

## Frequently Asked Questions: Water Resources

**The main purpose of Lake Eppalock is to capture, store and release water on behalf of entitlement holders. The level of water in the lake depends on inflows and delivery of water to customers. In dry conditions the lake is at risk of low levels that can impact on safe recreational use.**

**Will GMW's management response change if there is no water in the lake?**

Water entitlement holders are customers who have paid for the right to take and use the water held in Lake Eppalock.

Entitlement holders include urban water corporations that supply towns and businesses, irrigators who grow food and environmental water holders who protect and improve waterway health.

When entitlement holders ask to use their water downstream of Lake Eppalock, GMW is obliged to release the water to the Campaspe River under the Victorian Water Act. GMW can only refuse delivery when a release could cause flooding or when the lake is nearing minimum capacity.

Entitlement holders drawing water directly from Lake Eppalock itself are required to adjust their infrastructure as water levels fall. GMW does not guarantee a water level for diversions.

The amount of water that entitlement holders receive changes with the levels of the lake. GMW must allocate water to entitlement holders as well as keeping the Campaspe River flowing downstream of the lake while resources are available.

When water levels become very low, there may not be enough water to keep the Campaspe River flowing. In these circumstances, GMW works with entitlement holders to maximise water availability for as long as possible.

Depending on the severity of the water shortage, deliveries to customers may be limited to particular days.



**What is the minimum level of Lake Eppalock?**

The minimum operating level of Lake Eppalock is 163.44 metres AHD, which equates to a volume of 1,024 ML or about 0.3% of the lake's total capacity.

**Can ownership of water entitlements be changed?**

Water entitlements define the volume of water that customers 'hold' in water storages, and are able to be changed through transfer on a temporary or permanent basis.

It's important to understand that water entitlements don't necessarily guarantee water availability.

The amount of water available to customers each year is called a seasonal determination and is expressed as a percentage of their water shares.

In dry periods it's common for the seasonal determination to drop.

This means that the amount of water customers can have delivered is, in many cases, far lower than their actual entitlement.

## **What is the cost to deliver water via Coliban Water's pipeline?**

The Goldfields Superpipe that connects Lake Eppalock to the Waranga Western Channel at Colbinabbin is operated by Coliban Water and Central Highlands Water to secure water supplies for Bendigo and Ballarat respectively. Specific questions about cost are best directed to these urban water corporations.

## **What is the safe water use level of the lake?**

The minimum operating level of Lake Eppalock is 0.3% of the lake's total capacity. However, changes in water levels can result in additional hazards, so from 17% capacity and below, Lake Eppalock is limited to a blanket watercraft zone of 5 knots to ensure safety.

Boaters should:

- at all times comply with all boating laws
- take water levels and submerged hazards into account – if in doubt, slow to 5 knots or less
- seek out local knowledge on conditions and hazards and take note of signage at sites
- ensure the motor kill switch is attached to the driver
- not overload the vessel
- ensure they're equipped with the required safety equipment and that it's in good working condition and easily accessible

