

Dam Safety in Victoria

Role Overview / DEECA Water and Catchments Group

Overview

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) helps support the safe management of dams across Victoria.

Dam safety is important because dams can affect people, homes, businesses, essential services and the environment. In Victoria, dam owners are responsible for operating and maintaining their dams safely. DEECA supports this through policy, oversight and emergency preparedness arrangements.

Victoria's dam safety framework is supported by legislation, including the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) Statement of Obligations (General), which set out responsibilities for dam safety management and reporting.

Our role

Our role is to help provide confidence to government and the community that dam safety risks to people, property and the environment are being identified, managed and reduced as "so far as is reasonably practicable" (SFAIRP).

DEECA manages its role in dam safety through three pillars:

Risk

Identify significant dam safety risks and support arrangements to manage them, especially where there may be consequences for people, property or the environment.

Policy

Develop and maintain dam safety policy, guidance and frameworks that support consistent and effective dam safety management across Victoria.

Assurance

Provide oversight of key dam safety responsibilities and arrangements to support confidence that the dam safety framework is working effectively.

Emergency Response and Resilience

DEECA supports emergency preparedness and response arrangements for dam safety incidents.

Our role as Control Agency under the State Emergency Management Plan and Dam Safety Response Plan includes:

- coordinating access to technical advice and specialist capability during serious emergency events
- helping arrange access to suitably qualified technical experts to assess dam safety conditions during escalated incidents
- contributing to incident response planning and review.

DEECA also:

- participates in emergency exercises and post-incident reviews to support continuous improvement
- maintains dam inundation mapping in the Victorian Government's flood intelligence platform (FloodZoom) for large dams.

Stakeholder engagement

DEECA works with a range of partners to support dam safety across Victoria. This includes:

- contributing to dam safety response and operational planning
- working with water corporations and industry to support coordinated emergency arrangements
- maintaining dam safety forums and professional networks
- consulting with internal and external stakeholders to inform strategic advice on dam safety

What we do

DEECA:

- develops dam safety policy, regulatory frameworks and guidance
- supports oversight of dam safety responsibilities under the Water Act 1989 and the Statement of Obligations for water corporations
- identifies state-significant dam safety risks and works with stakeholders to support risk management by dam owners
- coordinates arrangements for escalated responses to dam safety incidents to help reduce impacts on communities, property and the environment
- provides advice to government on Victoria's dam safety framework, incidents and emerging risks.

What we do not do

DEECA does not:

- advise on, design or approve dam works
- carry out compliance or enforcement activity for public or private dams
- manage risk management plans or escalated response activities for mining and quarrying tailings and slimes dams, which are managed by Resources Victoria under the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 (Vic)*.

Our commitment

DEECA is committed to working with partners across government and industry to support strong dam safety arrangements that help protect Victorian communities, infrastructure and the environment.

We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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