

PUBLIC COMMENT INVITED

Environment Effects Statement: Belsar-Yungera and Hattah Lakes North (EES Central package)



VICTORIAN MURRAY FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION PROJECT
HEALTHY LANDSCAPES, STRONG COMMUNITIES

The Belsar-Yungera Floodplain Restoration Project (Belsar-Yungera project) and Hattah Lakes North Floodplain Restoration Project (Hattah Lakes North project) are two of the nine projects that comprise the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP), which seeks to return a more natural water inundation regime across approximately 14,000 ha of high-ecological-value Murray River floodplain in Victoria.

The location of the two project sites is illustrated below.



The Victorian Minister for Planning determined that a single Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required for the two projects under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Victoria). The EES describes the potential effects of the projects on the environment and identifies how the projects would avoid, minimise and manage those potential impacts.

This EES will be on public display along with the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment for 30 business days.

Written submissions can be made between 3 October 2022 and 11.59pm on 14 November 2022.

This notice is provided pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) (EE Act), the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) and *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PE Act).

Project Descriptions

The Belsar-Yungera project is located in north-west Victoria near Robinvale. The project would involve works to facilitate the inundation of approximately 2,374 ha of high ecological value Murray River floodplain.

The Hattah North project is located on the western side of the Murray River in north-west Victoria, approximately 75km south of Mildura. The project would involve works to facilitate the inundation of approximately 1,130 ha of high ecological value Murray River floodplain.

The works proposed for these projects will include construction of channels, large and small regulators, containment structures, temporary cofferdams, spillways, new access tracks and realignments/upgrades to existing access tracks. The projects will also establish borrow pit sites to supply fill material to support construction.

The VMFRP is being implemented as part of Victoria's obligations under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and the project objectives for VMFRP flow from the Basin Plan objectives and outcomes. Lower Murray Water is the proponent of the Belsar-Yungera and Hattah Lakes North projects.

The EES process

On 6 December 2020, the Victorian Minister for Planning determined that a single EES was required for the Belsar-Yungera and Hattah Lakes North projects under the EE Act.

In April 2021, DELWP issued draft Scoping Requirements for the project's EES for public comment. Following consideration of feedback, the final Scoping Requirements were issued and identified the matters to be investigated and documented in the EES.

The key approvals required under Victorian legislation are planning approval via a Planning Scheme Amendment under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*; Commonwealth approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act); approved Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*; works on waterways permits under the *Water Act 1989*; permits to take protected flora under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*; approvals under the *National Parks Act 1975*. Other approvals may be required and will be determined throughout the course of the EES.

How to access the EES and Exhibited Documents

The EES, together with a draft PSA, is now available for public comment. All documents are available to read and download at www.vmfrp.com.au.

Hard copies will be made available at the following locations during the exhibition period:

- Lower Murray Water, 741-759 Fourteenth Street, Mildura, 3500
- Agriculture Victoria Centre Cnr Koorlong Ave & Eleventh St Irymple, 3498
- Robinvale Resource Centre, 72 Herbert Street, Robinvale, 3549
- Swan Hill Library, 53 Campbell Street, Swan Hill 3585
- State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston St, Melbourne 3000

Please note the EES is a long document and the use of electronic versions is encouraged.

For those who cannot access either the physical or electronic sites to view the EES and draft PSA, hard copies of specific documents may be requested free of charge by emailing the Proponent on info@vmfrp.vic.gov.au or calling 1800 808 830.

EES Information Pack

You can request a free EES information pack which includes:

- USB loaded with the complete EES and draft PSA
- Printed Summary Document

To request an information pack, email the Proponent on info@vmfrp.vic.gov.au or call 1800 808 830.

Drop In Sessions

Drop-in sessions will be held by the Proponent at the following locations and times:

- 12 October, 2022, from 9am to 11am at Lower Murray Water, 741-759 Fourteenth Street, Mildura, 3500
- 12 October, 2022 from 1pm - 3pm at Robinvale Resource Centre, 72 Herbert Street, Robinvale 3549
- 19 October, 2022, from 2- 4pm at Agriculture Victoria Centre, Cnr Koorlong Ave and Eleventh Street, Irymple 3498
- 24 October, 2022, from 1pm to 3pm at Swan Hill Library, 53 Campbell Street, Swan Hill 3585
- Online Information Session 27 October from 7pm to 8pm. Register your interest at info@vmfrp.vic.gov.au

How to make a submission

Anyone can make a submission. Submissions on this EES (and the proposed PSA) must be made in writing and be received by 11:59pm on 14 November 2022. Online submissions are preferred and can be lodged via the Victorian Government's engagement website <https://engage.vic.gov.au/VMFRP-SIAC-EES-Central>.

Each submission is a public document and will be treated as a submission on the EES and the draft PSA. Only one submission is needed to address your views about the project, its effects and the relevant documents.

Where a submitter is unable to lodge a submission online, they must contact Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) through the DELWP Customer Call Centre on 136 186 (select option 6) and request a hardcopy submission coversheet. Each hardcopy submission must be accompanied by a coversheet issued by Planning Panels Victoria for privacy reasons.

All submissions must state the name and address of the person making the submission. Petitions will be treated as a single submission and only the first names from a petition will be registered and contacted. Pro-forma submitters will be registered and contacted individually if they provide their contact details. However, pro-forma submitters who want to be heard at the public hearing may be encouraged to present as a group, given their submissions raise the same issues.

Submissions will be treated as public documents and will be published on the Engage Victoria website. Do not include personal information in the body of your submission (such as your email address or phone number) or photos of people, particularly children. Your submission and your name will be made public.

Inquiry and Advisory Committee Process

The Minister for Planning will appoint a Standing Inquiry and Advisory Committee (SIAC) under the EE Act and PE Act to consider the proposed nine VMFRP that will be referred to them via four assessment packages.

The SIAC will review the EES, the draft PSA, submissions and conduct a public hearing. It will consider the environmental effects of the EES Central projects in accordance with terms of reference issued by the Minister.

After the exhibition period, the SIAC will hold a Directions Hearing on Monday 28 November 2022 where the necessary arrangements and timetable for the public hearing will be established.

Further information about the Directions Hearing arrangements (including whether it will be held in person or conducted online by video conference) will be published on <https://engage.vic.gov.au/VMFRP-SIAC-EES-Central> when determined. The SIAC will follow the health advice from the Victorian Government and the Chief Health Officer in making this decision.

The public hearing process will commence in the week beginning Monday 16 January 2023 and will run for approximately three to four weeks (if required).

Members of the public and any other parties seeking to be heard at the public hearing are required to submit a written submission and indicate on the online submission form or hardcopy submission coversheet that they would like to be heard at the hearing.

Information on the SIAC, hearing process and timetable will be published as it becomes available at: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/VMFRP-SIAC-EES-Central>

Further information

In relation to Project or EES documentation: VMFRP Lower Murray Water PO BOX 1438, Mildura 3502
Phone: 1800 808 830
Email: info@vmfrp.vic.gov.au

In relation to making a submission or the SIAC and hearing process: Planning Panels Victoria
Phone: 136 186 (select option 6)
Email: VMFRP.SIAC@delwp.vic.gov.au

In relation to the EES process: Impact Assessment Unit, DELWP
Email: environment.assessment@delwp.vic.gov.au
<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/hattah-lakes-northfloodplain-restoration-project-and-belsaryungera-floodplain-restoration-project>