

A guide to public access and recreational use

This fact sheet provides information for licensees and the public on accessing and using licensed and unlicensed Crown water frontages in Victoria. In particular, it details what recreational activities can and can't be undertaken.

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.

The occupier of land adjoining a Crown water frontage can take out a licence to use the land for grazing or riparian management. The licence doesn't 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 bird watching. Pedestrian access must be provided at any fence that crosses a frontage.

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.

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.

Some Crown water frontages remain unlicensed and are subject to different rules. When the Crown water frontage is unlicensed, the rules applying to the occupier of the adjoining private land are the same as for the general public.

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.



Fishing on Gunbower Creek

Credit: Jon LeEVERS, DELWP

The following pages provide a table of specific recreation activities that can and can't be undertaken on licensed and unlicensed Crown water frontage and conditions that apply to those activities.

Crown water frontage

Activity	Frontage licensed under Section 130 <i>Land Act 1958</i>		Unlicensed frontage	Comments
	Licence holder	Public		
General access				
Can I have pedestrian access to Crown water frontages?	Yes	Yes	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 and bird watching.
Can I leave a gate open or deface, damage or interfere with buildings, gates, fences, barriers, signs or other structures?	No	No	No	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?	Yes	No, unless given permission by the licence holder.	No	Unlicensed Crown water frontage should be free of cultivation. If you do encounter cultivation, inform DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.
Can I bring a dog, or allow a dog to remain on the land?	Yes, but only if the dog is under your control at all times.	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 <i>and</i> the dog is under your control at all times.	Yes, but only if the dog is under your control at all times.	
Can I injure, disturb or interfere with any livestock on the land?	You may manage stock in accordance with the licence purpose.	No	No	Unlicensed Crown water frontage should be free of stock. If you do encounter them, inform DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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Can I cut, ringbark, fell, pick, remove, destroy or damage any vegetation, trees or fallen timber alive or dead (except weeds)?	No, unless you have licensor consent or it is permitted by the Secretary of DELWP.	No, unless you have a licence or permit under the <i>Forests Act 1958</i> or you are a member of a Traditional Owner group acting in accordance with section 84 of the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> .	No, unless permitted by the Secretary of DELWP.	
Can I destroy, disturb or interfere with nests or habitat of birds or animals?	No	No	No	
Can I remove, dig or cut any soil, sand, rock or gravel?	No, unless you have licensor consent.	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	No	Yes, but only if the camp site is more than 20 metres from a waterway <i>and</i> you camp for no more than 28 consecutive nights.	
Can I leave litter while camping?	N/A	N/A	No	
Can I use or dispose of soap, detergent or similar substances while camping?	N/A	N/A	Yes, but only if it is more than 50 metres from a waterway.	
Can I install and use a portable toilet while camping?	N/A	N/A	Yes, but only if the toilet is more than 100 metres from a waterway.	

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Fires				
Can I light or cause any fire?	No, unless you have licensor consent.	No	Yes, but only if you light a campfire or barbecue and you comply with the conditions in the section below.	
Can I have a campfire or barbecue using solid fuel in the open air?	No	No	Yes, but only if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the fire is lit in a properly constructed fireplace or in a trench at least 30 cm deep - the fire does not occupy an area exceeding 1 square metre in any direction - all dimensions of the solid fuel are less than 1 m - the ground and airspace within 3 m from the outer perimeter and upper-most point of the fire are 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.</p> <p>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>
Hunting and firearms				
Can I possess, use or carry a firearm on Crown frontage?	Yes, but only if you hold a licence to use a firearm.	Yes, but only if you have the frontage licence holder's consent <i>and</i> you hold a licence to use a firearm. You do not need the licence holder's consent to possess or carry (but not use) a firearm for the purpose of hunting on land that can only be accessed by passage over the licensed Crown water frontage.	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

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Can I hunt game using a firearm?	Yes	Yes, but only if you have the frontage licence holder's consent <i>and</i> you hold a licence to use a firearm <i>and</i> have a Game Licence.	Yes, unless it is reserved Crown land and regulations to prevent this activity apply. You must hold a licence to use a firearm <i>and</i> have a Game Licence. You must comply with relevant legislation and regulations including season restrictions and bag limits.	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 Hunters should comply with the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals in Hunting made under the <i>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986</i> . http://www.gma.vic.gov.au/laws
Can I hunt pest animals* using a firearm?	Yes	Yes, but only if you have the frontage licence holder's consent <i>and</i> you hold a licence to use a firearm.	Yes, unless it is reserved Crown land and regulations to prevent this activity apply. You must hold a licence to use a firearm.	<i>See above</i>
* as named in the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i>				
Vehicles, bikes and horses				
Can I use or operate a motor vehicle or a trail bike?	Yes, but only if in accordance with the frontage licence purpose, e.g. checking or mustering stock or weed control <i>and</i> you do not damage the land.	No	Yes, but only on a road or parking area, or in an off-road or restricted access area where your class of vehicle is permitted <i>and</i> you do not damage the land.	
Can I go four wheel driving?	No, not for recreational purposes.	No	Yes, but only if: - the vehicle is registered and you hold a driver's licence - you only drive on a formed road, in a parking area, or in an off-road or restricted access area where your class of vehicle is permitted - you do not damage the land, leave a vehicle on the land, or cause an obstruction.	You should comply with all relevant codes of practice. http://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/recreational-activities

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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 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?	Yes, but only on formed vehicle tracks.	Yes, but only on formed vehicle tracks.	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 There is no requirement for the licence holder to provide horse access to licensed Crown water frontage.
Farming				
Can I crop, graze livestock or undertake riparian management, or a combination of these activities?	Yes, but only if specified in the licence schedule.	No	No, not without a licence, lease or permit.	

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

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