

Planning Scheme Amendment

The Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP) is a program of nine projects proposing to build and operate water management infrastructure such as regulators, containment banks and culverts, which will get much needed water back onto high-value floodplains along the Murray River. Without this water, these rare and iconic landscapes will continue to decline – along with the many native animals and plants that depend on them. The VMFRP is being delivered by the Victorian Government, and is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment.

Planning is underway

Before we begin, we'll seek appropriate planning approvals under the Victorian *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

What is a Planning Scheme?

All local councils in Victoria have planning schemes in place. A Planning Scheme is a statutory document which sets out the objectives, policies and provisions for the use, development and protection of land in the area to which it applies. They prescribe how land can and cannot be used and developed, including what permits are required for particular uses or development.

Planning Schemes can be amended, in accordance with processes established by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) to achieve a planning outcome or support a new policy direction or project.

Why we are seeking Planning Scheme Amendments?

To assist with the efficient delivery of the projects, we are seeking to “switch off” the need to obtain a series of individual planning permits that would ordinarily be required. In lieu of the planning permits, VMFRP would

be required to meet conditions prescribed by the Minister for Planning in an ‘Incorporated Document’ that will be added to the relevant Planning Scheme. This will ensure that the objectives and requirements on the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* are still met.

The conditions will apply only to the construction and operation of the VMFRP projects, within a geographic extent defined by a Specific Controls Overlay (SCO). The SCO will cover public and applicable private land.

Planning Scheme amendments are common for the construction and operation of infrastructure projects within Victoria.

Planning Scheme Amendment process

We'll seek approval from the Minister for Planning to amend the Planning Schemes across the nine project areas. We'll request the Minister for Planning to prepare and approve the Planning Scheme amendments under Section 20(4) of the Victorian *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The decisions to amend the Planning Schemes are based on a comprehensive assessment of the potential benefits and impacts of each project. These assessments are documented in an Environment Effects Statements or an Environment Report, which will be placed on public exhibition enabling the community to understand the projects, their potential effects, and the suitability of the proposed Planning Scheme amendment.

Whilst on public exhibition, the community will have an opportunity to make a formal submission that will be considered by the Minister for Planning in making their determination on the projects.

More information about Planning Scheme amendments is available at planning.vic.gov.au

What our Planning Scheme amendment seeks

VMFRP will be asking the Minister for Planning to amend the applicable Planning Scheme. This amendment will exempt VMFRP from requiring planning permits by applying a Specific Controls Overlay (SCO) to the project areas and inserting an Incorporated Document with conditions for the project areas into the affected Planning Schemes.

Amending the Planning Schemes to insert an SCO and an Incorporated Document will allow the VMFRP to progress in a more streamlined manner without the need for the series of individual planning permits, provided conditions are met as set out in the Incorporated Document.

The conditions may include aspects such as environmental and heritage management. The proposed SCO and Incorporated Document will apply to both public and private land, as well as any land temporarily required for construction.

Where can I see the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment?

The draft Planning Scheme amendment will be placed on public exhibition as part of and alongside an Environment Effects Statement or Environment Report. The community will have the opportunity to review the draft conditions and make a formal submission on them, or any other aspect of the VMFRP project, that will help inform the statutory decision-making process.

More information on this is provided under “Have your say”, below.

What will change on my land?

The proposed SCO and Incorporated Document will only apply for the purpose of delivering the VMFRP and will not change your ability to do what you are currently permitted to do on your land.

If your land is within the proposed area of the SCO, the VMFRP team will be in contact to discuss what this means for your property and address any other queries or feedback you may have.

Have your say

We understand that planning matters can be complex, and we would be happy to discuss them with you.

We value what you say because it helps us understand your needs. As part of the process, the community and other interested parties have an opportunity to provide feedback on the project and the proposed Planning Scheme amendment.

You can participate in this process by submitting your feedback to us in writing or online.

We'll combine your feedback in a report and submit it to the Minister for Planning as part of a formal request to amend the relevant Planning Scheme.

More information

For more information on these projects, visit www.vmfrp.com.au. You can also email info@vmfrp.vic.gov.au or contact the VMFRP Project Officer of Communications and Engagement on 0428 516 233.

