

Attachment 2**For Public Notice via Internet****REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978***

Title of Proposal: **Western Irrigation Network Scheme -Recycled Water Supply Infrastructure**

Proponent: **Western Region Water Corporation (Western Water)**

Description of Project:

The project involves construction and operation of infrastructure to manage and distribute class C recycled water from the Melton, Bacchus Marsh and Sunbury recycled water plants (RWP) to the Parwan Balliang Irrigation District including the following components:

- The 13.5 km bi-directional subsurface recycled water pipeline Melton RWP to Bacchus Marsh RWP (M2BM) interconnector pipeline.
- Bacchus Marsh RWP Pump Station.
- Parwan Balliang Irrigation District (PBID) Supply Network – A 14 km subsurface pipeline (typically 675 mm diameter) with offtakes to on-farm irrigation infrastructure, and an associated pump station and 2 ML balance tank designed to connect to the M2BM Interconnector Pipeline.
- PBID Foundation Recycled Water Irrigation Areas – On-farm infrastructure and works, including irrigation pipelines and centre pivot irrigators, to distribute recycled water from property offtakes along the PBID Supply Network pipeline for irrigation of mostly existing broadacre cropping land.
- A 1 GL Parwan Recycled Water Storage.
- An approximately 30 km subsurface recycled water pipeline Sunbury RWP to Melton RWP (S2M) interconnector pipeline.

The overall construction footprint for the WIN scheme is between approximately 175 to 178 ha.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) **is not** required for the Western Irrigation Network Scheme, as described in the referral accepted on 3 June 2021, subject to the following conditions:

- a) An environment report(s) for the Western Irrigation Network Scheme project, excluding the Bacchus Marsh RWP Pump Station, must be prepared in consultation with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the relevant councils, and completed to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. The report needs to examine and document the
 - i. The predicted direct and indirect impacts on native vegetation and biodiversity values including listed communities and species of flora and fauna (under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*), waterways, DELWP listed wetlands and groundwater dependent ecosystems;
 - ii. Potential cumulative impacts on native vegetation and biodiversity values associated with the development of the project components and other known infrastructure works planned to occur in the area;

- iii. Project development configurations, layouts and alignments to avoid and minimise adverse environmental impacts;
 - iv. The mitigation measures proposed to avoid, minimise and/or manage potential impacts on native vegetation and biodiversity assets and values examined in the report, including use of no-go zones and rehabilitation of environmentally sensitive areas such as waterway crossings;
 - v. Targeted surveys and ecological investigations undertaken by suitably qualified persons in accordance with relevant survey guidelines in consultation with DELWP; and
 - vi. An assessment of the geological significance of the eruption point located within the proposed footprint of the Parwan Recycled Water Storage.
- b) The environment report (condition (a)) is to be completed in order to inform the project (or project components) that is to be examined through planning and approval processes, in particular under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The environment report may be prepared in stages given the project components are proposed to be delivered in stages.
- c) An environmental management framework (EMF), informed by the findings and conclusions of the environment report, must be completed by the proponent to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning prior to the commencement of works and may be prepared in stages. The EMF needs to be prepared in consultation with DELWP and include a statement of all environmental commitments for the project.

Reasons for Decision:

- With the exception of potential adverse effects on native vegetation and biodiversity values, the environmental effects of the project are unlikely to be of high significance and complexity.
- Uncertainties remain on the cumulative extent of potential adverse environmental effects for the different project components and the likely feasibility and effectiveness of avoid and mitigation measures. There is also uncertainty on the geological significance of an eruption point located in the project footprint.
- The conditions set out through this decision provide the most appropriate means for examining these effects and uncertainties, in particular for the potential adverse biodiversity effects. They will also enable examination of the adequacy of the measures proposed to avoid and mitigate impacts in the context of the relevant policy and regulatory requirements.
- Potential adverse effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values can be addressed through the statutory processes under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Heritage Act 2017*.
- Other potential effects should be readily addressed through respective statutory requirements under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* (to be superseded by the *Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018* from 1 July 2021) and *Water Act 1989*.

Date of Decision: 15/08/2021