

Project Update
August 2009

Pipeline investigation underway

Investigation is underway to build a 35 kilometre water pipeline that will improve water security for Castlemaine urban customers and allow for modernisation of Harcourt's rural system.

The pipeline will be from Sandhurst Reservoir south of Bendigo to Barkers Creek Reservoir in Harcourt and then to McCay Reservoir near Castlemaine.

This pipeline will be the backbone for 65 kilometres of pipes that will supply raw water to rural customers in the Harcourt area to replace aged and leaky channels. Refer to our diagram on the back page of this project update.



Sandhurst Reservoir south of Bendigo



Barkers Creek Reservoir near Harcourt



McCay Reservoir near Castlemaine

Why build a pipeline?

Our only source of water to supply the majority of our urban towns to the south of Bendigo including Castlemaine and Kyneton, is from our three catchment reservoirs near Malmsbury.

Based on current Stage 4 GE (General Exemption) water restrictions we presently have enough water in these reservoirs to supply urban customers in our Castlemaine and Kyneton areas until towards the end of 2010 if we do not get any inflows from rainfall.

Building a pipeline connection to Bendigo will provide an alternative source of water for towns connected to the Castlemaine system. It will allow us to save the water in our catchment reservoirs to supply Kyneton and surrounding towns.

Pipeline will operate in both directions

The backbone pipeline will be able to move water from Bendigo to Castlemaine via Harcourt or in the other direction from our catchment reservoirs near Malmsbury to Bendigo.

This means if our catchment reservoirs have high volumes of water in the future we can move water to Castlemaine or Bendigo using this pipeline.

Where will the water come from?

We can move our share of water from Lake Eppalock through the pipeline, or we have 22,480 megalitres of our permanent water entitlement in the Goulburn System.

Our permanent water entitlement is subject to percentage allocations made by Goulburn-Murray Water throughout the season each year. If we need to, we can purchase temporary water each year on the open market.

Based on current consumption patterns under Stage 4 GE (General Exemption) water restrictions, towns in the Castlemaine area use approximately 4,000 megalitres of water each year.

Our aim is to keep at least two years of water in reserve for urban supply to meet essential human needs. If we have high volumes of water in our storages in the future our preference will be to use water from our catchment reservoirs.

Water security is important for our region to prosper. It is critical that residential customers, businesses and investors have confidence in the security of water supplies. Water security underpins employment opportunities and incomes, and economic development.

Project Information Desk

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Community consultation

We are keen for the community to be involved in this project. Your feedback and input are an important part of our investigation process. In addition to community input we need to consider environmental, regulatory, financial and project timelines to help determine the most appropriate pipeline alignment.

Door knocking this week

This week (starting 24 August) we will have a team of people door knocking properties in the area. We want to do this before investigation work starts on private land. We hope to find out how landowners would like to be communicated with throughout the duration of the project.

At properties where no-one is home we will leave a card to let you know we have visited. Our aim is to speak with as many landowners as possible prior to sending out a letter about accessing land to carry out investigation work.

Investigations on private property

The proposed pipeline alignment options include sections within private property, Crown Land and road reserves. Property owners within the investigation area will receive a letter about accessing their property as part of the investigations.

Project Information Desk contact details

A Project Information Desk has been established to provide information and respond to enquiries about this project. This includes a free call number **1800 135 904** operating between 8am and 7pm weekdays and 8am and 12 noon on Saturdays.

We also have a dedicated project email address: castlemainelink@coliban.com.au that will be checked and responded to on weekdays.

More about the pipeline alignment

We are currently investigating potential alignments for the pipeline and locations for three pump stations and a water storage tank.

This includes assessing environmental, heritage and community impacts in order to identify the most sustainable option.

We are working closely with regulatory approval organisations such as the Department of Sustainability and Environment, local government and the North Central Catchment Management Authority to ensure all requirements are met.

We also need to work with the local community to successfully deliver the project.

Environmental and Heritage considerations

We have appointed Biosis Research to carry out our flora and fauna, and heritage investigation work.

The purpose of this work is to help find the pipeline alignment that will minimise environmental and heritage impacts.

Project Timeline

We have a very tight timeframe in which to deliver the project to improve water security for Castlemaine and Kyneton and surrounding towns.

The first phase is investigation, followed by planning, construction and finally commissioning.

The construction phase of the project is scheduled from February to September next year. This is subject to change depending on investigation and planning phases of the project.

Project cost

The current estimated project cost for the backbone pipeline from Bendigo to Castlemaine is \$40 million.

Our Rural Modernisation Project

Our rural supply system was created in 1877 with the construction of a 65 kilometre Coliban Main Channel from Malmsbury Reservoir to Bendigo.

The system was expanded in 1902 with the construction of the Upper Coliban Reservoir, and in 1941 the Lauriston Reservoir was completed.

The Rural Supply System now comprises over 500 kilometres of open channel varying from concrete sections and earthen channels.

In conjunction with the reforms proposed in the Victorian Government's White Paper *Securing Our Water Future Together*, it is necessary for a major upgrade of the system to provide improved levels of service to customers and to reduce water losses.

Harcourt is the first rural area to be modernised

Harcourt is a well-known fruit growing region of Victoria that is important to our local economy.

It is the first area of our rural system that will be modernised into a piped system.

Harcourt Water Services Committee formed to help

The Harcourt Water Services Committee (WSC) was formed last year to involve the local community in the modernisation of the Harcourt rural system.

The introduction of the WSCs was a new approach to involve local communities in major projects to ensure the best possible outcomes for the area.

Project costs

The current estimated cost of the modernisation of the rural system in the Harcourt area is \$15 million.

Project investigation so far

We started our investigation work in Harcourt last year and we estimate that the new 65 kilometre pipe network will be delivered late next year.



Project investigation work underway on Harcourt rural modernisation project last year

Pipeline schematic

