

Consultation to start on new regulation for Mount Lofty Ranges

Consultation is about to begin on a draft regulation that will provide existing water users who qualified for a share of the resources across the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges Prescribed Water Resources Area, a second chance to apply for a water licence.

At the end of 2005, all existing water users who could demonstrate water use, or a future commitment to use water, during the relevant establishment periods were given six months to apply for a water licence. This included owners of dams greater than 5 megalitres used for stock and domestic purposes in the Western Mount Lofty Ranges region.

The relevant establishment periods for the Mount Lofty Ranges were 1 July 2000 to 16 October 2003 for the Eastern MLR and 1 July 2001 to 14 October 2004 for the Western MLR.

Acting Director Water Planning and Management, Mike Fuller, said around 288 water users in the Mount Lofty Ranges failed to submit an application for a water licence before the end of the six-month statutory application period in 2005/06. For the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges, the statutory application period was from 8 September 2005 to 8 March 2006. For the Western Mount Lofty Ranges, the statutory application period was from 20 October 2005 to 20 April 2006.

In addition, there are approximately 500 dams larger than 5 megalitres in capacity used only for stock and domestic purposes in the Western Mount Lofty Ranges that require a licence to continue to lawfully take water.

“A planned three-week consultation will run from Wednesday 12 September to Wednesday 3 October 2012 and will provide all water users across the Mount Lofty Ranges with the opportunity to comment on the proposed regulation, under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*,” he said.

“The intent of the regulation is to facilitate a fair and equitable approach for all landholders who qualified as existing water users during the relevant establishment periods of both the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges. This is crucial to continue to maintain healthy and sustainable water resources and to recognise the rights of those that have investment in the use of those water resources.”

“Water users who did apply for a licence by the end of the six-month statutory application period are entitled to a share of the region’s water resources enabling their irrigation and farming practices to



Water licensing to begin in Western Mount Lofty Ranges

continue to occur. However, for a range of reasons some existing water users did not meet this deadline and currently cannot be issued with a licence under current legislation, meaning that once the water licensing process is complete, they will not be able to take water lawfully” Mr Fuller said.

“The proposed regulation will offer those who failed to submit a formal application during the statutory period a further limited window of time to apply for a water licence.

“However, failure to implement this regulation would substantially affect farm viability across the Ranges with well established and viable business and commercial interests being unable to legally take water.

“Modelling of water demand since the application period has taken into account the reasonable requirements of all known existing users, including those who failed to submit an application within the statutory period.

“As the amount of development in the Mount Lofty Ranges that requires access to water has increased, it has become increasingly important to manage these water resources to both protect the environment and ensure future sustainability of the resources.”

To view the draft regulation visit <http://www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/homepage/consultation/current-consultation/extension-of-the-licence-application-period/>

Comments are welcome during this period and feedback will be used to inform development of the final regulation.

An email address has been set up to make it easy to provide comment: MLR.Regulation@sa.gov.au

