

WATER SEPP OBJECTIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The release of the updated State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP)(Waters of Victoria)¹ brought with it a range of new measures and approaches for improving and protecting Victoria's waterways during the next 10 years. Reflecting current scientific knowledge and directions, one significant step forward was the introduction of a risk-based approach to establish environmental quality objectives for the protection of our rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters across the State.

To support implementation of the water SEPP, EPA Victoria has developed a package of practical resource tools for use with the policy's environmental quality objectives to assess waterway condition and establish regional improvement targets. The various schedules to the policy, which detail specific objectives for areas requiring special measures such as Western Port and the Yarra catchment, are also included.

The information package in the form of a CD provides:

- A.** easy identification of the appropriate segment and the corresponding environmental quality objectives for rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters across the State that apply under the water SEPP and its schedules
- B.** an assessment of rivers and streams monitoring data against key environmental quality objectives that apply:
- to the water SEPP, providing an indicative baseline condition status at the time of its release
 - to the policy's schedules.

The segments and environmental quality objectives have been compiled from the water SEPP and the following schedules to the policy:

- F3 Gippsland Lakes and Catchment
- F5 Waters of the Latrobe and Thomson River Basins and the Merriman Creek Catchment
- F6 Waters of Port Phillip Bay
- F7 Waters of the Yarra Catchment
- F8 Waters of Western Port and Catchment.

The assessments provided are for rivers and streams only. The monitoring data used in the assessments has been sourced from the:

- Victorian Water Quality Monitoring Network and Melbourne Water's Waterway Water Quality Monitoring Network (2001)
- EPA Biological Monitoring Network and Melbourne Water Biological Monitoring Program (1997-2000).

The information package in the form of a CD is available from EPA and can be obtained by

¹ (Gazette no. S107 3 June 2003)

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subscribing using the following link:

watersepp.tools@epa.vic.gov.au

2. SEPP SEGMENTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OBJECTIVES

This information has been designed for water resource managers (for example, Catchment Management Authorities and Coastal Boards), government bodies, environmental consultants or any other stakeholders using SEPP environmental quality objectives to assess the condition of, or set regional targets for ambient fresh, marine and estuarine waters. Maps and tables are provided to enable accurate identification of the appropriate segment and environmental quality objectives for any assessments undertaken. This includes:

- the segments and environmental quality objectives that apply across the State under the water SEPP and schedules (F3, F5, F6, F7 and F8)
- detailed information for each Catchment Management Authority (CMA) region on:
 - the SEPP segment and water quality objectives that apply at each water quality site²
 - the SEPP segment and biological objectives that apply at each biological site³
 - maps showing the SEPP segments and location of biological monitoring sites³

² Victorian Water Quality Monitoring Network (VWQMN) and Melbourne Water

³ EPA and Melbourne Water

- location details for website access to maps of the water quality sites² within each CMA region.

3. RIVERS AND STREAMS ASSESSMENT

This section of the CD provides assessments of water quality and biological monitoring data against the water SEPP environmental quality objectives for rivers and streams and, where appropriate, the schedules to the water SEPP. The intent of these assessments is to provide stakeholders with:

- an indicative baseline level of condition at the time of release of the water SEPP
- condition status for schedules to the policy
- information to assist in the development of regional resource condition improvement targets.

They are ‘once-off’ assessments and will provide an initial baseline condition assessment.

This information is expected to be of interest to a broad range of stakeholders, including: water resource managers such as CMAs and Coastal Boards; DSE; DPI; water authorities; Parks Victoria; Commonwealth, State and local government; and community interest groups. The information for each of the key water quality and biological objectives of the water SEPP comprises:

- a State overview, with summary statistics provided by CMA region
- summary statistics for each CMA region and each of the schedules (F3, F5, F6, F7 and F8) to the water SEPP

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- the water quality sites used in the assessments, location details and individual site results by CMA region and schedule area
- the biological sites used in the assessments, location details and individual site results for each CMA region and schedules F7 and F8 to the water SEPP.

4. GUIDELINE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – RISK-BASED ASSESSMENT OF ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION IN AMBIENT WATERS

This document provides guidance to support catchment management authorities, coastal boards, water authorities and other resource managers in the implementation of the SEPP (WoV) risk-based approach. It provides decision frameworks and information on how to undertake risk-based assessments.

Case study examples are also included to provide practical applications of risk-based assessments. They were conducted in partnership with water resource managers to ensure the applications were both practical and appropriate within a regional context.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Copies of the water SEPP and schedules to the policy can be obtained from EPA's website.

Website: www.epa.vic.gov.au

Email: info@epa.vic.gov.au

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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