

Managing Crown water frontages

For better farms and waterways



There are several ways landholders can improve Crown and private river frontages to provide benefits for their property, as well as for the broader community and the environment. Options include fencing, revegetation, controlled grazing, off-stream watering and weed management. River frontage, also known as riparian land, is land that runs alongside a waterway.



Graeme and Justin Weaver. Photographer: Rob Addinsall

“Putting in the fencing improves the manageability of the property, it improves your ability to move stock around.”

“It improves the land value because of the structural improvements as well as the aesthetic value, the environmental values.”

Justin Weaver, Crown water frontage licensee, Glenelg River



Photographer: Clint Bain

“In this flat country with cold south westerly winds, the riparian vegetation provides protection for cattle. It’s a very good windbreak.”

Dennis Matthews, Crown water frontage licensee, Mitchell River



"I treated the blackberries, willows and English broom along the fence which was then relocated further away from the river to reduce damage during flood events."

Herman Brunink, Crown water frontage licensee, Owens River



"Through fencing off the frontage we no longer have the worry of our cattle falling into the river or wandering stock from other properties."

"We have frequently noticed our cattle prefer to drink from troughs, rather than the river."

David McLaren, Crown water frontage licensee, Acheron River

What is a Crown water frontage?

- It is a strip of Crown land that runs alongside a waterway and is typically located between the waterway and a private land boundary. It can vary in width from 20 to 100 metres or more.
- Crown water frontages run alongside about 17% of Victoria's waterways. Private land, parks and state forests cover the remaining frontages.
- The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for the administration of Crown water frontages. In some cases Parks Victoria has a management role.

On farm benefits of frontage management

Fencing, off-stream watering and revegetation works on water frontages lead to:

Better stock management

- Fencing prevents stock falling down banks, getting stuck in the waterway or wandering on to other properties

Enhanced productivity and capital value

- Stock have easier access to water when using an off-stream trough, leading to them being healthier and more productive
- Property values are increased with improvements such as fencing and off-stream water access
- Riparian vegetation acts as a windbreak which provides protection for stock

Erosion control

- Riparian vegetation reduces soil erosion and helps reduce the impact of floods

Improved water quality

- Riparian vegetation helps improve water quality in waterways

Environmental benefits

- Riparian vegetation improves habitat for birds, animals and fish.

What is a Crown frontage licence?

- It is a licence that authorises the licensee to enter and use a Crown water frontage for a specified purpose such as grazing or riparian management. The conditions of the licence describe the responsibilities of the licensee and the licensor.
- A licence is normally issued to the owner/occupier of private land adjoining a Crown water frontage. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has the power to check licence compliance. In some areas Parks Victoria shares these responsibilities.
- If you have a Crown water frontage licence for grazing and have undertaken riparian management works such as fencing or revegetation, your licence should be changed to a riparian management licence to reflect changes in both grazing management and long-term management responsibilities.
- Riparian management licences recognise that all or some of the Crown frontage is being maintained to protect the riparian environment, typically by fencing to manage stock access to the waterway. Licence fees are generally reduced to as low as \$1 payable on demand.
- A licence is not a lease. It does not give the licensee exclusive use of the land. The public retains the right to enter and remain on the land for certain recreational purposes such as walking, fishing or bird watching.
- The public should not interfere with the licence purpose. Public access may be restricted to protect revegetation areas or erosion control sites. Pedestrian access must be provided at any fence that crosses the frontage by providing a stile or unlocked gate.
- Members of the public are not permitted to camp, light camp fires, take firewood, interfere with habitat, damage vegetation, drive a vehicle or ride a trail bike off road, remove, dig or cut soil, sand, rock or gravel, interfere with livestock, damage infrastructure, leave gates open or bring a dog on licensed Crown water frontages.

More information

Landholders may be eligible for funding for riparian works such as fencing, revegetation and off-stream stock watering in areas considered a priority by the local catchment management authority (CMA) or Melbourne Water.

These incentives are available for Crown water frontages, when landholders take out a riparian management licence. The location of the fence may be negotiated between the landholder and the CMA.

For more information contact your local CMA or Melbourne Water. For more information about Crown water frontages, contact the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

www.delwp.vic.gov.au/crownlandwaterfrontages

Cover photo courtesy of West Gippsland CMA

© The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, the Victorian Government logo and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning logo. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en>

ISBN 978-1-76047-100-2 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-76047-101-9 (pdf/online)

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186, email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au or via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relayservice.com.au. This document is also available online at delwp.vic.gov.au

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Customer Service Centre **136 186**
www.delwp.vic.gov.au