



project factsheet

July 2009

General Information

Background

In June 2007, the Victorian Government released *Our Water Our Future – The Next Stage of the Government's Water Plan*, outlining a number of major infrastructure projects to help secure Melbourne's future water supply.

Based on record low inflows to water catchments, it was clear that even with active water conservation, additional sources of water were required to provide for our increasing population and the impacts of climate change.

Water Plan projects include:

- the creation of new water through the construction of a desalination plant
- reconnection of the Tarago Reservoir (subsequently completed in June 2009)
- \$1 billion to save water through modernising irrigation and other infrastructure in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District

- construction of the Sugarloaf Pipeline to transfer water savings to Melbourne from irrigation modernisation in Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District.

Stage one of the project to modernise irrigation infrastructure in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District is being delivered by the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project and is expected to save an average 225 billion litres annually. These water savings will be shared equally between the irrigation system, the environment and Melbourne. Melbourne's share of up to 75 billion litres per annum will be delivered via the Sugarloaf Pipeline.

In return for a share of the water savings, Melbourne Water is contributing \$300 million towards the irrigation modernisation works in the food bowl region.

Project outline and current works

The \$750 million Sugarloaf Pipeline project will link the Goulburn River

catchment to Melbourne's water supply system. It is due for completion in 2010.

Construction highlights of the project include:

- a low-velocity intake and low-lift pump station on the Goulburn River
- an 830 metre tunnel through the Great Dividing Range to avoid a sensitive and difficult-to-access section of the route
- installation of 70km of pipeline from the Goulburn River near Yea to Sugarloaf Reservoir, including clearing and trenching, pipelaying, backfilling and reinstatement
- a high-lift pump station at 'Sheoak', south of Yea, to pump the water over the Great Dividing Range
- a power substation outside Yea to supply power to the two pump stations
- a water outlet structure at Sugarloaf Reservoir



- an upgrade to increase capacity of the existing Winneke Water Treatment Plant at Sugarloaf Reservoir
- connection to the existing Melbourne Water distribution network.

Where the water is coming from

The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) aims to annually capture up to 425 billion litres of water currently lost due to leaks, evaporation and other inefficiencies within the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation System.

Stage one of the project will secure up to 225 billion litres of water annually. This water will be shared between irrigators, the environment (through additional river flows) and Melbourne Water's urban users (comprising 72% of Victoria's population).

At the end of NVIRP, irrigators will have a 21st century irrigation system delivering more water, more efficiently so they can be more productive.

Sugarloaf Pipeline project approval and route

The Victorian Government approved the Sugarloaf Pipeline project on 6 August 2008, while Federal Government approval was granted on 12 September 2008. These approvals came with certain conditions, including a requirement to create detailed environmental management plans.

As part of the detailed design process, thorough environmental, heritage and planning studies were conducted to finalise design of the pipeline. This process included close consultation with affected landowners and local councils. Particular attention was paid to minimising the impact on the environment and community. The result is a corridor that is considered to be the best possible environmental, technical, social and economic outcome.

The Sugarloaf Pipeline route includes private farmland and public land. In the vast majority of cases an easement is being acquired on private land, rather than compulsorily acquiring freehold title of the land. The final easement for the pipeline will be 15 metres wide.

Project management

The Sugarloaf Pipeline Alliance is the group of companies chosen by Melbourne Water to design and construct the Sugarloaf Pipeline. In addition to Melbourne Water, the Alliance is John Holland, GHD and Sinclair Knight Merz.

Collectively, these companies provide considerable expertise and experience in undertaking a project of this size and nature. Each of the Alliance partners also has a proud reputation for operating in strict accord with high environmental standards and positively engaging with communities.