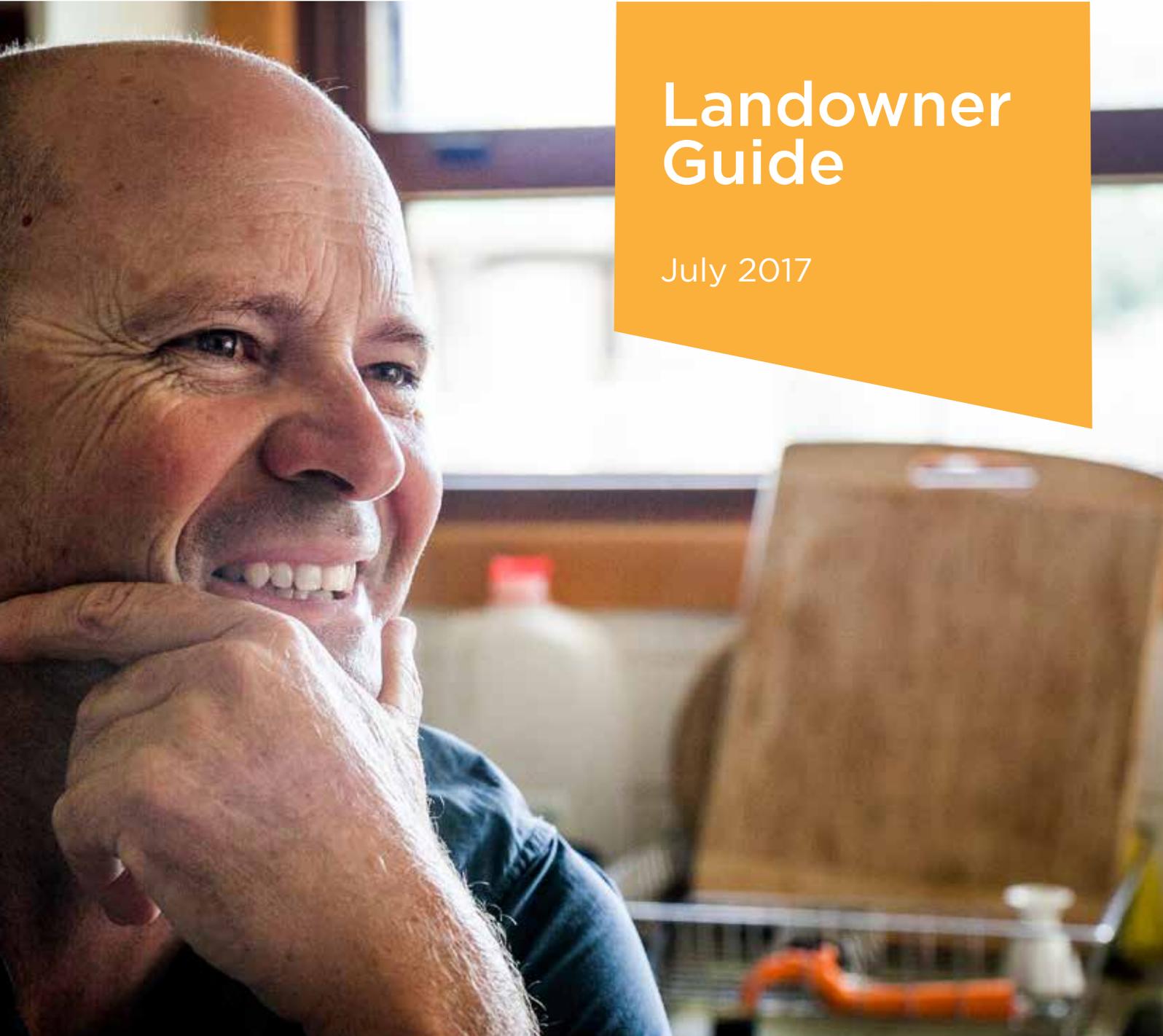


connectionsproject

# Landowner Guide

July 2017



Cover: Yarroweyah dairy farmer Damien Janssens

If you would like to receive this information in an accessible format (such as large print or audio), please call the GMW Connections Project hotline on 1300 163 006 or email [connections@gmwater.com.au](mailto:connections@gmwater.com.au)

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We use case studies in this guide to help explain certain concepts. The names used and the situations used are fictional and not intended to resemble real life.

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## Meanings of the terms we use:

### You

An owner of a property or multiple properties associated with the Connections Project.

### We

The Connections Project or an authorised representative of the Connections Project (such as a contractor engaged by the Connections Project).

### GMW Connections Project

The \$2 billion irrigation modernisation and water savings project for the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

### Channel retention

A channel previously proposed for decommissioning under the original business case which will now be retained.

### Co-contribution

An increase to the size of a meter being upgraded and/or scope of farm works with your funding contribution.

### Fit for purpose

The channel or pipeline capacity, meter size and type and extent of on-farm work are appropriate based on the historic water use.

### Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW)

The rural water corporation responsible for delivering the Connections Project.

### On-farm works design

The proposal, map and preliminary design for any on-farm works associated with reconnecting a property to the reconfigured GMW water delivery system.

### Independent review

An additional layer of assurance to landowners that our draft final reconfiguration plans are consistent with our Operational Rules.

The Independent Reviewer provides recommendations to the project as to whether GMW's reconfiguration plan or proposed landowner agreement for on-farm works are consistent with the project's Operational Rules and policies.

### Operating rules

The rules that have been applied in the Reset Delivery Plan in making design and operation decisions.

These rules include matters such as how we determine the size of service points, GMW pipeline/channel levels of service, operation and maintenance compensation, voluntary dry-off, co-contribution and property consolidation.

### Project manager

The project person assigned to your works from start to finish and who you can contact about your connection works.

### Reconfiguration

The process in which GMW rearranges, reshapes, reforms and/or redesigns its water delivery infrastructure, which includes meters and channels.

### Reconfiguration plan

The adopted plan for reconfiguration of GMW-owned water delivery infrastructure.

Depending on the reconfiguration process adopted by GMW, the plan may go through several stages before it is adopted as final: desktop concept reconfiguration plan; concept reconfiguration plan; draft final reconfiguration plan and finally, a reconfiguration plan.

## About this guide

This guide was created to help you understand how the GMW Connections Project will interact with you and your business in delivering a modernised irrigation system for the GMID.

We want to make sure that you have access to the right information at the right time, and that if you have questions, that you know where to get help.

The guide aims to answer many of the questions you may have, based on what we've heard from you in consultations to date. Questions like the following are addressed:

- What's the status of works in my area?
- What are my rights as a landowner?
- When will you get to me?
- How does the project make decisions about important things that impact on my business and livelihood?
- What rights of review do I have if I don't agree with the project's proposal?

We may not be able to cover every circumstance in this guide but we are available to answer your questions at any time.

## Who this guide is for

This guide is for GMW customers who will connect to the modernised irrigation system. We refer to these customers as 'you' or 'landowners' throughout this guide.

There are different categories of landowner depending on the status of a channel or group of channels, including:

1. landowners who have already agreed to works, have an executed agreement with GMW and have been partially paid to complete their own on-farm works
2. landowners who have agreed to works and have a signed agreement, but the agreement is contingent on other landowners on the channel also signing an agreement. The project intends to honour these agreements, unless mutually agreed to be withdrawn
3. landowners who have been consulted with on works but have yet to sign an agreement with GMW, and
4. landowners who are yet to hear from us because we haven't reached their channel yet.

### Key point:

If you fall into the first category - you have an executed agreement and you've received a partial payment - then your agreement sets out the terms and conditions between you and GMW to complete your connection to the modernised system.

While you may still find this guide helpful, it is primarily aimed at landowners in categories 2 to 4.

If you are not sure which category you fit in to, please contact us and we can help you. Our contact details are included at the back of this guide.

## Your privacy

The GMW Connections Project and the Independent Reviewer are committed to protecting personal information provided by you in accordance with the principles of Victoria's privacy laws.

The collection and use of information by the GMW Connections Project and the Independent Reviewer complies with the privacy principles set out in the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

All personal information you provide, including information provided during landowner consultation, the reconfiguration process and in any submissions you make on a reconfiguration plan will be handled in accordance with this Act.

## Introduction

The GMW Connections Project is the largest irrigation modernisation and water savings project in Australia. Its scale and complexity cannot be understated.

Communities across the GMID will benefit from an improved irrigation system that balances a number of competing needs with an increasingly drier climate.

With all large projects come challenges.

In late 2015, a Mid Term Review, followed by an independent consultation program told us that significant changes were required to enable the project to meet its aims and objectives.

In March 2016, the Minister for Water Lisa Neville established a new Project Control Group to 'reset' the project, supported by a new Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SCC) comprising members with commercial irrigation, water policy and local government experience.

The SCC has played a significant role in the development of this guide through their input into the Reset Delivery Plan.

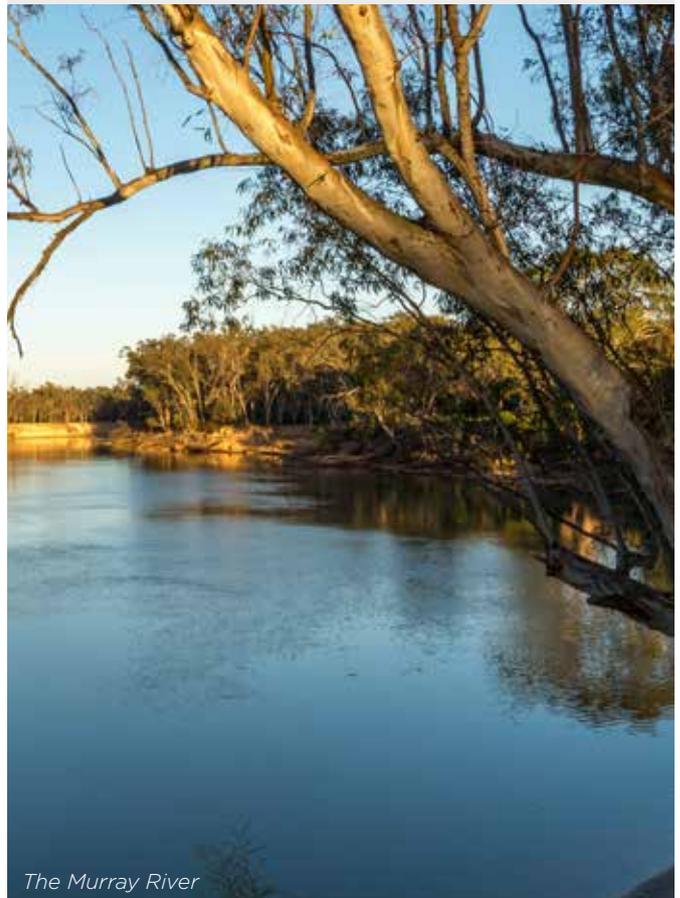
### A new project delivery plan

In September 2016, the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments approved the Reset Delivery Plan which sets out the way forward for the project to meet its delivery targets.

The aims and objectives of the Connections Project have been revised and underpin a new delivery model that will achieve the target water savings, while supporting the ongoing sustainability of the GMID for its customers and the region.

### Reset aims and objectives:

- Assist irrigation communities in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District to adapt to reduced water availability and build a sustainable future for productive agriculture.
  - Provide services that meet customer needs for flow rates and timing, and are adaptable to meet changes in customer needs.
- Enhance the environment locally and across the Murray Darling Basin.
  - Create water savings for environmental use across the Basin (i.e. deliver 204GL of water savings)
  - Create local environmental benefit by implementing environmental improvement projects (eg. lowering Little Murray Weir, Kerang Lakes, mitigation water and local environmental flows).



*The Murray River*

### Reset high level principles:

- The project will work productively with communities to implement the project.
- Provision of connections solutions will be prioritised on the basis of their ability to deliver value for money water savings.
- Where the value for money water savings criteria is met, priority will be given to connections that support food and fibre productions, regional development, jobs and growth.
- Connections standard will be proportional to the needs of the user and fit for purpose.
- Where a user seeks a higher standard of service, the user will have to contribute to the cost.
- Where urban supply is available to non-commercial users, the continuing requirement for both urban and irrigation supply will need to be justified.
- GMW will honour executed landowner agreements that are consistent with these principles or where contractual obligations exist. Contractual arrangements can be withdrawn where mutual agreement has been reached with the landowner.
- Statutory tools will be enacted when an agreement cannot be reached in a reasonable timeframe.
- Seek to ensure GMW's cost recovery meets operational and whole of life cost needs for the water delivery system.

## What the changes mean for you

Since the project was reset, you might be unsure how the changes affect you, particularly if you have already had discussions with the project team in the past.

Here we set out the key changes and what they mean for you.

### > The project completion date is now October 2020 (previously October 2018).

You may need to wait longer for GMW to assess changes to its water delivery system.

### > We will design solutions on a channel by channel basis.

How we treat the channel that you connect to will be based on that channel's attributes - meaning, if it is a low loss channel, it may be retained rather than decommissioned. This may be different to what you had previously thought was going to happen.

### > We will work with a large contractor to deliver a significant portion of the works (scoping through to construction).

Your main point of contact may be with our contractor with clear guidelines to ensure your experience with the project is a positive one. This will be regardless of whether you deal directly with the project team or our contractor.

### > We have adopted a clear and transparent process for the reconfiguration of the GMW water delivery system into our everyday engagement with landowners.

We will consult with you about any irrigation assessment and concept changes we propose for the GMW water delivery system (for example, the location of meters, whether we retain or decommission a channel, etc.). You will have opportunities to have your say on our proposal.

### > On-farm works to reconnect your property to the water supply will be carried out by us.

To ensure the project meets important quality, health and safety, and completion requirements, our contractors will be carrying out on-farm works. Payments to landowners to carry out their own on-farm works will no longer be offered (with an exception for certain co-contribution arrangements). Our Operational Rules are available on our website providing more detail on how we will make decisions.

## Keeping you informed

You can find out how your property is currently planned to be connected and track the progress by looking at the My Connections Update web portal [www.connectionsproject.com.au](http://www.connectionsproject.com.au).

The anticipated timing of remaining works is provided as we want to be open with you about when to expect to be contacted about works on your channel.

If the timing changes, we will let you know.



## The reconfiguration process

Previously we relied on reaching voluntary agreement with landowners to make changes to the water delivery system and their connection.

However, progress stalled on a number of channels because we couldn't reach agreement with every landowner on that channel, or group of channels.

The reconfiguration process that has now been adopted provides a number of clear steps in order to reach agreement with landowners. This also includes the ability to use certain statutory tools (Water Act provisions) if required to reconfigure the GMW water delivery system, following consultation with affected landowners. Examples include decommissioning channels and moving outlets.

It is important to note that reconfiguration that uses statutory Water Act provisions only applies to GMW assets, such as channels and meters. It does not apply to any privately owned infrastructure or assets (i.e. on-farm infrastructure which connects you to the water delivery network).

When we reconfigure the system, we offer customers the opportunity to reconnect to the network - we call this the on-farm works component.

### What is involved in a reconfiguration process?

The reconfiguration process simply refers to GMW complying with its obligations under Part 7A of the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) to reconfigure its own assets.

The process followed for each reconfiguration process will be guided by the level of prior engagement with landowners.

Where the project has previously engaged with landowners about a connection proposal, GMW may elect to follow an abbreviated reconfiguration process from the default process set out in this guide.

Where landowners have not been previously engaged about a connection proposal, GMW will generally follow the reconfiguration process set out in this guide.

#### Key point:

We separate the project into two streams of work that we carry out at the same time:

1. The reconfiguration process, which applies to the GMW water delivery system, and
2. On-farm works, where we reconnect customers to the reconfigured system - we need your formal agreement to do any on-farm works.

### What it looks like 'on the ground'

Put very simply, reconfiguration starts with the preparation of a plan (consisting of a map and a listing of outlets) that shows the current configuration of GMW-owned assets on a channel or group of channels, and how we propose to reconfigure those assets.

At this point, it is called a desktop concept reconfiguration plan.

Through consultation with you and with the benefit of local knowledge, the plan is refined. It then becomes a concept reconfiguration plan.

When we've developed the plan to the point at which we're ready to formally consider and adopt it, it is called a draft final reconfiguration plan.

In circumstances where GMW has previously engaged with you about a connection proposal, you may only be asked to make a submission with respect to a draft final reconfiguration plan.

We have included an independent review process to give additional assurance to you that our decisions are in line with our Operational Rules (see page 18 for more information on the independent review process).

After the plan is adopted, it is simply a reconfiguration plan.

#### **FAQ:**

#### **If I agree to the solution you propose, do I have to go through the statutory reconfiguration process?**

In most cases the answer is yes, because we are dealing with multiple customers on the same channel and even if you agree to the proposed solution, other customers may not.

However, there may be isolated cases where it is possible to progress works without a reconfiguration plan. This will need to be assessed on a case by case basis, via a 'voluntary' agreement process.

### **Reaching agreement for on-farm works**

Any works that are needed to connect your on-farm infrastructure to a reconfigured supply must be agreed by you.

We start with a concept on-farm works design.

We then refine the design in consultation with you until it becomes a final on-farm works design.

Finally, if you agree to the proposed solution, a landowner agreement for on-farm works is the formal agreement document that we use to carry out any works to reconnect water supply.

We encourage landowners to engage actively with GMW in order to make arrangements for any necessary on-farm works to guarantee water supply post configuration works.

As noted at the beginning of this guide, the previous practice of relying on voluntary agreement from landowners is now being replaced by a formal statutory process. It is in the best interests of landowners to make every effort to understand the potential impact of proposed reconfiguration works and what works are necessary for continued access to water.

## **Design solutions**

There are two sources of design solutions: substantially planned solutions and channel by channel assessment solutions.

### **Implementing substantially planned solutions**

In the past, the project made efforts to implement solutions through the use of voluntary agreements. In some cases, these proposed solutions have been agreed to by many but not all affected landowners.

Where GMW believes that a previous solution meets our Operational Rules, GMW may commence a reconfiguration process to implement this solution.

Landowners who have signed on-farm works agreements are not required to do anything further.

Where landowners have not signed an agreement to facilitate on-farm works, GMW will provide an agreement on a case-by-case basis.

### **Channel by channel/farm enterprise assessment**

The feedback received from our reset consultation sessions confirmed a channel by channel, fit for purpose solution as the preferred approach.

This will provide a balance between achieving water savings and a sustainable and affordable water delivery system.

All of our decisions for each channel start with gathering existing data and filling in any gaps. We get our information from many sources, including local area staff, local government and commercial enterprises.

We will look at a range of factors, such as how much water a channel loses through leakage and seepage, total water use and frequency of water use, channel condition and the type of enterprises that use water from that channel.

Previously, we assessed channels in groups called Strategic Connections Projects (SCP). This has changed and we now assess channels individually.

Every channel will be treated in one or a combination

of the following six ways:

- Retain the channel and the existing outlets
- Retain the channel and upgrade outlets
- Retain the channel, automate and upgrade outlets
- Retain the channel, remediate, automate and upgrade outlets
- Decommission the channel and replace with a GMW pipeline
- Decommission the channel and replace with private infrastructure

#### Key point:

In each of the above channel treatment options we will seek to rationalise the number of outlets in consultation with landowners.

Where a channel is retained, we do not modernise meters that use less than 10ML/year (unless an exception to the rule is approved as explained in our Operational Rules).

## Factors we consider

### Value for money for water savings

A value for money decision is based on the project cost (\$) per megalitre (ML) of water savings. We have to achieve our water savings target, but not at any cost.

The following examples show how this factor would be assessed.

#### Example:

John's farm is serviced by a high water loss channel that we plan to decommission and we estimate the cost of re-connection to be about \$100,000.

Decommissioning the channel will save 50ML of water.

At around \$2000 per ML of water saved, we would consider this to be good value for money.

Sarah's property is serviced by a channel that has relatively low water loss. Decommissioning this channel will only save us 5ML of water but would cost us \$50,000 for Sarah's connection.

At around \$10,000 per ML of water saved, we may not consider this to be value for money, unless there were other matters that warranted this cost.

## Fit for purpose

A fit for purpose solution is one that is appropriate, based on historic water use. We determine this based on your annual water use (deliveries and flow rate) in the period from 2011 to 2014.

Our Operational Rules provide more information about the treatment of outlets including the following:

- Determining flow rates
- Treatment of service points (rationalisation), and
- Criteria for exceptions.

You can find the Operational Rules on the Connections Project website [www.connectionsproject.com.au](http://www.connectionsproject.com.au).

## Additional options for landowners

### Property consolidation

Consolidating two or more properties sharing a common border into one large property allows land to be retained in productive irrigation with improved economies of scale in reconnecting the property.

Rationalisation of the water delivery network benefits the landowner and GMW, by reducing the quantity of service points or outlets, reducing whole of life costs, and maximising water savings for the project.

The Connections Project may provide fixed sum funding to consolidate on-farm infrastructure with the successful purchase of a property in agreed circumstances, and prior to finalisation of the draft final reconfiguration plan.

The project may contribute to the cost of purchasing the property in lieu of the cost of works that would be incurred by the project if the property consolidation did not occur.

It is important to note that the project will not actively seek out property consolidation opportunities - this must be initiated by landowners. If you think that property consolidation may be an option (for example, your neighbour has expressed an interest in selling their land to you), contact your project manager to discuss eligibility.

### Example:

Les lives next door to Greg, who has recently retired from farming.

Greg's farm is now too large for him to manage and he says to Les that he may consider selling to Les if he would be interested.

If Les buys Greg's farm and consolidates land it would bring great benefits to his commercial enterprise.

Les discusses this with his Connections project manager and the project agrees that property consolidation in this case meets the reset aims and objectives and satisfies the project's Operational Rules. The project takes no part in negotiating the sale between Les and Greg.

### Co-contribution

The solutions that we may provide may not always meet with your expectations for future use of your property because we use your historic water use as the basis for determining meter sizes, flow rate and on-farm works to re-connect you to your supply.

We understand that you may want to expand or change your operations in the future, so we encourage you to think about co-contribution as a way to achieve this.

By contributing funds to your connection, you may fund more or different infrastructure to what we propose, such as a bigger meter or higher flow rate (if your channel has the capacity to do this). Co-contribution is where you fund the difference between what we propose and what you want.

### Voluntary dry off

You might want to decrease your water use, change to stock and domestic supply or leave irrigation all together.

You may be able to dry off your property and terminate your Delivery Share for that property at the same time. This will also mean that you will transition from a Water Use Licence to a Water Use Registration which authorises the use of water other than irrigation.

You will have an opportunity to discuss this with your project manager in the early stages of the engagement process.

## Eight step landowner engagement process

Our eight step process for engaging with landowners is based on the following principles:

- No surprises – we will be transparent with our decision-making (for example, our My Connections Update portal)
- Use a range of methods to engage with landowners, and clearly explain important concepts, such as reconfiguration and on-farm works design, and
- Guidance – landowners will be provided with information and guidance throughout the engagement process.

The next page shows what to expect from Step 1 through to Step 8. We then take you through each step in more detail.

### Key point:

Please note that the eight step landowner process will not be applied by GMW in all instances.

As noted earlier in this guide, where landowners have previously had the benefit of engagement with the project about a particular reconfiguration proposal, GMW may elect to follow an abbreviated reconfiguration process from the default process set out in this guide.

Where this happens, any departure from the eight step model will be clearly explained to you. Where a reconfiguration proposal has been substantially planned and subject to extensive engagement, only steps 4 to 8 will be relevant to landowners.

## 1. Getting started

We start the process by sending you an introductory letter providing details of a group channel meeting and a project manager who will be your point of contact from start to finish.

We will have already undertaken some preliminary planning on your channel or group of channels and are preparing to consult with you.

### FAQ:

#### Who will I be dealing with?

Depending on how we have allocated or packaged up similar works, your project manager will either work directly for us or for a contractor appointed by us.

All Operational Rules will be the same regardless of who you deal with.

Regardless of who your point of contact is, all of our dealings with you will be professional and courteous.



## 2. Concept planning

We will host a group channel meeting and present the desktop concept reconfiguration plan for your channel.

### The group channel meeting

In the group meeting, we will explain what we are planning to do with the GMW water delivery system that you connect to.

This is in the form of a desktop concept reconfiguration plan which looks similar to the online portal that shows your channel status.

After the meeting, we'll give you a copy of the desktop concept reconfiguration plan to take home. If you need on-farm works to reconnect to the GMW water delivery system, we'll also give to you a desktop on-farm works design.

### FAQ:

#### What if I can't attend the channel meeting?

If you can't attend the meeting, we'll send you (via Registered Post) the desktop concept reconfiguration plan and concept on-farm works design (or organise another mutually convenient way to deliver it to you) and we'll also schedule a one-to-one meeting with you.

**FAQ:**

**What is a concept on-farm works design?**

A concept on-farm works design is our proposal for your on-farm irrigation infrastructure that you will need in order to reconnect to the reconfigured GMW water delivery system.

The concept on-farm works design will show what is proposed for your service points, and any other works needed such as remodelling of farm channels. It also outlines what will happen to your associated delivery share.

The first version is a concept version only, based on information that we have. We will discuss this in detail with you in the next step.

### 3. Consulting and refining

In this step, we have individual conversations with you to refine the desktop reconfiguration plan that applies to your channel and the on-farm works design for your farm.

The first meeting will be scheduled to occur shortly after the group meeting described in Step 2. Further meetings can be scheduled if more consultation is needed.

While your project manager is appointed from start to finish of the project, you will likely deal with a team member who specialises in this part of the engagement process (for example, one of the project's engagement officers).

If your connection requires on-farm works, we will engage a farm designer to undertake the preliminary design of these works in consultation with you. This may include site visits, survey and/or geotechnical investigations.



## Preparation for this step

With the plans in hand, you may want to think about:

- What input or changes you think should be made to the plans
- Whether you'd be prepared to co-contribute to your on-farm works and/or contribute to a larger meter size to allow for future farming plans - as we base our proposals on your historic water use, or
- If you want to reduce the number of outlets you have. This will also save you money on future service point fees.

### Example

#### Outlet rationalisation

Peter owns a substantial parcel of land that he uses for mixed cropping. He has six outlets.

Peter intends to continue to use large quantities of water.

There are two spur channels on his property that lose a great deal of water to leakage and seepage. By decommissioning these spur channels and removing four outlets, he can connect to a channel with the two remaining outlets, which would be upgraded with modern outlets.

Rationalising and upgrading meter outlets helps Peter because he will pay less Service Point Fees and the project will achieve water savings.

## Refining the plans

If we make changes to the desktop plans based on our consultation with you, we'll provide new copies of the plans showing the changes.

This may happen more than once, depending on the complexity of your connection.

Throughout this step, we'll refer to the plans as the concept reconfiguration plan and the concept on-farm works design.

### Key point:

#### Exceptional circumstances or hardship

We know that making big decisions about your business and property can be stressful, particularly if you are also dealing with other non-related issues or hardship.

If you are experiencing hardship that may make dealing with us difficult (such as bereavement or a significant health issue) we can make allowances in our timeline for you, up to four weeks in most cases.

Please don't hesitate to speak with your project manager as early as possible so that we are aware of your circumstances.

## 4. Final plans

In this step we go through what we call a gateway check, which is an internal verification process to make sure the concept reconfiguration plan and on-farm works design is costed correctly and accurately reflects our discussions with you.

Once this gateway is cleared, the concept reconfiguration plan becomes a draft final reconfiguration plan because this is what we plan to adopt as final.

### How we deal with your on-farm works

We take the concept on-farm works design from previous steps and prepare a landowner agreement for on-farm works. This is a contract between you and GMW that enables us to construct your on-farm works. It sets out the legal obligations of each party, including any land dealings required for your connection.

Included with your landowner agreement for on-farm works will be a preliminary design.

We'll send you the draft final reconfiguration plan and two copies of your landowner agreement for on-farm works (with preliminary design) by Registered Post or hand delivery.

## 5. Your review

This is your opportunity to thoroughly review both the draft final reconfiguration plan and your landowner agreement for on-farm works.

### Key point:

You have 30 calendar days to provide submissions on the draft final reconfiguration plan and sign and return your landowner agreement for on-farm works (if you agree with it).

The 30 days starts from when you receive the letter or when you are deemed to have received it (if via Registered Post).

### Submissions on the draft final reconfiguration plan

In reviewing the draft final reconfiguration plan, you may want to ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the draft final reconfiguration plan an accurate reflection of discussions I've had in earlier steps?
- Do I need anything to be explained to me?
- Do I want to make a submission?

### Making a submission

Any person who might be affected by a draft final reconfiguration plan may make a submission as part of the statutory reconfiguration process.

Submissions can be emailed or posted to us.

### Key point:

#### How to make a submission:

**Write to:** GMW Connections Project Submissions

PO Box 165

Tatura, Victoria 3616

**Email:** [connections@gmwater.com.au](mailto:connections@gmwater.com.au)

**Telephone:** 1300 163 006

### Reviewing your landowner agreement for on-farm works

Your landowner agreement for on-farm works sets out the on-farm works that we will carry out on your behalf to reconnect you to the reconfigured water delivery system.

### FAQ:

#### Can I make a submission on my on-farm works design?

Yes. The statutory reconfiguration process provides the opportunity for landowner or relevant interested party submissions on the application of the Operational Rules in the on-farm works offer. Landowners and interested parties will be invited to make submissions on the on-farm works for consideration by the Independent Reviewer.

The Independent Reviewer is appointed and managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and will provide a recommendation to the project as to whether the project has consistently applied Operational Rules in light of landowner submissions received.

## FAQ:

### What if I need professional advice?

The landowner agreement for on-farm works is a binding legal document and it is very important that you understand what it means for you.

We encourage you to seek independent professional advice if you have any questions about the form of document. In order to assist, we will reimburse you up to \$1,000 to cover this expense.

In order to arrange for reimbursement of such costs, please give your project manager a copy of any invoice and proof of payment.

### If you agree with the landowner agreement for on-farm works

If you agree with the landowner agreement for on-farm works, please sign both copies and return them to us within 30 days of receipt.

When a GMW-authorized person has countersigned the agreement, we will return one copy to you for your records.

### If you don't agree with the landowner agreement for on-farm works

If you do not sign the agreement by the specified date or, despite past discussions and consultation to date, you don't agree with what we've proposed in the

landowner agreement for on-farm works, you do not have to sign it.

If this is the case, there are some important things you need to know:

- Without a signed landowner agreement for on-farm works, the project cannot undertake any on-farm works on your behalf.
  - You will need to undertake the on-farm works at your own cost as we no longer provide payments to landowners
  - You need to be able to carry out the works in a reasonable time so the project will not be delayed, and
  - You understand that there may be a potential disruption to your water supply if you are unable to complete the works in reasonable time.
- The project will, however, move ahead with the reconfiguration of the GMW water delivery system as per the adopted reconfiguration plan after allowing reasonable time for you to arrange your own on-farm works.



## 6. Our review

This step is only needed if one or more submissions on a draft final reconfiguration plan have been made.

### Considering submissions

When the project considers a submission there are generally three possible outcomes:

1. The submission is deemed by the project to not justify an amendment to the draft final reconfiguration plan. On the basis that the submission raises matters of a technical and engineering nature, an independent technical and engineering review is undertaken, considering the submission and the project's response.
2. The submission raises matters of a technical and engineering nature that justifies one or more minor changes to the draft final reconfiguration plan. A minor change is that which is localised to the landowner making the submission and does not need further consultation with other landowners.
3. The submission raises matters of a technical and engineering nature that justify a material change to the draft final reconfiguration plan. This would likely mean that further consultation is required with all landowners with an interest in this change.

### Independent Review

An Independent Review process provides for an additional layer of assurance to landowners that our draft final reconfiguration plans are consistent with our Operational Rules.

The Independent Reviewer provides recommendations to the project as to whether GMW's reconfiguration plan or proposed landowner agreement for on-farm works are consistent with the project's Operational Rules and policies.

The Independent Reviewer is appointed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

An Independent Review is carried out at no cost to the landowner.

## 7. Adopt the plan

We can now formally adopt the draft final reconfiguration plan, which we now refer to as a reconfiguration plan.

On adoption, the draft final reconfiguration plan becomes a reconfiguration plan.

The reconfiguration plan is gazetted in the *Victoria Government Gazette* and the project advises the Minister for Water that the reconfiguration plan has been adopted. The project also advises the GMW Board and managing director.

The project then provides a copy of the reconfiguration plan to all relevant landowners and interested parties.

### Final chance to sign your landowner agreement for on-farm works

If you didn't sign your landowner agreement for on-farm works in Step 5, we'll contact you with a final offer of another 30 calendar days to sign the agreement.

## 8. Construction, commissioning and handover

A reconfiguration plan provides all of the information required to prepare for construction so it is at this step that your project manager can give you a timeline for works to take place.

As long as you have signed your landowner agreement for on-farm works, construction will likely be done at the same time as the reconfiguration of the GMW water delivery system.

### FAQ:

#### What if I want to carry out construction on my on-farm works myself?

A key part of the Reset Delivery Plan was the change in construction methodology for on-farm works.

This means that instead of the project giving you funds to construct your on-farm works, the project will manage construction on your behalf.

We project manage the process from start to finish, including obtaining the relevant permits, engaging of contractors and all OH&S obligations and there is no cost to you.

We recognise that some landowners would prefer to carry out their own construction activities, however, this method has been problematic.

There is an exception to the above rule. If you co-contribute to the on-farm solution, depending on the nature of the works, we may agree to provide you with a partial payment to you to carry out your own works.

The terms and conditions of such an arrangement will be set out in a formal agreement between you and the project.

### Timing of construction

We understand that construction can impact on land use and commercial activities. Where possible we will work with you to schedule activities around your needs, or at least limit the impacts of our construction activities on your business.

### FAQ:

#### Who will carry out the construction works on my property?

The Connections Project or its representative will engage a suitably qualified and experienced contractor to carry out construction works on your property.

The project is carrying out construction delivery in two ways: managed in-house with direct engagement of contractors, and through one or more major construction contractors who may employ a sub-contractor for works on your property.

Regardless of contracting method, all contractors – large and small – must comply with strict safety and quality standards at all times.

### Accessing your land

The GMW Customer Charter sets out the general principles, communication requirements and expected conduct of our project team when seeking to access private property. Contractors working on the project's behalf must also abide by the charter.

Before we enter your land, we will take reasonable steps to:

- Contact you before entering your land
- Inform you of our intentions and timeframe before entry
- Consult with you regarding any planned works that may have a significant impact on your property
- Respond to your queries promptly and courteously, and
- Inform you immediately of any damage or interference to your operations, services, structures or property.

You can get a copy of the charter from GMW's website [www.gmwater.com.au/customer-charter](http://www.gmwater.com.au/customer-charter) or phone 1800 013 357 to request a copy by email or post.

## **Commissioning**

Commissioning is the final testing to ensure any assets or structures like meters, pipes and pumps are operating correctly. It also confirms that the on-farm works have been completed and are working in line with the design specifications.

Where it is possible, operational testing can take place during the construction phase.

## **Handover**

Once we sign off on all commissioned assets, we will hand over any operational manuals, ensure you are trained in operating the new assets, and make sure you have the opportunity to meet with a GMW Customer Relationship Consultant for your ongoing irrigation needs to support your farm business.

## Contact us

To find out more about the GMW Connections Project, you can find us in the following ways:

T: 1300 163 006

E: [connections@gmwater.com.au](mailto:connections@gmwater.com.au)

W: [www.connectionsproject.com.au](http://www.connectionsproject.com.au)

F: [facebook.com/ConnectionsGMID](https://facebook.com/ConnectionsGMID)

T: [twitter.com/connectionsGMID](https://twitter.com/connectionsGMID)

Or drop in to your local GMW office and speak with one of our project managers or engagement officers.

