

A 'Good Neighbour' Strategy is an essential element in Coliban Water's overarching Environmental Policy, where we aim to manage facilities and land in a manner that demonstrates good environmental stewardship and minimises adverse environmental impacts.

Coliban Water's Good Neighbour Strategy contributes to the demonstration of the Authority's 'duty of care' to the wider community on managing environmental issues that exist on Coliban-owned land to prevent any adverse environmental impacts on adjacent land.

Taking a 'good neighbour' approach to investing in environmental management works will ensure a more targeted and effective investment strategy for land management that works to maximise the benefits of control as well as to create a shared sense of stewardship in the environmental, economic and social values of our land.

Pest Management

Under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994, all landowners have a duty of care to protect and conserve their land and to ensure that management does not threaten the land or the livelihood of others. Among other things, land owners are legally required to take all reasonable steps to eradicate regionally prohibited weeds, prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds and prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals.

The Victorian State Government promotes an integrated community approach to pest management, detailed in *Victorian Pest Management – A Framework for Action*, with education, training and incentives being the preferred methods of encouraging land owners to meet their responsibilities.

The North Central Weed and Rabbit Action Plans provide the regional framework to guide the management of pests and outline the regional priorities and compliance components for regional programs. The Plans aim to contain and reduce the impact of pests in this region.

In satisfying our legal responsibilities under the CALP Act 1994 and in line with the priorities of the North Central Weed and Rabbit Action Plans, Coliban Water has the following objectives:

- To support community-based pest management programs occurring on adjoining private land.
- To ensure that Coliban Water's pest management activities take into account community priorities and actions.
- To promote Coliban Water as a 'Good Neighbour' when it comes to pest management on our land.
- To integrate pest management with other natural resource management objectives in managing Coliban Water facilities and land.

Coliban Water will undertake several initiatives to achieve these objectives:

1. Provide contact details for the Manager Catchment & Environment to DPI to maintain a central contact point for Coliban Water to manage liaison with Landcare Groups on coordinated weed and rabbit control programs.
2. Implementation of current Storage Management Plans (Operations and Maintenance Manuals) which guide Reservoir Keepers in working with landowners of land adjoining reservoirs to control noxious weeds and vermin.
3. Review the land management components within the Storage Management Plans to ensure best practice and improved environmental condition of land.
4. Seek advice from DPI annually to establish the community pest management programs to be undertaken during the coming year that may require Coliban Water involvement.
5. Pest control undertaken as practical to enable Coliban Water to co-operate with and support adjacent land managers and/or local Landcare Groups.
6. Seek advice from DPI as required on new and emerging weed species to assist reservoir keeping staff and operations staff in CAMS to readily identify problems and manage accordingly.
7. Seek advice from Goulburn-Murray Water (aquatic weeds unit) as required.

8. Ensure that all lease and licence agreements administered by Coliban Water specify pest management responsibilities and that these responsibilities are adhered to.

Protecting Air Quality

The air we breathe is fundamental to our health and well-being and odour management is one aspect of air quality that Coliban Water has identified as a significant environmental impact. Another key aspect is the emission of greenhouse gases contributing to the growing problem of the 'greenhouse effect'.

Victoria's legal framework for protecting air quality is provided by the *Environment Protection Act 1970* which in turn, provides for the development of State environment protection policies (SEPPs). The two relevant SEPPs for protecting air quality include the SEPP (Ambient Air Quality) and the SEPP (Air Quality Management). Now more than ever, with the increased development occurring across our region, there is a much greater need for local or 'neighbourhood' air quality to be considered in the way we manage our services.

The generation of odours is recognised as a significant environmental aspect associated particularly with the area of wastewater treatment and disposal. In managing this, Coliban Water has the following objectives:

- To reduce the nuisance of odours generated on Coliban Water land to the surrounding community.
- Meet EPA requirements as a minimum and drive continual improvement by aiming to do better than 'just comply'.
- To be aware of the potential for increased odours at Water Reclamation Plants (WRPs) during prolonged dry periods.

Coliban Water will achieve this by:

1. Ensuring the efficient handling of community odour complaints and a streamlined process implemented for addressing concerns.
2. Considering process management, buffer distances, future upgrades and maintenance on WRPs from the perspective of 'no odour emissions' and implementing mitigation measures where possible.
3. Acknowledging the influence of trade waste management practices on potential odour generation and ensuring the business maintains a major tradewaste customer relations role.
4. Identifying regional 'hot-spots' where poor air quality is a concern and considering potential environmental management programs to write into the EMS that will facilitate 'best practice'.
5. In our business' drought planning, ensure potential odour generation is tabled as an issue for consideration in the management of WRPs.

In terms of reducing our energy emissions to the environment, Coliban Water has the following objective:

- To reduce Greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption by 20% over the next 5 years.

Coliban Water will achieve this by:

- Developing and implementing a business-wide 'Energy Management Plan'.

Noise Management

Victoria's legal framework for managing unreasonable noise is provided by two key documents; The Interim Guidelines for Control of Noise from Industry in Country Victoria (N3/89), and in areas where background noise is comparable to metro Melbourne (ie. in large urban towns such as Bendigo and Echuca), the SEPP (Control of Noise from Commerce, Industry and Trade) No.N-1.

Coliban Water will aim to work with local communities in a way that minimises the impact of excessive noise on residents and where this noise is unavoidable, in a way that considers the impact in line with the standards established in the above two guidelines.

In practice, this will involve Coliban Water managing all capital and recurrent works in a manner that is consistent with the outcomes sought through the SEPP (Control of Noise from Commerce, Industry and Trade) in the urban centres of Bendigo and Echuca and for all other areas, through the Interim Guidelines for Control of Noise from Industry in Country Victoria, and where possible, the objective is to:

- Meet EPA requirements as a minimum and drive continual improvement by aiming to go beyond SEPP compliance.

General Facility and Land Management

The standard to which a landowner manages land in terms of recognising the natural, aesthetic, historic, cultural, scientific or social values associated with the surrounding area, is not often discussed when looking at environmental stewardship. The ability of a landowner to manage land in a way that does not compromise these values, contributes to the perception of whether or not they are considered to be a 'good neighbour'.

Local Government planning policies provide guidance for landowners in protecting neighbourhood character, particularly from a development perspective. Consistent with relevant local planning policies, Coliban Water will endeavour to:

- Maintain facilities, associated infrastructure and land to a 'showcase' standard that respects and does not detract from the surrounding aesthetic amenity and historic and cultural values.

In addition, taking this approach will assist in maintaining and enhancing Coliban Water's image in providing water and wastewater services for north central Victoria.

Coliban Water will achieve this by:

1. Ensuring that internal planning processes regularly identify management, maintenance and upgrade requirements for infrastructure, facilities and land managed by Coliban Water. This will involve;
 - Contract management for our Public Private Partnerships (PPP), specifying minimum standards. Wording to be explicit about land management requirements.
 - Standards for land management to be detailed in all lease agreements.
 - Operations Group site audits (by Supervisor Partnerships) to assess according to 'showcase' standards.
 - Comprehensive Asset Management Plans to be regularly reviewed and updated by the JAM team, with annual schedules aiming for a 'showcase' standard of management.
 - Encouraging the planting and maintenance of indigenous vegetation on all sites.
 - Removing all rubbish on Coliban Water managed land and disposing of it appropriately.
 - Coliban Storage Operations & Maintenance Manuals incorporating the principles of 'showcase' standards.
 - Good housekeeping and clean site management to be a priority for all capital and recurrent works projects.
2. Ensuring the efficient handling of community complaints with regard to aesthetic amenity and a streamlined process implemented for addressing concerns. PPP's will be required to report on all complaints received and action taken to address them.

Strategy Review and Evaluation

The Good Neighbour Strategy will be reviewed every three years and updated with any emerging issues and relevant legislation and policy.

Date	Strategy Review	Comment	Initials
13/10/04	4	Strategy developed	SAM