

# Reconnecting Tarago Reservoir

## Fact Sheet

Tarago Reservoir is located among the picturesque rolling hills of Neerim South, 20 kilometres north of Warragul and 95 kilometres east of Melbourne.

It was built in 1969 to supply several local townships and the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport regions via the Tarago-Westernport Pipeline.

The reservoir has a history of water quality issues and occasional algal blooms. In 1994 supply to Westernport and the Mornington Peninsula was stopped when the untreated water became unsuitable for drinking.

Melbourne Water is now planning to reconnect the reservoir by building a new water treatment plant to supply an extra 15 billion litres of water a year.



**Tarago Reservoir**

### Making the connection

Reconnecting Tarago Reservoir has long been Melbourne Water's vision, and the construction of a new water treatment plant is central to these plans.

Unlike most of Melbourne Water's other catchments, which are closed to the public, the land around the Tarago Reservoir is used for a number of purposes. This can affect the quality of water in the reservoir, and means the water must be treated before it can be supplied to customers.

The new water treatment plant is being built in Drouin West, 9 km south-west of the reservoir on the route of the existing Tarago-Westernport Pipeline, and is scheduled to be completed in mid-2009.

The reservoir and the Tarago River will remain valuable assets for the community, with local towns such as Neerim South, Drouin, Rokeby and Warragul continuing to receive water treated to a high standard by Gippsland Water.

Water in the reservoir will also continue to be shared with local irrigators and the environment.

### Responding to climate change

When the Tarago Reservoir was taken offline in 1994, Melbourne's storages were close to 90 per cent full. Today, the effects of drought have greatly depleted our reservoirs.

Reconnecting Tarago will provide an additional 15 billion litres of water a year on average. It will be the first project to be delivered under the Victorian Government's \$4.9 billion Water Plan, which aims to boost water supplies by 240 billion litres a year by 2011.

Other major Water Plan projects include the proposed desalination plant in Wonthaggi and Phase 1 of the Food Bowl Modernisation Project, which will modernise leaking irrigation infrastructure in the Goulburn and Murray Irrigation District and share the water savings equally between irrigators, Melbourne and the environment.

### A good quality drop

The technology behind the new Tarago Water Treatment Plant is commonly used in plants across Australia and the rest of the world. Water will be treated to the same high standard as at Melbourne Water's other water treatment plant at Sugarloaf Reservoir and at Gippsland Water's local plant in Warragul.

The key components of the process are Dissolved Air Flotation and Filtration (DAFF) and ultraviolet (UV) disinfection.

The treatment plant will be gravity fed from the reservoir, and this combined with the plant's hill-top location will virtually eliminate the need for pumping and greatly reduce the ongoing energy costs.



**Main treatment building under construction**

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### Protecting a valuable community resource

Good catchment management is needed to ensure Melbourne Water and Gippsland Water customers receive high quality drinking water from Tarago Reservoir for years to come.

Since 1997, Melbourne Water has been working with local farmers, residents, Landcare groups, Baw Baw Shire Council, Gippsland Water and other agencies on an integrated catchment management strategy. It aims to minimise the impact of human activities in the land around Tarago Reservoir to help ensure the highest possible quality of source water for the local community and beyond.

Huge progress has been made as a result of the cooperation and goodwill of the partners involved. Projects such as stormwater management, erosion control and sustainable farm management are just some of the initiatives already in place.

Local landowners can contact the Tarago Catchment Sustainable Farms Project officer on 0439 701 987, or visit the Neerim and District Landcare Group website at [www.ndlg.org.au](http://www.ndlg.org.au) for more information.

#### Tarago facts:

- The reservoir has a capacity of 37,500 million litres.
- Its catchment area is 11,400 hectares.
- The reservoir was built by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and officially opened in 1969 by the then Premier of Victoria Sir Henry Bolte and Minister of Water Supply W A Borthwick.
- The new Tarago Water Treatment Plant will have the capacity to treat up to 70 million litres of water a day.

### We want to hear your comments and questions:

Free-call **1800 096 546** for questions or comments about the Tarago Reconnect construction project. Or call Melbourne Water on **131 722** or visit our website at [melbournewater.com.au/tarago](http://melbournewater.com.au/tarago) for general information about this and other projects to secure our water future.