

Diversions Management Drought Response Plan Fact Sheet

January 2009



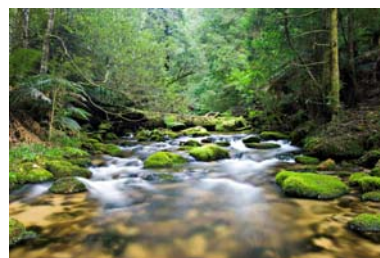
Background

Water is a scarce resource and Melbourne Water has developed a Drought Response Plan (DRP) for Licensed Water Users. During drought, diverters' access to water is restricted or banned depending on the levels of our waterways to avoid adverse environmental impacts.

Melbourne Water has an obligation under the State Environment Protection Policy, Schedule F7, Waters of the Yarra Catchment 1999, to protect the health of the Yarra River by attempting to maintain minimum environmental flow rates. Minimum flow rates have similarly been determined for the smaller sub-catchment waterways feeding into the Yarra River main stem and are detailed in the DRP.

What are the main points of the plan?

- The DRP is active at all times in conjunction with licence conditions and requires licence holders to proactively seek and monitor information about waterway status prior to taking any water.
- Warning levels will alert water users of low flows and the likelihood of bans
- Ban trigger levels apply for the Yarra River and all major sub-catchments. Bans are introduced once these triggers are reached.
- Where flows are subject to rapid change, such as the smaller catchments, restriction levels do not apply and catchments will go directly onto a ban following escalation of risk warning levels
- In larger catchments, such as the Little Yarra, Yarra (Upper and Lower) and Woori Yallock, a single level of restriction applies. Bans are then introduced if trigger levels are reached
- Information on warning levels, restrictions and bans will be available on Melbourne Water's website (www.melbournewater.com.au/diverters), or by calling the Melbourne Water Customer Support Centre on 131 722
- Licence holders are expected to check the restriction status of their catchment before taking water under a licence



- The plan is designed for water users to manage their use appropriately in accordance with the active warning levels, in order to avoid or limit the introduction of bans
- Bans or restrictions will remain in place until the catchment-specific relief trigger is met
- A licence holder must check with Melbourne Water each time they wish to pump, either by contacting the Customer Support Centre or by checking the status of restrictions on the Melbourne Water website
- The website will be updated regularly, enabling a responsive approach to fluctuations in flows and weather.

Obligations

Melbourne Water

- Comply with relevant statutory and legislative obligations, including the need to protect the environment
- Manage drought in accordance with relevant Stream-flow Management Plans where applicable
- Maintain and implement the drought response plan as required
- Communicate openly with licensed water users, industry groups and stakeholders



Water Users

- Comply with licensed volume and conditions
- Understand and comply with the Drought Response Plan
- Comply with applicable Stream-flow Management Plans and/or Local Management Plans where they exist
- Observe minimum Stream-flows
- Proactively seek and monitor information about drought status
- Prepare individual drought contingencies and manage own water use during times of drought conditions¹
- Contact Melbourne Water for clarification and/or advice if uncertain about any aspect of water resource management.

Further Information

Melbourne Water can be contacted:

- By telephone during business hours on 131 722
- By writing to PO Box 4342, Melbourne, Vic, 3001
- By email to inquiry@melbwater.com.au