

# Developing a Strategy for Rural Drainage Management

## Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy - Factsheet 2

Drainage of Victorian rural land began in the mid-1800s, growing significantly at the start of the twentieth century, and again after the Second World War. There are now estimated to be up to 130 drainage systems across the state.

Changes to legislation, regulations and the role of government agencies over time have caused considerable confusion around the management and operation of rural drainage systems.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is developing a rural drainage strategy, which will set the policy and establish a framework for the management of rural drainage in Victoria. Institutional arrangements will be

clarified and clear roles and responsibilities identified.

Drainage can greatly improve the productivity of land by reducing the length of time that water remains after local rainfall events. However, while some drainage systems have clearly defined agreements for management and operation, many do not.

This can lead to significant issues for landholders, management agencies and other stakeholders. Poorly managed drainage systems may cause losses in productivity and damage to private, public, cultural and environmental assets.



**Rural drainage at Trafalgar Flats** Source DELWP

# Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy

## Environment and Natural Resources Committee Inquiry

Extensive flooding in 2010, 2011 and 2012 highlighted that many drainage systems were not working effectively. An inquiry into rural drainage in Victoria was initiated and undertaken by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee (ENRC).

The Inquiry revealed that local communities and stakeholders were concerned about the lack of appropriate governance and investment, systems in poor condition and the confusion over roles and responsibilities. ENRC made 32 recommendations for improvement, one of which was the development of a Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy (the strategy).

## Strategy scope

The development of the strategy started in late 2016, and will continue through to mid-2017.

The strategy will:

- clarify institutional arrangements
- support the best use of agricultural land while protecting and improving environmental values
- promote decision making at the local level
- support community led management.

The strategy will be developed based on the Victorian Government's Response to the ENRC Inquiry:

<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/57th-parliament/enrc/article/1940>.

A draft strategy will be released for public comment in the first half of 2017.

## Strategy development

The strategy will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, Traditional Owners, and the local community. A reference group including representatives of state government agencies, catchment management authorities, Victorian Farmers Federation and local government will guide the development of policy.

Consultation and engagement will be important to ensure that the policy developed in the strategy is clear, practical and relevant.



Regulators on the Woody Yaloak diversion scheme Source DELWP

## Getting involved

We would like to hear from community members or groups who have an interest in rural drainage and want to be involved in the development of the strategy.

## More information

For information or to find out how you can become involved, please contact:

Rural Drainage Team on [vrds.enquiry@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrds.enquiry@delwp.vic.gov.au) or 03 9637 9769.

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