



# Fire-fighting

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline will enhance resources for fire-fighting.

Plans are in place to ensure fire-fighting resources are enhanced through the construction of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

Extensive consultations have taken place with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) at local brigade, regional and state levels to develop practical ways to adapt the pipeline supply for fire-fighting purposes.

## Local brigade recommendations

The pipeline system will comprise hydrants, where pressures and flows are adequate, and tank supplies at locations determined by local CFA brigades to ensure an effective coverage of the region. In line with local brigade recommendations a nominal hydrant spacing of five kilometres has been adopted.

GWMWater will adjust the spacing of facilities to suit local fire-fighting scenarios influenced by land-use and landscape. Hydrants will be located at road intersections wherever possible. In addition, the spacing will consider the location of homes and major infrastructure.

Local fire brigades and councils are working together to assess risk in their district by having direct input into the location of fire hydrants.



Dale Russell from the CFA, left and Andrew Sinn from the pipeline business unit discuss hydrant locations.

## Regional impacts

Adapting the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline supply for fire-fighting purposes will require a major investment across the region in new fire-fighting facilities. Under the *Water Act*, Local Government is responsible for funding fire-fighting facilities in their municipality.

GWMWater is working closely with councils in the eight municipalities affected by the pipeline project, to explore funding opportunities that might be available to help offset the cost of new fire-fighting facilities.

In July 2006, the Victorian Government announced the contribution of \$1.25 million towards the cost of fire-fighting facilities.

## On-farm impacts

With an estimated 50,000 litres of water required to protect a homestead and sheds from fire, it will be critical for private landholders to have tanks on their properties for fire-fighting.

*We recommend that farmers:*

- > install tanks with Victorian CFA standard coupling fittings to connect to quick-fill tankers and pumps in an emergency
- > ensure there is all-weather access to tanks
- > work with their local brigade to assess risk and help with their planning

## Plastic tanks

One of the keys to tank survival is fire prevention, with plastic tanks affected by fire. Fuel reduction by slashing, spraying, grazing or burning to provide a fire break, will all go a long way in protecting your tanks from fire.

## Back-up supply

There will be extensive back-up supply arrangements in the event of loss of power during an emergency. A combination of mobile stand-by generators and tanker access to town storages are part of the back-up supply arrangements.

A radio-linked control network will be part of the management system for the pipeline. This control system will provide early warning of equipment breakdown or power failure, so that back-up plans can be implemented quickly.

### **Quality will be suitable**

The pipeline will ensure water quality is suitable for fire-fighting.

### **Additional resources**

There is concern that the introduction of the pipeline could pose some problems in terms of loss of open water. The CFA currently relies on water from private dams and other water sources to support their units when fighting a fire. This will still be the case when the pipeline is built, with the additional and more secure water supply that the pipeline will bring to the region.

Water for fire trucks will also be available from recreational lakes in the pipeline system. In addition, town storages are also a source of surface water for fire-fighting purposes.

CFA officials have commented that the pipeline will provide more water for fire-fighting than is available in many other parts of Victoria.

## **Real people, real stories**

### **Fire-fighting praise**

As president of the Cannie Ridge Pipeline Group, Lalbert cereal and sheep farmer Frank Fogarty, was heavily involved in discussing and working through pipeline issues during the lead up to pipeline installation.

He said one positive the Cannie Ridge area had achieved was having a number of tanks strategically placed throughout the system. This provided a good water supply system for the Country Fire Authority.

He said that forming a group to liaise with authorities before the pipeline was installed had been a good way to obtain information.

“People were very much informed about what was happening with the pipeline and what they would need to do when it was installed,” he said.

More information is available by contacting

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