

Upper Ovens Water Supply Protection Area Licence Renewals

What is the Upper Ovens River Water Supply Protection Area Water Management Plan?

The *Upper Ovens River Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) Water Management Plan* (the Plan) is a statutory plan approved by the Minister for Water in 2012.

The Plan had an extensive development and engagement process set out under the *Water Act 1989*.

What is the objective of the Plan?

The objective of the Plan is to ensure groundwater and surface water resources in the area are managed equitably including long-term sustainability.

Were customers involved in the development of the Plan?

In accordance with the *Water Act 1989*, a consultative committee was appointed with the task of preparing the Plan.

The consultative committee consisted of people with a range of knowledge and experience in matters outlined in the Plan – 50 per cent of the committee membership were customers.

Why do we undertake licence renewal?

Licence renewal is an important part of protecting the environment.

As part of a renewal assessment any impacts that extraction are having on the environment and water resources is taken into account.

Ensure that no licence is having a long term impact on surrounding users and the environment.

The renewal process treats all licence holders equally and holds every licence to account.

Within the Upper Ovens this is particularly important due to high value environmental features within the catchment which the plan aims to protect.

Why have I received a licence renewal notice?

The Annual Licence Renewal Project was initiated in 2014, to transition more than 5000 Take and Use Licences and Works (Regulated) Licences that had one year tenures into a five, 10 or 15 year renewal structure.

The 2015 renewals were funded by customer contributions approved as part of *Water Plan 3 (2012-16)*.

Affected customers were not invoiced for licence renewals in 2015, following the project.

Why is my licence only issued for a term of five years?

Your licence is located in the Upper Ovens River WSPA. The Plan requires all licences in the Upper Ovens WSPA can only be reissued for a period of five years, meaning the five yearly renewal requirement.

Why is the Upper Ovens Licence for a term of five years and others 15?

The five year term is a requirement of the statutory management plan.

The Upper Ovens is a unique area with environmental significance and demonstrated high connectivity between groundwater and surface water resources.

The *Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy 2009* acknowledged this and endorsed the development of a conjunctive management plan, the first plan of its kind in Victoria.

What does my licence renewal fee cover?

The licence renewal costs cover activities such as administration, processing of application and property inspection. .

Fee for Service activities are cost neutral i.e. the application fee covers the cost of undertaking the transaction, whether it be a licence renewal, new licence application or application to trade water.

GMW regularly reviews these fees to ensure they cover the cost only.

Are there any reporting requirements on the Upper Ovens River WSPA Water Management Plan 2012?

The Plan governs how the resource is managed and GMW is required to report on it annually.

Reports are submitted to the Minister for Water and available on GMW's website.

When is the next Upper Ovens River WSPA Water Management Plan review planned to occur?

GMW must review the operation of the Plan five years after it commences; and thereafter, at intervals of no more than five years.

The last review was completed in 2017. For more information visit GMW's website.

The next review will be in 2022.

Is your fee structure independently endorsed?

Every four years GMW puts forward its proposed fees and charges to the independent authority – the Essential Services Commission (ESC).

As a non-profit authority, GMW's pricing is structured to recover the costs of the services it provides and to maintain its assets – the dams, channels and meters it operates - into the future. The written document lodged with the ESC is called our "Pricing Submission".

GMW also submits its annual fees, which are CPI adjusted, to the ESC for independent endorsement.

What if I cannot afford to pay the application fee?

We have a number of payment options available if you require support.

For more information phone the GMW Customer Contact Centre Team on 1800 013 357.

Pricing Comparison

Diversions – Typical customer bill				
Groundwater				
	2019/20	2020/21	\$ Change	% Change
Small	\$576	\$478	-\$97	-17%
Medium	\$1,523	\$1,317	-\$205	-13%
Large	\$3,100	\$2,657	-\$443	-14%
Extra Large	\$6,080	\$5,195	-\$885	-15%
Surface Water Unregulated				
	2019/20	2020/21	\$ Change	% Change
Small	\$407	\$345	-\$62	-15%
Medium	\$766	\$687	-\$78	-10%
Large	\$1,206	\$1,072	-\$134	-11%
Extra Large	\$2,835	\$2,499	-\$336	-12%