



project factsheet

October 2009

Frequently Asked Questions

How long is the pipeline?

The Sugarloaf Pipeline is 70km in length; stretching from the Goulburn River at Killingworth to Sugarloaf Reservoir, on Melbourne's north-eastern fringe.

How long will it take to build the pipeline?

The project is ahead of schedule and is expected to be completed in early 2010.

How much will it cost?

The entire project will cost \$750 million, made up of \$625 million to design and build the Sugarloaf Pipeline, and \$125 million for upgrades at Sugarloaf Reservoir and to Melbourne's water distribution system.

Why is the pipeline necessary?

Record low inflows to water storages and a growing urban population mean new sources of water need to be found for Melbourne. The ability to redistribute water throughout the state as required is also very important.

The desalination plant and any future opportunities to increase water recycling are two to three years from completion. The Sugarloaf Pipeline will deliver additional water to Melbourne in 2010.

Where will the water come from?

Water to be transferred by the Sugarloaf Pipeline will be saved through the modernisation of irrigation infrastructure in the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District.

This program, known as the Food Bowl Modernisation Project, aims to save up to 425 billion litres (425 gegalitres) of water each year. This water is currently lost due to system inefficiencies, such as open channels and inaccurate metering.

The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) has been established to oversee the irrigation upgrades.

The first stage of the project will secure up to 225 billion litres of saved water annually. This water will be shared between irrigators, the environment and urban users.

How much water will the Sugarloaf Pipeline transfer?

The Sugarloaf Pipeline will transfer up to 75 billion litres of water savings to Melbourne each year, or one-third of the savings from Stage One of the Food Bowl Modernisation Project.

Does the Sugarloaf Pipeline have the necessary Federal and State Government approvals?

Yes. The Victorian Government approved the project on 6 August 2008, while Federal Government approval was granted on 12 September 2008. These approvals came with certain conditions, including a requirement that detailed environmental management plans are prepared and approved outlining how the Alliance will protect and manage environmental issues.

What is the pipeline route?

The Sugarloaf Pipeline travels south from the Goulburn River near Yea, following the Melba Highway to Gulf Road, west



to Steels Creek Road, on to Yarraview Road and into the Sugarloaf Reservoir, west of Yarra Glen. The route includes private farmland, public land and the existing Melbourne Water pipe reserve.

Is private land being compulsorily acquired?

Generally, no. In the vast majority of cases, Melbourne Water is registering an 'easement' across properties on the Sugarloaf Pipeline's route, rather than purchasing freehold title to the land.

An easement is a legal right to use another's land for a specific purpose. The easement is for the pipeline to exist under the owner's land and to ensure ongoing access for maintenance. When the Sugarloaf Pipeline is completed and the ground reinstated to its original condition, farmers and other landowners will be free to use their land (except for constructing buildings or planting deep-rooted vegetation over the easement) as they please.

How wide will the easement be on private land?

The easement will be 15 metres wide; however, during construction a corridor of land approximately 30 metres wide will be required.

What compensation is available for landowners?

There are two types of compensation available for direct impacts from the Sugarloaf Pipeline project. The first is where an interest in land is compulsorily acquired for the registration of an easement. Melbourne Water is compulsorily acquiring the easement via a process outlined in the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 (Vic)*.

Compensation for the use of the workspace when land is entered or occupied for construction purposes is also available.

Compensation will be assessed by an independent certified practising valuer.

Is the Sugarloaf Pipeline above or below ground?

The pipeline is buried underground. The only exceptions are where the pipeline negotiates three river crossings.

How deep will the pipeline be in the ground?

As a rule, there is a minimum of about 800mm cover over the pipe. At points where it crosses major roads or rivers it is greater than 1200mm deep. Generally, we will try to maintain as constant a cover as possible to minimise any changes in vertical alignment.

Will the land be reinstated when construction is finished?

Yes. Melbourne Water is legally obliged to reinstate land to the same or better condition than we found it.

What studies have been undertaken as part of the approval and design process?

As part of our detailed design process, thorough environmental, heritage and planning studies were conducted to finalise design of the pipeline. Geotechnical investigations were also conducted.

These studies were necessary to provide additional detail in preparing the environmental management plans (EMPs). All EMPs were individually approved by the Victorian Government before each section of construction commenced.

What is the Sugarloaf Pipeline Alliance?

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 projects 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.

What benefit will the project provide for the region?

Benefits from the Sugarloaf Pipeline project include:

1. the \$5 million Regional Benefits Grants Scheme, which is helping community groups affected by the Sugarloaf Pipeline's construction fund projects and initiatives with a lasting benefit
2. six off-take valves are being incorporated into the pipeline infrastructure to allow the CFA to take water from the pipe for fire fighting purposes
3. the project has provided \$200,000 each to Murrindindi and Yarra Ranges shires for the provision of additional community support services
4. a substantial economic injection into the region
5. skilled and unskilled jobs within the region for workers who may otherwise have to search for work elsewhere.