

Welcome to Waranga Basin



About the Basin

Waranga Basin is the fourth largest inland waterway in Victoria and was formed on the site of a natural wetland called 'Waranga Swamp', also known as 'Gunn's Swamp'.

The Basin is an important off-river storage, supplying water to the Central Goulburn, Rochester and Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Areas. The Basin also supplies the nearby towns of Rushworth, Kyabram, Stanhope and Tongala.

Located approximately eight kilometres from the historic township of Rushworth, twelve kilometres south-west of Tatura and two hours from Melbourne, Waranga Basin is surrounded by agricultural land and state forest.

Construction

Waranga Basin was the first major dam constructed in Australia. The first stage of construction began in 1905 using only picks, shovels and horse drawn scoops. At the time, the 8.8 metre high and 7 kilometre long embankment was the largest project of its kind in the world!

Over the years the embankment has been raised to increase capacity and today stands at 12 metres high and 7 kilometres long.



Did you know?
"Waranga" is thought to mean 'sing' after the abundance of birdlife in the area.





Fast fact

The average depth of water in Waranga Basin is 7 metres, with a maximum depth of 10 metres.

History

The area around Rushworth and Whroo was originally the home of the Ngooraialum (now known as Ngurai-illam-Wurrung) Aboriginal people.

The Waranga goldfields opened in 1853 following the discovery of gold on a nearby squatter's run, 'Waranga'. Remnants of the goldmining town 'Waranga Village', the original squatter's homestead and railway line can still be found when the Basin is low.

During World War II, purpose built Internment Camps operated on the northern and eastern shores of the Basin. The camps housed German and Italian civilians who were deemed potential security risks because of their country of birth.

Supply for Irrigation

With a capacity of 432,360 megalitres and total surface area of 5,848 hectares, Waranga Basin is one of the largest storages in the Goulburn System.

As an 'off-stream' storage, the Basin is filled by water diverted from Goulburn Weir, via the Stuart Murray Canal and Cattanach Canal. Water is released via the Major and Minor Outlets and along the 180 kilometre long Waranga Western Channel.

The Major Outlet has a discharge capacity of 4,200 megalitres per day, and the Minor Outlet discharge capacity is 1,850 megalitres per day.

Normally, only about three quarters of Waranga Basin's water can be used by gravity flow from the two outlets. During extremely dry years, however, the Basin is pumped below the normal minimum operating level to assist communities downstream.

Did you know?

There are several remaining Indigenous & European archaeological sites around Waranga Basin - including scar trees and remains of the original railway line.

