

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Water



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WATER FOR VICTORIA: A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

The Andrews Labor Government has today released *Water for Victoria* – a framework to guide smarter water management, bolster the water grid and support more liveable Victorian communities.

Unveiling the plan today, Minister for Water Lisa Neville said it was the first comprehensive state-wide water policy in more than 10 years.

It includes \$537 million in funding over the next four years for projects to strengthen water security for communities, protect jobs and agriculture, recognise Aboriginal water values and improve environmental health.

In a first for Victoria, the plan recognises the value water has for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians. It includes \$9.7 million to support economic development and an Aboriginal Water Program to ensure Aboriginal participation in the planning and management of water resources.

In another first, the plan acknowledges the importance of recreational water use – with projects funded for Donald Weir Pool, Taylors Lake and Green Lake near Sea Lake to build drought resilience.

It will expand the water grid, modernise existing water infrastructure and improve water delivery efficiency across the regions.

Water for Victoria looks at how to make better use of alternative, fit-for-purpose supplies – including recycled water and stormwater – to create more liveable and resilient communities.

It will develop a market trial in southern Victoria to harness the potential of the water grid and enable water to move to where it is most valuable.

A review of sustainable water strategies will help better manage water for shared benefits in our communities – balancing the needs of irrigators, towns, farms, local businesses and recreational water users.

It's central in helping Victoria address the challenges of population growth. By 2065 streamflows to some catchments could reduce by about 50 per cent, while the population is set to almost double by 2051.

Most importantly, *Water for Victoria* looks at how to do more with less.

The Government will work with the agriculture sector to identify the best ways to build the resilience of our water supplies. There will also be greater transparency in the water market to give customers the information they need to make the best decisions.

The plan includes projects announced as part of the *Victorian Budget 2016/17* including:

- \$222 million to address the health of waterways and catchments
- \$25 million to prepare Victorians for floods and other emergencies
- \$58 million for rural water system upgrades at Wedderburn, Bacchus Marsh and Werribee
- \$59.6 million to support irrigation modernisation projects and improve on-farm water efficiency
- \$30 million to extend the water grid in South Gippsland.

You can access the report at: <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/water/a-new-water-plan-for-victoria>

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Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"Water is critical to our health and wellbeing, the environment and the Victorian economy."

"As we deal with issues around climate change and population growth, we need to make sure our water management is prepared to meet these challenges now and for future generations."

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Natalie Hutchins

"Respect for the role of water in Aboriginal cultural heritage is yet another example of our self-determination agenda in action."