

Westernport Water Bulk Entitlement (Westernport – Bass) Application

[Westernport Water Corporation](#) has applied for a new [bulk entitlement](#) to allow it to extract up to 3 billion litres of water from the Bass River near Almurta each year.

This action is part of Westernport Water's plan to secure water supplies for towns in the Westernport region including Cowes, San Remo, Corinella, Grantville, Kilcunda and Dalyston.

If you wish to comment on Westernport Water's application you can make a submission to the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Please make your submission before 5pm on Monday 22 June 2009 by mail or email to:

Department of Sustainability and Environment
Attention: Water Resource Policy Analyst, Office of Water
PO Box 500
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Email: wpw.be@dse.vic.gov.au

Alternatively you can contact Westernport Water's General Manager Operations Steven Porter directly on 5956 4123.

Once the submissions process is complete the Department will ask Westernport Water to address any relevant issues raised.

More information about Westernport Water's application is provided below, or in the Frequently Asked Questions (below).

PRIVACY NOTE: The information you provide in your submission, or any other response, will be used by the Department of Sustainability and Environment only in the assessment of Westernport Water's application. All submissions will be treated as public documents and may be published on this page for public access. All addresses, phone numbers and email details will be removed before being published. Formal requests for confidentiality will be honoured, however Freedom of Information access requirements will apply to submissions treated as confidential. If you wish to access your information in your submission once it is lodged with the Department you may make a request by contacting the Office of Water at the address or email provided.

Bulk entitlement application

[File link] [Application Letter from WpW.pdf](#)

[File link] [Draft Bulk Entitlement \(Westernport – Bass\) Order 2009.pdf](#)

[File link] [Extract from consultant's \(SKM\) Report on WpW's application.pdf](#)

Related documents

[File link] [Melbourne Water - Bass River Flow Recommendations Report Final June 2008.pdf](#)

[File link] [Westernport Water's Water Supply Demand Strategy.pdf](#)

[Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy](#) (see Chapter 4)

Frequently Asked Questions

Submissions on Westernport Water's application are being accepted until 5pm on Monday 22 June 2009. All non-confidential submissions can be accessed below.

- 1. What is a bulk entitlement?
- 2. What has Westernport Water applied to do?
- 3. What happens now?
- 4. How much water has Westernport Water applied for?
- 5. What will the water be used for?
- 6. Can Westernport Water source water from somewhere else?
- 7. Why doesn't Westernport Water connect to the desalination plant?
- 8. How will the environment be protected?
- 9. What monitoring and reporting arrangements will there be?
- 10. Can the bulk entitlement be changed if there is any impact on the environment?
- 11. What else is Westernport Water doing to protect river health?
- 12. How does Westernport Water's application relate to long-term planning for the region's water supplies?
- 13. Where can I find out more about Westernport Water's application?

1. What is a bulk entitlement?

A bulk entitlement is a legal right to water granted by the Minister for Water under the *Water Act 1989*.

Bulk entitlements are commonly held by water corporations in Victoria. A bulk entitlement to a water supply system often contains:

- a share of the storage capacity in the system
- a share of the inflows of water into the system
- the right to take water from specified points in the system
- the obligation to provide or allow flows past at a point on the river
- the obligation to supply customers and primary entitlement holders in the system
- financial and reporting obligations

2. What has Westernport Water applied to do?

Westernport Water has applied for a new bulk entitlement to allow it to extract 3 billion litres of water from the Bass River near Almurta each year. Westernport Water will only take from the river during the months of May to November inclusive when flows are high.

In June 2007 storage levels in Candowie Reservoir, where water is sourced for the Westernport region, fell to a record low of 7 per cent. Westernport Water is acting to secure future water supplies and lower the risk of future high level restrictions.

3. What happens now?

Submissions are being called for until 22 June. Once this process is complete the Department will collate submissions and require Westernport Water to address any relevant concerns. Once Westernport Water has addressed any issues, its application will be submitted to the Minister for Water.

The Minister for Water will then determine Westernport Water's application taking into account community concerns and how they are being addressed. If approved, the signed bulk entitlement amendment will be published in the Victorian Government Gazette.

4. How much water has Westernport Water applied for?

The draft entitlement proposes an extraction cap of 3 billion litres in any year (1 July to 30 June). In some years the actual extraction will be less than the cap volume of 3 billion litres. This is because of other conditions within the entitlement that limit when Westernport Water can take water. For example, the draft entitlement requires Westernport Water to extract water only when the river flow rate exceeds 40 million litres per day. In some dry years flow will frequently exceed this rate.

The entitlement also only allows water to be taken between May to November inclusive. Westernport Water will not pump from December to April.

Westernport Water's pumps and pipes connected to the Bass River currently have a capacity of 13 million litres per day. Westernport Water is planning to increase the pumping capacity to 25 million litres a day to capture more water from high flow events. These high flow events occur following significant rainfall, more frequently over winter, and typically only lasting for a few days.

Westernport Water's extraction will equate to between 5 and 11 per cent of total annual flow, depending upon the river flow in any year. This is solely based upon the last 12 years of climate.

5. What will the water be used for?

The water will be used to increase the urban water supplies to Phillip Island and the mainland from San Remo to Dalyston.

6. Can Westernport Water source water from somewhere else?

Westernport Water is also developing the Corinella bore fields to augment the water supply to Candowie reservoir. There is no other water available in the quality and quantity, except from Bass River, that will not involve significant work and costs.

Apart from the Bass River supply there is no other available water supply that does not require significant costs.

Westernport Water currently has a bulk entitlement for the Tennent Creek, a subsidiary of Bass River that helps fill the Candowie reservoir. There are no other nearby rivers or surface water sources that have sufficient high quality water to augment the flow into Candowie reservoir.

Westernport Water supply options in order of preference, with consideration to its application, are as follows:

1. Tennent Creek (existing bulk entitlement)
2. Bass River (proposed new bulk entitlement)
3. Groundwater (Corinella Borefield)
4. Desalinated water

7. Why doesn't Westernport Water connect to the desalination plant?

Westernport Water is exploring a range of alternatives to improve reliability of water supplies, including connection to the desalination plant which is scheduled to deliver water by the end of 2011. Connecting to the desalination plant may be used as an emergency supply option to deliver water in a water shortage.

In the interim, Westernport Water is securing water supplies for the Westernport region with available resources from the Bass River.

8. How will the environment be protected?

There will be strict conditions on when Westernport Water can take water from the river. Melbourne Water, acting as the waterway manager for the Bass River, has carried out an environmental flow study and the findings from this informed these conditions.

Westernport Water developed its application to make sure that there would be minimal risk of any negative impact on the environment. Westernport Water will also monitor river health as part of the conditions of the bulk entitlement.

Melbourne Water is a member of the technical working group that helped develop Westernport Water's application. You can download Melbourne Water's report on environmental flows in the Bass River by navigating back to the Westernport Water Bulk Entitlement (Westernport – Bass) Application page.

9. What monitoring and reporting arrangements will there be?

Monitoring and reporting requirements included in the draft entitlement include preparation of a metering program to monitor and report on its extractions. This metering program will ensure that Westernport Water complies with the proposed entitlement rules.

The metering program will include an assessment of the impacts of the works on the banks of the river, and any effects on fish and insects in the waterway, and will ensure the quality of the water in the river.

Southern Rural Water, as the Minister for Water's appointed resource manager for the Bass River system, will monitor Westernport Water's extractions.

Westernport Water will also be required to report on compliance with entitlement rules in its annual report.

10. Can the bulk entitlement be changed if there is any impact on the environment?

Yes, if it was determined that extraction was having a serious environmental impact. Any environmental impacts from extraction would be identified under the proposed monitoring and reporting requirements explained in question Q9 above.

If there were environmental impacts from extractions under the amendment, the resource manager (or another Authority), with support of another Minister, may recommend bulk entitlement amendments to the Minister for Water. The Minister for Water could then amend the bulk entitlement in the same manner as the original order or amendment was made.

11. What else is Westernport Water doing to protect river health?

Westernport Water donates each year to support efforts by Landcare volunteers and Landcare groups across the region have recently received nearly \$50,000 in support.

Volunteers have revegetated much of the river catchment and around 12,000 plants native to the Bass Valley have recently been planted along four kilometres of riverside landscape at Tennent Creek.

12. How does Westernport Water's application relate to long-term planning for the region's water supplies?

The application is an action recommended by the [Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy](#) (CRSWS). The Bass River was recognised as a source of water for the urban communities in the Westernport region.

Action 4.52 of the CRSWS states that Westernport Water will immediately undertake a comparative assessment of augmentation options, including an interconnection with: the Bass River; groundwater bores near the Candowie Reservoir, Corinella aquifer, and the Melbourne supply system, to determine which option should be implemented.

See page 106 of the strategy for further details.

13. Where can I find out more about Westernport Water's application?

If you have a specific query about Westernport Water's application, you can contact Westernport Water's General Manager Operations, Steven Porter, directly on 5956 4123.

Submissions

Submissions on Westernport Water's application can be made before 5pm on Monday 22 June 2009. All non-confidential submissions will be accessible below.