

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT, GOULBURN MURRAY WATER AND... YOU!



WHAT IS THE SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT ABOUT?

The Safe Drinking Water Act aims to ensure safe drinking water is supplied to consumers.



Sediment from Goulburn catchment at the junction of Goulburn and Howqua Rivers after bushfires (July 2009).

WHY IS GMW INVOLVED WITH SAFE DRINKING WATER?

The water supplied to GMW customers is not fit for direct human consumption. However, some GMW customers are urban water corporations that treat and supply water to thousands of households. This water comes from 'open catchments' and GMW must identify and, where possible, reduce the risks to town water supply offtakes.

Town water supply offtakes can be located in GMW storages, waterways downstream of storages and even in irrigation channels.

WHERE DO HAZARDS COME FROM?

'Open catchments' are those in which the land is used for a variety of purposes. There may be farming, towns, forests, industry and recreation, which can each affect water quality in different ways. Natural events, including fires and floods, can also contribute to poor water quality.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS TO DRINKING WATER?

High levels of the following substances can make drinking water unsafe:

- Pathogens e.g. cryptosporidium and *E.coli*,
- Algae toxins e.g. blue green algae,
- Chemicals e.g. pesticides, and
- Radiological e.g. mining waste.

HOW DOES GMW MANAGE RISKS?

GMW identifies, assesses and, where possible, controls risks to water quality. GMW does the following to reduce risks (just to name a few!):

- Improves facilities around GMW storages e.g. public toilet and wastewater system upgrades,
- Erosion prevention works,
- Manages houseboat wastewater,
- Uses herbicides responsibly,
- Conducts blue green algae monitoring & issues warnings,
- Has input to development planning,
- Responds to incidents.



Upgraded toilet facilities at Cairn Curran Reservoir.

YOUR ROLE IN SAFE DRINKING WATER

Catchment-to-tap protection of drinking water involves us all.

If you become aware of an incident or circumstance that may affect water quality or GMW customers, report it on 1800 064 184 – at any time.



Earthworks for residential development at Silverwoods Estate, Yarrawonga.

RECREATION

Reduce the impact of your activities on water quality by making sure you:

- Obey boating speed limits and reduce speed near the shore,
- Launch boats only at signed sites,
- Obey refuelling and wastewater rules for houseboats,
- Avoid high erosion risk areas, and
- Dispose of all rubbish properly.

LANDOWNERS

Reduce the impact of your actions on water quality by making sure you:

- Prevent stock access to waterways,
- Use appropriate stocking rates,
- Inspect and maintain onsite wastewater systems (including septic),
- Ensure that new development or works comply with relevant guidelines,
- Plant trees and shrubs along waterways,
- Use and store fertilisers and pesticides responsibly,
- Have suitable animal waste management (including dairy waste and manure stockpiles), and
- Gain correct approvals before starting works on waterways and storages.



Houseboats at the Lake Eildon marina.

RESOURCES

Department of Health and Human Services

www.health.vic.gov.au/water/drinkingwater/protecting-our-drinking-water-catchments.htm

See: Brochures on protecting our waters, and stock accessing waterways upstream of drinking water offtakes, at the above website.

Your local Catchment Management Authority

www.necma.vic.gov.au

www.gbcma.vic.gov.au

www.nccma.vic.gov.au