

Crown water frontage licences

A guide to understanding your licence conditions

This fact sheet summarises information from *Crown water frontages: An explanatory guide to your licence conditions*.

What is Crown water frontage?

A Crown water 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 water frontage. The remainder is private land, reserves, parks or state forests.

What is a Crown water frontage licence?

A Crown water frontage licence gives you the right to use the land for a specific purpose (generally grazing or riparian management), with conditions on that use.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) or, in some situations, Parks Victoria issues licences, generally to the owner or occupier of the adjoining private land.

It is your responsibility to understand your licence conditions and how you must comply with them. It is important that you are aware of the boundary between the Crown water frontage and adjacent freehold land.

A licence is not a lease. It authorises the use of the land for specific purposes. It is not an authority to occupy it exclusively.

If you enter the licensed frontage for activities not covered by your licence conditions, you are subject to the same conditions as a member of the public.

The public has the right to enter and remain on the licensed Crown water frontage for certain recreational purposes, such as walking, fishing or bird watching. Camping is permitted in specific, designated areas that have been assessed and deemed suitable for camping. Campfires may be permitted in some camping areas.

If you sell your freehold property, you must advise your solicitor or selling agent that the licence needs to be transferred to the new owners.

DELWP and Parks Victoria have authorised officers who may inspect Crown water frontages to ensure compliance with the licence purpose and licence conditions. They have a right to request a copy of your licence and discuss management of the frontage.



Riparian fencing in the Upper Wimmera catchment

Credit: David Fletcher

Crown water frontages: An explanatory guide to your licence conditions

The guide describes each clause in your licence conditions and what you must do to comply with them. You are encouraged to read the guide to ensure you understand your licence conditions. The full guide is available on the DELWP website <https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/crown-land-water-frontage>

Key points of the guide are outlined in this fact sheet.

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Good order and condition

You are required to maintain the licensed land and any improvements in good order and condition. You are expected to:

- prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals¹
- take all reasonable steps to eradicate regionally prohibited weeds and prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds¹
- take all reasonable steps to ensure the percentage of bare ground does not exceed 20% of the total licensed area (excluding stream banks)
- ensure the presence of livestock camping areas and tracks along the stream bank does not exceed 25% of the bank length
- ensure improvements on the licensed frontage do not pose a risk to public safety or contribute to environmental degradation.

Rubbish and chemicals

You must not let rubbish accumulate on or near the licensed land.

You must not store any hazardous chemicals on the licensed land without written permission of your licensor. This includes gas, inflammable liquids (including petrol and diesel), explosive substances, pesticides, herbicides, fertiliser and other chemicals.

Incidents or defects

You must promptly inform your licensor of any significant incidents or defects that occur on the licensed frontage that may pose a risk to the land, water or the public, e.g. chemical spills, fires, dumping of rubbish, dangerous trees, significant flood damage or erosion.

Fire

You must obtain written approval from your licensor to light a fire on licensed frontage and obtain any other necessary permits for burning. Licensor consent is not required to light a campfire in a designated area where campfires are permitted.

Cultivation and use of licensed land

You must obtain written permission from your licensor to damage or remove standing vegetation, remove fallen timber (including firewood), damage or remove soil, plant any indigenous or non-indigenous plant or crop, or apply any material to improve the supply of nutrients.

Erection of improvements

You must obtain written approval from your licensor before constructing improvements on the licensed frontage, e.g. buildings, dams, levees, channels, signs, permanent fences or other structures, and any additions to an existing improvement.



Fenced Crown water frontage, Campaspe River, Elmore

Credit: Emma Wolters, North Central Catchment Management Authority

¹ Information on weed classifications and pest animals is available from Agriculture Victoria

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Public access and use

You must not block public access to the licensed Crown water frontage from another area of public land and must provide a stile, gate or other suitable means of pedestrian access. This does not apply to vehicle access.

You must not erect any signs that could restrict or discourage public access to the licensed frontage. However, you may wish to erect signage indicating the boundary between Crown land and private land, or a revegetation area.

On Crown water frontages, members of the public are not allowed to:

- wilfully damage a fence or leave a gate open
- deface, damage or interfere with any infrastructure, including fences and signs
- camp or light fires (except in designated areas where this is permitted)
- enter sites that are cultivated or being reclaimed (unless with the written permission of the regulated land manager)
- cut, fell, pick, remove, take, destroy or damage any native vegetation (alive or dead)
- bring vehicles, including trail bikes, into the area
- interfere with livestock
- interfere with the nest or habitat of any native bird or animal
- remove or dig any soil, sand, rock or gravel
- carry or use a firearm without your, the licensee's, permission (they are allowed to carry a firearm without your permission where the Crown water frontage provides the only access to land such as a Game Reserve [in accordance with the *Wildlife Act 1975*]).
- bring a dog onto the land, unless it is an assistance dog, or a gundog and the person is either crossing the land for the purpose of hunting as above or has your permission.

Conditions for recreational use of Crown water frontages are outlined in the fact sheet *Crown water frontage: A guide to access and recreational use*. Refer to the *Camping on licensed Crown river frontages* fact sheet for more information about camping.

More information

If you have any queries regarding licence conditions or want to report inappropriate public use or a breach of the law on licensed frontage, contact the relevant licensor (DELWP on 136 186 or Parks Victoria on 131 963).

For information on incentives for riparian works, such as fencing, revegetation and off-stream watering, contact your local catchment management authority.

Further information on Crown water frontages is available on the DELWP website:

<https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/crown-land-water-frontage>

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



Tributary of Glenelg River, Warrock

Credit: Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority

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