

# Victoria's approach to additional water recovery

## Socio-economic criteria for projects that contribute to additional water recovery

Victoria's Basin Plan position has always been to get the best environmental outcomes with the least impact on productive water

### Additional water recovery above 2,750 GL

Under the Basin Plan, 450 GL of water above the target of 2,750 GL can be recovered as long as there are neutral or positive socio-economic outcomes for communities. The additional water is to improve the environmental outcomes for the Basin beyond those achievable under a 2,750 GL scenario – for the Lower Lakes, Murray mouth and floodplains along the Murray River.

Victoria has been monitoring the socio-economic impacts of the Basin Plan and has continued to build understanding of the nature and extent of these impacts, particularly in the southern Basin. The work we've done so far has shown that our northern communities are already feeling the impacts of water recovery for the Basin Plan and that these impacts are likely to become more evident during dry times.

In October 2018, the Victorian government worked with other Basin states and the Commonwealth to develop additional socio-economic criteria beyond the participation test, which would give communities confidence that water recovery above the Basin Plan's 2,750 GL target will have neutral or positive socio-economic outcomes for their regions.

### Socio-economic criteria

At Ministerial Council in December 2018, Murray-Darling Basin Ministers agreed to a strong set of socio-economic criteria to be applied to all water recovery projects above the 2,750 GL target in the Basin Plan. Each state will establish a process for implementing the socio-economic criteria, which includes a chance for public submissions before any decisions are made.

More information about the socio-economic criteria can be found the DELWP website [www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb](http://www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb).

### Implementing socio-economic criteria for additional water recovery in Victoria

Victoria has always looked for ways to develop and deliver water savings projects that have multiple benefits for regional communities and the environment.

We will continue to do this as we implement the socio-economic criteria for additional water recovery in Victoria through an approach driven by our regional agencies and communities.

Further information about Victoria's process can be found on the DELWP website [www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb](http://www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb).

### Recovering more water for the environment in Victoria

#### Water for Victoria

Water for Victoria sets out Victoria's strategic plan for management of our water resources, now and into the future. Water for Victoria outlines principles for public investment in rural water infrastructure projects, which aim to ensure that our investments represent long-term viability, provide net public benefit and value for money.

#### Victoria's Northern Water Infrastructure Prospectus

In October 2018, the Victorian government published Victoria's Northern Water Infrastructure Prospectus, outlining six project proposals that can deliver further water recovery for the environment with neutral or positive socio-economic outcomes for communities. These projects have been submitted to the Commonwealth and are awaiting funding approval.

The projects in the prospectus have been driven through our northern Water Corporations, who are always looking for ways to develop and deliver water efficiency projects that benefit their customers and regional economies.

#### Future water recovery opportunities

Analysis of the socio-economic impacts of the Basin Plan shows that the impacts of water recovery can flow on to people who do not directly participate in programs, that cumulative implementation of projects can have increased impacts and that these impacts can flow across different stakeholders.

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The best way to continue to recover water for the environment without those negative impacts occurring is by approaching water savings opportunities at an irrigation district scale, targeting water supply infrastructure efficiency works that don't impact on the water market or create the risk of stranded assets.

Creating water savings through water supply infrastructure efficiency works aligns with the socio-economic criteria, which aim to protect the future of irrigation businesses, regional communities and economies and the long-term viability of irrigation districts whilst delivering social, cultural and environmental benefits to the region.

## Water Efficiency Program

Commonwealth funding for water saving infrastructure projects that deliver additional water for the environment above the Basin Plan's 2,750 GL target is now available through the Water Efficiency Program.

The modernisation of irrigation delivery systems and stock and domestic pipelines are important investments for Victoria.

These types of projects will improve how water is supplied to, private diverters and stock and domestic users and ensure Victoria's irrigation districts remain viable in the long term.

As part of developing projects, Victorian Water Corporations will consult with customers and key stakeholders to ensure that project proposals meet the socio-economic criteria and have the support of the community.

For more information about Victoria's approach to additional water recovery visit [www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb](http://www.water.vic.gov.au/mdb).

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