



Constructing a Farm Dam



Steps for Constructing a farm dam

1

Contact Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW)

2

Contact:

- the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- your relevant Catchment Management Authority
- your local council

3

Apply to GMW for a waterway determination

4

Apply to GMW for the relevant licence/s

5

GMW refers your licence application/s to the relevant agencies

6

GMW advises the outcome of your licence application/s

In the interests of all parties, Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) requires that all newly constructed farm dams and modifications to existing dams comply with licensing and safety regulations.

1

Contact Goulburn-Murray Water

We recommend you contact us to indicate your intention to construct a dam and discuss your options well in advance of commencing any construction work.

2

Contact:

- your regional Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning office
- your relevant Catchment Management Authority
- your local council

We recommend you contact the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, your relevant Catchment Management Authority and your local council to indicate your intention to construct a dam and discuss your options, well in advance of commencing any construction work.

Your local council may require you to obtain a planning permit.

3

Apply to GMW for a waterway determination

A waterway determination will identify whether your proposed dam site is on a waterway. There may be special conditions you need to meet if your proposed dam site is on a waterway.

We can provide you with a waterway determination application. Once you have returned the completed application form with your application fee, a GMW diversion inspector will contact you to arrange an inspection.

Take and Use Licence

A Take and Use Licence is an entitlement to take and use water from your dam.

You will require a Take and Use Licence for all irrigation or commercial use dams. The Authority may require you to meter any water usage at your own cost.

When you apply for a Take and Use Licence we will develop irrigation guidelines and land capability assessments in consultation with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Licence to Construct Works

In all cases, where you wish to construct a dam on a waterway, you will need to first apply for and obtain a Licence to Construct Works.

If you wish to construct a dam off a waterway, you will need to first apply for and obtain a Licence to Construct Works if the dam is:

- 5 meters or higher and 50 megalitres capacity or larger
- 10 meters or higher and 20 megalitres capacity or large
- 15 meters or higher, regardless of capacity
- a dam belonging to a prescribed class of dams.

The height of the dam or embankment is the difference in level between the natural surface level, bed of the gully, stream or waterway at the downstream toe of the dam and the crest.

When applying for a Licence to Construct Works you are required to:

- notify neighbouring owners in writing and advertise in your local newspaper
- have the dam designed and construction supervised by a qualified engineer
- complete a Dam Safety Emergency Plan.

You may also be required to engage a suitably qualified engineer to complete and/or endorse the Dam Safety Emergency Plan.

If your proposed dam is on a watercourse or waterway with high ecological value, as determined by the waterway determination, you must also:

- investigate alternative sites or alternative sources of water supply
- obtain an environmental assessment report including appropriate conditions e.g. fishway or passing of flows.

Licence to Operate Works

You are required to apply for and obtain a Licence to Operate Works prior to operating a dam on a waterway. If you operate a dam off a waterway that meets the criteria outlined under Licence to Construct Works, you are required to have an operating licence. The Licence to Operate Works requires dam owners to take adequate precautions to protect life, property and the environment.

The conditions of the Licence to Operate Works relating to dam safety will vary depending on the size, location and potential hazard of your dam.

5

GMW refers your licence application/s to the relevant agencies

We will refer your Licence to Construct Works application to the relevant agency as follows:

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Catchment Management Authority
- Local government
- Bulk water entitlement holders e.g. Coliban Water, Goulburn Valley Water or North East Water, if the proposed construction site for your dam is located in a declared catchment.

Please note that referral agencies require 30 working days to undertake their role in the application process.

6

GMW advises the outcome of your licence application/s

Once your application/s have been assessed by the relevant agencies, we will advise you of the outcome in writing.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a commercial use dam?

A commercial use dam stores water for uses other than direct irrigation or domestic and stock. It includes washing dairy sheds and water for feed lots, caravan parks, poultry sheds or other intensive uses.

What is classified as domestic and stock?

Domestic and stock water can be used for:

- household purposes
- animals kept as pets
- cattle or other stock
- fire prevention purposes from a catchment dam, not including a dam on a waterway, where the area surrounding a house is no greater than 1 to 2 hectares
- surface water irrigation of a kitchen garden up to 0.1 hectare.

Domestic and stock does not include use for dairies, piggeries, feed lots, poultry or other intensive or commercial uses.

Do I require a licence for a domestic and stock use dam?

If the dam is solely for domestic and stock use, you may not need a licence to take and use the water.

You will need a Licence to Construct Works if the dam is to be located on a waterway or if you wish to construct a dam off a waterway and your dam is:

- 5 meters or higher and 50 megalitres capacity or larger
- 10 meters or higher and 20 megalitres capacity or larger
- 15 meters or higher, regardless of capacity
- a dam belonging to a prescribed class of dams.

Contact us on 1800 013 357 for more information.

Desilting

From time to time you will find silt and debris builds up in dams and it will be necessary to undertake desilting of the dam. The main concern with desilting is the risk of extracted material and water impacting downstream water quality and other users.

A Licence to Construct Works is not required for genuine dam desilting. Genuine desilting does not cover any works that will:

- enlarge the dam in any way
- impact the structural integrity of the dam
- compromise release mechanisms (release mechanisms include spillways, compensation pipes and by-passes).

When planning desilting activities you should consider:

- engaging an experienced, reputable contractor
- disposing of silt waste to prevent it re-entering the dam or waterway, or having a negative environmental impact.

We strongly encourage you to contact us on 1800 013 357 to discuss your planned desilting activities.

Enlarging dams or making other alterations

For dams that are to be enlarged or altered on and off waterways you must contact GMW to assess the site and proposed works as well as determine any approvals required.

We strongly encourage you to contact us on 1800 013 357 to discuss any planned changes.

More information

For more information about constructing a farm dam phone 1800 013 357 or visit www.gmwater.com.au



Published October 2018

Disclaimer

While care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in this brochure is true and correct at the time of publication, changes in policy or legislation that occur after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information. GMW gives no warranty or assurance, and makes no representations as to the accuracy and reliability of any information or advice contained in this brochure.