

Frequently Asked Questions

*This information has been compiled from a variety of sources and was correct at the time of preparation.
Lower Murray Water advises customers to seek independent advice from a variety of sources.*

1. What is a waterMAP?

A waterMAP is a water management action plan.

2. What is the purpose of a waterMAP?

A waterMAP requires eligible non-residential water customers to:

- assess their current water use;
- identify inefficiencies and opportunities for water savings;
- prepare an action plan to implement water conservation actions; and
- annually report on implementation of water conservation actions.

Within their waterMAP customers are encouraged to include an action of posting water conservation signage near water using fixtures to alert staff and the public.

3. Non-residential customers are the largest users of water - why aren't there more restrictions imposed on businesses?

The non-residential customer segment is not the biggest user of water in the urban sector. However, in many cases individually their water usage is proportionally greater than residential customers.

For example in Melbourne there are approximately 1,500 customers who consume more than 10ML potable (drinking quality) water per year. These users are responsible for approximately 15% of the demand for urban water. Overall the 125,000 non-residential customers in Melbourne consume around 30% of urban water.

Non-residential users of water face the same restrictions as domestic customers, with a few exemptions for some industries such as commercial car washes that are able to demonstrate efficient water usage practices. Other non-residential water users are more significantly impacted such as turf growers and the pool industry.

4. How many customers are expected to complete a waterMAP?

Across the state approximately 2,100 customers will need to complete a waterMAP. This includes 1,500 in Melbourne and 600 in regional urban areas.

5. What will it cost a business to develop a waterMAP?

The program is developed to provide flexibility to the diverse range of customers with a water use (or expected water use – see Q16) greater than 10ML potable water per year. The waterMAP handbook allows a customer to either undertake a self assessment or in the case of larger more complex businesses to enlist the services of an external service provider.

Businesses are not being asked to implement water saving initiatives that don't provide a payback that the business finds acceptable. In addition external funding may be available to support the program (refer to question 13).

6. Why is the Government requiring non-residential customers who use more than 10ML to develop a water management action plan?

While the Government recognises that the non-residential customer segment has made significant water savings in the past ten years all customer segments need to look at ways to become more efficient in their water usage.

Benefits of a targeted program include:

- working with a smaller group of customers has the potential to develop significant water savings, maximising the use of water corporations resources;
- Majority of customers who use less than 10ML potable water per year largely have residential style usage i.e. taps, toilets showers etc, and therefore would not require a detailed water management action plan. The same water saving measures and communication that apply to the residential sector can be applied to these customers.

The current program is based on the already successful program targeting Melbourne's top 200 customers, that has to date reduced their consumption by over 6 billion litres per year.

7. What if a business already has a water management plan?

These plans may be approved as a waterMAP providing the relevant water corporation is satisfied that the plan meets the criteria set out in the waterMAP handbook.

Where it is known that customer has already completed a plan or similar program they will be contacted directly by their water corporation as to their requirements to complete a waterMAP.

8. How is the waterMAP program mandatory?

The requirement to complete a waterMAP is under each water corporation's Permanent Water Saving Plan (PWSP). These set out restrictions and prohibitions on the use of water. For non-residential customers using more than 10ML of potable water per year to avoid these prohibitions, they are required to:

- Register an intention to complete a waterMAP;
- Develop a waterMAP;
- Annually report on the implementation of their waterMAP
- Review and amend their waterMAP as requested by their water corporation

9. What are the key dates?

The key dates are as follows:

Registration by customer	28 th September 2007
Submission of waterMAP by customer	31 st December 2007
Annual review	12 months following submission of waterMAP

10. Is the customer expected to save a certain amount of water?

In developing a waterMAP it is recommended that businesses seek to achieve at least a 10 per cent reduction in water use. While this is not a mandatory requirement, current non-residential water saving programs have identified this as a benchmark water savings level to be used as an aspirational target. In some instances, a 10 per cent reduction may not be achievable due to existing water savings programs.

11. Is it mandatory to implement all the actions identified in a customer's waterMAP?

No, the waterMAP program follows on from the success of the voluntary 'Pathways to Sustainability' program, where Melbourne's top 200 customers have reduced their water usage by 6.2 billion litres. It was identified through this program that customers would voluntarily implement water saving measures when they were better informed of the potential benefits eg. Water and energy savings. A number of funding programs may also be available to provide incentives to implement water saving initiatives (see question 13).

12. Are the waterMAPs publicly available?

No. All information will be treated as strictly commercial in confidence, encouraging customers to be open in the information they provide.

13. What support is there for a customer to create and implement their waterMAP?

Some water corporations and peak industry bodies have run a number of support programs around the implementation of the waterMAP program including workshops on the development of waterMAPs.

Incentives to implement water saving initiatives, such as funding programs, may be applicable to your organisation. An example of these are:

- Community Water Grants - www.communitywatergrants.gov.au
- Stormwater and Urban Conservation Fund - www.dse.vic.gov.au
- Sustainability Fund - www.sustainability.vic.gov.au
- Water for Industry Fund - www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Other avenues for general assistance and advice in creating a waterMAP are:

- Alternative Technology Association - www.ata.org.au
- Australian Industry Group - www.aigroup.asn.au
- Australian Institute of Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Heating - www.airah.org.au
- Department of Sustainability and Environment - www.dse.vic.gov.au
- Environment Protection Authority - www.epa.vic.gov.au
- Facility Management Association of Australia - www.fma.com.au
- Fire Protection Association Australia - www.fpa.com.au
- Green Plumbers Association - www.greenplumbers.com.au
- Grow me the Money - www.growmethemoney.com.au
- Lower Murray Water - www.lmw.vic.gov.au
- Our Water Our Future - www.ourwater.vic.gov.au
- Plastics and Chemical Industries Association - www.pacia.org.au
- Plumbing Industry Commission - www.pic.vic.gov.au
- Property Council of Australia - www.propertyoz.com.au
- Sustainable Gardening Australia - www.sgaonline.org.au
- Textile Rental and Laundry Association of Australia - www.trlaa.com.au
- Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) - www.vecci.org.au
- VicWater - www.vicwater.org.au
- Water efficiency labelling standards - www.waterrating.gov.au

14. Are farmers and other bulk users of water required to complete a waterMAP?

In the majority no, only customers using 10ML or more of potable water per year are required to complete a waterMAP. Water corporations would encourage them to develop a waterMAP on a voluntary basis at this time as water remains a scarce resource that needs to be used more efficiently.

15. Are there penalties involved with not adhering to the PWSP requirements?

Yes, it is an offence to contravene a restriction or prohibition on the use of water. Penalties range from infringement notices or fines, daily penalties, restriction of water supply to imprisonment.

16. Is it only customers who currently use more than 10ML potable water per year who are required to complete a waterMAP?

No, any existing customers who increase their water consumption to more than 10ML of potable water per year or new customers where it is forecast they will consume more than 10ML of potable water per year will be required to complete a waterMAP.

17. What is an EREP and how does it relate to waterMAP?

Commencing in 2008, Victoria's largest industrial and commercial consumers (in the order of the largest 250 consumers in the state) of energy and water will be required to prepare an Energy Resource Efficiency Plan (EREP) under the Environment Protection (Amendment) Act 2006. The EREP program will be administered by EPA Victoria and may apply to major non-residential customers who are also required to prepare a waterMAP.

Major non-residential customers consuming 100ML or more of water (whether supplied by an urban water corporation or by other legal agreement such as a bulk entitlement or ground water licence) or consuming 100TJ of energy at a site will trigger a requirement for an EREP.

18. What are the key differences between the two programs?

WaterMAP	EREP
Threshold of 10ML per year Site based	Threshold of 100ML per year (proposed) Site based
Mandatory (Permanent water saving rule) : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register with water authority• Prepare a plan• Annual Reporting	Mandatory: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Registration with EPA•Preparation of assessment & plan•Implementation (based on 3 year pay-back)•Annual reporting
Scope: urban water supply	Scope: urban water and water supplied by legal agreement, all fuel sources consumed and waste generated at premises.
Voluntary implementation (incentive based) Penalties for non-compliance Managed: Water authorities & DSE	Required to implement actions with payback within 3 years Penalties for non compliance Managed: EPA
Plans submitted by 31 st Dec 2007	Plans submitted by 2008

19. Why do customers need to register for both programs?

Given Victoria's water storages are still under pressure there is a need for major water users to manage their water usage earlier than the EREP deadline of December 2008. Water corporations will work with customers required to prepare an EREP to align the requirements of EREP and waterMAP.

20. Why isn't the waterMAP requirement delayed and incorporated into the EREP program?

WaterMAP focuses on a larger state wide customer base of water consumers (approximately 2,100 customers). EREP is a new Regulation which will focus on a small number of the largest energy and water businesses in the State (approximately 250-300 customers). While there are some similarities in elements of the programs they have different time frames and objectives.

21. If a customer completes a waterMAP will it automatically be approved as meeting EREP requirements?

No. Work undertaken toward waterMAP (and other programs) will be considered on a case-by-case basis for its rigour, accuracy and performance. A thorough water audit undertaken for waterMAP, for example, is likely to also be sufficient for that aspect of the EREP program. If you develop your waterMAP in an integrated way by assessing energy consumption and waste generation then this will maximise the likelihood of the work meeting EREP requirements down the track.

22. What happens to a customer's water plan that they have already completed under another program such Melbourne's Top 200?

Customers who have existing water plans developed under the Top 200 program will need to review them and incorporate priority projects and other information into their plan under EREP next year.

These customers may apply to have aspects of the work undertaken considered sufficient for the purposes of EREP where those purposes are similar. A site, for example, may have completed a thorough water audit less than two years ago and also provide evidence that processes and water consumption have not changed considerably in that time. Such an audit may be considered adequate as a basis for water action planning under EREP.

23. Will Lower Murray Water automatically submit a customer's waterMAP to EPA for consideration?

No, the information in your waterMAP is treated as strictly commercial in confidence. Given there are other components required in completing an EREP any information provided to the EPA will need to be done in co-ordination with the customer.

24. If I complete both an EREP and waterMAP does this mean that I will be required to report separately on both programs annually?

DSE and the EPA are currently working to align the two programs to avoid any duplication of reporting. This issue will be resolved prior to any reports being prepared by the end customer, with any changes or aligning of reporting requirements being communicated directly to the customer.

25. Why is it mandatory to implement actions under EREP and not under waterMAP?

The waterMAP program is following on from the success of the voluntary 'Pathways to Sustainability' program, where Melbourne's top 200 customers have reduced their water usage by 6.2 billion litres. It was identified through this program that customers would voluntarily implement water saving measures when they were better informed of the potential benefits of water savings.

Whereas the EREP program is taking a firmer regulatory approach adopted by the EPA in its successful Greenhouse Gas program.

26. Why is the waterMAP program limited to potable water when EREPs are more comprehensive and include all water sources?

Consistent with other urban drought response measures, the waterMAP program is seeking to manage the demand on urban water usage.

This water is predominantly of a potable water standard. It also recognises that other water sources have other constraints on their usage during times of drought, including reduced water allocation on water entitlements.

There is a built-in incentive to use water more efficiently if production is to be sustained. Rather than mandating the management of all water resources, waterMAP program promotes their sustainable use.

EREPs are looking to address the optimal and efficient use of water and energy resources and to limit waste production.