



2016/17 Annual Stream Flow Management Plan Reports

Annual reports for Melbourne Waters Stream Flow Management Plans (SFMP's):
Hoddles Creek, Little Yarra and Don Rivers, Olinda Creek, Plenty River, Steels, Pauls
and Dixons Creeks, Stringybark Creek, Woori Yallock Creek.

September 2017



Melbourne Water is owned by the Victorian Government. We manage Melbourne's water supply catchments, remove and treat most of Melbourne's sewage, and manage rivers and creeks and major drainage systems throughout the Port Phillip and Westernport region.





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Annual reports for Melbourne Water Stream Flow Management Plans 2016-17

Background

Melbourne Water is responsible for managing approximately 1900 surface water diverters in the Yarra catchment, parts of the lower Maribyrnong River and some creeks in western catchments.

Melbourne Water is obliged under the *Water Act 1989* (the Act) to develop Stream Flow Management Plans (SFMP) for certain waterways that are considered ecologically important and stressed over summer months. Seven waterways in Melbourne Water's management district are classified as such. They are 'protected areas' and are afforded this status under the Act.

Section 32C of the Act requires Melbourne Water to prepare an annual report for each approved Stream Flow Management Plan. The Act also requires Melbourne Water to submit an annual report to the Minister for Water and the relevant Catchment Management Authority for each approved plan by 30 September each year.

Melbourne Water has supported the development and approval of plans for the following seven waterway catchments:

- Hoddles Creek (Est. 2003);
- Olinda Creek (Est. 2012);
- Plenty River (Est. 2007);
- Steels, Pauls and Dixons Creeks (Est. 2007);
- Stringybark Creek (Est. 2007);
- Woori Yallock Creek (Est. 2007);
- Little Yarra and Don Rivers (Est. 2012).

Copies of the 2016/17 Annual Reports for these catchments are contained in this bound volume. Please note that electronic versions of the reports are also available and include hyperlinks to related information.

This report will also be made available via the Melbourne Water website on www.Melbournewater.com.au

About this report

This report provides additional interpretive information relating to the performance of the seven plans. Attachments to this report for each plan include a detailed compliance table against the plans prescriptions and a secondary table of summary statistics for volumetric allowances, bans and rosters and volumetric use from metered licences.

General notes relating to Melbourne Water's compliance with SFMP prescriptions are provided below.

Active Licences

Melbourne Water considers a licence active when a pump is in place and water is extracted.

Non-active licences are monitored to determine if they become active through:

- Licence holders applying to install a pump thereby indicating their intent to take water,
- Routine property inspections every 5 years,
- Reviewing aerial images that indicate if irrigation may be occurring within the catchment.

Metering small volume licences, dam registrations and inactive licences is not considered practicable due to the capital cost of installation or the ongoing operation costs associated with reading and maintenance. The benefit of metering these licences is not evident and does not justify the cost which would be passed on to licence holders.

Streamflow Monitoring

The Hydrology and Flood warning team has a contract with Australian Laboratory Services (ALS). This contract involves the maintenance, calibration, gauging, downloading and quality controlling all of the data that this organisation collects.

- Maintenance is done on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis depending on the pre-set criteria for each site.
- Calibration of all instruments is done on an annual basis, or as required to meet calibration and QA needs.
- Gauging's are completed so as to calculate a stream to discharge (Rating Table) that accurately represents the flows required.
- Data is downloaded monthly or daily if the site is telemetered, this site is quality checked prior to the data being added to the Hydstra database."

All data is quality coded prior to that data being added to the data file for this location. The data is kept in the Hydstra database and backed up by Melbourne Water servers. This data is available to analyse long term trends in water quality and quantity data.

Compliance activities against overuse

Compliance actions are undertaken in accordance with our Waterways & Land compliance procedure and may be variable depending on severity of overuse and history of offending. The procedure takes a risk based approach looking at impacts and consequence against evidence and other information available. The majority of overuse cases relate to only small volumes or percentage overuse against licence. Compliance approach will be focussed on education and informal warnings for first or low offenders, escalating to formal written warnings, notices and prosecution for more serious offences.

Reporting year context

This report for 2016/17 reflects generally higher stream flows measured across the seven plan areas. This has resulted in a reduction of number of days on ban and a subsequent increase in access to water for all users and improved environmental water flows.

Melbourne Water manages stream flows in consultation with community committees, as part of the way we work towards the Government's commitment to an integrated, resilient water system that is planned and managed to protect the environmental health of urban waterways and bays.

The annual reporting tables attached the following detail:

- The volume of water allocated in each Water Supply Protection Area;
- Compliance with flow monitoring requirements and ability to meet environmental flows;
- The metering and use of water allocations;
- Water transfers;
- Compliance issues.

Key Highlights

Key points to note in the 2016/17 annual reporting tables are:

- A reduction of 148ML in licence volumes was achieved across all other SFMP catchments in 2016/17;
- With the exception of Plenty River (76%), metered licences in all other SFMP catchments used less than 47% of total metered licence allocation ;
- Bans on take and use licences were implemented to protect environmental flows in all catchments, with the number of days on bans lower than last year in all catchments;
- Metered water use in 2016/17 was lower than the previous year's totals in 5 catchments, with slight increases in Olinda Creek and Steels, Pauls and Dixons Creeks;
- Instances of licence holder non-compliance with annual licence limits were recorded in two catchments, with follow up interviews and warning letters issued;

Exception Reporting

There were several compliance exceptions in this year's reports that carry over from previous years.

Current licence allocation exceeds Permissible Annual Volume in Stringybark Creek, catchment. This is due to the allocation at the time the plan was developed exceeding the proposed caps. Melbourne Water believes allocation will fall to within limits through natural attrition, as seen in a continued yet slight reduction of 2ML in licence volumes for this reporting period. Melbourne Water considers the over-allocation in Stringybark Creek to be low risk as water use in all catchments is significantly lower than the caps.

Historical over allocation in the Stringybark Catchment has caused the current total allocated licenced volume to exceed the Permissible Consumptive Volume (PCV). Prescription 1 within the plan states:

PROHIBITIONS ON GRANTING NEW LICENCES

Melbourne Water must refuse an application under section 51(1)(a) or (ba) of the Act if this will, or may, cause the total volume of water taken in any year under:

- all licences to exceed 2664 ML; or
- all-year licences to exceed 1527 ML.

Similarly Prescription 3 within the plan states:

TRANSFERRING LICENCES

- 3.1 Melbourne Water may grant an application made under section 62(3) of the Act to permanently transfer a licence upstream or downstream from a location within the Protection Area and without reduction in volume.
- 3.2 Melbourne Water must refuse an application made under section 62(3) of the Act to permanently or temporarily transfer a licence if this will cause the limits referred to in prescription 1 to be exceeded.
- 3.3 Subject to prescription 3.4 if approving an application to permanently transfer a licence into or within the Protection Area, Melbourne Water must amend its conditions to ensure that it is a licence for the purpose of dam-filling where Melbourne Water deems that this is practical.
- 3.4 In deciding whether to amend, delete or add to the conditions to which a licence is subject when it is permanently transferred, Melbourne Water may have regard to whether the location at which water is taken or collected will, or will not, change.
- 3.5 Melbourne Water may grant an application made under section 62(3) to temporarily transfer a licence into or within the Protection Area without amending its conditions.

Melbourne Water in consultation with Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) consider the 2016/17 plan compliant with the intent of the Act. Temporary or permanent trading within the catchment does not in itself cause the cap to be exceeded as this was a result of over allocation prior to the plans implementation. Melbourne Water continues to work with Licence holders in an attempt to bring this plan into full compliance through the voluntary surrender of unused or sleeper licences.

Prescription 4 of the Plenty River SFMP required the installation of meters on all licences greater than 5ML. Melbourne Water has implemented this prescription where this has been deemed cost effective and relevant. Several registered dam licences have not been implemented with meters due to the cost of installation and maintenance of such devices against the relatively low risk that these small volumes would have against the intent of the plans. This prescription will continue to be reported as a technical non-compliance, as has done in the past, until the plan is next reviewed. At that time Melbourne Water will seek to amend this prescription to make it relevant.

Prescription 16 of the Steel Pauls and Dixons Creeks plan required the development and implementation of a rostering system to "*ensure the equitable sharing of available water under low flow conditions. Melbourne Water must develop the roster in consultation of water users*". Melbourne Water investigated the hydrology of the catchments and deemed that due to the steep gradients of the individual creeks, stream flows following rainfall events reduce rapidly to a low flow scenario. It was deemed that the current low flow trigger would in effect be sufficient to protect the stream environment and still allow equal access to water. This

prescription will be reviewed with an aim of removing it when the plan is next due for formal review.

Consultation

Melbourne Water has consulted with the Integrated Water and Catchments Department at the DELWP regarding the 2016/17 Annual Reports in the preparation of this information. Please note that the format of this year's annual reports has been modified in an effort to improve information transfer and deliver a more comprehensive product for our customers.

Melbourne Water works closely throughout the year with SFMP committees, which include community volunteers, to manage stream flows and protect the environment.

Plan Reviews

Melbourne Water is currently completing the formal review of the Olinda Stream Flow Management Plan. The amended plan will become available once accepted and formally approved by the Minister for Water. Initial review process has also commenced for the Woori Yallock and the Little Yarra and Don Creek Stream Flow Management Plans. These plans are reaching the five year formal review period. Consultation with relevant stakeholders and assessment of the plans performance over the previous 5 years will be undertaken to determine if the plan is still relevant or needs amendment.

Attachment A: Compliance and Summary Statistic Tables

Compliance tables and checklists for plan prescriptions and secondary tables of annual reporting data are supplied for each Stream Flow Management Plan. These tables contain summary statistics for volumetric allowances, bans and rosters and volumetric use from metered licences.

Key to compliance report tables

Colour code	Compliance interpretation
Green	Full technical compliance with Prescription(s)
Yellow	Compliant with intent of Prescription(s) - explanation provided
Red	Non compliant with Prescription(s)

- Table 1. Hoddles Creek SFMP Annual Report Checklist
- Table 2. Hoddles Creek SFMP annual reporting data
- Table 3. Little Yarra and Don Rivers SFMP Annual Report Checklist
- Table 4. Little Yarra and Don SFMP annual reporting data
- Table 5. Olinda Creek SFMP Annual Report Checklist
- Table 6. Olinda Creek SFMP annual reporting data
- Table 7. Plenty River SFMP Annual Report Checklist
- Table 8. Plenty River SFMP annual reporting data
- Table 9. Steels, Pauls and Dixons Creeks SFMP Annual Report Checklist
- Table 10. Steels, Pauls and Dixon Creeks SFMP annual reporting data
- Table 11. Stringybark Creek SFMP Annual Report Checklist
- Table 12. Stringybark Creek SFMP annual reporting data
- Table 13. Woori Yallock Creek SFMP Annual Report Checklist
- Table 14. Woori Yallock Creek SFMP annual reporting data