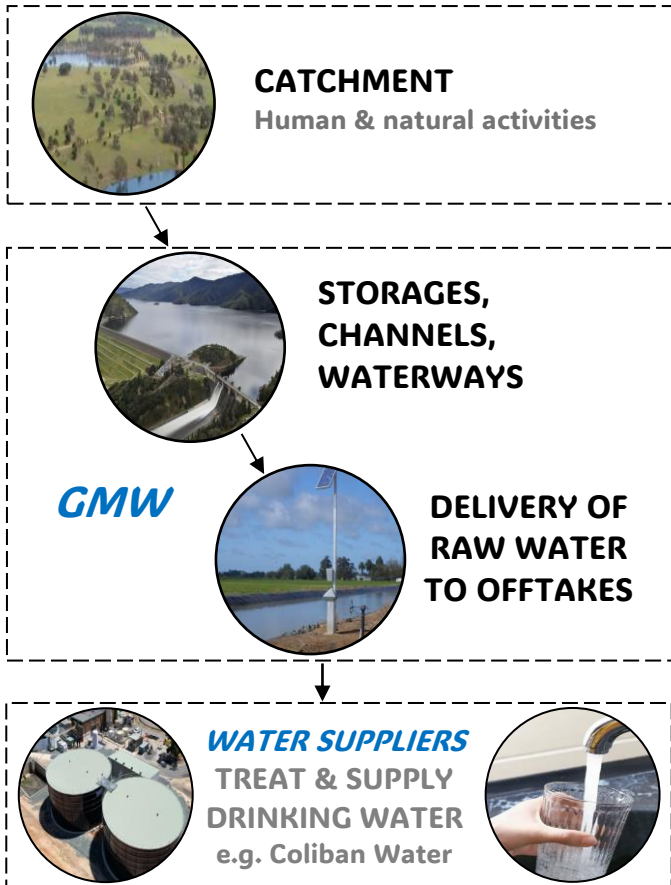


# PUBLIC FACT SHEET

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

### What is the Safe Drinking Water Act?

The [SDWA](#) aims to protect the quality of water intended for human consumption in Victoria, from the catchment all the way to its supply to consumers, e.g. at a customer's tap.



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

GMW supplies raw water to its customers. This water comes from 'open catchments' and GMW must identify and, where possible, reduce the risks to raw water taken at town offtakes.

Customers of GMW include Water Suppliers, that treat and supply drinking water to thousands of households.

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

### Water Quality Hazards

GMW operates in 'open catchments' where the land is used for a variety of purposes by many different people. Both human and natural activities/events can generate hazards to water quality.

Agriculture, recreation, towns and urban development, forestry and industry each can impact water quality in different ways. Natural events, including fires and floods, can also contribute to poor water quality.

Hazards of concern that can make water unsafe for drinking water are;

- **Pathogens;** e.g. *E. coli* or cryptosporidium from animal faeces, or septic tanks.
- **Algae toxins** in blue green algae.
- **Chemicals;** e.g. pesticides, heavy metals, hydrocarbons (fuel).
- **Radioactive substances** from mining or occurring naturally.

Sediment in water can reduce the effectiveness of water treatment processes (by urban Water Suppliers) in removing hazards from drinking water e.g. pathogens.

Chemicals and algae can also alter the taste and smell of water.



*Blue-green Algae scum at Cairn Curran Reservoir*

## How does GMW manage risks?

GMW identifies, assesses and where possible, controls risks to water quality. The following are a few things that GMW does to reduce and manage risks:

- Maintain and improve facilities at GMW storages e.g. public toilets, boat ramps
- Erosion prevention and repair works around storages and along channels (including plastic or rock lining)
- Collect and treat wastewater from houseboats at Lake Eildon
- Use herbicides responsibly
- Monitor for blue green algae and other water quality issues
- Review development proposals
- Respond to incidents
- Communicate risks to town Water Suppliers



## Your role in risk management

Catchment-to-tap protection of drinking water involves everyone. Please report any incidents or circumstances that may affect water quality or GMW customers on 1800 064 184 – at any time.

## Recreation

Reduce the impact of your recreational activities on water quality by following the rules set by GMW and other authorities 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

## Landowners

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

- Prevent stock access to waterways
- Use appropriate stocking rates
- Have suitable animal waste management processes
- 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



*Prevent livestock access to channels and waterways*

## Resources

### Department of Health

[Protecting Water Catchments](#)

[Preventing stock access to waterways](#)

### Local Catchment Management Authorities:

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)

### Regional town Water Suppliers:

[Central Highlands Water](#)

[Coliban Water](#)

[Goulburn Valley Water](#)

[Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water](#)

[Lower Murray Water](#)

[North East Water](#)