

### Frequently Asked Questions – June 2020

#### Project Overview

##### ***What is the Hinterland Environmental Water Scheme?***

The Hinterland Environmental Water Scheme would supply high-quality alternate water for agriculture and public open spaces across the Mornington Peninsula's hinterland region. This would support local food production and jobs, create liveable green spaces that can be enjoyed all year round, and improve waterway health and the region's bushfire defences.

##### ***What is the status of the scheme?***

The Australian Government has committed \$300,000 in funding to investigate the feasibility of the project. Matched funds have been committed with co-contributions from Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, South East Water and Hinterland Environmental Water Scheme Incorporated. The project partners have now begun working together to investigate and understand the long-term water needs of the hinterland community. Planning studies are now being carried out, with a feasibility study to be complete by mid-2021.

##### ***What are the benefits of the scheme?***

Potential benefits of the scheme include:

- opening up the region to increased agricultural production and new horticultural opportunities, by providing a high-quality, drought-proof alternative water supply
- boosting local food production and creating local jobs by making more water available for the agricultural industry
- increased fire-fighting capacity for the Country Fire Authority

- a secure water supply for parks and reserves, ensuring these spaces can be used all year round
- reduced reliance on surface water and groundwater for irrigation, allowing these water sources to replenish and improve waterway health
- less treated wastewater going out to sea.

##### ***How much will the project cost?***

We will have a better indication of the total cost of the scheme once the feasibility study is finalised in mid-2021.

##### ***Who could connect to the scheme?***

Landowners in the hinterland region, particularly agricultural businesses and others with high water usage, such as farms, wineries, market gardens, nurseries, sporting fields and open spaces. The scheme would also be of benefit to landholders wanting to realise new horticultural opportunities on their property in the region. The scheme could also increase the fire-fighting capacity of the Country Fire Authority.

##### ***How much will I need to pay?***

We will shortly be seeking to contact potential customers to better understand their water needs and willingness to pay to secure a high-quality, drought-proof alternative water supply. We will have a better indication of likely costs later in the planning process.

##### ***What do I need to do to participate and be considered a potential water customer of this scheme?***

Contact us (see contact details below) to register your interest in being included in the feasibility study for this project.

### **Information on recycled water as a high-quality alternate water source**

#### ***Who can use recycled water?***

Recycled water is suitable for a wide range of irrigation uses, including turf growing, nurseries, golf courses, market gardens, wineries, parks and sports fields. It can also be used in commercial laundries.

Recycled water isn't suitable for drinking or other personal use.

#### ***What is the quality of recycled water?***

The recycled water is described as 'Class A' and is regulated by the Environmental Protection Authority and Department of Health and Human Services, to ensure that the water is fit for use and does not pose a health risk. You can find more information on the Victorian Government's health website at [recycled water guidelines](#).

#### ***Can Class A recycled water be used to water crops?***

Yes. Class A recycled water is one of the highest grades of recycled water in Victoria and can be used to irrigate a range of food crops that are consumed raw, such as carrots and leafy greens. You can find more information on recycled water at [www.southeastwater.com.au/recycledwater](http://www.southeastwater.com.au/recycledwater)

#### ***Where will the scheme water be sourced from?***

The high-quality alternate water for the scheme will be sourced from Melbourne Water's South Eastern Outfall.

#### ***Can visitors and the public still come to my site when I start using recycled water?***

Yes, but you should inform your visitors about recycled water and ensure the 'Recycled water—do not drink' signs are placed near the purple outdoor taps and clearly visible near any outdoor recycled water storages. You will also need to irrigate during times that avoid contact with anyone who may be using your facility (e.g. golf courses).

### ***Where can I get further information or register my interest in this scheme?***

Email: [HEWS@mornpen.vic.gov.au](mailto:HEWS@mornpen.vic.gov.au)

Website: [mornpen.vic.gov.au/hinterlandwater](http://mornpen.vic.gov.au/hinterlandwater)

#### ***Engagement during COVID-19***

We'll be changing the way we engage with you about the project to comply with physical distancing rules and keep you safe.

We will be avoiding face-to-face engagement wherever possible and will organise meetings via phone or video conference (using skype or zoom). Letters and emails will be used to keep you updated about the scheme.