

What are we proposing?

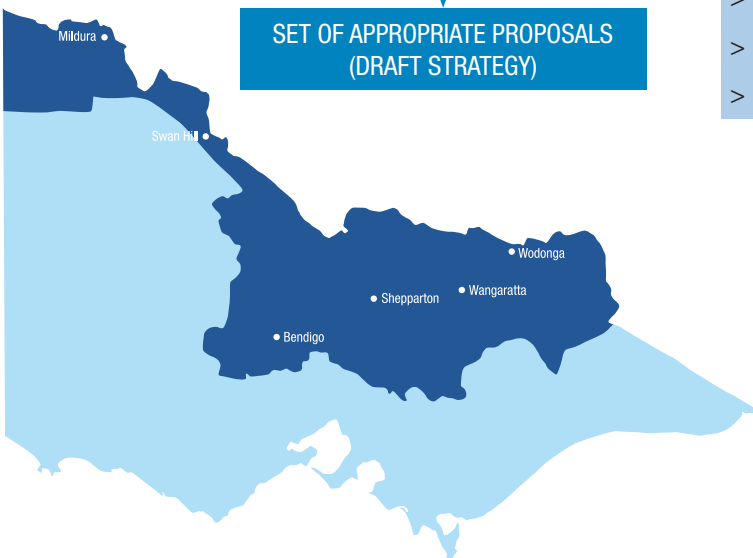
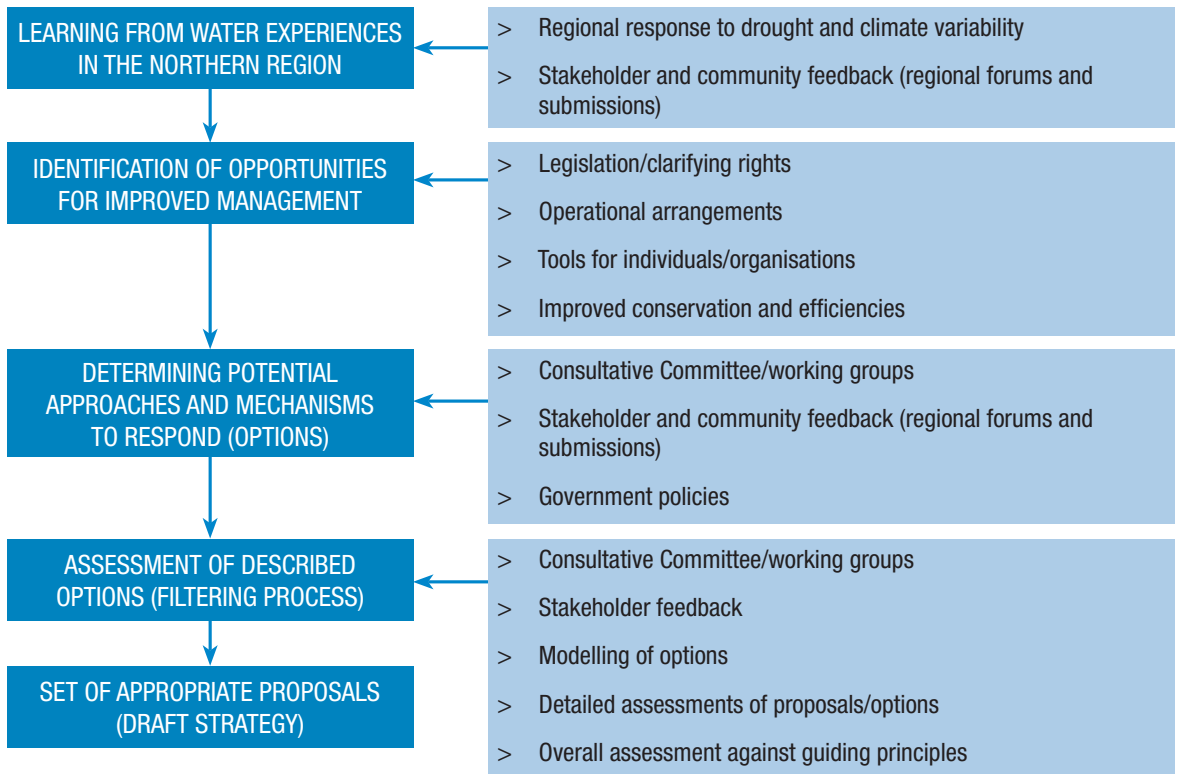
At a glance

- > Ensure irrigation distribution systems can always be run – by setting water aside in reserve earlier.
- > Allow individuals to manage their own risk – by buying, selling and carrying water over as they need to.
- > Identify priorities for water recovery for the environment – and make sure we're getting the most out of the environmental water we already have.
- > Ease the impact of water restrictions – with more interconnections between towns, flexible carryover and trade.
- > Better management of water harvesting from farm dams, unregulated streams and groundwater.

The Draft Strategy is the region's response to future drought and the possibility of climate change.

We cannot predict the next 50 years with certainty, but we do know there is likely to be less water available. See Chapter 3 of the Draft Strategy for more information on the risks to, and potential impacts on, water resources.

Process for developing the Draft Strategy proposals



Proposals for rural water users

Allowing users to manage the risk of water scarcity

Climate change means the risk of zero allocation years, when distribution systems may not be run. Putting water aside in reserve earlier ensures enough water to run distribution systems, even in the worst droughts expected. This allows carryover and trade to be effective tools to manage water scarcity. Water can be delivered when it is needed.

See Chapter 5 of the Draft Strategy for more information.

Better management of unregulated supplies

Clearer sharing arrangements and more flexibility with carryover and trade will allow groundwater and upper catchment water users to be better prepared for drought. The Draft Strategy seeks community input on the future management of domestic and stock water supplies.

See Chapter 8 of the Draft Strategy for more information.

Proposals for the environment

Clear priorities for water recovery

Existing projects could recover about 900 GL (billion litres) of water for the region's rivers and wetlands, depending on the Commonwealth Government's water purchase program. The Draft Strategy proposes clear priorities for where water recovery should occur and how the water should be used.

Getting the most out of environmental water

Establish an independent Environmental Water Holder to identify priority watering sites, make decisions on best use and liaise with the Commonwealth to coordinate watering programs.

See Chapter 5 of the Draft Strategy for more information.

Proposals for urban water users Reduce the impact of restrictions

The Draft Strategy proposes more flexibility for urban water corporations to buy and carry over water, and to update their drought response plans to include a 'worst case' scenario. This will also ensure that restrictions and permanent water saving rules are applied consistently and equitably across the region.

See Chapter 7 of the Draft Strategy for more information.

Further information

Individuals, organisations and the community are invited to provide formal feedback on the proposals in the Draft Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy by December 12 2008. These will inform the directions in the Final Strategy, due for release in early 2009.

To obtain a copy of the Draft Strategy, or to find out how to make a submission, please call 136 186 or go to www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/programs/sws/northern.

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