

## Hopkins River Basin

March 2014

### Introduction

Southern Rural Water (SRW) is the water corporation responsible for administering and enforcing the Hopkins River Basin Local Management Plan (LMP).

The purpose of the Hopkins River Basin LMP is to:

- Document the management objectives for the system;
- Explain to licence holders (and the broader community) the specific management objectives and arrangements for their water resource and the rules that apply to them as users of that resource;
- Clarify water sharing arrangements for all users and the environment, including environmental flow requirements; and
- Document any limits, including water use caps, permissible consumptive volumes or extraction limits that apply to the system.

### Management objectives

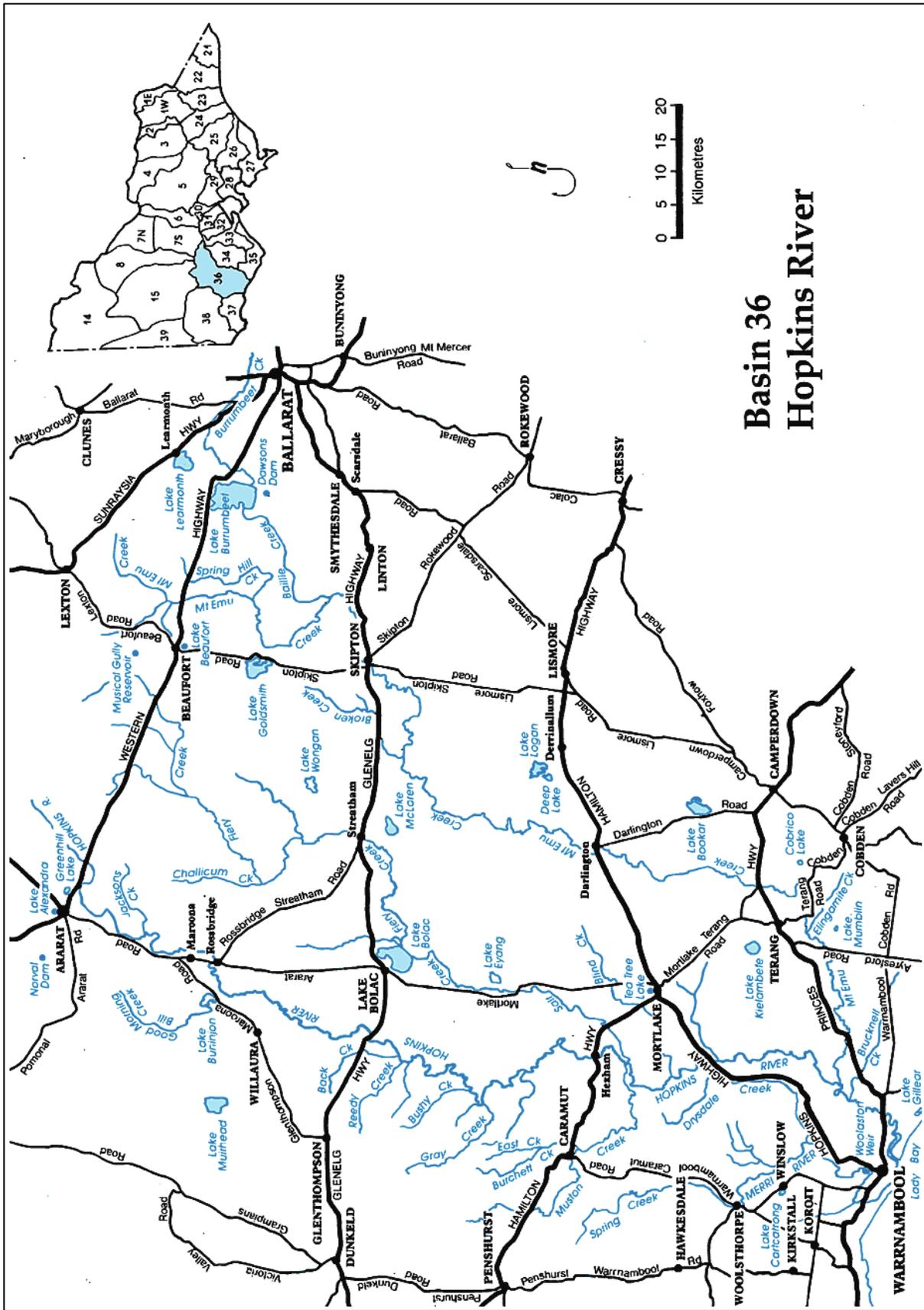
The objective of the LMP is to ensure the equitable sharing of water between users and the environment and the long-term sustainability of the resource.

### Water system covered

The LMP covers all the rivers and creeks located within the Hopkins River Basin, which includes:

<b>Hopkins River</b>	<b>Merri River</b>
Hopkins River and tributaries	Merri River and tributaries
Brucknell (Cudgee) Creek and tributaries	Drysdale Creek and tributaries
Mount Emu Creek and tributaries	Spring Creek and tributaries

The Hopkins River Basin is shown in the map below.



## Catchment information

The Hopkins Basin (Basin 36) in Victoria's South West covers an area of 10,096 km<sup>2</sup> (4.4 % of the state). It is bounded in the north by the Great Dividing Range, in the north- west by the Grampians Ranges and in the south by the Southern Ocean; entering the sea at Warrnambool. The basin is flat to undulating with numerous volcanic cones. The major tributaries of the Hopkins River are Salt Creek, Mount Emu Creek, Muston Creek and Brucknell Creek.

The Merri River is the only other significant coastal stream within the Hopkins Basin and drains the South Western corner, also discharging to the sea at Warrnambool. There are also several brackish or saline lakes within the basin, including Lake Burrumbeet and Lake Bolac.

Rainfall in the South of the basin is around 800mm per year and drops to 524 mm at Lake Bolac, increasing with elevation to 700mm along the range. The mean annual runoff from the basin is 405,600 megalitres, which represents 2% of the total runoff generated in the state.

The Hopkins system has many significant attributes including boating opportunities, Recreational fishing scenic landscapes, cultural Indigenous heritage sites and native fish and fauna habitat.

## Water entitlements and use

Apart from allocations on the Hopkins River, licence allocations in the Hopkins River Basin, also includes the major tributaries of Mount Emu Creek, Brucknell (Cudgee) Creek along with the sub catchment of the Merri River and its tributaries–Drysdale and Spring Creeks.

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation* - direct	109	9696.9
Irrigation - winterfill	13	1385.1
Registration**	121	5947.7
Domestic and Stock	32	77.1
Commercial / Industrial	5	234.4
Dairy	6	21.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>17,362.9</b>

\* Includes amalgamated D&S and Commercial licences

\*\*Includes Dairy and Commercial licences

More detailed information can be located in the Victorian Water Register.

## General rules

Licences in the Hopkins River Basin are managed in accordance with the Water Act 1989 and Policies for Managing Take and Use Licences. A copy of these policies can be found at:

<http://waterregister.vic.gov.au/Public/TakeAndUseLicences.aspx>

The general rules for licences in the Hopkins River Basin are as follows:

### *New licences*

- The Hopkins River Basin is fully allocated, so no new licences can be issued.
- There is no permissible consumptive volume (PCV) for the Hopkins River Basin at present

### *Metering*

- Diversions are metered and licence holders must not use more than their licensed volume.
- Meters are installed on all active licences of 10ML or greater or all new licences regardless of the volume. Meters are read at least twice per year.
- Stock and Domestic use is not metered.

### *Restrictions*

- Take and use licences allow for SRW to roster and/or restrict extraction during periods of low water availability. Restrictions will be applied by SRW as required. Notifications will be provided to licence holders in advance of their implementation, generally at the implementation of Stage 1 roster/restriction level.

### *Transfers*

- Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
  - the licence will be transferred to a downstream user, or
  - the licence is issued to the buyer as a winterfill licence
- A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream (all-year licence).

## *Renewals*

- Licences are renewed in accordance with the Water Act 1989 and Policies for Managing Take and Use Licences.

The general rules apply to all licences in the Hopkins River Basin, unless otherwise stated in the system specific rules.

### **System specific rules**

Some systems within the Hopkins River Basin require more specific management rules that address rostering, restrictions and trade. In the Hopkins River Basin specific rules exist for the following systems:

- Hopkins River- refer to appendix 1
- Mount Emu Creek- refer to appendix 2
- Brucknell (Cudgee) Creek - refer to appendix 3
- Merri River (Zones 1 & Zone 2) – refer to appendix 4

### **Annual reporting**

SRW produces Local Water Reports for each river basin. These reports include information on licences, water use and seasonal conditions. A copy is sent to each licence holder each year.

### **Consultation and review**

SRW will consult with licence holders and relevant stakeholders before making changes to the Local Management Plan, other than administrative changes or clarifications.

The Local Management Plan will be reviewed every 5 years, unless an update is required sooner.

### **References**

- Department Primary Industries – Victorian Resources Online

### **Contact details**

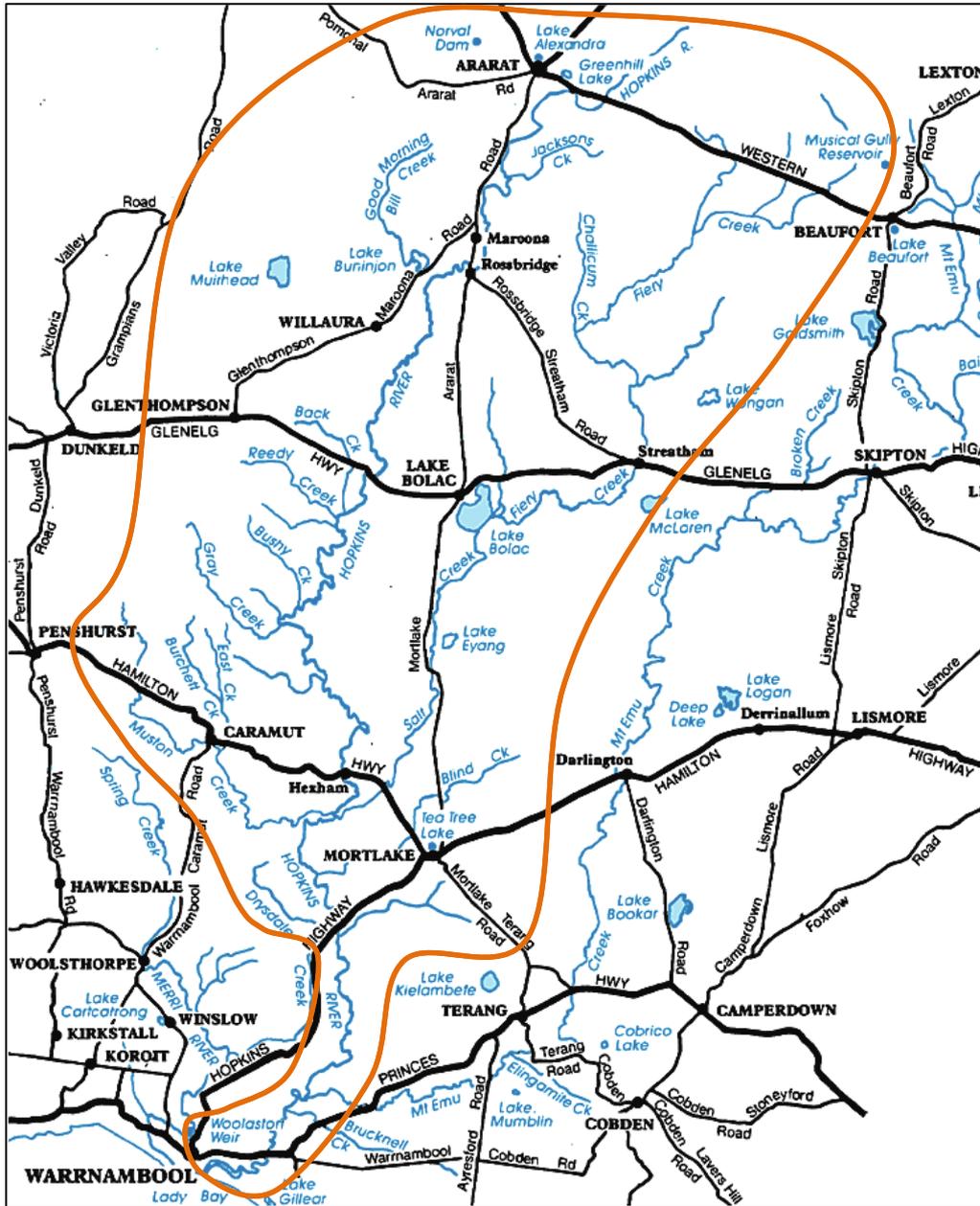
For general information call 1300 139 510 or visit [www.srw.com.au](http://www.srw.com.au)

# Appendix 1

# Hopkins River Rules

## Area Description

These rules apply to all Hopkins River irrigation licence holders, as shown below.



## Licences

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation* - direct	30	2,733.1
Irrigation - winterfill	8	1,249.0
Registration**	63	2,486.3
Domestic and Stock	19	43.8
Commercial / Industrial	3	42.0
Dairy	3	9.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>6,564.1</b>

\* Includes amalgamated D&S and Commercial licences

\*\*Includes Dairy and Commercial licences

More detailed information can be located in the "Victorian Water Register".

## Management of Licences

The Hopkins River has a five stage irrigation restriction regime. This regime will commence from stage 1 on or about October 1<sup>st</sup> each year; or when the daily flow drops to 10 Megalitres at the Hopkins Falls gauging station.

Licence holders will be informed of the implementation and commencement of stage 1 of the irrigation regime and the requirements of licence holders to adhere to each stage of restriction as determined by SRW.

Restrictions are increased one stage at a time, based on flows at the Hopkins Falls Gauging station when flows drop below 7 megalitres per day. These restrictions are eased one stage at a time when the flows increase to 12 megalitres per day at the Hopkins Falls gauging station

Management is by visual inspection and liaison with all licence holders.

Southern Rural Water has adopted a message bank system to assist in the delivery of a more equitable allocation of the water resource for all licence holders. The message bank will indicate the stage level set for the river, for that day.

The 1300365607 (message bank) telephone number must be called to determine the stage level for the river, prior to any diversion on any given day.

Triggers for each stage of restriction are:-

<b>Restriction Stages</b>	<b>Trigger Value for Introduction of Next Stage of Restriction</b>	<b>Percentage of Allocation Allowed</b>
Stage 1	October 1 <sup>st</sup> or 10 MI / day	100%
Stage 2	< 7 MI / day	75%
Stage 3	< 7 MI / day	50%
Stage 4	< 7 MI / day	25%
Stage 5	< 7 MI / day	BAN

### **Compliance Point**

There is a surfacewater gauging station (Gauge Site No.236209A) located immediately upstream of the Hopkins Falls, Hopkins Falls Road, Cudgee.

The flow levels can be obtained either by text using a mobile phone or by a sight inspection.

Southern Rural Water will:

- Continuously record the daily instantaneous flows at the Hopkins Falls Gauging station (236209A), once the restriction regime has been introduced and
- periodically inspect the condition of the Hopkins Falls gauging station; and
- Maintain the Hopkins Falls gauging station in good condition.

### **Transfers**

- Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
  - the licence will be transferred to a downstream user, or
  - the licence is issued to the buyer as a winterfill licence
- A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream (all-year licence).

### **Consultation and Review**

SRW will consult with licence holders and relevant stakeholders before making changes to the Local Management Plan, other than administrative changes or clarifications.

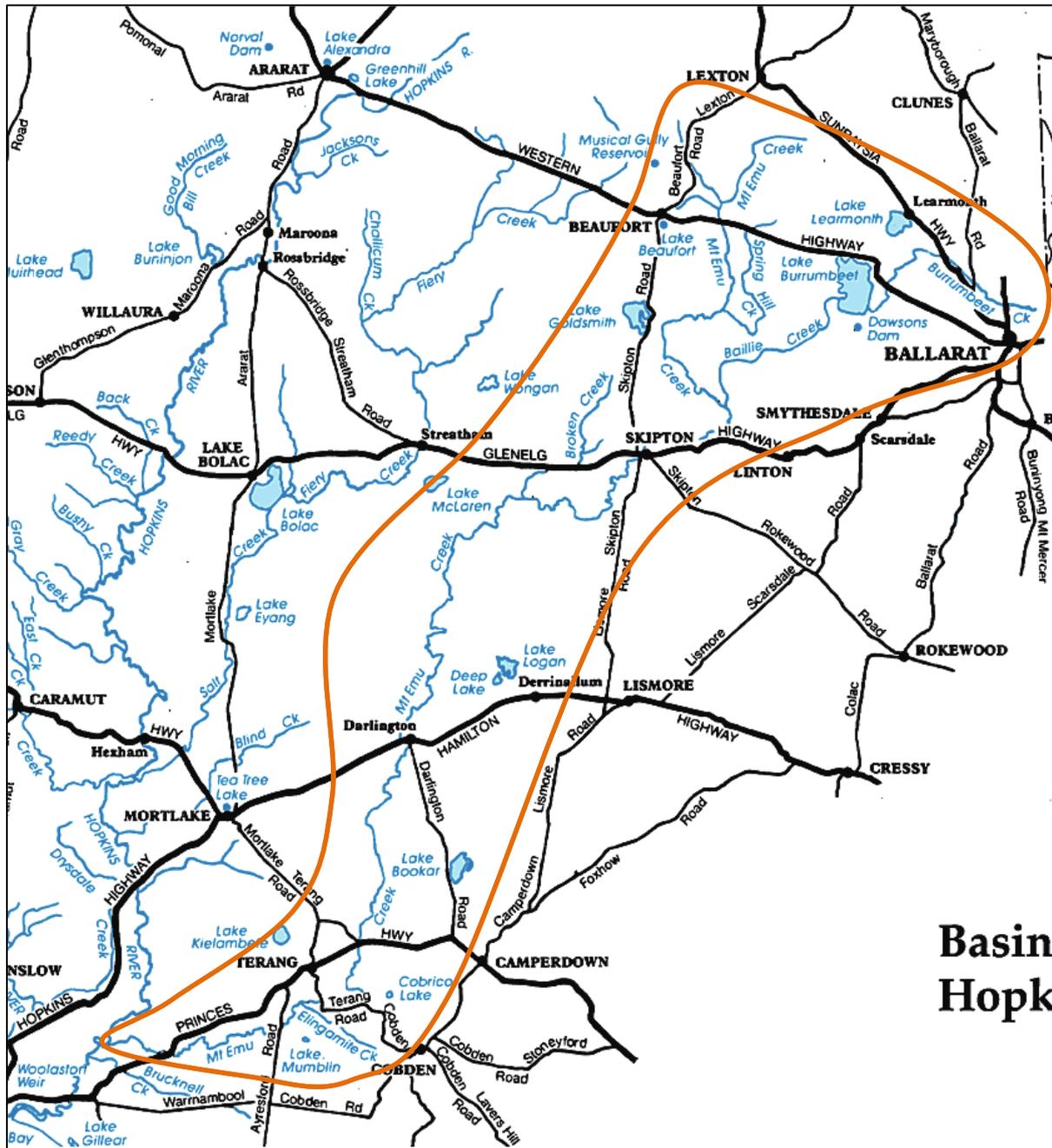
The Local Management Plan will be reviewed every 5 years, unless an update is required sooner.

# Appendix 2

# Mt Emu Creek Rules

## Area Description

These rules apply to Mount Emu Creek irrigation licence holders as shown below.



## Licences

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation* - direct	16	1,248.9
Irrigation - winterfill	4	115.1
Registration**	37	2,407.0
Domestic and Stock	4	15.9
Commercial / Industrial	-	-
Dairy	3	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>3,798.7</b>

\* Includes amalgamated D&S and Commercial licences

\*\*Includes Dairy and Commercial licences

More detailed information can be located in the Victorian Water Register.

### Management of Licences

The Mount Emu Creek has a five stage restriction regime. This regime will commence from stage 1 on or about October 1<sup>st</sup> each year; or when the daily flow drops to 10 Megalitres at the Mount Emu Creek gauging station.

Licence holders will be informed of the implementation and commencement of stage 1 of the irrigation regime and the requirements of licence holders to adhere to each stage of restriction as determined by SRW.

Restrictions are increased one stage at a time, based on flows at the Mount Emu Creek Gauging station when flows drop below 7 megalitres per day. These restrictions are eased one stage at a time when the flows increase to 9 megalitres per day at the Mount Emu gauging station

Management is by visual inspection and liaison with all licence holders.

Southern Rural Water has adopted a message bank system to assist in the delivery of a more equitable allocation of the water resource for all licence holders. The message bank will indicate the stage level set for the river, for that day.

The 1300365607 (message bank) telephone number must be called to determine the stage level for the river, prior to any diversion on any given day.

Restriction triggers for each stage of restriction.

<b>Restriction Stages</b>	<b>Trigger Value for Introduction of Next Stage of Restriction</b>	<b>Percentage of Allocation Allowed</b>
Stage 1	October 1 <sup>st</sup> or 10 MI / day	100%
Stage 2	< 7 MI / day	75%
Stage 3	< 7 MI / day	50%
Stage 4	< 7 MI / day	25%
Stage 5	< 7 MI / day	BAN

### **Compliance Point**

There is a surfacewater gauging station (Gauge Site No.236216A) is located on the Mount Emu Creek at Ayrford Road bridge, Taroon, south of Terang.

The flow levels can be obtained either by text using a mobile phone or by a sight inspection.

Southern Rural Water will:

- Continuously record the daily instantaneous flows at the Mount Emu Creek Gauging station (236216A), once the restriction regime has been introduced and
- Periodically inspect the condition of the Mount Emu Creek gauging station; and
- Maintain the Mount Emu Creek gauging station in good condition.

### **Transfers**

- Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
  - the licence will be transferred to a downstream user, or
  - the licence is issued to the buyer as a winterfill licence
- A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream (all-year licence).

### **Consultation and Review**

SRW will consult with licence holders and relevant stakeholders before making changes to the Local Management Plan, other than administrative changes or clarifications.

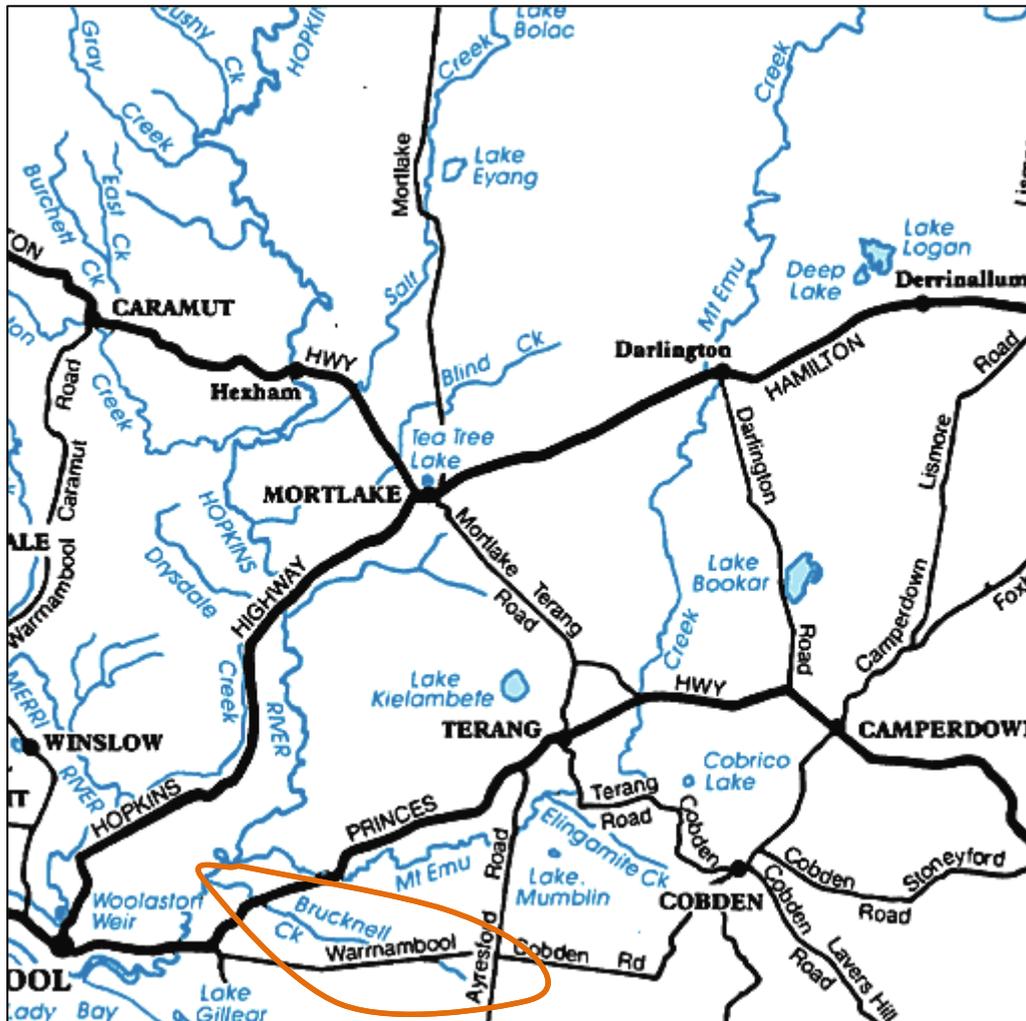
The Local Management Plan will be reviewed every 5 years, unless an update is required sooner.

# Appendix 3

# Brucknell Creek Rules

## Area Description

These rules apply to all Brucknell Creek irrigation licence holders, as shown below.



## Licences

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation* - direct	18	1,355.8
Irrigation - winterfill	-	-
Registration**	5	31.8
Domestic and Stock	-	-
Commercial / Industrial	-	-
Dairy	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1,387.6</b>

\* Includes amalgamated D&S and Commercial licences

\*\*Includes Dairy and Commercial licences

More detailed information can be located in the Victorian Water Register.

### Management of Licences

The Brucknell Creek has a five stage restriction regime. This regime will commence from stage 1 on or about October 1<sup>st</sup> each year; or when the daily flow drops to 20 Megalitres at the Brucknell Creek gauging station.

Licence holders will be informed of the implementation and commencement of stage 1 of the irrigation regime and the requirements of licence holders to adhere to each stage of restriction as determined by SRW.

Restrictions are increased one stage at a time, based on flows at the Brucknell Creek Gauging station when flows drop below 7 megalitres per day. These restrictions are eased one stage at a time when the flows increase to 9 megalitres per day at the Brucknell Creek gauging station

Management is by visual inspection and liaison with all licence holders.

Southern Rural Water has adopted a message bank system to assist in the delivery of a more equitable allocation of the water resource for all licence holders. The message bank will indicate the stage level set for the river, for that day.

The 1300365607 (message bank) telephone number must be called to determine the stage level for the river, prior to any diversion on any given day.

Restriction triggers for each stage of restriction.

<b>Restriction Stages</b>	<b>Trigger Value for Introduction of Next Stage of Restriction</b>	<b>Percentage of Allocation allowed</b>
Stage 1	October 1 <sup>st</sup> or 20 MI / day	100%
Stage 2	< 7 MI / day	75%
Stage 3	< 7 MI / day	50%
Stage 4	< 7 MI / day	25%
Stage 5	< 7 MI / day	BAN

### **Compliance Point**

There is a surfacewater gauging station (Gauge Site No.236212A) is located on the Brucknell Creek at the Cudgee Road Bridge at Cudgee

The flow levels can be obtained either by text using a mobile phone or by a sight inspection.

Southern Rural Water will:

- Continuously record the daily instantaneous flows at the Brucknell Creek Gauging station (236212A), once the restriction regime has been introduced and
- Periodically inspect the condition of the Brucknell Creek gauging station; and
- Maintain the Brucknell Creek gauging station in good condition.

### **Transfers**

- Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
  - the licence will be transferred to a downstream user, or
  - the licence is issued to the buyer as a winterfill licence
- A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream (all-year licence).

### **Consultation and Review**

SRW will consult with licence holders and relevant stakeholders before making changes to the Local Management Plan, other than administrative changes or clarifications.

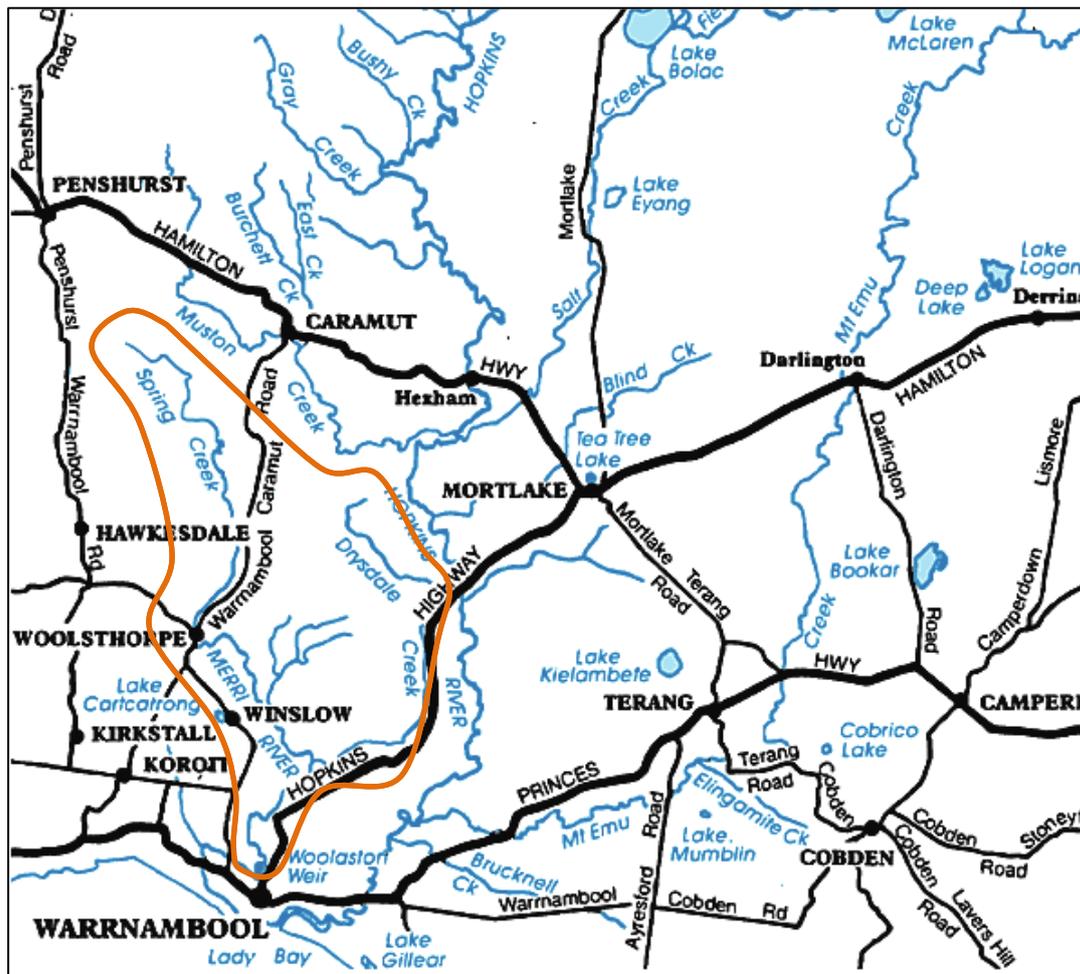
The Local Management Plan will be reviewed every 5 years, unless an update is required sooner.

## Appendix 4

## Merri River Rules

### Area Description

These rules apply to all Merri River irrigation licence holders, as shown below.



### Licences

Licence Type	Number of Licences	Volume (ML)
Irrigation* - direct	45	4,359.1
Irrigation - winterfill	1	21.0
Registration**	16	1,022.6
Domestic and Stock	9	17.4
Commercial / Industrial	2	192.4
Dairy	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>5,612.5</b>

\* Includes amalgamated D&S and Commercial licences

\*\*Includes Dairy and Commercial licences

More detailed information can be located in the Victorian Water Register.

## **Management of Licences**

Management of the river since 1998/99 has been based on a draft streamflow management plan – the first to be developed in the State for an unregulated river. The draft plan was developed by a committee with broad representation and went through a public consultation process. It aimed to find better ways to balance water use and environmental water needs.

The Merri River is split into two reaches for diversions management – Zone A upstream of Woodford and Zone B downstream of Woodford. Management of Zone A is based on flows at the Woodford Road Bridge gauging station (Woodford). Downstream of Woodford (Zone B) the river consists primarily of two long pools and is managed based on flows recorded at the Bromfield Weir gauging station (Bromfield).

*Key points for the management of licences include:*

- Maintaining a minimum summer flow of 10 ML per day, over a five-day rolling average at Woodford and Bromfield;
- A trigger for a ban on diversions if the minimum instantaneous summer flow (November-June) falls below 8 ML per day at Woodford and Bromfield;
- A trigger for a ban on diversions if the minimum instantaneous winter flow (July-October) falls below 43 ML per day at Woodford;
- The year-round licence volume is capped at the current allocation; and
- 590 ML is available under a winterfill (July-October) licence cap.

*Restriction triggers for each stage of restriction:*

The Merri River operates under a nine stage restriction regime, which will generally commence on or about October 1<sup>st</sup> each year or when the daily flow drops to <30ML/day at Woodford.

Generally, stage 1-6 restrictions are gradually increased one stage at a time when flows at Woodford or Bromfield fall below 12 MI's/day and stages 7 & 8 are introduced when flows at the Woodford or Bromfield fall below 10 MI's.

These restrictions are eased one stage at a time when the flows increase to 12 MI's (stage 1-6) and 10 MI's (stages 7 &8) at Woodford or Bromfield. (Refer to table 1 below).

If there is a rapid fall in flows, the restriction regime has the ability to react to the falling flows and can implement a higher level of restriction quickly or even place an immediate

total ban if flows fall below 8 ML's/day daily or 10 ML's/day on the five day rolling average. (Refer Table 1 below)

*Restrictions*

**Merri River restriction triggers and Stage levels at Woodford and Bromfield**

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7	Stage 8	Stage 9	
		100%	80%	65%	50%	35%	25%	17.50 %	10%	BAN	
<b>Increase</b>	<b>Daily Average</b>	< 12MI -one stage; < 10MI go to stage 7; < 8MI - immediate BAN						< 10MI - one stage; < 8MI - BAN			
	<b>5-Day Average</b>	< 12MI - go to stage 7 immediately; < 10MI - immediate BAN						< 12MI - one stage; < 10MI - BAN			
<b>Ease</b>	<b>Daily Average</b>	> 13MI - one stage						> 12MI - one stage			

Southern Rural Water will distribute information relating to the commencement of restrictions and the requirements of licence holders to adhere to each restriction stage as determined by SRW to all licence holders prior to enforcing stage 1.

Southern Rural Water has adopted a message bank system to assist in the delivery of a more equitable allocation of the water resource for all licence holders. The message bank will indicate the stage level set for the river, for that day. The 1300365607 (message bank) telephone number must be called to determine the stage level for the river, prior to any diversion on any given day.

## Compliance Points

There are 2 gauging stations used as compliance points for the restriction management of the Merri River flows.

Merri River at Woodford: (Gauge Site No.236205B) located below the Woodford Road bridge at Woodford, North of Warrnambool. Also known as Zone A; upstream of Woodford.

Merri River at Bromfield: (Gauge site No. 236227A) located immediately upstream of the weir at the northern end of Bromfield Street, Warrnambool. Also known as Zone B; downstream of Woodford.

Grassmere at Grassmere: (Gauge site No. 236227) located immediately downstream of the confluence of the Merri river and Drysdale Creek is used only to monitor flows and to assist in interpreting upper catchment flows in the Merri River

The local Field Officer accesses the daily instantaneous flows (via SMS) once the roster has been introduced.

## Transfers

- a) Temporary transfers of a licence (or part of a licence) can be for up to 5 years, and conclude at the end of the water season (30 June).
- b) Permanent or temporary transfers of a direct stream (all-year licence) may only be approved if:
  - a. the licence will be transferred to a downstream user; or
  - b. the licence issued to the buyer is a winterfill licence.
  - c. upstream trades can be temporary only and to remain on the main river and within reaches of significant inflows
  - d. temporary trades upstream on Drysdale Creek and Spring Creek must be within current allocation limits for each stream
- c) A winterfill licence cannot be transferred to be a direct stream licence (all-year licence).

## Winter Diversion Management

The Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy identified a winterfill volume of 590 megalitres per year that is available under the sustainable diversion limits. The plan defines the winter period as May to October inclusive, providing there is a minimum flow of 43 megalitres

## Consultation

SRW liaises with the LAC whose membership consists of customers from the catchment. Meetings are held as the need arises. The purpose of the committee is to inform of policy changes and to consult on management practices in the local area.

## **Review**

These rules will be reviewed every 5-years, unless an update is required sooner.