

There are now more opportunities for recreation along Victorian rivers. This factsheet explains what activities can and can't be undertaken on licensed and unlicensed Crown river frontages in Victoria*.

Crown land river frontage

A Crown river frontage is a strip of Crown land alongside rivers and streams varying in width from 20 to 100 metres or more. Victoria has 170,000 km of water frontage. About 30,000 km of this is Crown river frontage. The remainder is private land, reserves, parks, or state forests.

Licence holders

Some Crown land river frontages are subject to licences, issued by DELWP or Parks Victoria (the 'licensor') to the adjoining landowner/occupier (the 'licensee'), under section 130 of the *Land Act 1958*. A licence includes conditions for the licensee, including the management of the licensed land.

The licence does not give the licence holder exclusive use of the land: the public has the right to enter and remain on the land for some recreational purposes such as walking, fishing, and birdwatching. Camping is also permitted in specific, designated camping areas on licensed Crown river frontages.

A licence holder is subject to the same conditions as a member of the public when undertaking activities not specified in their licence conditions, such as recreational activities.

Further information

The Regulated Watercourse Land Regulations 2021 manage the recreational use of Crown river frontages, including camping.

These regulations establish a clear set of rules and behaviours for the recreational use of certain Crown land near watercourses, both licensed and unlicensed. The regulations balance recreational access with protecting agricultural, environmental, and Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

For more information, visit: <https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/land-management/managing-crown-land/access-to-crown-water-frontages/>

What you can and can't do

The table below outlines what you can and can't do on licensed and unlicensed Crown river frontages.

Licensed Crown river frontage is Crown land which has a frontage to a waterway and is licensed under the *Land Act 1958*. Unlicensed Crown river frontage is Crown land that is not licensed under the *Land Act 1958*.

*Information in this fact sheet refers only to Crown water frontages that are not within areas such as national, state or regional parks or Crown land reserves. Those areas are subject to other acts, regulations, and management arrangements.

Crown river frontages

Activity	Licensed Crown river frontage	Unlicensed Crown river frontage	Comments
General access			
Can I have pedestrian access to Crown water frontages?	Yes		Licensed Crown water frontage that is fenced requires pedestrian access by a stile or unlocked gate. This includes access for recreational purposes such as walking, fishing, bird watching.
Can I leave a gate open? †	Yes, but only if the gate was already open. Gates must be left as found. If you find a gate closed and use the gate, ensure it is closed when you leave.		Unlicensed Crown water frontage should be free from gates and fences. If you encounter one, inform DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.
Can I enter land that is cultivated or reclaimed? †	Only if you have the written permission of the land manager.	No.	Crown water frontage that is not licensed under the <i>Land Act 1958</i> or the <i>Forests Act 1958</i> should be free of cultivation. If you do encounter cultivation, inform DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.
Can I bring a dog? †	No, unless: - it is your assistance dog <i>or</i> - it is for the purpose of hunting on land that can only be accessed by passage over the licensed Crown water frontage <i>or</i> - it is for the purpose of hunting game ducks with the permission of the licence holder.	Yes.	Dogs are not permitted in designated camping areas for the purpose of hunting game ducks.
Can I interfere with livestock? †	No.		Crown water frontage that is not licensed under the <i>Land Act 1958</i> or the <i>Forests Act 1958</i> should be free of stock. If you do encounter them, inform DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.
Can I damage or remove vegetation, trees, or fallen	No, unless you are a member of a Traditional Owner group acting in	No, unless you have a licence or permit under the <i>Forests Act 1958</i> .	

Crown river frontages

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timber (alive or dead)?	accordance with section 84 of the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> .		
Can I bring vegetation, soil, sand, gravel, or rock?	No, unless it is firewood.		Many farms are subject to strict biosecurity requirements. We expect visitors to be considerate of these requirements.
Can I interfere with nests or habitat of birds or animals?	No.		
Can I remove, dig or cut any soil, sand, rock or gravel? Δ	No.	No, unless operating under a licence or permit issued under the provisions of the <i>Forests Act 1958</i> .	
Camping			
Can I camp?	No, unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you camp in a designated camping area <i>and</i> - the campsite is more than 20 metres from a waterway <i>and</i> - the campsite is more than 200 metres from a dwelling <i>and</i> - you camp for no more than 14 consecutive nights. 	Yes, but only if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the camp site is more than 20 metres from a waterway <i>and</i> - 200 metres from a dwelling <i>and</i> - you camp for no more than 28 consecutive nights. 	Refer to the DELWP website for information about where camping is permitted on licensed Crown water frontages. Please review the rules relating to each designated camping area as these may vary. https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/land-management/managing-crown-land/access-to-crown-water-frontages/
Can I leave litter?	No, you must remove all waste and personal property for which you are responsible.		
Can I use or dispose of soap or detergent?	Yes, but only if it is more than 50 metres from a waterway.		
Can I dispose of human waste?	Yes, but only if it is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - buried more than 100 metres from a waterway <i>or</i> - disposed of in a portable toilet more than 50 metres from a waterway <i>or</i> - disposed of in any toilet facilities provided. 		

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Can I install and use a portable toilet?	Yes, but only if the toilet is more than 50 metres from a waterway and you take the portable toilet and its contents with you when you leave.		
Fires			
Can I light a fire? Δ	<p>No, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you light a campfire or barbeque in a designated camping area where campfires are permitted <i>and</i> - you comply with the campfire safety rules. 	<p>Yes, but only if you light a campfire or barbecue and you comply with the campfire safety rules.</p>	<p>Campfires are only permitted in some designated camping areas on licensed Crown river frontages. Refer to the DELWP website for information about where campfires are permitted. https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/land-management/managing-crown-land/access-to-crown-water-frontages/</p> <p>Campfires or barbeques using solid fuel must comply with the following campfire safety rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the fire must be lit in a properly constructed fireplace or in a trench at least 30 cm deep - the fire must not occupy an area exceeding 1 square metre in any direction - all dimensions of the solid fuel must be less than 1 m - the ground and airspace within 3 m from the outer perimeter and upper-most point of the fire must be clear of flammable material. <p>You must also comply with any fire restrictions, days of acute fire danger, Code Red days or Total Fire Bans as declared by the CFA or DELWP. You should always ensure that the fire is completely extinguished before you leave, or ensure that a person who has the capacity and means to extinguish the fire is in charge of it. Never leave a campfire or barbecue unattended.</p>
Can I collect firewood?		No.	

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Can I use a gas or liquid stove for cooking?		Yes.	You must also comply with any fire restrictions, days of acute fire danger, Code Red days or Total Fire Bans as declared by the CFA or DELWP. Never leave a burning stove unattended.
Hunting and firearms			
Can I possess, use or carry a firearm on Crown frontage?	Yes, but conditions apply. Refer to the Game Management Authority website for more information.	Yes, unless it is reserved Crown land and regulations to prevent this activity apply. You must hold a licence to use a firearm.	Refer to the Game Management Authority website or your local DELWP office for further information on hunting on Crown land. http://www.gma.vic.gov.au/hunting
Vehicles, bikes and horses			
Can I use a motor vehicle or a trail bike? †	No, unless it is on a road or parking area or it is a signed off-road access area. You must hold a driver's licence for the class of vehicle/bike used and only use a registered vehicle or bike. In no circumstances can you damage the land.		
Can I go off-road driving? †	No, unless it is a signed off-road access area. You must hold a driver's licence for the class of vehicle used and only use a registered vehicle. In no circumstances can you damage the land.		You should comply with all relevant codes of practice. http://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/recreational-activities
Can I go cycling or mountain biking?	Yes, but only on formed vehicle tracks <i>and</i> you do not damage the land.	Yes, but you must not damage the land and must obey seasonal road or track closures.	You should comply with all relevant codes of practice. http://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/recreational-activities
Can I ride a horse? †	No.	Yes, but only on formed tracks. You must obey seasonal road or track closures.	You should comply with all relevant codes of practice. http://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/recreational-activities

† Licensees may undertake these activities if they are in accordance with the licence purpose.

Δ Licensees may undertake these activities if they have licensor consent.

Further information on Crown water frontages is available on the DELWP website <https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/land-management/managing-crown-land/access-to-crown-water-frontages/> or by contacting the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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