

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee  
Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water



Public Hearing – 5 December 2017  
DELWP/VEWH Presentation



Environment,  
Land, Water  
and Planning



# Water for the Environment

- **A solid natural resource base is fundamental:**
  - healthy environment; prosperous economy; thriving communities
- **Victoria's allocation framework:**
  - clear rights to water are established under the *Water Act 1989*
  - held environmental entitlements are considered in the same way as consumptive water entitlements
  - mature system – focussed on flexibility (carryover/trade)
  - provides confidence – to invest, to meet individual needs
- **Water for the environment – Victoria's framework:**
  - strong track-record on environmental water recovery and management
  - recognises the importance of continued learning and improvement



# Victorian Environmental Water Holder

The **Water Holder** is an independent body, established by the Victorian Government in 2011, responsible for managing Victoria's Environmental Water Holdings.

Its role are:

- to **decide** whether to use, carryover, or trade;
- to **authorise** waterway managers to implement watering decisions;
- to **coordinate** with other water holders and storage managers to maximise **environmental outcomes** from the delivery of all water;
- to commission projects to **demonstrate ecological outcomes** and to facilitate **improvement**; and
- to publicly **communicate** watering decisions and outcomes.

The Water Holder works with **program partners** to adaptively **manage risk** and ensure water for the environment achieves:

1. the best **environmental outcomes**, and
2. where possible **shared community benefits**.



## Inquiry Terms of Reference - One

### **The role of environmental water management in preventing or causing blackwater events:**

- Blackwater events are a natural phenomenon.
- Severe blackwater events are initiated by large natural floods.
- Delivery of held environmental water is not sufficient to completely prevent these severe events, but sometimes can be used to lessen the impact.
- The risk of causing a blackwater event is a key consideration in environmental water planning.



## Inquiry Terms of Reference - Two

**How environmental water and environmental water managers interact with, and utilise, management tools such as carryover.**

**Whether the carryover of environmental water impacts on the availability of water for irrigators:**

- Tools including carryover and trade allow all water entitlement holders to be flexible and efficient.
- Carryover and trade allow environmental water holders to move water to where it's needed most, and gives them control over timing of delivery.
- Rules are in place that apply to all water entitlement holders.
- These tools reduce the need for additional environmental water recovery.

## Inquiry Terms of Reference - Three

### Consideration of what barriers exist to the more efficient use of environmental water and how these may be addressed:

- Victoria's framework for environmental water is based on the principle of efficient and effective use – providing the best outcomes possible, for the least amount of water.
- The Victorian Government also prioritises investment in infrastructure, which allows for targeted watering and management.
- Key commitments for further increasing the efficient use of environmental water can be found in the Victorian Government's Water Plan – *Water for Victoria*:
  - **Action 3.5 – Improve Environmental Water Management in a Changing Climate**
  - **Action 3.6 – Better Monitor and Report on the Benefits of Environmental Watering**
  - **Action 3.7 – Ensure Clear and Transparent Charging Arrangements**



## Inquiry Terms of Reference - Four

### **Assessment of fees and charges applied to environmental water and whether these differ from those imposed on other water users:**

- Charging arrangements for held environmental water are specified within the relevant entitlement.
- Fees and charges can also be developed through negotiations with the relevant water corporation.
- Currently, charges for environmental water services vary between different held entitlements and between Victorian water corporations. They may vary from the charges applied to other users.
- *Water for Victoria* commits to ensuring clear and transparent charging arrangements for environmental water.
- The *Environmental Water Charges Information Paper* is the first key step in actioning this work.
- This Paper forms Appendix One of the Government's written submission.