

Groundwater and upper catchment water users

At a glance

- > Climate change will result in less reliable water for groundwater and upper catchment water users.
- > The Draft Strategy seeks community input on the future management of water for domestic and stock purposes.
- > The Draft Strategy proposes clearer sharing arrangements and more flexibility for groundwater and upper catchment water users to be better prepared for drought.

Streamflows in unregulated rivers will be reduced with climate change. Groundwater use will probably increase as surface water availability declines. There will also be decreasing groundwater recharge due to reduced rainfall. See Chapter 3 of the Draft Strategy for more information.

The Draft Strategy proposes to:

- > require rural water corporations to formally document, adopt and publish local management rules for surface water and groundwater including:
 - **passing flow** requirements for rivers and associated restrictions and ban rules for each system
 - **groundwater trigger levels** and **annual restriction rules** for all priority groundwater management areas and water supply protection areas in northern Victoria
- > introduce **carryover** for some groundwater systems
- > improve the capacity of licence holders to **trade** water.

Domestic and stock water use is now the only significant water use that is not fully covered by the licensing regime. In recent times the proportion of water resources water being used for domestic and stock use has increased (see Figure 1).

With climate change, domestic and stock dams capture a bigger proportion of flows. This leaves less water for downstream users and the environment.

For example, farm dams intercept about 18 GL (billion litres) of water that would otherwise flow into Lake Eppalock each year. Historically, this was only eight per cent of flows, but over the last 11 years this represents a much greater proportion of the total water available (up to 25 per cent).

The Draft Strategy seeks community response regarding the future management of water for domestic and stock use. See Chapter 8 of the Draft Strategy.



Figure 1. Farm dams in the Mt Ida sub-catchment, Campaspe Basin

a) as a rural setting in 1982



b) as a peri-urban subdivision in 2008



Source: Coordinated Imagery Program, DSE

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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