



# Water allocation trading strategy 2018-19

July 2018

Final Version

collaboration

integrity

commitment

initiative

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#### **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

The VEWH proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

The VEWH acknowledges Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

The VEWH recognises and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

Cover photo: Wimmera River near Dimboola by Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.

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## Executive summary

The VEWH's water trading strategy 2018-19 provides a high-level overview of the types of water trading activities that VEWH may undertake across Victoria in 2018-19.

Water allocation trade is one of the tools the VEWH uses to effectively manage environmental water. Water trading allows the VEWH to move water to the systems where it is most needed, and to smooth out some of the variability in water availability across systems and across years.

This strategy covers both commercial water allocation trade (selling and purchasing water allocation), and administrative water transfers ('internal' transfers of VEWH allocation or transfers between water holders).

Environmental water availability is expected to be moderate across the state in 2018-19, with average to wet conditions required to increase water availability to high levels. A dry winter-spring 2018 will likely see supply reduce to low levels in some parts of the state.

In 2018-19, the VEWH intends to implement a range of administrative transfers to facilitate the delivery of environmental water across Victoria or for carryover purposes, including water held by other environmental water holders. Similarly, administrative transfers will be undertaken to transfer allocation available for use in the Snowy River.

Opportunities to purchase allocation may be considered in the Maribyrnong system, depending upon assessment of seasonal conditions and environmental need. Opportunities to increase available allocation in the Moorabool may also be investigated. The VEWH may consider selling part of its allocation in northern region systems if foreseeable environmental demands can be met. If this occurs, it would most likely be from summer 2018-19 onwards and be more likely following a wet winter-spring.

For further information on environmental water trade, as well as where, when, how and why environmental water is being released in Victoria, visit [www.vewh.vic.gov.au](http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au).

# 1 Purpose

The VEWH's 2018-19 water trading strategy provides a high-level overview of the types of water trading activities that VEWH may undertake across Victoria in 2018-19.

Water allocation trade is one of the tools the VEWH uses to effectively manage water for the environment. Water trading allows the VEWH to move water to the systems where it is most needed, and to smooth out some of the variability in water availability across systems and across years.

As a public organisation, the VEWH takes its trade responsibilities extremely seriously. In undertaking any water trading, the VEWH aims to avoid negatively impacting on other market participants. The VEWH ensures its trading activities are carried out in a manner that is consistent with trading rules under the *Victorian Water Act 1989* and the Basin Plan water trading rules under the *Water Act 2007* for the Victorian part of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan water trading rules place obligations on government agencies, including environmental water holders, regarding the management of water market sensitive information (known as a 'water announcement' under the trading rules – see Chapter 12, Part 5, Division 5 of the Basin Plan). The intent of these rules is to ensure that persons or organisations with prior knowledge of market sensitive information that will be publicly announced, do not have an unfair market advantage over other water market participants. Under these rules, persons or organisations may be prevented from trading when they have knowledge of water market sensitive information before it is made public.

Some of the decisions and actions the VEWH may take in relation to water allocation trade (including its administrative transfers) may be considered a 'water announcement' within the meaning of the Basin Plan trading rules. The rules allow that such information is not considered a water announcement if it is consistent with a publicly available trading strategy. This document forms the VEWH's trading strategy.

## 2 Trade types

This trade strategy covers water allocation trade, but does not consider entitlement trade. The VEWH can trade its water entitlements, however, this would only be carried out to refine the Water Holdings and not to implement major water recovery initiatives (for which the VEWH is not funded). Entitlement trade requires the approval of the Minister for Water and would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

This strategy covers the following types of allocation trade used by the VEWH:

- commercial water allocation trade (selling and purchasing water allocation), and
- administrative water transfers, including:
  - ‘internal’ transfers of VEWH allocation between VEWH entitlements for carryover or water delivery
  - transfers with other water holders without financial consideration (e.g. transfers with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder [CEWH]).

Trade of allocation can be facilitated via established water markets, or by agreement between entitlement holders. Water markets in the irrigation supply systems in the northern region and the Murray-Darling Basin are well established and are commonly used by entitlement holders to manage water for irrigation, towns and the environment. In other regions in Victoria, while trade is possible, there are not always well-established processes. The Victorian water grid, which connects water sources within and across different regions, can provide opportunities that enable transfer or exchange of water allocation between regions.

Decisions to trade environmental water are made by the VEWH Commission as part of VEWH’s standard portfolio management practice. The primary focus of VEWH operations is the delivery of environmental water to meet environmental outcomes. Carryover and trade are important tools that help the VEWH manage seasonal water availability and maximise benefits to the environment. The VEWH may also decide to sell water to invest in complementary works and measures, technical studies or other priorities to improve waterway health and the performance of Victoria’s environmental watering program.

The VEWH regularly assesses its environmental demand and supply position throughout the year, considering factors such as environmental condition and demand, current and forecast climate conditions and water availability, carryover capacity and market conditions. Figure 1 shows the key considerations that guide the VEWH’s use, carryover and trade decisions.

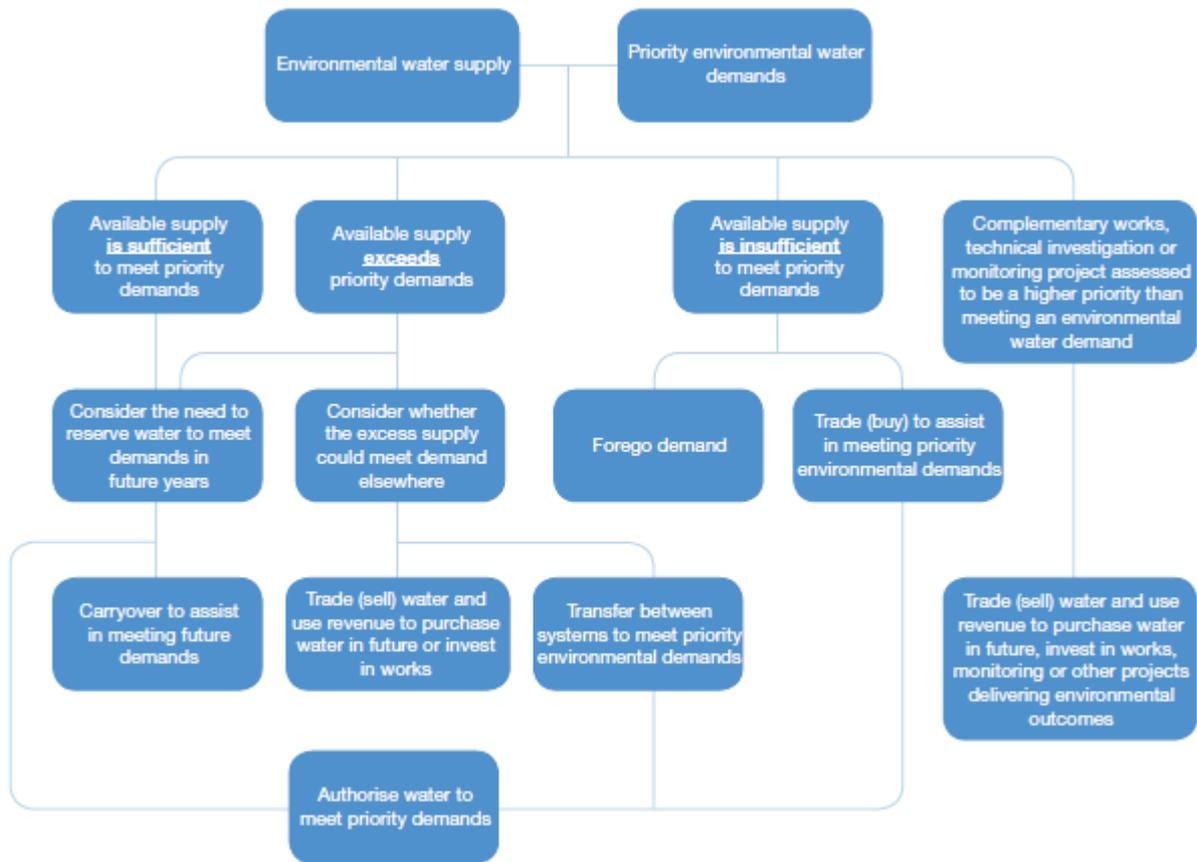


Figure 1 - Considerations guiding use, carryover and trade decisions

The following sections detail trade actions that the VEWH may take based on current water availability assessments and seasonal forecasts. Decisions to undertake the actions identified in this strategy will depend on unfolding seasonal conditions and environmental water demands in 2018-19 and into 2019-20.

## 3 Northern Region

Water markets in the irrigation supply systems in the northern region and the Murray-Darling Basin are well established and are commonly used by entitlement holders to manage water for irrigation, towns and the environment. This section covers VEWH trading activities in the following systems:

- (Victorian) Murray
- Goulburn
- Campaspe
- Loddon
- Broken.

The VEWH coordinates with other environmental water holders in northern Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia to deliver environmental outcomes at the broader Murray-Darling Basin scale. The VEWH liaises with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (Living Murray program) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office to maximise the benefits of environmental water delivery in Victorian systems. In most cases, when Commonwealth or Living Murray water is to be delivered in Victoria, the CEWH and MDBA transfer the agreed amount of water to the VEWH. That water is held by the VEWH until used or transferred back. Excluding trade application fees, there is no financial consideration associated with such transfers.

Transfers between environmental water holders occurs to:

- facilitate the efficient delivery of environmental water
- maximise availability across the whole environmental water portfolio
- return unused water to the source environmental water holder
- account for delivery of water to South Australia.

Further information about Commonwealth environmental water priorities, including its Annual Water Use Options and commitments can be found here:

[www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo)

### 3.1 Expected water availability in 2018-19

Conditions across the Northern Region in 2017-18 were dry, however reserves in storage from a wet 2016-17 resulted in high seasonal determinations across all systems, including some low-reliability seasonal determinations for the Campaspe and Broken systems. The Northern Victoria Resource Manager's May outlook for 2018-19 suggests that early-season water availability will be lower than 2017-18. All systems are likely to reach 100 per cent seasonal determination for high-reliability water shares (HRWS) by October under average to wet conditions, however dry to extreme dry conditions are likely to result in only the Murray system reaching 100% HRWS in 2018-19.

Most recent climate and rainfall forecasts from the Bureau of Meteorology suggest a relatively dry and warm winter across the northern region.

Environmental water demands in the northern region are usually high in winter and spring. As the outlook indicates, there is likely to be moderate water availability early in the season. Carryover from 2017-18 combined with opening allocations in July 2018 is expected to meet early season environmental water demands. It is unlikely environmental water availability will exceed foreseeable demand in winter-spring 2018-19, however availability may exceed demand in summer-autumn, particularly under average to wet conditions due to increased allocation and natural flows downstream of storages meeting a higher proportion of environmental requirements.

## **3.2 Commercial allocation trade**

The VEWH can buy or sell water allocation where it is in line with the VEWH's statutory objectives: that is, if it benefits the environment.

VEWH's water availability position leading into 2018-19 is expected to be sufficient to meet its demand. As such, VEWH is not planning to purchase any allocation in the northern region in 2018-19.

Depending on unfolding seasonal conditions and environmental water demands in 2018-19 and into 2019-20, it is possible that VEWH will sell allocation in 2018-19 in the Murray, Goulburn and/or Campaspe systems. The VEWH will be less likely to sell allocation under drier scenarios and more likely to sell under wetter scenarios.

As environmental water demand is highest in winter and spring, decisions to sell allocation have typically taken place from late November onwards, once the peak demand period has passed. This is expected to be the case in 2018-19. Any decision to sell allocation in the northern region in 2018-19 will be announced via the VEWH website at <http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/news-and-publications>.

The VEWH's commercial trade announcements will cover the system in which the trade will take place, the volume, timing and mechanism (e.g. brokers, online exchange) of the allocation trade. For example, see our 2017-18 announcement <http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/news-and-publications/news/water-sale-in-northern-victoria>.

## **3.3 Administrative water transfers**

Administrative water transfers are transfers of water allocation that have no financial consideration. These are the most common trades the VEWH undertakes. VEWH administrative transfers occur between VEWH entitlements (or accounts) to move water to where it is most needed for delivery or carryover purposes.

### **3.3.1 Administrative transfers between VEWH accounts for environmental water delivery**

Administrative transfers between VEWH accounts sometimes occur to enable delivery of an environmental watering action. These transfers do not occur for every environmental water delivery, but are undertaken on an as-needs basis to maximise use of the VEWH's portfolio.

For example, in 2017-18, 1,817.7 ML of environmental water was transferred from the Goulburn system (trading zone 1A) to the Loddon system (trading zone 5A) to support delivery of a spring high flow in the Loddon River and deliveries to Serpentine Creek. In 2017-18, 1,000 ML (as two 500 ML parcels) of environmental water from the Goulburn system (trading zone 1A) was transferred to the Broken system (trading zone 2) to provide sufficient water to support environmental water deliveries in Moodie Swamp and the Broken River.

### **3.3.2 Administrative transfers to maximise carryover opportunity**

Carryover is an important tool the VEWH uses to help ensure environmental water can be delivered at a time that is of the greatest value to the environment. For example, environmental water demand is often highest in winter and spring, and so carryover can help ensure those demands can be met, particularly when there is a risk there will be a low seasonal determination at the beginning of the season.

At the end of each year, the VEWH may undertake administrative transfers between VEWH accounts to maximise carryover opportunity. Such transfers may occur within particular systems or trading zones, or across systems or trading zones (subject to system trade limits). Carryover decisions will be undertaken to maximise benefit to the environment, and are informed by:

- priority environmental demands identified for 2019-20
- the seasonal outlook for 2019-20 (e.g. Bureau of Meteorology climate and streamflow forecasts and Northern Victoria Resource Manager seasonal determination outlooks)
- carryover limits (i.e. entitlement volume and entitlement rules)
- spill risk
- carryover costs.

The majority of administrative transfers to facilitate carryover are likely to be undertaken in June 2019, to ensure environmental water availability is optimised for the new season opening on 1 July 2019.

### **3.3.3 Administrative water transfers to enable reuse of return flows**

Trade is the mechanism used to 'shepherd' environmental water flows down the Murray and across the border from Victoria to South Australia, so that environmental flows are not re-regulated for supply to consumptive users.

This reuse policy, known as 'return flows', is available for environmental water delivered from VEWH's Goulburn, Murray and Campaspe entitlements in the northern region. It increases the efficiency of environmental water use and helps reduce the volume of water needed to be recovered for the environment from consumptive water users.

For example, environmental water is delivered in the Goulburn River to provide environmental benefits such as stimulating fish to breed and promoting the growth of vegetation on river banks. The water flows down the Goulburn River and into the River Murray. The VEWH can apply to the storage manager (Goulburn-Murray Water) to have the

volume of environmental water that reached the River Murray re-credited in VEWH Murray accounts as a return flow. This water can then be reused at a priority environmental site in Victoria (such as at Hattah Lakes near Mildura) or used for environmental outcomes in the Murray in South Australia.

If the water is to be reused in South Australia, the VEWH trades the re-credited return flow volume to environmental water managers in South Australia. This may include return flow transfers to South Australia for the CEWH and Living Murray, when the VEWH delivers water on their behalf.

During the season, the VEWH makes regular transfers (e.g. monthly) of environmental return flows to South Australia to account for the water that flowed on after meeting Victorian environmental objectives to be reused downstream - providing whole-of-system benefits. For example, in 2017-18, the VEWH transferred about 525 GL of environmental return flows to South Australia (progressively traded over the year). This water was initially delivered to achieve environmental benefits at Victorian sites such as the Goulburn and Campaspe rivers, lower Broken Creek, and Hattah Lakes, before continuing down the River Murray. Excluding application fees, there is no financial consideration for these transfers.

The conditions of VEWH's access to return flows are in the VEWH's Campaspe, Goulburn and Murray entitlements. These entitlements can be viewed online at: [waterregister.vic.gov.au/water-entitlements/bulk-entitlements](http://waterregister.vic.gov.au/water-entitlements/bulk-entitlements).

### **3.3.4 Administrative transfers for the Snowy River**

Water from the Snowy hydro-electric scheme is made available to the Murray system to support consumptive water deliveries.

The VEWH holds entitlements in the Murray, Goulburn and Loddon systems that form part of the Victorian government's commitment to recover water for the Snowy and Murray rivers. The water recovery project aimed to increase environmental water availability to the Snowy and Murray rivers by recovering water in the Murray and its tributaries that would be made available as a substitute for Snowy water to supply Murray water users.

A substitution arrangement is in place to enable the VEWH entitlements in the Murray, Loddon and Goulburn to increase environmental flows in the Snowy River. Allocation trade is the mechanism used to give effect to this substitution arrangement.

Each year, water is allocated to entitlements held by VEWH in the Murray, Loddon and Goulburn systems in line with seasonal determinations in those systems. At the end of each season (around the end of June), any water allocated to these entitlements to 31 January of that year must be traded by the VEWH to a holding account for the Snowy. Similar arrangements are in place for the New South Wales Murray and Murrumbidgee systems.

The volume of water the Snowy 'owes' the Murray for consumptive purposes is reduced by the equivalent amount of the transfers. This offsets the volume of water that must be supplied from the Snowy system to the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, thereby freeing up water for environmental flows in the Snowy, while ensuring the equivalent amount of consumptive water is available in the Murray.

In 2017-18, the VEWH traded the following volumes from each system to the Snowy inter-valley transfer account:

- Murray system – 44,769.9 ML
- Goulburn system – 38,573 ML
- Loddon system – 470 ML.

The volumes were equivalent to allocations made to the VEWH from 1 February 2017 to 31 January 2018 (high-reliability allocations in the Murray, Goulburn and Loddon systems, totalling 83,812.9 ML).

As the Snowy transfers are required annually and there is no financial consideration associated, the transfers will not be publicly announced.

### 3.3.5 Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder transfers

Environmental water committed by the CEWH to a Victorian environmental watering action is transferred to the VEWH for delivery once the environmental water demand and water availability is confirmed. Unused Commonwealth environmental water is transferred back to CEWH accounts if it is no longer needed for delivery in Victoria.

Such transfers may occur within a particular system or trading zone, or across connected systems or trading zones. The transfer of water between environmental water holders in Victoria is subject to the same allocation trade opportunities and limits as consumptive water users, in accordance with Victorian trading rules.

In 2018-19, transfers between the VEWH and CEWH are likely to occur in the Goulburn, Murray, Campaspe, Loddon and Broken systems to facilitate environmental water delivery. Due to the large size of environmental watering activities in the Murray and Goulburn systems, volumes transferred from CEWH to VEWH can be large (i.e. greater than 100 gigalitres) but will vary depending on CEWH commitments. In the Broken, Loddon and Campaspe systems, transfers are generally smaller (i.e. less than 10 GL).

VEWH transfers to CEWH are generally relatively small in volume, as they are associated with returning any unused water following the completion of an environmental water delivery.

For information regarding CEWH water commitments and portfolio management activities, see [www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo)

### 3.3.6 Living Murray program transfers

VEWH environmental water entitlements held on behalf of Living Murray may only be used to provide for the delivery of environmental water to Living Murray icon sites. Trade of Living Murray environmental water cannot be conducted for financial gain.

Administrative transfers of Living Murray water to VEWH accounts may occur to facilitate delivery for icon site watering actions or to maximise environmental water availability for future watering actions (e.g. through carryover). In the past, these transfers have occurred in the Murray and Goulburn systems (less than 20 GL), but not in the Campaspe system.

Living Murray administrative transfers may occur within particular systems or trading zones, or across systems or trading zones (subject to system trade limits and entitlement rules).

Further information regarding Living Murray's trading activities can be found on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority website at [www.mdba.gov.au](http://www.mdba.gov.au).

### **3.4 Other potential opportunities**

The VEWH does not hold any environmental water entitlements in the Coliban system, however, the Coliban River is a priority waterway within the environmental watering program. Environmental flows for the Coliban River are currently managed through flexible passing flow arrangements, which enable environmental water managers to agree with Coliban Water to withhold passing flows at certain times so water can be accrued and then delivered at a time when the environmental need is greater (e.g. to maintain good water quality in the river over summer).

In 2018-19, opportunities to further increase environmental water availability in the Coliban system may be considered. One potential opportunity could be a substitution arrangement with Coliban Water, in which environmental water held in Lake Eppalock might be exchanged for a small volume of water in Malmsbury Reservoir (on the Coliban River upstream of Lake Eppalock). Such an arrangement may enable additional priority environmental flow releases to occur in the Coliban River.

## 4 Western Region

The VEWH holds an environmental entitlement for the Wimmera-Glenelg supply system, which is used to meet demands across the Wimmera and Glenelg river systems, and to supply small wetlands in the region.

There is no mature water market in the western region, however, allocation trades can be conducted between entitlement holders within the Wimmera-Glenelg supply system with the permission of the Minister for Water (or his/her delegate).

Following a wet 2016-17, drier conditions occurred in 2017-18, particularly from mid-spring. Allocations reached 81% in October 2017, supported by water held in storage from the previous year and average winter and early spring conditions that generated some inflow into storages. Inflows to storages in the western region have been very low or nil through summer and autumn.

The Storage Manager's outlook indicates low opening allocations are expected in 2018-19. Combined with carryover from 2017-18, the VEWH expects to have sufficient water availability for environmental watering in 2018-19, in partnership with water held by the CEWH.

### 4.1 Trade opportunities

The VEWH does not plan to trade any environmental water in the Western Region in 2018-19.

## 5 Central Region

This section covers potential VEWH trading activities in the following systems:

- Yarra
- Tarago
- Maribyrnong
- Werribee
- Moorabool
- Lower Barwon.

There are a range of trade opportunities in the central region, including through established water markets in the Werribee and Bacchus Marsh irrigation districts, or through commercial or substitution arrangements with other bulk water entitlement holders (such as urban water corporations).

### 5.1 Expected water availability in 2018-19

With most inflows into storages in the central region occurring in winter and spring, the likely water availability in these systems should be evident early in 2018-19.

The western systems of the Central Region are generally drier than those in the east and quite different rainfall conditions can exist between them at the same time. Entitlements in some systems (such as the Yarra) are more reliable than others, providing greater certainty of water availability irrespective of catchment conditions.

Systems in the west (such as the Werribee and Moorabool systems) will rely on inflows in 2018-19 to improve environmental water availability. Carryover will be an important source of water to meet demands in these systems.

### 5.2 Trade opportunities

Allocation trade is not planned for the Yarra, Tarago, Werribee and Barwon systems in 2018-19.

The VEWH does not hold an environmental entitlement in the Maribyrnong system, but as in previous years the VEWH will work with Melbourne Water and licence holders in the system to consider the purchase of unused licence allocation to support environmental values in the system. This arrangement has occurred over the past five years, and will only continue with the agreement of all parties involved.

Trade may be considered in the Moorabool system in 2018-19 to increase water available for the environment. This action is being considered in response to higher than expected use of environmental water in 2017-18 due to very dry conditions. Potential trade opportunities are yet to be investigated in detail with other water entitlement holders in the system.

Commercial trade is not planned for the Werribee system in 2018-19, however, an administrative transfer of water allocation held for environmental outcomes by Melbourne Water in the Werribee system may occur for delivery purposes.

# 6 Gippsland Region

This section covers potential VEWH trading activities in the following systems:

- Latrobe
- Thomson
- Macalister
- Snowy.

Opportunities to trade in the Gippsland region exist through the established water markets (e.g. Macalister Irrigation District), or through commercial or substitution arrangements with other water entitlement holders (such as urban water corporations).

## 6.1 Expected water availability in 2018-19

Under moderate streamflow forecasts, sufficient environmental water is expected to be available to achieve the highest priority watering actions identified in the Seasonal Watering Plan 2018-19 for the Latrobe, Thomson and Macalister rivers.

Environmental water availability and delivery for the Snowy River is determined through interstate agreements: Victoria's contribution to Snowy environmental water availability comes from entitlements held in the Murray, Goulburn and Loddon systems. This water is made available for environmental flows in the Snowy River via a substitution method, whereby Victorian environmental water replaces water that was earmarked for transfer from the Snowy to Victoria to support irrigation demands in the Murray. Further information about this process is available in section 3.3.4.

## 6.2 Trade opportunities

At this stage, the VEWH is not planning to buy or sell any environmental water in Gippsland in 2018-19. Some water may be transferred between VEWH entitlements within the Gippsland system or from another region (for example, in 2015-16 VEWH transferred 1,970 ML from the Yarra system to provide a spring fresh for Australian grayling in the Thomson River).

See Section 3.3.4 regarding the administrative transfers the VEWH makes on behalf of the Snowy Water Recovery project.

## 7 Frequently asked questions

### 7.1 Where can I find out more about this year's plans for environmental watering in Victoria?

Information about the environmental watering in Victoria can be found in the VEWH's Seasonal Watering Plan 2018-19 at [www.vevh.vic.gov.au](http://www.vevh.vic.gov.au).

The plan previews the potential environmental watering that could be implemented using water available under all environmental water entitlements held in Victoria. This includes water available under the VEWH's environmental water entitlements and water held by other environmental water holders, such as the CEWH and the Living Murray program.

Decisions to implement environmental watering actions in Victoria, including commitments of CEWH and Living Murray water, are published via seasonal watering statements on the VEWH website at: <http://www.vevh.vic.gov.au/news-and-publications/seasonal-watering-statements>.

### 7.2 Will VEWH announce its trade decisions?

VEWH will announce commercial trade decisions via its website at <http://www.vevh.vic.gov.au/news-and-publications/news>.

The VEWH's commercial trade announcements will cover the system in which the trade will take place, the volume, timing and mechanism (e.g. brokers, online exchange) of the allocation trade.

There may be circumstances when a trade decision would not be publicised, for example, if the action was urgently required (e.g. purchase of a small volume to ensure a watering action could continue), or if the announcement in itself could have a potentially adverse impact on the market. However, large purchases or sales of allocation (for example 1,000 ML or greater, but assessed relative to the size of the available market) will **always** be announced by VEWH.

The VEWH will also place notice of a trade decision on the VEWH website (<http://www.vevh.vic.gov.au/news-and-publications/news>) if it is:

- related to a water system covered by this trading strategy; and
- not consistent with the activities covered by this trading strategy; and
- may have an adverse impact on the water market.

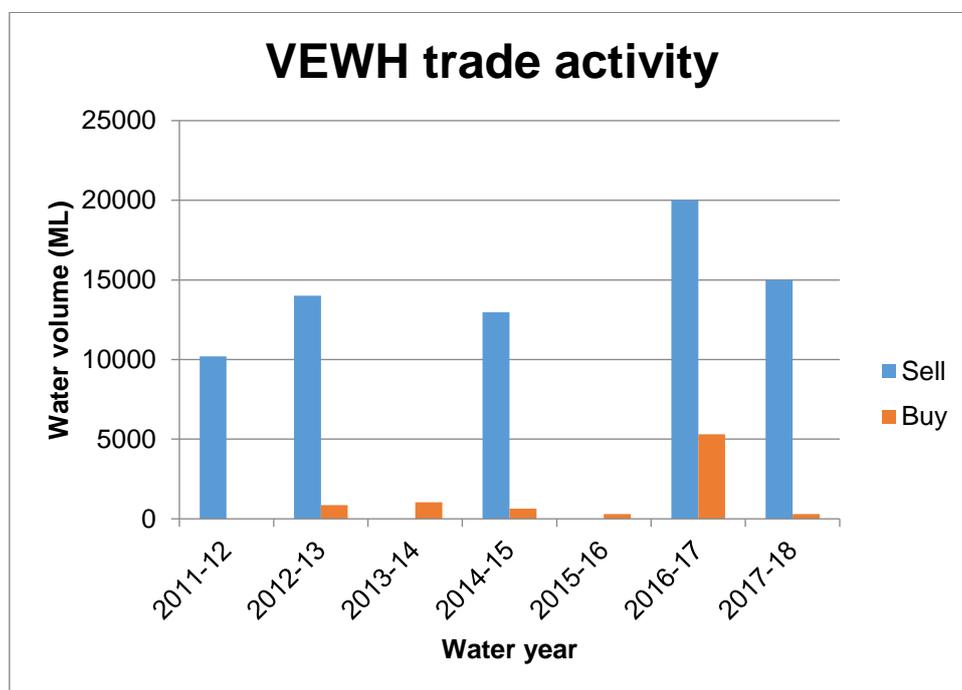
As there is no financial consideration associated with administrative water transfers, decisions to undertake these transfers are not publicised when they occur. This also avoids considerable administrative effort. However, the VEWH reports all water transfers, including those with other environmental water holders, in its corporate annual report at the end of each financial year.

The VEWH reports annually on the management and use of environmental water in Victoria, including carryover and trade, through its annual reports and *Reflections*. These are available at <http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/>.

### 7.3 Has the VEWH bought or sold allocation in the past?

Since its commencement, the VEWH has bought and sold water allocation in water systems around Victoria, including the Murray, Goulburn, Loddon, Wimmera-Glenelg, Werribee and Maribyrnong systems. Figure 2 shows the relative volumes of allocation bought and sold each year.

Figure 2 - VEWH trade activity



### 7.4 How does the VEWH participate in the market?

VEWH’s selected mechanism for participating in the market will vary depending on different factors. These may include whether the VEWH is buying or selling allocation, whether there is an established market, the size of the market, the system in which the trade is to occur, or the volume of water VEWH is buying or selling. Different mechanisms will suit different circumstances.

In the past, when trading in the northern region where there are large and established water markets, the VEWH has used a mixture of brokers and web-based water exchanges to conduct its trade activity. Brokers selected by VEWH must be members of the Australian Water Brokers Association to help ensure they are operating with a high standard of ethics and business practices.

## 7.5 Does the VEWH take steps to ensure market prices are not affected by VEWH trading?

As a public organisation, the VEWH seeks to ensure it's operating in the public interest, and is not causing impacts to market participants. When considering the volumes of water to sell or purchase, the method of market participation, and the prices considered, the VEWH undertakes an assessment of potential market impacts and takes steps to minimise those impacts.

VEWH activity in the water market, including its choice of market intermediaries and mechanisms, is guided by the following considerations:

- Ensuring adequate information is provided to the marketplace
- Ensuring no positive or negative discrimination against potential buyers and sellers or intermediaries
- Minimising any real or perceived impacts on the market from trading activity
- Ensuring efficient transaction costs and management fees
- Ensuring systems and contractual arrangements are in place to guarantee transactions are executed in a timely, accountable and efficient manner.

In addition, the Victorian government has set ministerial rules around how the VEWH can make decisions, including about water trade. In setting these rules, the government has ensured that the VEWH is trading only in the public interest, in order to protect environmental values without adverse community impacts.

## 7.6 Additional questions?

If you have any queries or would like to contact us, please do and one of our friendly staff will get back to you shortly.

Phone: (03) 9637 8951

Email: [general.enquiries@vewh.vic.gov.au](mailto:general.enquiries@vewh.vic.gov.au)

Address: 8 Nicholson St, East Melbourne

PO Box 500

East Melbourne 3002