

Background

The Irrigators' Share Consultative Committee (ISCC) was appointed by the Minister for Water in June 2019 to recommend how the irrigators' share should be distributed. The irrigators' share is water recovered through the Connections Project and is to be returned to holders of delivery shares in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID).

The ISCC recommended to the Minister for Water that the irrigators' share be distributed as a once-off distribution, in proportion to the volume of delivery share held by the owner/s of a delivery share, and who pay an infrastructure access fee. The ISCC's recommendation report can be found on the Engage Victoria website, along with the Closing the Loop report:

www.engage.vic.gov.au/irrigators-share

The Minister for Water announced on 3 October 2020, that she accepted the recommendations made by the ISCC and that Eligible Delivery Share Holders (defined below) would receive water shares and other holders of delivery shares would receive a financial benefit by way of a credit on their fixed charges bill.

The Minister's announcement from October last year can be found here:

www.premier.vic.gov.au/delivering-goulburn-murray-irrigators

Arrangements to issue water shares to Eligible Delivery Share Holders

An Eligible Delivery Share Holder is the owner of a serviced property in a gravity fed irrigation area in the GMID who holds a delivery share of at least 0.25 ML/day at 12:01 AM 1 October

2021 (the Census Date) and who is charged an infrastructure access fee. The expected period on which water shares will be issued to each Eligible Delivery Share Holder is between 16 – 31 October 2021 (Issue Period).

Each Eligible Delivery Share Holder is scheduled to receive a high reliability water share and a low reliability water share, proportional to the size of their delivery share holding as at the Census Date.

Estimates provided in the Customer Guide indicate that there will be around 4ML of high reliability water shares and 2ML of low reliability water shares per 1 ML/day of delivery share.

A water share calculator is available on the GMW website to estimate the amount of water shares you will receive:

www.gmwater.com.au/irrigators-share

Arrangements to assess changes to eligibility

Discrepancies as to the holder of a delivery share

Significant technical work is being undertaken to ensure that the names of delivery share holders recorded in the Victorian Water Register are exactly the same as the landowners recorded in the land titles system. As part of the process for preparing an application form on your behalf, a final comparison of ownership details in the Victorian Water Register and the land register on the Census Date will be undertaken. This comparison will provide the basis for verifying ownership details and your eligibility to receive water shares.

If that process identifies discrepancies between the two registers, then it is not

possible to proceed with the preparation of an application on your behalf at this stage. The application process will be delayed until after the Issue Period and once the discrepancies have been resolved.

You will still have an opportunity to apply for the water shares at a later date once the discrepancies have been resolved.

Transactions relating to the sale of land or delivery shares

As the applications for water shares will be prepared in line with the proportional volume of delivery share held by the Eligible Delivery Share Owner/s at the Census Date, any sale or purchase of delivery shares will affect the volumes of the water shares to be issued.

Any sale of delivery shares prior to the Census Date that brings you below the threshold for receiving water shares (ie less than 0.25 ML/day) will mean that it is not possible to proceed with the preparation of an application on your behalf. Instead, you will be eligible to receive a financial benefit in the form of a credit on your 2022 fixed charges bill.

Any sale of a serviced property that changes the owner of the delivery share and is completed or takes place prior to the Census Date will mean that it is not possible to proceed with the preparation of an application on your behalf in the manner outlined in the covering letter. The application will be lodged on behalf of the new delivery share owner.

If any transaction affecting eligibility occurs after the Census Date you are not required to take any action and the water shares will be issued based on the circumstances that applied on the Census Date. Any further adjustments to be made should be dealt with by contractual arrangements between the relevant parties.

Application fees

An application for water share/s made on your behalf in accordance with the covering letter will not incur, and you will not be charged, an application fee.

Water allocations to newly issued water shares

Water will be allocated to a newly issued water share as if the share had been issued at the start of the 2021/2022 water season.

Changes to water shares after issue

The *Water Act 1989* (Vic) provides that, in certain circumstances, a water share may be varied or cancelled and re-issued. You, together with the other holders of the water share, will be responsible for seeking any such changes to your water share once it has been issued.

For example, all water shares issued to more than one person are being issued to those persons as joint tenants. Ownership arrangements can be changed if all owners agree to have the water share cancelled and a new water share issued to the owners as tenants in common.

Also, all water shares will be issued as “unassociated” water shares, ie the water share will not be associated with land specified in a water-use licence or a water-use registration. The owners of a water share can apply to have the water share associated with land under Part 10 of Part 3A of the *Water Act 1989* (Vic).

Where to go for more information

For more information about the project, the process outlined in this factsheet or to discuss with a GMW staff member, please email **ISDProject@gmwater.com.au** or call 1800 013 357.