

WATER ACT 1989

Water Savings Protocol for the Quantification of Water Savings from Irrigation Modernisation Projects

July 2009

EXPLANATORY NOTE FROM THE MINISTER OF WATER

As Minister for Water, I am issuing this Water Saving Protocol for the determination of water savings resulting from irrigation modernisation projects. The Protocol has been developed in conjunction with Goulburn-Murray Water, and Northern Victorian Irrigation Renewal Project team. DSE has consulted widely across the irrigation community and with all Victorian rural water corporations.

The impetus for the Protocol is the recent and significant investment in irrigation modernisation projects in Victoria and the requirement to demonstrate the resultant water savings are calculated in a transparent manner using best practice.

The purpose of the Protocol is to provide guidance for water corporations and project proponents in the estimation, application for and allocation of water savings from irrigation modernisation projects.

The application of the Protocol will also allow water savings to be calculated in a consistent and transparent manner which can be independently audited.

1 Context

This Protocol provides a guide to my expectations for water corporations and project proponents to demonstrate water savings in:

- requesting funding for irrigation modernisation projects which deliver water savings;
- setting aside water savings for future transfer; and
- making an application to the Minister for a new bulk entitlement or to amend bulk entitlements to reflect water savings.

The use of the Protocol by a water corporation will be taken into account, where appropriate, when:

- a) an application is made under section 36 of the *Water Act 1989* for the formal recognition of water savings;
- b) seasonal determinations are made by Authorities under section 64 of the *Water Act 1989* or as specified in the Bulk Entitlement Orders for the purpose of setting aside water savings for future use; and
- c) proposals for State investment in irrigation modernisation projects are considered, in order to ensure consistent and robust estimates of water savings.

2 The nature of the Water Savings Protocol

The Water Savings Protocol is made up of a series of technical documents which provide guidance in how to estimate, calculate and allocate water savings. It also sets out the associated responsibilities of the authorities and stakeholders.

The Protocol consists of the following documents:

- this explanatory note;
- Technical Manual for the Quantification of Water Savings from Irrigation Modernisation Projects;
- the statement of Roles and Responsibilities;
- the statement of Water Savings Audit Process.

The Technical Manual reflects current best practice for the calculation of water savings. The Technical Manual may be updated periodically by DSE to reflect improvements in technology and developments in the understanding of irrigation system loss.

The Technical Manual is predominantly based on the knowledge and experience of irrigation management and modernisation in northern Victoria but may be applied to the entire State, for all stages of the modernisation projects.

The Protocol is provided for the purposes of guidance and clarification.

3 Application of the Protocol

The guidance provided by the Protocol may be applied to all current and new modernisation projects in Victoria. I recommend that the Protocol should be followed when:

- estimating the savings for the project business case;
- auditing the savings generated from the modernisation works each year;
- allocating the savings each year before they have been converted to entitlements; and
- applying to the Minister to amend the bulk entitlements to reflect the reduction in the system loss provisions and to allocate the water savings.

TIM HOLDING MP
Minister for Water