

## Planning and Environment Fact Sheet

In June 2007, the Victorian Government released *Our Water Our Future - The Next Stage of the Government's Water Plan*. The document outlines major infrastructure projects to secure Victoria's water supplies in the face of drought and the challenge of climate change. Scientific studies indicate that rainfall in Melbourne will decrease over the medium to long term as a result of climate change.

These projects include creating new water through the construction of a desalination plant and saving water through modernising irrigation and other infrastructure in the Goulburn Murray Region - Victoria's Food Bowl. The Food Bowl Modernisation Project is expected to deliver up to 225GL of water annually, to be shared equally between the irrigation system, the environment and Melbourne.

As part of the Food Bowl Modernisation Project, a pipeline will be built linking the Goulburn River to Sugarloaf Reservoir, north east of Melbourne. When completed in 2010, the Sugarloaf Pipeline Project will deliver up to 75GL of water annually to Melbourne.

### Preferred pipeline route

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, and then along Steels Creek Road to Sugarloaf Reservoir in the north east of Melbourne. The route includes private

farmland and public land, but does not take in National Park.

The route is approximately 70 kilometres long, will have a construction width of 25 - 30 metres, an operational width (easement) of approximately 15 metres and a pipeline depth of approximately 1.0 metre.

The exact route will be determined following completion of thorough technical assessments and discussions with and input from key stakeholders.

Careful consideration will be given to minimising construction impacts, which may include:

- Disruptions to traffic due to road closures or widening
- Clearing of vegetation
- Earthworks
- Potential noise, dust, vibration and odour emissions

The realignment of the route, the use of trenchless technology and minimising the width of the easement will be used to avoid or minimise such impacts. While noting that roadside vegetation often has high conservation significance, every effort will be made to use existing corridors such as roads or farmland.

### Addressing Planning and Environmental matters

Melbourne Water has considerable experience in successfully delivering major infrastructure projects.

Our ability to do so is underpinned by Melbourne Water's comprehensive policies, procedures and guidelines covering environment, heritage, health and safety and planning matters.

All those involved in project delivery are required to have a sound understanding of these policies and procedures and for many it involves completing thorough training programs.

Practical community engagement tools, including the Community, Environment and Public Health Assessment checklist (CEPHA checklist) have been developed to assist everyone involved in the delivery of infrastructure projects. Information on Melbourne Water's approach to community engagement can be found at [www.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.melbournewater.com.au).

To further assist with the planning and implementation of major infrastructure projects, Melbourne Water engages specialist expertise as required. The following environmental assessments are being undertaken to inform the successful planning and design of the Sugarloaf Pipeline Project:

- Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- Geological
- Flora and Fauna
- Aquatic Ecology
- Traffic Management
- Noise and Vibration
- Dust and Odour
- Greenhouse Gas
- Tourism and Economic
- Landscape and Visual Impact

Sugarloaf Pipeline Project

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### Stakeholder input to the project

The Sugarloaf Pipeline Project involves detailed planning and design. It poses some challenges due to the tight timeframe for its completion. A key to the ability to meet these challenges will be Melbourne Water's consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, including statutory authorities and the community.

Melbourne Water is currently meeting with key stakeholders involved in, or impacted by, the project to obtain feedback on their requirements and concerns. The delivery of the project will therefore be underpinned by ongoing consultation and engagement.

Regular meetings will be held with key stakeholders to discuss the form and content of environmental and planning issues and approvals processes. These discussions will form the detailed assessment of the project. Stakeholders include:

- The local Shires of Murrindindi, Yarra Ranges and Nillumbik
- VicRoads
- Goulburn, Broken and Port Phillip & Western Port Catchment Management Authorities
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Department of Planning and Community Development
- Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and Heritage Victoria
- Environment Protection Authority
- Service authorities such as water, power and gas including SP Ausnet
- Victrack
- Goulburn Murray Water and Southern Rural Water
- Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development Victoria

### Relevant legislation

Approval for the project may be required under the following State and Federal Government legislation. These pieces of legislation run concurrently.

- Environment Effects Act 1978 (Victorian State legislation)
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Victorian State legislation)
- Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Victorian State legislation)
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Victorian State legislation)
- Native Title Act 1993 (Commonwealth legislation)
- Heritage Act 1995 (Victorian State legislation)

The Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 (Victorian State legislation) and the Water Act 1989 (Victorian State legislation) also confer certain rights upon Melbourne Water including the ability to access land.

### The next steps

Project development activities are underway and include:

- a detailed alignment survey of the proposed route
- a detailed flora and fauna survey along the proposed route
- undertaking a geotechnical investigation along the proposed route
- initiating activities associated with the resolution of all matters required to be addressed under statutory planning and environmental approval processes
- commencement of the detailed design of the project to ensure that the procurement of long lead items is progressed expeditiously.

Construction is expected to commence by mid 2008.

### Inquiries welcome

Melbourne Water welcomes inquiries on the Sugarloaf Pipeline Project.

Please contact:

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