

# LOCAL MANAGEMENT PLAN GUIDELINES

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### 1 Purpose

This guideline explains the role of a local management plan (LMP). It provides rural water corporations with a framework for development, approval, implementation, reporting and review of an LMP. It aims to achieve a consistent state wide approach to water management in Victoria at a local level, by ensuring that:-

- current management arrangements are transparent;
- relevant stakeholders are consulted during the preparation, review and prior to any amendment of LMPs;
- the layout of documents describing local rules is reasonably consistent across Victoria;
- LMPs are readily available to the public;
- LMPs are adaptive.

It is not expected that all LMPs will have the same information or follow the same processes. In some water systems it may be appropriate to focus on specific issues of concern and to deal with other matters, where appropriate, at a later time. However, there are certain minimum requirements that must be met for all LMPs.

### 2 Role of LMPs

Water corporations responsible for licensing (as delegates of the Minister for Water) unregulated surface water and groundwater are responsible for the development, approval, implementation, reporting and review of an LMP.

The objective of an LMP is to ensure the equitable sharing of available water between licensed water users, to protect the environment and ensure the long-term sustainability of the water resource in the applicable area. An LMP will be prepared where required by Government policies<sup>1</sup>, to help meet requirements of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan or the delegate decides that specific arrangements are needed for equitable sharing of the water resource. This may occur when:

- there are competing demands for water;
- there is risk from licensed water use to significant environmental values; or
- there is a need to manage the system (i.e. surface water and groundwater resources) as a whole (eg. due to significant inter-connection).

LMPs describe how delegates will manage the taking of unregulated surface water and groundwater licensed under section 51 of the *Water Act 1989* (the Act), using the powers delegated under the Act and in accordance with the *Policies for managing Take and Use Licences* (the Policies).

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<sup>1</sup> Refer Policies for Managing Take and Use Licences

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An LMP will:

- define the water system to which it applies and provide contextual information (e.g. catchment context, trading zones, winterfill sustainable diversion limit (SDL) zones, any significant water-dependent environmental values);
- explain to section 51 licence holders and the community the rules the delegate will apply to licence management, and, in particular sharing arrangements for the water, and the technical basis for their determination;
- where a water corporation is also the delegate of the Minister in relation to temporary qualifications, document the rules the delegate will apply in carrying out this function; and
- be available on the water corporation website.

The level of detail in an LMP, the technical information required to prepare it and the consultation required to resolve issues should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the system, the extent of licensed water use and the level of risk to the system's water resources and associated environmental values.

In northern Victoria, an LMP must comply with the requirements of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

### **3 Content and structure**

The suggested content and structure for an LMP are described in Appendix 1.

The minimum requirement is that an LMP includes:-

- a) a description of the water system
- b) rationale about the need for the plan
- c) the objectives of the plan
- d) a description of the water use in the system, including bulk entitlement and non-licensed use (e.g. farm dams or domestic and stock use)
- e) limits on the amount of water that may be licensed;
- f) where required, the water sharing arrangements including the rules the delegate will operate by for any rosters and/or restrictions and/or bans in summer, winter or annually to manage access to water resource(s);
- g) rules the delegate applies to licensing, including issue, renewal and transfers, that are additional to policies approved by the Minister;
- h) refer to any technical studies undertaken in preparation or review of the plan;
- i) relevant metering policies; and
- j) arrangement for monitoring and reporting against the objectives of the plan.

### **4 Supporting Information**

The process for determining the management approach, rules and restrictions is to be provided in a separate supporting document. The supporting document should include the basis for the management decisions made within the plan. DEPI is developing guidance for groundwater resource share decisions to guide the content for the supporting documentation.

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### 5 Engagement

Delegates should apply the IPA2 Public Participation Spectrum to plan stakeholder engagement needed to prepare or amend an LMP. Resources for planning engagement are accessible from <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/effective-engagement/introduction-to-engagement>.

Relevant stakeholders will vary according to the size and complexity of the system being managed, but would be expected to include (where appropriate) water users, waterway manager(s), DEPI, affected water corporations, local government, Landcare groups and local environmental representatives.

#### 5.1 Advertisement

The draft management plan should be widely advertised within the area to maximise the opportunity for both water users and the general public to make comment.

Delegates should consider the need to advertise at each of the following stages:

1. Initiation – to advise of intention to prepare a new plan or amend an existing LMP and the process to be followed;
2. Draft plan – to advise that the draft LMP is available and invite written comments;
3. Plan approved – to advise that the approved plan is available and of its commencement.

#### 5.2 Notification

The relevant waterway manager<sup>2</sup> (Catchment Management Authority or Melbourne Water) and the Executive Director, Water Resources within DEPI<sup>3</sup> should receive written notification of initiation, the availability of the draft plan and when the final plan is approved.

Notification of the waterway manager must include an invitation to be represented on any committee proposed to advise on the preparation of the LMP.

### 6 Approval

The LMP should be approved in accordance with the delegation applicable for s51 licensing provisions of the *Water Act 1989*.

The approved LMP must be available on the water corporation website.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that some groundwater LMPs may overlap waterway management areas, so more than one waterway manager may need to be notified.

<sup>3</sup> For plans in the Murray-Darling Basin of Northern Victoria, DEPI must ensure trading rules are compliant with the requirements of the Murray Darling Basin Plan from 1 July 2014 and that the plans are no less consistent with the Basin Plan.

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### 7 Reporting

Reporting is required to demonstrate the delegate is acting in accordance with the LMP including monitoring the condition of the resource and that the resource condition is consistent with objectives of the plan.

The LMP should define the reporting period and method for reporting, and be produced annually.

Reporting may be on a basin or catchment scale with sections pertaining to each area for which an individual LMP exists.

At a minimum, reports must include information on periods when rosters or restrictions were in place, compliance and enforcement action taken for non-compliance, monitoring data relied upon to introduce, enforce and lift rosters or restrictions or alter allocations.

Reports should state:

- if the objectives of the plan are being met;
- any uncertainties about meeting the objectives, for example due to information gaps; and
- if the objectives are not being met, actions to be undertaken to address this, including addressing identified information gaps.

The report should be available on the corporation's website with the plan.

### 8 Review

The LMP should be reviewed every five years or earlier if the rural water corporation considers it necessary as a result of its assessment when reporting.

The process is illustrated in figure 1.

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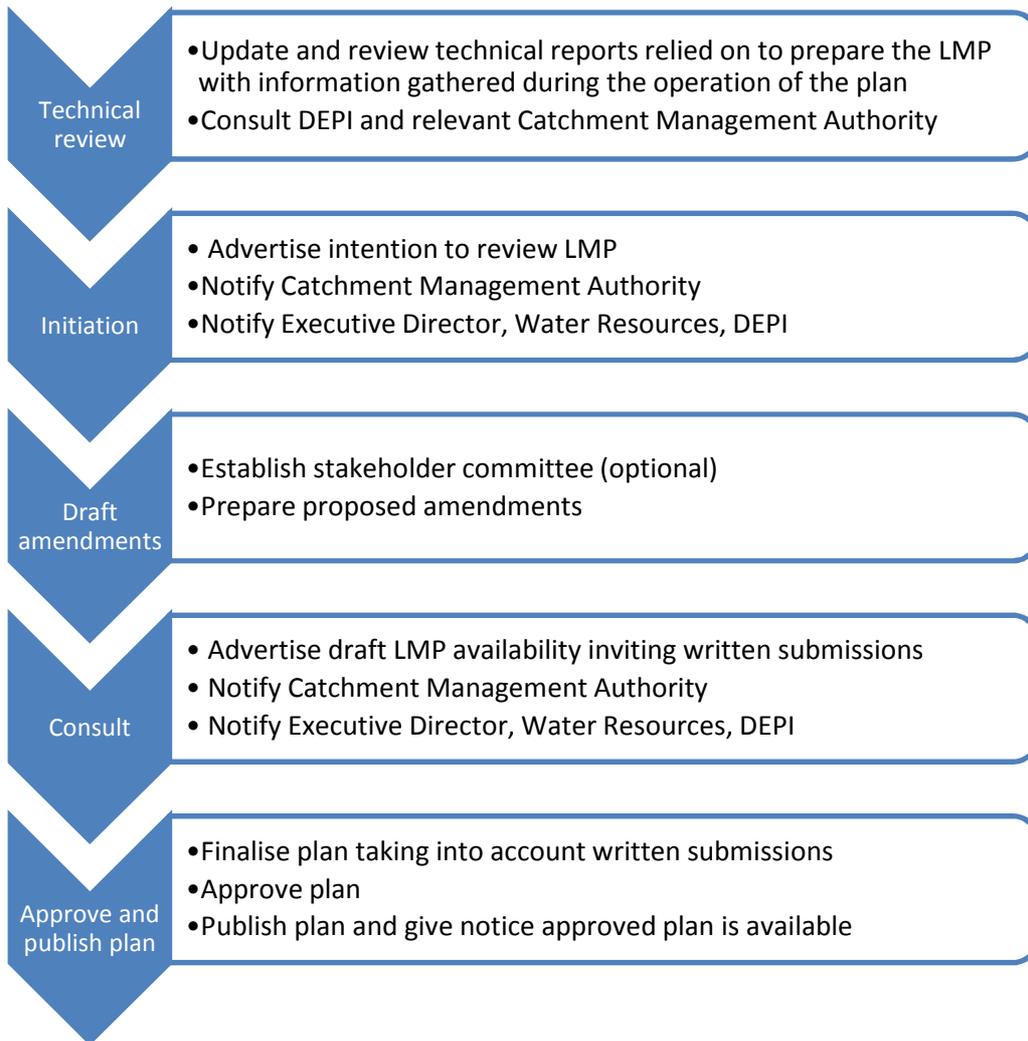


Figure 1 - Local management plan review process

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### 9 Appendix 1 – Content and Structure

This section sets out the suggested content and structure for an LMP including an explanation of the information that may be included.

#### Table of Contents

1. Glossary
2. Introduction
3. Management objectives
4. Water system
5. Licensed water entitlements and historical water use
6. Rules
  - a. Annual allocations, rosters or restrictions, including timing of announcements, minimum flows or water levels at which bans occur in summer and winter or annually
  - b. Issue, renewal or transfer (trading) of licences
  - c. Metering
  - d. Carryover (groundwater only)
7. Monitoring
8. Annual reporting
9. Review
10. References
11. Contact details

#### 1. Glossary

The glossary should define terms not otherwise defined in the Act. Definitions should be consistent with the descriptions used in other relevant policies.

#### 2. Introduction

The introduction should:

- a. identify the rural water corporation responsible for administering and enforcing the LMP; and
- b. describe the purpose of the LMP including the specific issues or risks that are being managed.

#### 3. Management objectives

The key objective is to ensure the equitable sharing of available water between licensed users and to protect the environment and ensure the long-term sustainability of the water resource. This section should explain any more specific objectives of the LMP appropriate to the groundwater management unit or surface water catchment. The LMP should identify indicators that reflect the objectives and will be monitored and assessed for the purpose of reporting on the performance of the LMP.

#### 4. Water system

This section should describe the waterway(s) or aquifer(s) covered (i.e. its geographic or physical extent), ideally illustrated by a map (Appendix 2). It should make reference to any limits to the amount of water that may be taken from the water source(s) such as

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sustainable diversion limits and permissible consumptive volumes. One document may cover more than one water system and contain different rules for different water systems.

### 5. Licensed water entitlements and historical water use

This section should provide summary information on water entitlements including licence type, number and volume using a similar format to the following table.

Licence type	All-year						Winter-fill		Registration		Totals	
	Irrigation <sup>3</sup>		Other		D&S <sup>2</sup>		No	ML/yr	No	ML/yr	No	ML/yr
Waterway / GMU and/or zone	No	ML/yr	No	ML/yr	Est. No	Est. ML/yr						
<b>Totals</b>												

Reference could be made to the Victorian Water Register for this detailed information.

Historical usage reported as a per cent of metered entitlement is indicative of the entitlements that have been activated in the area and the water market potential.

Where relevant, the LMP should outline, and if possible quantify, other water uses in the system that may influence management or affect existing licensed water users, the environment or the long term condition of the resource. These may include bulk entitlements, interceptions such as farm dams, extensive land use changes or SDL changes.

### 6. Rules

#### a. Annual allocations, rosters or restrictions

The LMP should detail annual allocation or restriction policies. The LMP should include the triggers (surface water flow rates or water levels, quality parameters) for introducing restrictions/rosters on entitlements or diversions (summer and winter) and the corresponding allocation or restriction levels that will apply.

The LMP should identify gauging stations, observation bores or other relevant level monitoring device at which triggers are to be determined and to which areas the triggers apply.

The LMP should identify the methods that will be used to notify water users and the community about the commencement, relaxation or lifting of restrictions/rosters and resulting changes to allocations.

#### b. Issue, renewal or transfer (trade) of licences

The LMP should detail any specific system based rules that are applied to the issue, renewal or transfer of licences.

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The LMP should detail any rules that apply to the temporary or permanent transfer of licences in the area and where rules apply in particular zones, should describe those zones.

### c. Metering

The LMP should specify:

- i. any metering requirements that exceed the state wide metering thresholds detailed in the *Policies for Take and Use Licences*;
- ii. the frequency of meter readings and when more frequent reading and reporting are needed, such as during periods of restrictions/rosters; and
- iii. how water use will be estimated in circumstances where meters are not installed including estimating domestic and stock use.

### d. Carryover (groundwater only)

A Ministerial declaration under section 62A of the Act is required for carryover to be available in an area. Where a declaration is not already in place, consultation for the purpose of preparing an LMP may aid the delegate in providing advice to the Minister as to particular rules to be included in the declaration.

## 7. Monitoring

This section should outline any monitoring program implemented in the area. It should include:

- i. Objectives;
- ii. monitoring frequency; and
- iii. storage and reporting of monitoring data.

## 8. Annual reporting

This section should detail annual reporting requirements including who reports are to, where they will be made available and by when. It should also indicate when the LMPs will be reviewed.

## 9. Review

This section should indicate when the LMP will be reviewed and outline the engagement that will occur before the LMP is amended.

## 10. References

This section should list all references relied upon to decide restrictions/rosters and allocations. It should list supporting documents that describe the process undertaken, including engagement, and the basis for the management adopted for the plan.

Key technical information and documents relied upon to prepare the LMP should be accessible to the public.

## 11. Contact details

This section should provide contacts for more information.

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### 9.1 Appendix 2 – Mapping Standards

To ensure that these maps meet a consistent and uniform standard, DEPI has developed a standard map template and map layers for use in ESRI ArcGIS. These align with DEPI's corporate mapping standards as described in the Map Style Guide and are provided separately as electronic files (.mxd and .lyr formats).

The layer files are intended as a starting point for the development of symbology for each feature class. Due to the potential complexity of different feature classes being displayed in ArcGIS, layers may need to be customised to provide meaningful and readily understandable products. Customisation may involve applying variations in transparency, colour and symbology as necessary.

In addition, base datasets such as roads, rivers and localities (i.e. towns) may be sourced from DEPI's Victorian Spatial Data Library (VSDL) for inclusion in the maps.

For a copy of DEPI's Map Style Guide contact the Water Resources Division.

Features that should be included in maps are:

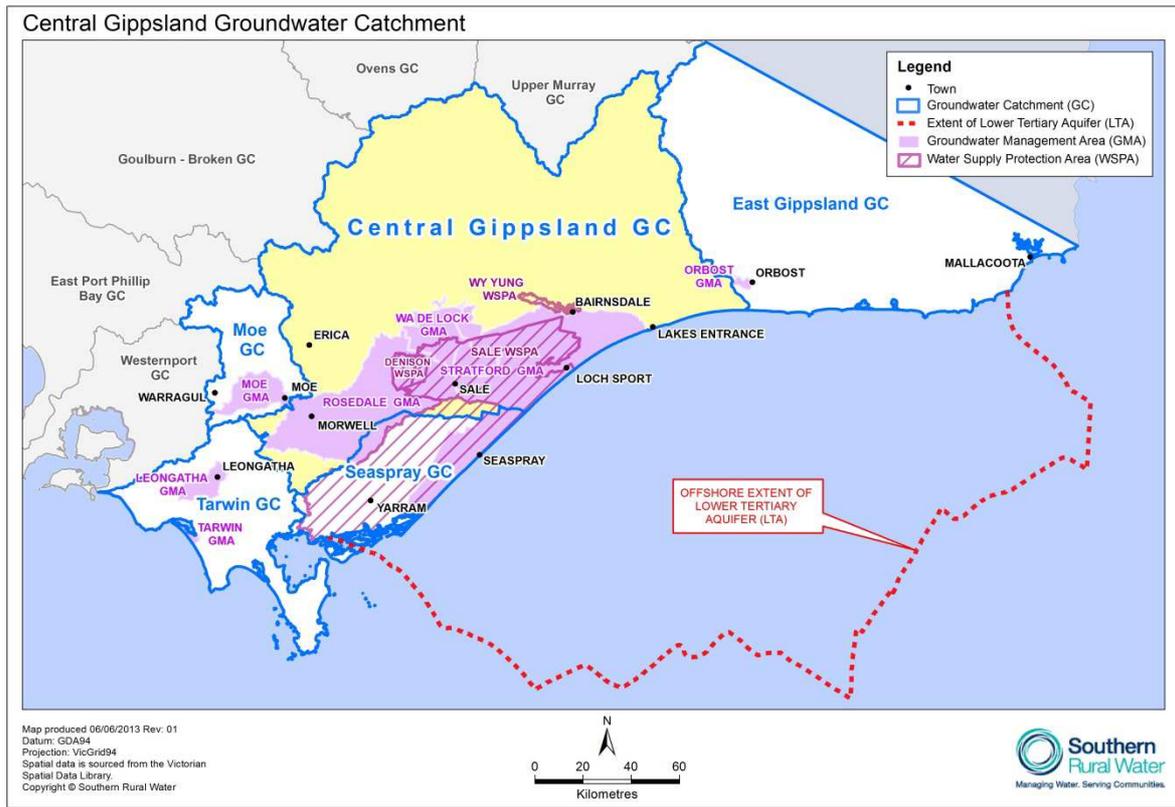
### 9.2 Surface Water Catchment Maps

- Boundaries of the catchment
- Localities (major and minor towns)
- Major Roads
- Rivers and other water bodies (major watercourses)
- Location of compliance points / compliance gauges
- Distribution of licences

### 9.3 Groundwater Catchment Maps

- GMAs (purple shading) and WSPAs (pink hatching) in the catchment and neighbouring catchments (view is customised to show the catchment fully and only parts of neighbouring catchments)
- Major towns (regional population centres)

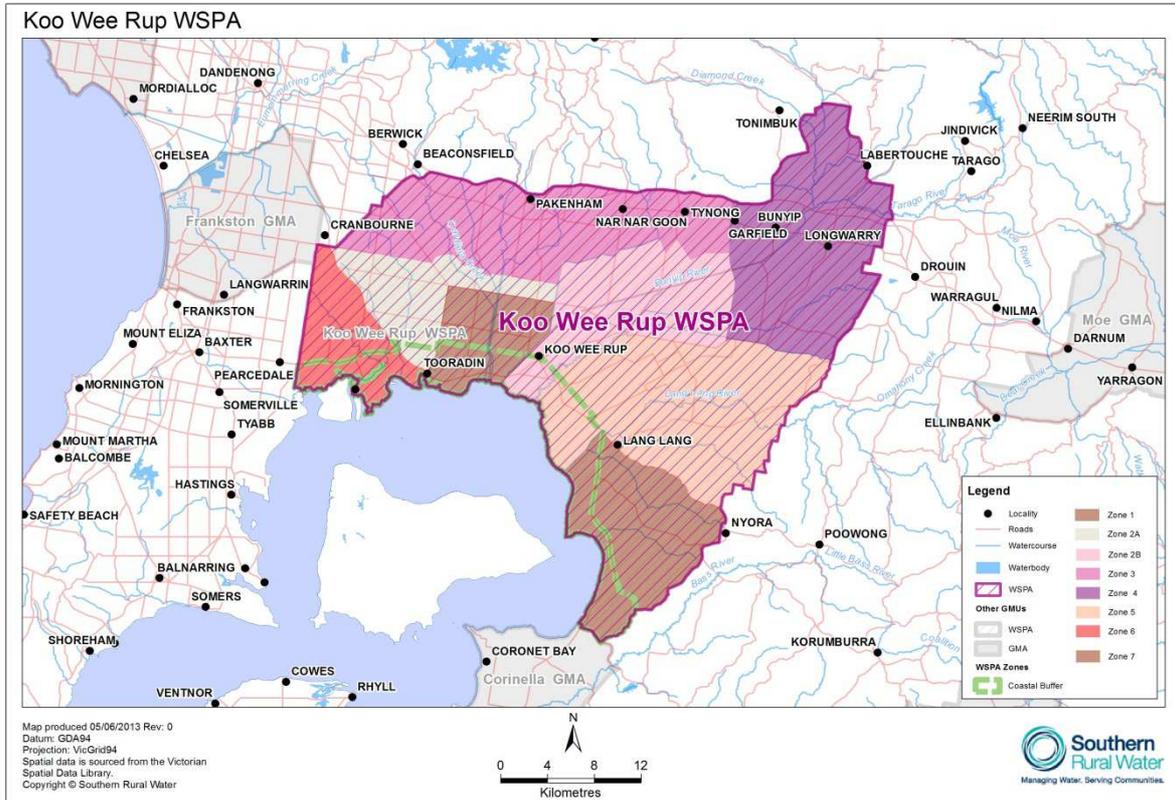
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### 9.4 WSPA/GMA Maps

- Sub-zones
- Neighbouring GMA/WSPAs within the extent shown
- Localities (major and minor towns)
- Major Roads
- Rivers and other water bodies (major watercourses and wetlands)



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### 9.5 Trading Zone Maps

- Sub-zones
- GMA/WSPA boundaries (depending on complexity of information)
- Localities (major and minor towns)
- Major Roads
- Rivers and other water bodies (major watercourses)