

Frequently Asked Questions

How long is the proposed pipeline?

Approximately 70 kilometres - linking the Goulburn River to Sugarloaf Reservoir.

How long will it take you to build the pipeline?

The project is expected to take 2.5 years to build and is expected to be completed in 2010.

Where is the water coming from?

The water transferred via the pipeline is considered 'saved' water, in that it will be sourced from savings achieved through the modernisation of irrigation infrastructure in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District.

This program of irrigation modernisation, known as the Food Bowl Modernisation Project, will aim to capture up to 450 gigalitres of water each year that is currently lost due to system inefficiencies, such as open channels and inaccurate metering, in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District.

A new body, the Northern Victoria Infrastructure Renewal Project, has been established to oversee the irrigation upgrades.

The first stage of the project will secure up to 225 GL of saved water annually. This water will be shared between irrigators, the environment and urban users.

How much water will the Pipeline transfer?

The Sugarloaf Pipeline will transfer up to 75 gigalitres of water savings to Melbourne each year.

What route is the pipeline planned to travel?

The preferred route for the Sugarloaf Pipeline travels south from the Goulburn River near Yea, along the Melba Highway, via either Hunts Lane or Gulf Road, then Steels Creek Road to Sugarloaf Reservoir, west of Yarra Glen. The route includes private farmland, and public land.

How long before the route for the pipeline will be finalised?

Project development and pre-construction activities are well advanced. An announcement regarding the route alignment is expected in early 2008.

Why has the Melba Highway route been chosen?

The Melba Highway is the preferred route because:

- It is approximately 20 kilometres shorter in length than the next preferred option.
- It has the lowest capital cost in terms of both the cost of the construction of the pipeline and also the cost of the associated water treatment plant works.
- It has fewer identified environmental issues and planning impacts.

- The Melba Highway route is the lowest point over the Great Dividing Range, thus reducing ongoing energy costs of pumping.

How will the land be affected?

Melbourne Water will need to access private land to build the pipeline and to create an easement to protect the pipeline. The easement is necessary so that the pipeline can be accessed if required in the future for maintenance. Its location will be register on titles.

How wide will the Pipeline easement on private land be?

The easement will be approximately 15 metres wide; however, construction will require a strip of land approximately 30 metres wide.

How deep will the pipeline be dug into the ground?

As a rule, it will be a minimum of about 1 metre deep. At points where it crosses major roads or rivers it is likely to be greater than 1.5 metres deep. The approach is to keep as constant a grade as possible to minimise any changes in vertical alignment.

Will land owners' land be acquired or will an easement be put across it?

In most cases there will be a requirement to register an easement, rather than purchase a strip of land. Consultation will be undertaken with affected landowners to agree the compensation payment related to the registration of easements. Melbourne Water can compulsorily acquire the easement via a process outlined in the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986.

Does Melbourne Water have to pay landowners to put an easement on their land?

Compensation for the easement and rental for the workspace occupied during construction will be assessed by an independent certified practising valuer. Melbourne Water will pay compensation to landowners, including costs associated with creating the easement and restoring land within it.

Will the easement impact what owners can and can't do on their land or across that easement?

The easement will restrict the construction of significant buildings over the pipeline, but is unlikely to affect uses such as grazing. The aim of the consultation process with affected landowners is to minimise disruption to the current and future use of their land as a result of the pipeline. The easement will generally not be fenced and access will be maintained. The exception to this is where above ground fittings will be required at some locations and these will need to be protected from damage. No rezoning of land will be required for construction of the pipeline.

Will the pipeline be above or below ground?

Our intention is for the pipeline to be underground, particularly on privately owned land. The possible exception to this may be where the pipeline negotiates river or creek crossings.

What studies will be undertaken as part of the detailed design process?

As part of our detailed design process, thorough environmental, heritage and planning studies are being carried out to support a decision on a finalised route alignment for the pipeline. Geotechnical investigations are also being conducted, involving digging test pits and boreholes up to four metres deep.

Why is the pipeline being built by Melbourne Water?

Melbourne Water has extensive expertise and experience in undertaking projects of this size and nature. Projects are undertaken in strict accordance with comprehensive environmental and community policies and procedures.

Where can I get more information about the project?

For any information about the project contact our toll free number: on 1300 453 753, email sugarloafinfo@melbournewater.com.au or visit our website www.melbournewater.com.au/sugarloaf