Key milestones in the irrigation history of Victoria

YEAR

1881
Water Conservation and Distribution Act passed - local waterworks trusts able to borrow funds for irrigation works

1886
The *Irrigation Act* passed - private water rights abolished, landowners entitled to apply for diversion licence

1891
Goulburn Weir construction complete – first major diversion structure built for irrigation in Australia

1905
- Private trusts began to fail, unable to secure stable revenue base
- *Water Act* passed establishing the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission (SRWSC), most local water trusts are abolished

1906
- State rivers and water supply commission established
- First SRWSC offices opened in Tatura and Kerang

1909
Set fees to access irrigation water introduced

1910
John Dethridge invents the Dethridge Wheel

1915
Murray River Commission established to jointly manage works on the Murray River

1918 -1939
- SRWSC purchases land for irrigation settlements at Shepparton, Merebin, Tongala, Rochester, Cohuna and Murray Valley
- Soldier settler schemes post WWI see large influx of returning soldiers settle in Northern Victoria

1929
Lake Eildon construction complete

1939
Lake Hume construction complete

1945 -1960
- Post-war expansion
- Soldier settler programs and immigration increase population in Northern Victoria
- Victoria's total irrigation storage capacity increased fourfold between 1950 and 1960

1955
Lake Eildon expansion complete

1970 -1980
Victorian irrigation shifts from 'expansion' to 'mature' phase - greater focus on efficiency

1972
Snowy Mountains Scheme complete

1979
Lake Dartmouth construction complete

1984
SRWSC abolished, Rural Water Commission (RWC) established - shift toward financial independence

1989
Victorian *Water Act* passed - introduction of water trade

1991
- Irrigators protest water rates following increases and low commodity prices
- RWC future management review (McDonald Review) committee appointed to review pricing and the future of the RWC

1992
- Rural Water Commission future management review complete
- Rural Water Corporation formed, skills based corporation board and regional boards appointed
- Victorian government accepts $102m in RWC debt in return for no further subsidies, all future activities must be self funded

1994
RWC regional boards become independent government businesses - **Goulburn-Murray Water established** under the *Water Act* (1989)

1995
Interim Murray Darling Basin cap introduced

1997
Beginning of the millennium drought

2007
- Commonwealth *Water Act* - barriers to trade removed
- Carryover introduced on the Murray and Goulburn systems
- Water entitlements unbundled on declared systems
- The Victorian Government announces $1B in funding to modernise and rationalise infrastructure in the GMID

2008
Murray-Darling Basin Authority established

2011
The Commonwealth Government agrees to jointly fund Stage 2 of the Connections Project

2015
Connections Project reset announced

2016
Connections Project reset delivery plan announced