# Campaspe River Increased Flows Technical Assessment (CRIFTA)

## Investigating opportunities to improve environmental water delivery in the Campaspe River

### Part of Victoria's commitment to improve river health across the Basin

The Victorian Constraints Measures Program is looking at practical ways to get better results from the environmental water already available. The program is supported by Australian Government investment in the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.

The **Campaspe River Increased Flows Technical Assessment (CRIFTA)** is one of these investigations. It will look at whether changes to the Lake Eppalock outlet capacity could improve the health of the Campaspe River, protect cultural values and support connections between the Campaspe River and downstream waterways without the need for further non-strategic buybacks.



The benefits from the delivery of environmental water depends on how much is available, when it can be released and how much can be released, which is dictated by the capacity of the outlet. These current limitations mean not all river health goals can be achieved, particularly those that need much higher flows to fill the river channel or reach the floodplain.

Goulburn-Murray Water is delivering the project in partnership with the North Central Catchment Management Authority to deliver the assessment on behalf of the Victorian and Australian governments. They will consider:

- **River outcomes:** how different water releases could support the Campaspe River
- **Practical options:** whether outlet capacity changes would help and what else may affect the results.
- **Benefits, costs and risks:** what any change may mean for riparian land, GMW infrastructure, cultural values and the environment.

The assessment will draw on knowledge from environmental studies and engagement with Traditional Owners. CRIFTA recognises the strong community interest in Lake Eppalock and will provide further information as the assessment progresses through 2027.

### An environmental water delivery study

CRIFTA is an environmental water assessment that will compare options for changing the Lake Eppalock outlet capacity and the amount and timing of water releases. It will examine how these options could improve river health and support cultural values, alongside their practical limitations, costs, risks and potential impacts. CRIFTA is not a flood mitigation project and will not investigate lowering Lake Eppalock's full supply level. It is separate from the Rochester Flood Study, which is assessing flood mitigation options. CRIFTA may provide technical information that further informs mitigation options established by the Rochester Flood Study, led by Campaspe Shire Council.

### Victorian Constraints Measures Program

Victoria continues to investigate practical ways to improve the delivery of environmental water already available, so it can better support healthy rivers, wetlands and floodplains. Constraints can be physical barriers, including infrastructure, or river operating rules and practices that limit where, when and how environmental water can be delivered. The work assesses potential benefits, costs and risks, including implications for landholders, communities and cultural values, before decisions are made about any changes.

For current program status, published studies and updates, visit DEECA's Victorian Constraints Measures Program webpage.

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## FAQ:

**What is the projects status?**

The project is getting started. Goulburn-Murray Water is partnering with the North Central Catchment Management Authority to deliver the assessment on behalf of the Victorian and Australian governments. The assessment will be carried out during 2027.

**Will there be consultation for this project?**

Public consultation is not planned for the technical work within CRIFTA. The work will draw on earlier studies such as environmental flow assessments and the Lake Eppalock Technical Assessment, with project information to be shared as the assessment progresses. Technical information will also be shared with Campaspe Shire Council and may inform the separate Rochester Flood Study it is managing. Findings on flood mitigation options will be established through that study.

**Is CRIFTA a flood mitigation project for Rochester?**

No. CRIFTA is looking at whether changes to the Lake Eppalock outlet capacity could improve the delivery of water for river health and cultural outcomes. It will not assess flood mitigation options. CRIFTA may provide technical information that further informs mitigation options established by the Rochester Flood Study, led by Campaspe Shire Council.

**Why is outlet capacity being investigated separately for environmental water delivery?**

The current outlet capacity limits how much environmental water can be released and when it can be delivered. This can limit the benefits for the river and connected waterways. CRIFTA will investigate whether changing the outlet could make better use of the environmental water already available. Investigating outlet capacity for this purpose is different from assessing whether it could reduce flooding.

**Has a preferred outlet size already been selected?**

No. A preferred outlet size has not been selected. The assessment is investigating options, not confirming a pre-selected outcome.

**What will the technical assessment tell us?**

CRIFTA will compare different outlet capacity options and water release scenarios to show what is practical and what benefits could be achieved for river health. It will also identify the potential costs, risks, impacts and limitations of those options. The findings will help inform future decisions.

**What happens after the assessment?**

The completed assessment will be published on DEECA's website. Australian Government funding covers the technical assessment only, not construction or changes to the outlet capacity. The assessment itself is not a decision to change the outlet capacity. If an option is considered for further work, any proposal to change the outlet capacity would require separate government decisions, approvals and funding. Further investigation may also be required before any change could proceed.

**Where will you provide project updates?**

Project updates will be published on DEECA's Victorian Constraints Measures Program webpage as the assessment progresses. Goulburn-Murray Water and the North Central Catchment Management Authority are delivering the assessment and will direct people to this webpage for updates.