irrigation development proposals may involve cultural heritage issues. Developers must adhere to relevant cultural heritage legislation. The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (the Act), and the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018, provide for the protection and management of Victoria's Aboriginal heritage (e.g. Aboriginal places, objects and human remains etc.) from irrigation development activities on private and public land.

Statutory authorisations under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 may be required before any other licences or permits can be issued.. This usually means having an approved cultural heritage management plan (CHMP).

More information is available from the Fact Sheet: Protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

2. Planning permits

2.1 Native vegetation removal

A planning permit may be required from the relevant local council under applicable zones, overlays and Clause 52.17 to remove, lop or destroy native vegetation on all land. This can include changes to hydrology that may degrade native vegetation or wetland vegetation. Avoidance of impacts on native vegetation should be the first approach.

Please contact Local Council for information regarding whether a planning permit is required. Cultural heritage and other issues will be considered in the planning application stage. The planning permit may be referred to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action for further assessment.

2.2 Earthworks permit

In some municipal areas proposed earthworks may require a permit, particularly where earthworks are on the floodplain. Check with your local council for more information.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The IDC can provide an information pack containing the following related fact sheets:

- Irrigation and drainage plan
- Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Native vegetation protection
- Buffer standards
- Applying for a works licence
- Roles and responsibilities

ACCESSIBILITY

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please telephone Sarah Killury on 0458 004 918 or email irrigation@agriculture.vic.gov.au

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment contact the [National Relay Service](#) on 133 677



Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines

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FACT SHEET 2 – Irrigation and Drainage Plans

An Irrigation and Drainage Plan must accompany applications for a new water-use or take and use licence or major variation to an existing licence to comply with the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines (the Guidelines).

WHERE TO START

Contact the Irrigation Development Coordinator

West Gippsland CMA (WGCMA) employs an Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) in Gippsland to provide information about the Guidelines and to guide developers through the approvals process.

The IDC service is provided at no charge and can save developers considerable time and resources. The IDC works closely with Agriculture Victoria irrigation extension staff and other agencies as required.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The key purpose of an IDP is to match the way land is irrigated and drainage disposed of, with the characteristics of the land and soil, to meet the objective of minimising harmful side-effects, including to the environment.

The design must also meet current best practice.

The standards for an IDP are described in full detail in Schedule 1 of [Ministerial Determination for Standard Water Use Conditions](#).

What is in an IDP?

There are six components that an IDP must include. These are:

- A. A map of the proposed development
- B. A topographical survey

- C. A soil assessment
- D. Irrigation design and management details
- E. Arrangements for drainage disposal
- F. Biodiversity protection arrangements

The IDC will be able to clarify which elements of the IDP are required in your situation following a preliminary risk assessment.

A. A map of the proposed development which clearly identifies:

- Property boundaries
- Areas to be irrigated (irrigation footprint)
- Type and location of crops to be planted
- Location of existing infrastructure e.g. buildings, roads, water storages
- Location of proposed new infrastructure features
- Existing native vegetation, wetlands, and other environmental features
- Buffers to protect retained native vegetation and mapped wetlands.

B. Topographical survey

The topographical survey must include elevation data and appropriate contours.

C. Soil assessment

The soil assessment requirements may vary depending on the irrigation system and crop type proposed for the development. Where required, a soil survey must be undertaken by a suitably qualified soil surveyor and a written report must be provided.

The written report must include:

- Description of topography and previous land use
- Key aspects of climate
- Soil profile descriptions
- Factors affecting potential root-zone depth
- Soil/water interactions e.g. drainage, permeability, infiltration, readily available water
- Land capability
- Soil chemistry and soil amelioration proposals
- Hydrogeology – if required by the water authority.

D. Irrigation design and management plan

All developments will require:

- Anticipated crop water requirements and proposed maximum application rates.
- Irrigation system specifications
- An identified supply point to the irrigated area
- Proposed irrigation scheduling arrangements.

NOTE: The irrigation design must be completed with the following principles in mind:

- The irrigation system should be capable of applying an irrigation depth equivalent to, or less than, the readily available water of the soil appropriate to the crop. Areas of similar soil capability are to be grouped as irrigation management units and supplied separately based on the results of the soil survey
- Flood and furrow irrigation should not occur where the calculated minimum depth that can be applied (taking into account infiltration rates, slopes, length of irrigation runs and discharge rate) exceeds the readily available water within the estimated crop root-zone.

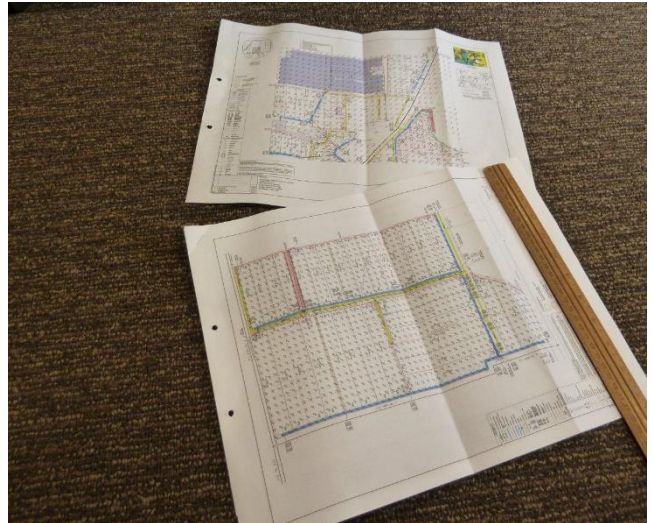
E. Arrangements for drainage disposal

The need for subsurface and/or surface drainage scheme and re-use system must be considered. A design is to be developed for the appropriate system(s) including the:

- Volume to be collected
- Details of any approved on-site disposal site and/or details of any off-site disposal site
- Details of approvals for any proposed re-use schemes and/or irrigation storages
- Location of pumps, discharge, or re-use points.

F. Biodiversity protection arrangements

The IDP must identify those parts of the property and adjacent land where the use of water for irrigation on the



property poses direct and ongoing risk to wetlands, native vegetation, or the habitat of native animals.

For those areas, the IDP must specify appropriate preventative measures, appropriate monitoring parameters, appropriate monitoring equipment and appropriate locations for the equipment to be installed. This includes nominated water table monitoring bores or piezometers.

The plan must also specify equipment maintenance standards, data reading, recording, reporting and auditing requirements, correction action thresholds, corrective action procedures and corrective action time limits.

The granting of a water-use licence does not remove the need to apply for any authorisation or permission necessary under any other Act with respect to the development.

FURTHER INFORMATION

An information kit containing related fact sheets is available from the IDC.

ACCESSIBILITY

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FACT SHEET 3 – Protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

This factsheet is part of an information kit for developers of new irrigation developments (or significant expansion or intensification of an existing irrigation project). The information kit helps developers follow the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines (the Guidelines) as part of seeking approval for their proposed development.

PART ONE: WHERE TO START

All developers of new irrigation developments (and significant re-developments) within Gippsland must follow the Guidelines. Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage from damage or loss, caused by the construction or operation of a new irrigation development, is a fundamental step in the process.

Contact the Irrigation Development Coordinator

West Gippsland CMA (WGCMA) employs an Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) in Gippsland to provide information about the Guidelines and to guide developers through the approvals process.

The IDC service is provided at no charge and can save developers considerable time and resources. The IDC works closely with Agriculture Victoria irrigation extension staff and other agencies as required.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (the Act), and the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018, provide for the protection and management of Victoria's Aboriginal heritage (e.g., Aboriginal places, objects and Aboriginal Ancestral remains etc.) from irrigation development activities on private and public land.

The Act provides clear guidance to planners and developers about how, Aboriginal cultural heritage is considered during the planning process and in some situations, where work cannot proceed until statutory authorisations are obtained. Significant penalties apply for breaches of the Act, including when a person undertakes an act that harms or is likely to harm Aboriginal cultural heritage (Aboriginal Heritage Act, Section 28).

NB: The onus of responsibility is on the Landowner to ensure that all relevant licences, permits and approvals are obtained prior to commencing works.

Cultural heritage sensitivity overlays

Irrigation developments along rivers and creeks in Gippsland, and/or within 200 metres of a named waterway or across Parks Victoria managed land will be in an area of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity. Developments that take place in locations where sand dunes, ancient lakes, sand sheets, lunettes, rivers, creeks, and wetlands may be in areas of cultural heritage sensitivity.

Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity are defined by the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 and are indicated on the [online map](#).

If the proposed development is associated with Cultural Heritage Sensitivity check the [Aboriginal Heritage Planning Tool](#) to see if your proposal classifies as a high impact activity and will need a CHMP.

The developer may be required to:

- prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan or
- obtain a cultural heritage permit (if works are in proximity to an Aboriginal Place).

Where an Aboriginal cultural heritage place is present on a landholder's property they might also elect to enter into a cultural heritage agreement with the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party for the ongoing protection of that place.

Cultural heritage management plan

Some new irrigation developments will require a cultural heritage management plan (CHMP) because all or part of the associated activity will take place in areas of cultural

sensitivity, and because all or part of those activities will be high impact activities.

The IDC can assist you in determining if the new irrigation development proposal will trigger the need for a CHMP.

When is a CHMP required?

A CHMP is required if the activity is in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and all or part of the activity is a high impact activity.

An example of some activities which may trigger the requirement for a CHMP include:

- Construction or alteration of water storage dams if a licence is required under section 67(1A) of the Water Act 1989 for the construction or alteration of the private dam.
- Utility installation (for example if a pump and associated pipeline is installed to service a property).
- Or if part of the works fall within a section of Park (as defined in the National Parks Act 1975).

A CHMP must be prepared by a qualified heritage advisor who is engaged by the developer. See the Aboriginal Victoria website for a [list of heritage advisers](#).

The CHMP must be assessed and approved by either a Registered Aboriginal Party (if one exists for the activity area), or the Secretary, DPEC, (via First Peoples – State Relations Group, DPC).

Cultural heritage permit

A cultural heritage permit (CHP) may be required where an exempt activity or a low impact activity may be planned that will, or is likely to, harm a Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Activities within 50 metres of known or registered Aboriginal places (such as scarred trees, shell middens and artefact scatters) may require a cultural heritage permit.

WHY IS ABORIGINAL/INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTED?

Aboriginal places provide a direct link between the past and contemporary Aboriginal culture, and they are an important source of information about how Aboriginal people live and relate to the environment.

In addition to the connections and significance that cultural heritage holds for Aboriginal people, Aboriginal places also have great scientific value. Some Aboriginal places are associated with the recent past while others are very old and date to a time when the environment was different from today. By studying the location and contents of Aboriginal places, we can learn more about how the environment has changed and how Aboriginal people responded and adapted to their environment over time.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [Relevant Registered Aboriginal Party \(RAP\)](#)
- [Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018](#)
- [Aboriginal Affairs Victoria](#)

An information kit containing related fact sheets is available from the IDC.

ACCESSIBILITY

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FACT SHEET 4 – Native Vegetation Protection

This factsheet is part of an information kit to assist developers of new irrigation developments in complying with the Gippsland New Irrigation Development Guidelines (the Guidelines). Protection of native vegetation is a component of seeking approval for a proposed development.

WHERE TO START

All developers of new irrigation developments (and significant re-developments) within Gippsland must follow the Guidelines. Fundamental in this process is protecting native vegetation and biodiversity from damage or loss caused by the construction or operation of a new irrigation development.

Contact the Irrigation Development Coordinator

West Gippsland CMA (WGCMA) employs an Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) in Gippsland to provide information about the Guidelines and to guide developers through the approvals process.

The IDC service is provided at no charge and can save developers considerable time and resources. The IDC works closely with Agriculture Victoria irrigation extension staff and other agencies as required.

WHAT TO EXPECT

All applicants must demonstrate that they have taken all practicable steps to avoid the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. They must also demonstrate that they have considered the impacts on biodiversity, including the risk of consequential or cumulative losses. For example, they should consider whether the change will result in the death of trees or other vegetation.

These issues should be discussed at an early stage of the approvals process.

It is easier to develop proposals that avoid loss if they consider the requirement from the outset. This also helps to avoid disappointment and frustration in having to alter designs late in the process.

What is native vegetation?

Native vegetation includes all trees (including dead standing trees), shrubs, herbs and grasses that are indigenous to Victoria.

There are a number of legal mechanisms that may apply to protect native vegetation. These are explained in general terms below.

The IDC and staff from the Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action (DEECA) and local government can provide guidance.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

A planning permit is required to remove, lop or destroy any native vegetation. This includes regrowth vegetation which is greater than ten years old. There are exemptions.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988

Some native plants including wattles (*Acacia* sp.), daisies (*Asteraceae* sp.) and rare plants have additional protection. A Protected Flora Permit for works on public land must be obtained if the works may affect plants or ecological communities listed in the Protected Flora List (DELWP 2017). Protected Flora Permits can be obtained from the regional DEECA office. See the DEECA website for more information on the [Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988](#).

Environment Effects (EE) Act 1978

If the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, it must be referred to the Minister for Planning for a decision on whether an Environmental Effects Statement is required.

The [criteria for environmental effects referral](#) include clearing 10 hectares or more of native vegetation, potential impacts on threatened species, important wetlands, and/or Aboriginal cultural heritage. Pre-referral consultation with the DEECA Referrals Coordinator (03) 8392 5503 is encouraged.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999

If the proposed project could impact on any matters of national environmental significance, it must be referred to the Commonwealth Government under the Federal EPBC Act.

Matters include nationally threatened species and communities such as Regent Parrots (nationally vulnerable). The [Significant Impact Guidelines](#) outline a self-assessment process to determine if you need to refer your project.

If a project is referred, the Commonwealth will advise if the project is a Controlled Action requiring assessment against the requirements of the Federal EPBC Act.

Environmental assessment bilateral agreement

The [bilateral agreement](#) between Victoria and the Commonwealth Government avoids duplication of assessment processes. Victoria can assess proposals that the Commonwealth has determined as controlled actions under the EPBC Act and are also likely to have a significant impact on the environment under the Victorian EE Act. The Commonwealth will still make the approval decision under the EPBC Act, relying on the assessment report prepared by the relevant Victorian decision-maker.

Assumed losses

Removal of native vegetation also includes assumed losses from works (such as trenching) which impact on more than 10 per cent of a tree's root system (even though the tree has not been physically removed).

All trees have a 'Tree Protection Zone' (TPZ), which is 12 times the tree trunk diameter, measured at a height of 1.4 metres. Any works within this TPZ need to be included as part of an application for native vegetation removal.

Assumed losses can also occur when more than one third of a tree canopy is lopped or removed.

Some exemptions may apply, such as limited removal of native vegetation to construct a boundary fence. Planning permit applications to remove native vegetation and the calculation of offset requirements must comply with the DELWP (2017) Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

Applications to remove native vegetation are categorised into one of three pathways which reflect the level of assessment required. For current information;

- Contact your local council
- Visit the [Farming and Native Vegetation Portal](#)
- See [DEECA Native Vegetation](#) information

Native vegetation offsets

An offset is an area of native vegetation or revegetation that is permanently protected and actively managed to control threats such as pests and weeds. Prior to the removal of any native vegetation, an offset may be required to be provided



to compensate for the impact on biodiversity. The type and amount of offset required depends on the native vegetation being removed and the contribution it makes to Victoria's biodiversity.

The DEECA website has more information on [offsets for the removal of native vegetation](#) including a list of vegetation brokers.

DEVELOPER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the developer's responsibility to ensure compliance under this legislation. In this context all new developments must proceed within the framework of this legislation.

For all activities there are reporting and compliance requirements that need to be met when undertaking works.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your Local Government for additional information.

The IDC can provide an information kit containing related fact sheets.

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FACT SHEET 5 - Buffer Standards for the Protection of Biodiversity

This fact sheet outlines the buffer zone standards required to comply with the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines (the Guidelines) and provides an overview of the process. Buffer zones may be required to protect environmental features from the impact of a new irrigation development.

WHERE TO START

Contact the Irrigation Development Coordinator

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The IDC service is provided at no charge and can save developers considerable time and resources. The IDC works closely with Agriculture Victoria irrigation extension staff and other agencies as required.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Buffer zones may be included as a condition on water-use licences or take and use licences. The IDC will provide further information and advice specific to your new irrigation development proposal.

What is a buffer

A buffer is an area of land set aside between irrigation developments and retained native vegetation or other important environmental features to ensure water use and management practices do not impact upon biodiversity values.

The adoption of buffers also reduces potential impacts from:

- Spray drift

- Soil erosion and surface water movement
- Surface runoff quality (e.g. nutrients and suspended solids) into waterways
- Weed invasion
- Encroachment and damage caused by machinery.

Standard buffer widths are required between environmental features and irrigation to reduce the impact on native vegetation and biodiversity values caused by irrigation.

The proposed buffers must be described in the Irrigation and Drainage Plan (IDP), which must accompany each irrigation development application.

Buffer areas must be included with the investigations or studies supporting the application. These may be independently reviewed by the licensing authority prior to approval of the final irrigation development application and conditions.

The proposed buffer will not be reviewed until the irrigation and drainage design has been completed as this will influence the buffer decision process.

WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES IS PROTECTED?

Native roadside vegetation, vegetation corridors, remnant patches within a property, scattered vegetation, mapped wetlands and waterways are all protected and defined for consistent application of buffer requirements.

The IDC can provide more specific details about these definitions as part of a preliminary discussion about the proposed irrigation development. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) (2017) Guidelines also provide detailed definitions.

https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/91146/Guidelines-for-the-removal,-destruction-or-lopping-of-native-vegetation,-2017.pdf

Standard buffers

Buffer requirements are determined using a risk-based approach depending on two main factors:

- The assessed level of risk a proposed irrigation development is likely to have on the environmental feature
- The value and condition (as determined by a qualified ecologist, arborist, zoologist, etc) of the native vegetation or waterway on which the proposed irrigation development is likely to impact.

The level of risk above can only be determined by obtaining data specific to the site, so in most instances conservative buffer distances are adopted. Standard buffers are shown in **Tables 1**.

Buffer distances should only be reduced where the applicant can demonstrate that biodiversity values will not be affected. This can be done by providing further evidence (e.g. the development is downslope of vegetation) and may require investigations or mitigating works.

Buffer distances are measured from the outer drip line (canopy edge) of the vegetation.

Table 1: Standard vegetation buffers for irrigation developments on non-Mallee soils

Environmental asset/value	Standard buffer
Land administered under the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> and significant reserves under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i>	Up to 200 metres or as advised by Parks Vic
Waterways including mapped wetlands and waterways in potable water supply catchments	30 metres (Clause 14.02)
Any vegetation which meets the definition of native vegetation as per 52.17	Tree Protection Zone (e.g. 12 x diameter at breast height at 1.3 m) up to 15 m maximum which will be determined by the responsible authority on a case by case basis.

HOW ARE BUFFERS MANAGED?

Buffers must be managed for the benefit of biodiversity in a farming system, which will include various management requirements (e.g. stock management, ecosystem services, species selection). Advice should be sought prior to approval of the new irrigation development where it includes buffers, to ensure long-term management. Responsible / referral authorities may specify conditions in any applicable planning permits.

Vegetated buffer:

- Vegetation must be established within 12 months of planting the adjoining irrigated crop, or as per conditions of any permit

- Species used in revegetation works must be based on the benchmark adjoining Ecological Vegetation Class species list for that area
- If livestock grazing is to remain a component of the development enterprise, stock proof fencing is to be erected to exclude livestock from any vegetated buffer area.

All buffers must be managed as follows:

- Buffers must not be used for works or development without the approval of the applicable Department or Responsible Authority
- Appropriate measures must be in place to maintain separation between irrigation activities and the buffer area and prevent encroachment.

HOW ARE BUFFERS APPLIED TO PIVOT IRRIGATION?

Buffer distances are calculated from the edge of the irrigation area.

Where a water-use licence or take and use licence is approved for pivot irrigation, a particular condition should be placed on the licence to the effect that "Pivot irrigation is approved for the land specified in the licence, other forms of irrigation systems must not be carried out on the land specified in the licence without the addition of particular conditions governing the use of such an irrigation system".

FURTHER INFORMATION

An information kit containing related fact sheets is available from the IDC.

ACCESSIBILITY

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FACT SHEET 6 - Applying for a Works Licence

This fact sheet covers the general requirements for approvals to construct and operate water diversion works (Works Licence) as part of the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines. This includes the construction of pumps, pipelines and associated infrastructure (including power) on and across Crown Land and to private property.

WHERE TO START

Contact the Irrigation Development Coordinator

West Gippsland CMA (WGCMA) employs an Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) in Gippsland to provide information about the Guidelines and to guide developers through the approvals process.

The IDC service is provided at no charge and can save developers considerable time and resources. The IDC works closely with Agriculture Victoria irrigation extension staff and other agencies as required.

WHAT TO SORT OUT

To satisfy the Guidelines, a new irrigation development (or significant expansion) must seek approvals from a range of Victorian agencies such as Southern Rural Water (SRW), the relevant Aboriginal cultural heritage authority, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), Parks Victoria and local government.

The specific details that will be required as part of the approvals process will vary. They depend on the complexity of the various issues that will need to be addressed; this may include native vegetation and biodiversity, cultural heritage, water availability, water access routes and existing planning overlays.

It is important to note that the approvals to construct and operate water diversion works, on or across Crown Land, need to be progressed in parallel with the approvals process for the associated water use licence or a take and use licence. A water use licence is required for developments sourcing water from declared surface water systems and a take and use licence is required for water sourced from undeclared water systems such as groundwater, unregulated rivers.

Assessment process

To construct and operate private water delivery infrastructure works to service properties, the developer may require the following permits/licences/approvals:

- Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- Public Land Managers consent
- Works on Waterways permit
- Planning permit/s
- Works licence

Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)

A CHMP can be triggered by new utilities such as pipelines, if it is a high impact activity in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity. Many new irrigation developments will be in areas of cultural sensitivity. For example, sand dunes, ancient lakes, sand sheets, lunettes and/or within 200m of a named waterway or across Parks Victoria land.

Refer to Fact Sheet 3 in this series for further details.

Public Land Managers Consent

The construction and installation of water delivery infrastructure on or across public land requires public land managers consent for the issue of a planning permit and landowners' consent from Parks Victoria or DEECA.

Works on Waterways Permit

Works on waterways can include things like bridges, jetties, crossings or culverts. Poorly planned works can cause bed and bank erosion, stop fish passage and change waterflows.

Permits are issued by the relevant Catchment Management Authority. There is no cost for a works on waterway permit.

A works on waterways permit is required for a range of works, including:

- crossings – bridges, fords, culverts
- deviations – waterway realignments
- stabilisation – bank protection, retaining structures
- vegetation – fallen timber and vegetation removal, revegetation projects
- works – irrigation pumps, service crossings
- other – jetty, river mouth opening, boardwalks.

Planning Permit

Land use and development including the removal of native vegetation is controlled by local government under planning schemes. Public land managers consent is a prerequisite for an application for a planning permit for infrastructure on or across public land.

Cultural heritage, earthworks, and other issues will be considered in the planning application stage. The planning permit may be referred to DEECA.

Works Licence

Extraction shares are expressed as a condition on a works licence. Extraction share conditions are a share of the total amount of water that can be drawn from regulated rivers at a certain point over a given period of time. Extraction shares are used to restrict water extraction in times of high demand, when rationing water is required. The issuing of additional extraction share may erode the existing shares available to Victorian entitlement holders and pose a risk to the deliverability of water.

More information on how the works licence application process in Victoria has changed can be found on the Victorian [Water Register](#) website.

Consideration must be given to what mechanisms will be undertaken to meet the standards necessary and to minimise the impacts on other persons and the environment during construction as well as ongoing operation of the water delivery infrastructure into the future.

The works licence is issued by the relevant Water Corporation (e.g. SRW) and is staged over two phases. The first is a licence to construct water diversion works. At the completion of the works an inspection by the Water Corporation will occur and metering requirements will be addressed and communicated to the customer. Once metering installation requirements have been met, the Water Corporation will convert the works licence from a 'Construct' to an 'Operate' status. The new operate licence will be issued with a five-year tenure. Developers can apply for a works licence (WL) by completing Form 29 and submitting it to the appropriate Water Corporation (see below for a link to the Water Register: Form 29).

In considering the works licence (WL) application, the Water Corporation must have regard for issues relevant to the associated water use licence (WUL) application. A WL will not be issued in isolation from a WUL

Developers should note that the Public Land Manager's Consent must be issued prior to applying for a WL and is recorded on **Form 29**.

A Works Plan is required as part of the WL application and enables the applicant to demonstrate that the public safety, aesthetic, archaeological, environmental and water resource values of the waterway, aquifer, or the riparian or riverine environment will be protected during construction, alteration, operation and/or decommissioning of the pump and associated infrastructure. The requirements of Works Plans are detailed in Schedule 2 of the Ministerial Determination on Policies for Managing Works Licences. These policies are available from the IDC.

Dams

Apart from pumps and pipelines the developer may require an on-farm dam to store water to adequately service the watering requirements of the property. All dam constructions require authorisation and must be incorporated into the Works Plan. Dam construction guidelines are available from your local Water Corporation. For further details on the requirements refer to [Managing Dams and Water Emergencies](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

The IDC can provide an information kit containing related fact sheets.

Access electronic copies of:

- [Standards for Site Environmental Management Plans](#)
- [Dam construction standards](#)
- [Works Licence Application Form 29](#) (These forms are issued with a discrete number).
- [Ministerial Determinations](#)

ACCESSIBILITY

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Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

FACT SHEET 7 - Roles and responsibilities for new irrigation developments

This fact sheet outlines the roles and responsibilities of the developer, the Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) and other relevant agencies in the Irrigation Development Guideline process.

Please take a moment to read it, to ensure that you understand your obligations.

DEVELOPER / LANDOWNER

All developers of new irrigation developments (and significant re-developments) within Gippsland must follow the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines.

You are advised to contact the Irrigation Development Coordinator before you proceed.

It is the developer's responsibility to understand the Guidelines.

It is the developer's responsibility to be clear about:

- What approvals will be needed from the various agencies
- How much these approvals will cost
- How long it will likely take to receive approval
- Understanding how this will impact on your development.
- You must ensure that no infrastructure works commence prior to receiving the appropriate approvals.

NB: The onus of responsibility is on the Landowner to ensure that all relevant licences, permits and approvals are obtained prior to commencing works.

IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR (IDC)

West Gippsland CMA (WGCMA) employs an Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) in Gippsland. The IDC service is provided at no charge and can save developers considerable time and resources. The IDC works closely with Agriculture Victoria irrigation extension staff and other agencies as required.

What we will do

- An Irrigation Development Coordinator (IDC) will explain the intent of the Guidelines.
- The IDC will undertake a preliminary assessment of your proposed development.
- The IDC will provide the developer with an understanding of the potential complexity of the assessment process, the information needed to be collected, and any issues which may impact on the time required to gain approvals and/or impact on the project cost structure.
- The IDC and Agriculture Victoria can provide free impartial advice on a range of topics including native vegetation and cultural heritage considerations, planning controls for earthworks and off-site impacts (drainage and flood mitigation), and advice to ensure all irrigation design options are discussed and understood.

What we won't do

- We won't recommend any one contractor or comment on what/how they charge.
- We don't issue approval for you to commence your development.
- There is no charge for the IDC service.

SOUTHERN RURAL WATER (SRW)

SRW is the Minister's delegate and is responsible for the issue of WULs, works licences and T&ULs in accordance with the Victorian Water Act 1989 and associated Ministerial Determinations.

A Water Corporation may not approve the issue of a works licence, WUL and or the T&UL to new developments unless the statutory requirements of the Water Corporations, and other stakeholder organisations, have been documented, evaluated and approved.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE ACTION (DEECA)

DEECA Planning & Approvals (P&A) is a referral authority for advising Local Government on native vegetation and Crown Land issues through the planning permit application process.

DEECA Water and Catchments Group provides high level policy advice to the CMAs and other agencies on the preparation and endorsement of the Guidelines.

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA (AGVIC)

AgVic Irrigation Officers can provide advice to the proponent, Water Corporations and CMAs on the technical aspect of irrigation developments. AgVic provide extension support to the proponent with information on best practice irrigation management and advice during development of an Irrigation and Drainage Management Plan.

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES (CMAS)

CMAs are the lead agency for ensuring the Guidelines are up to date with current legislation. CMAs are a referral authority for advising agencies, Local Government and individuals on lakes, rivers, wetlands and floodplain issues and matters, particularly as part of the planning permit approval process undertaken by statutory authorities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Issue planning permits in accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987 such as applications relating to land development, drainage, flooding, native vegetation, waterways, cultural heritage and earthworks.

PARKS VICTORIA

Under the Parks Victoria Act 2018, Parks Victoria has primary responsibility for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of Parks Victoria managed land.

URBAN WATER AUTHORITIES

Urban Water Authorities are a referral authority for developments located within declared urban water supply catchments. Typically, for developments in urban water supply catchments, the proponent will be required to demonstrate, via the Irrigation and Drainage Management Plan, how the development will protect the yield and quality of water for urban water supply purposes.

REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES AND ABORIGINAL VICTORIA (AV)

Cultural Heritage Management Approvals must be in place before any other approval process can be completed. This typically takes the form of a cultural heritage management plan (CHMP).

A Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) may elect to approve a CHMP. Where there is no appointed RAP, the Secretary, DPC, will assess an application for approval of a CHMP.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY (EPA)

The Environment Protection Act 2017 includes the general environmental duty (GED), which requires Victorians to understand and minimise their risks of harm to human health and the environment, from pollution and waste.

EPA work with industry to help them understand how to fulfil their obligations, by providing guidance, advice and other support. Complying with the GED is about taking reasonable practicable steps and employing good environmental work practices to minimise risk of harm to human health and the environment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The IDC can provide an information pack containing all related fact sheets.

ACCESSIBILITY

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Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

FACT SHEET 8 – Checklist of possible permits and requirements for new or expanding irrigation developments

This fact sheet outlines the most common permits and requirements you may need to obtain before you commence your irrigation development.

Please note: Not all of these requirements will be relevant to you. The Irrigation Development Coordinator at the West Gippsland CMA and the irrigation team Agriculture Victoria Maffra can assist in identifying which permits are relevant to your situation. Likewise, this list may not cover all the requirements for your property. It is your responsibility to ensure that you identify all relevant permits and statutory requirements before commencing your development.

PERMIT / REQUIREMENT	POTENTIAL COST ¹	POTENTIAL TIMEFRAME	LEAD AUTHORITY ²
Water Extraction and Use Licences			
Works Licences (Section 67) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pump offtake on a waterway Bore construction Dam construction 	\$	2-24 months depending on risks and additional requirements	SRW
Take & Use Licence (Section 51)	\$		
Water Use Licence (Section 64)	\$		
Possible additional requirements to support water licence applications			
Irrigation and Drainage Management Plan (IDMP) – Low Risk	\$	1-3 months	CMA / SRW
Irrigation and Drainage Management Plan (IDMP) – Moderate Risk	\$\$	3-6 months	
Irrigation and Drainage Management Plan (IDMP) – High Risk	\$\$\$	6-12 months	
Works Plan (to inform a S. 67 works licence)	\$	1-3 months	SRW
Bore pumping test / yield assessment	\$\$	1-3 months	
Hydrogeological Assessment	\$\$\$	3-6 months	
Effluent and/or nutrient management plan	\$\$	1-3 months	CMA / EPA
Salinity Management Plan	\$	1-3 months	CMA / AV
Topographical Survey and/or Soil survey	\$\$	1-3 months	CMA / AV
Cultural Heritage			
Cultural Heritage Check	-	1 month	SRW
Cultural Heritage Permit	\$	1-3 months	RAP
Cultural Heritage Management Plan	\$\$\$	6-12 months	

PERMIT / REQUIREMENT	POTENTIAL COST ¹	POTENTIAL TIMEFRAME	LEAD AUTHORITY ²
Native Vegetation and Biodiversity			
Local Government Planning Permit (to remove or lop native vegetation)	\$	3-6 months months	LG
Cert 5 Arborists Report	\$\$	1-3 months	LG
Native Vegetation Offset	\$\$\$	3-6 months	LG / DEECA
Protected Flora Permit (Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988)	\$\$	3-6 months	DEECA
Wildlife Management Plan (Wildlife Act 1975)	\$\$	6-12 months	DEECA
Environmental Effects Statement (Environmental Effects Act 1978)	\$\$\$	12-24 months	DEECA
Matters of national environmental significance (EPBC Act 1999)	\$\$\$	12-24 months	DOE
Floodplains and Waterways			
Local Government Planning Permit (for earthworks on a floodplain)	\$	3-6 months	LG / CMA
Flood study	\$\$\$	3-6 months	LG / CMA
Works on Waterways Permit	-	1-3 months	CMA
Protected urban water supply catchments requirements (<i>typically incorporated into the Irrigation and Drainage Management Plan</i>)	-	3-6 months	UWA
Public Land Manager's Consent (for works on Crown Land)	\$	1-3 months	DEECA / PV
Irrigating with Treated Wastewater			
EPA discharge licence (and associated requirements as advised by the EPA)	\$\$\$	6-12 months	EPA
Local government planning permits			
Additional planning requirements will vary depending on site specific settings and local overlays. Contact your Local Council planning department for further advice.			

¹ Potential cost - \$ = typically less than \$1000, \$\$ = may be \$1000 to \$5000, \$\$\$ = may be in excess of \$5000.

² Acronyms – SRW = Southern Rural Water, CMA = Catchment Management Authority, EPA = Environment Protection Authority, RAP = Registered Aboriginal Party, LG = Local Government, DEECA = Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, DOE = Department of Environment (Commonwealth), UWA = Urban Water Authority, PV = Parks Victoria

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Irrigation Development Coordinator at the West Gippsland CMA and the irrigation team Agriculture Victoria Maffra can provide further advice and an information pack containing all related fact sheets.

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