



## Diversions Service Standard

### Groundwater Management

#### Summary:

Groundwater is an important part of Victoria's water supply. It is critical to creating secure water supplies to meet growing food and fibre production, for drinking water supplies and to protect environmental values.

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) plays an essential role in the sustainable management of groundwater for local communities and the environment in northern Victoria. It is our role to issue and administer groundwater licences and develop and implement management plans on behalf of the Minister in accordance with the Victorian Water Act 1989.

We manage groundwater through management plans, which provide clear management rules for groundwater resources in an area. Management functions include:

- Considering environmental water requirements.
- Identifying local groundwater dependent values.
- Preventing intense areas of groundwater use developing.
- Describing how groundwater licence holders can maximise the use of their entitlements (including rules about groundwater trading, caps on entitlement, carryover and allocations where applicable).
- Explaining water sharing arrangements during times of water shortage.
- Describing how monitoring, reporting and reviewing the management plans are to be undertaken.

Implementation and application of groundwater management plans is a regulatory function of GMW. To put it simply this means we're required by law to develop these plans!

When it comes to groundwater management – there are two Service Standards we use to monitor our success. These are:

- 1. Groundwater resource monitoring data is collected in accordance with management plan requirements and is readily accessible to our customers. Monitoring data is made accessible within two weeks of data being submitted by the monitoring contractor.**
- 2. Customer access to groundwater is managed through seasonal allocations, which are announced in accordance with relevant management plans.**

# Price Submission 5

## Briefing paper for engagement



### Why is this topic being considered?

We understand the importance of providing you (our customers) with the information you need to make informed decisions at the time you need it.

Reviewing service standards is a standing item during the preparation of our pricing submission. So we're seeking information from you that ensures we're hitting the mark.

We provide management plans, compulsory reporting and updated water levels on our website for each of the 16 groundwater management units. This information is provided as outlined in each management plan.

### What are the decisions to be made?

- How does this matter affect you?
- Are we providing you with enough information about the current state of groundwater resources in northern Victoria?
- Is there any more information you would like us to include on our website?
- Is the information on our website easy for you to access?

### How does this matter affect customers / stakeholders?

It is a regulatory requirement to maintain compliance with Groundwater Management Plan requirements. Customers are involved in management plan development and review and have input to the rationale developed as a basis to setting allocations. Water level reporting provides an easy to access site for customers to check water levels in their specific area.

However, as we've said we're looking at ways to improve the information we provide our customers and are seeking their input into ways we can do this.

### What is not-negotiable in this topic?

The need for GMW to apply the prescription/rules set within groundwater management plans is not-negotiable across the entire operational area.

### What is negotiable in this topic?

- The level of communication regarding the current state of groundwater resources within each of the groundwater management areas. We currently provide water level data on our website based on our observation bores in the groundwater system.

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Briefing paper for engagement



## What are the known, viable options?

- GMW can review its online groundwater information to ensure its meeting our customers' needs.

## If other options are identified, can they be considered?

Yes, however the ability to change management plans requires a decision by the management plan committee and endorsement by the GMW Board or approval from the Minister for Water.