

## Safe Drinking Water Act, Goulburn-Murray Water... and you!

### What is the Safe Drinking Water Act about?

The Safe Drinking Water Act aims to ensure that safe drinking water is supplied to consumers.



*Blue-green Algae scum at Cairn Curran Reservoir*

### Why is GMW involved with Safe Drinking Water?

*Water supplied by GMW is not suitable for human consumption without first being properly treated.*

However, some GMW customers are urban water corporations that treat and supply water to thousands of households. This water comes from 'open catchments' and GMW must identify and, where possible, reduce the risks to water taken at town water supply offtakes.

### What are the hazards to drinking water?

Varying amounts of naturally occurring and man-made substances can make water unsafe for drinking. This includes:

- Pathogens e.g. cryptosporidium and *E.coli*,
- Algae toxins e.g. blue green algae,
- Chemicals e.g. pesticides, and
- Radiological e.g. mining waste.

### Where do hazards come from?

'Open catchments' are those in which the land is used for a variety of purposes, by many different people. Farming, towns, forestry, industry and recreation may occur in an open catchment, which can each affect water quality in different ways. Natural events, including fires and floods, can also contribute to poor water quality.

### How does GMW manage risks?

GMW identifies, assesses and, where possible, controls risks to water quality. The following are a few of the things we do to reduce and manage risks:

- Maintains and improves facilities at GMW storages e.g. public toilet and wastewater system upgrades
- Undertakes erosion prevention and repair works around storages and along channels (including plastic or rock lining),
- Collects and treats wastewater from houseboats
- Uses herbicides responsibly
- Conduct blue green algae and other water quality monitoring
- Reviews development proposals
- Responds to incidents
- Communicates risks to urban water suppliers.



*Plastic lined channel at Tongala*

## Your role in safe drinking water

Catchment-to-tap protection of drinking water involves us all.

**If you become aware of an incident or circumstance that may affect water quality or GMW customers, please report it on 1800 064 064 – at any time.**

## Recreation

Reduce the impact of your recreational activities on water quality by making sure you obey GMW and other authority's requirements including:

- Only camping in designated camping areas or commercial caravan parks.
- Obey boating speed limits and reduce speed near the shore
- Launch boats only at signed sites
- Obey refuelling and houseboat wastewater rules
- Use public toilets or follow camping by-laws
- Dispose of all rubbish properly.



*An agricultural catchment*

## Landowners

Reduce the impact of your actions on water quality by making sure you:

- Prevent stock access to waterways
- Use appropriate stocking rates
- Regularly inspect and maintain onsite wastewater systems (including septic)
- Ensure that new development or works comply with relevant guidelines & approvals
- Plant trees and shrubs along waterways
- Use and store chemicals responsibly, including fertilisers and pesticides

- Have suitable animal waste management processes (including dairy waste and manure stockpiles)
- Gain correct approvals before starting works on waterways and storages.



*Prevent livestock access to channels and waterways*

## Resources

**Department of Health:**

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/water/drinking-water-in-victoria/protecting-drinking-water-catchments>

See: brochures on **Protecting waterways from stock access** and **Water catchment land management** at the above website.

**Your local Catchment Management Authority:**

North East: [www.necma.vic.gov.au](http://www.necma.vic.gov.au)

Goulburn Broken: [www.gbcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au)

North Central: [www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au)



*Lake Nillahcootie outlet tower and spillway*