

WRP Fact Sheet 4: Introduction to environmental watering

Victoria's water resource plans

The Basin Plan aims to achieve healthy, working rivers that support healthy and resilient ecosystems. Victoria's water resource plans outline how Victoria undertakes its environmental watering in the Basin.

Environmental Water

Under Basin Plan environmental water consists of *held environmental water* (HEW) or *planned environmental water* (PEW). **Figure 1** shows how water may be used in the system (see page 2 for image).

Held Environmental Water (HEW)

HEW consists of water held by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) or the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) as an entitlement under the Victorian Water Act. HEW is typically held in regulated systems, which are controlled through operation of a storage dam to regulate delivery of water downstream.

For more information about environmental water holdings see the Victorian Water Register at <https://waterregister.vic.gov.au/>

Planned Environmental Water (PEW)

PEW is a new concept to Victoria. Basin Plan defines PEW as water that has a specified environmental purpose and is protected from other types of use. PEW can occur in regulated and unregulated systems, which do not have a storage dam to capture flows.

Victoria has identified three forms of PEW in northern Victoria. This is where a minimum passing flow is identified as being for the environment, must be provided under the specific instrument and the water is protected from extraction by other water users. It is committed under a bulk entitlement in the Broken and Ovens System and the Upper Ovens River Water Supply Protection Area Management Plan.

No PEW exists in the Wimmera-Mallee.

For details on how Victoria's water resource plans support environmental watering refer to Part 12 and Chapter 12 of the Wimmera-Mallee and Victoria's North and Murray Water Resource Plan Comprehensive Reports respectively <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb/mdbp/water-resource-plans>

For details on water availability and use see the Victorian Water Accounts available at <https://waterregister.vic.gov.au/water-availability-and-use/victorian-water-accounts>

Basin Plan requirements for environmental watering

Chapter 8 of the Basin Plan sets out the objectives for environmental watering in the Basin supported by the Basin-wide Environmental Watering Strategy. Victoria must undertake environmental watering consistent with the strategy, which is available on the MDBA website at https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/Final-BWS-Nov14_0816.pdf

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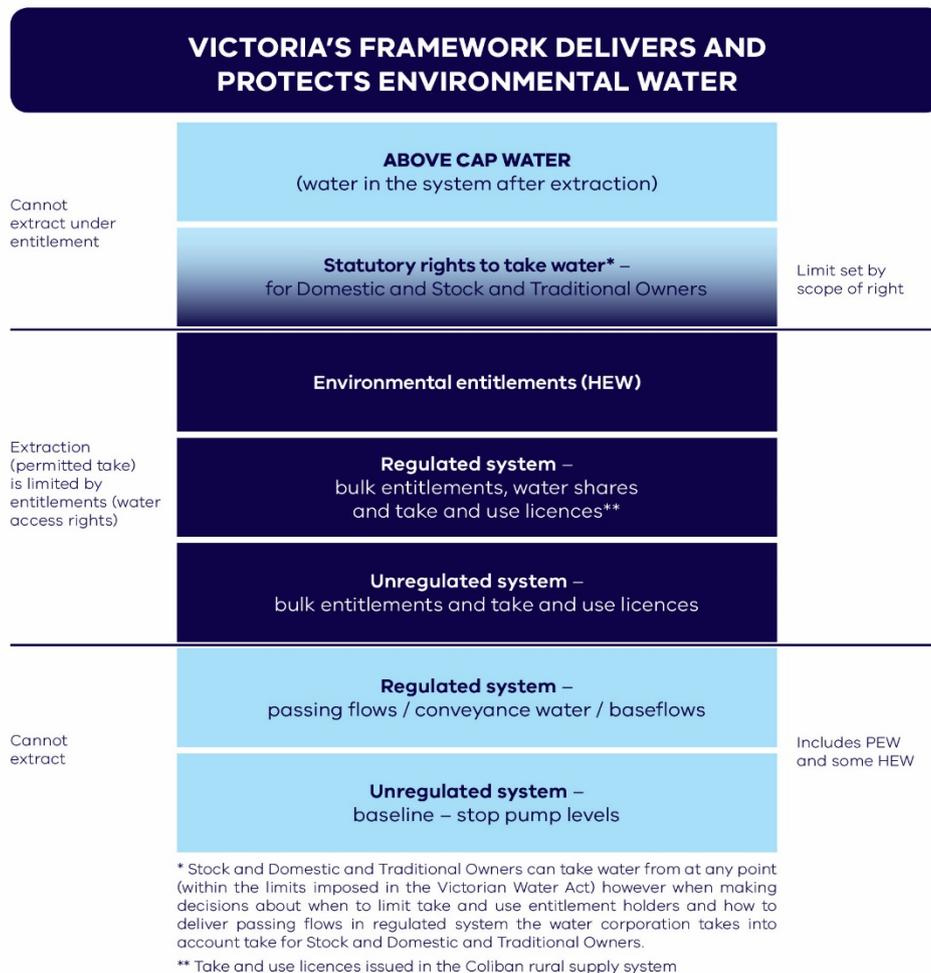


Figure 1 Victorian entitlement framework protects environmental water

Long-Term Watering Plans (LTWPs)

LTWPs are environmental water planning documents that describe the ecological objectives and targets for priority water-dependent assets (rivers and wetlands) in a given region, and the corresponding environmental watering requirements for these objectives. These plans support Basin Plan implementation and have been developed for each of Victoria's surface water resource plan areas.

Victoria's LTWPs are in place for 10 years and will be reviewed in 2020. These plans are available on DELWP's website at <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways-and-catchments/rivers-estuaries-and-waterways/environmental-water/long-term-watering-plans>

Water Resource Plans (WRPs)

Victoria's WRPs support environmental watering by:

- identifying environmental water available in the system
- requiring Victoria to undertake environmental watering consistent with the Basin Plan and the Basin-wide Environmental Watering Strategy
- requiring environmental watering to be coordinated across connected WRP areas
- ensuring that management of groundwater does not adversely impact the meeting of environmental watering requirements

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Environmental Watering in Victoria

Environmental watering, which is the considered management of environmental entitlements to achieve ecological objectives, is guided by the *Water Act 1989* (Vic), the *Water Act 2007* (Cth), the *Victorian Waterway Management Strategy* (DEPI, 2013) and *Water for Victoria* (DELWP, 2016).

Management of environmental water in Victoria is a state-wide partnership between the VEWH, catchment management authorities, Melbourne Water, DELWP, land managers including Parks Victoria and local councils, water corporations, Traditional Owner groups, and Basin States including the CEWH and the MDBA. These agencies work with upstream and downstream states to plan and deliver coordinated environmental objectives across state borders.

The role of the Environmental Water program at DELWP is to oversee legislation, policy, and investment for management of the Environmental Water Reserve.

How Victoria's environmental water planning and management framework aligns with Basin Plan requirements is outlined in **Figure 2** below.

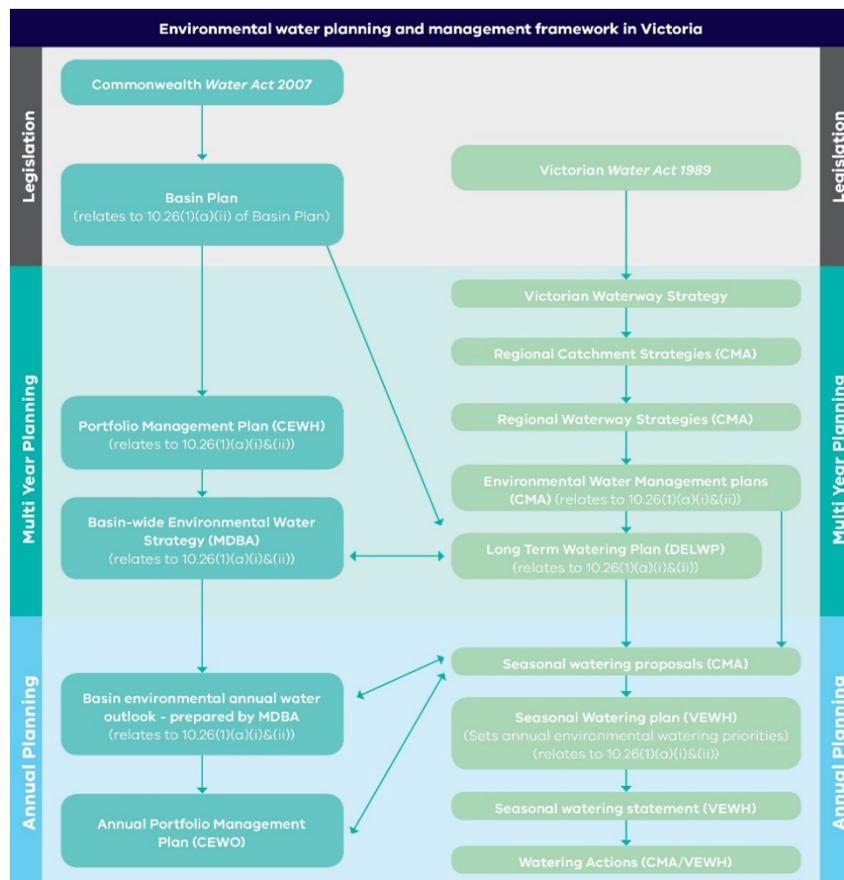


Figure 2 Environmental water planning and management framework

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