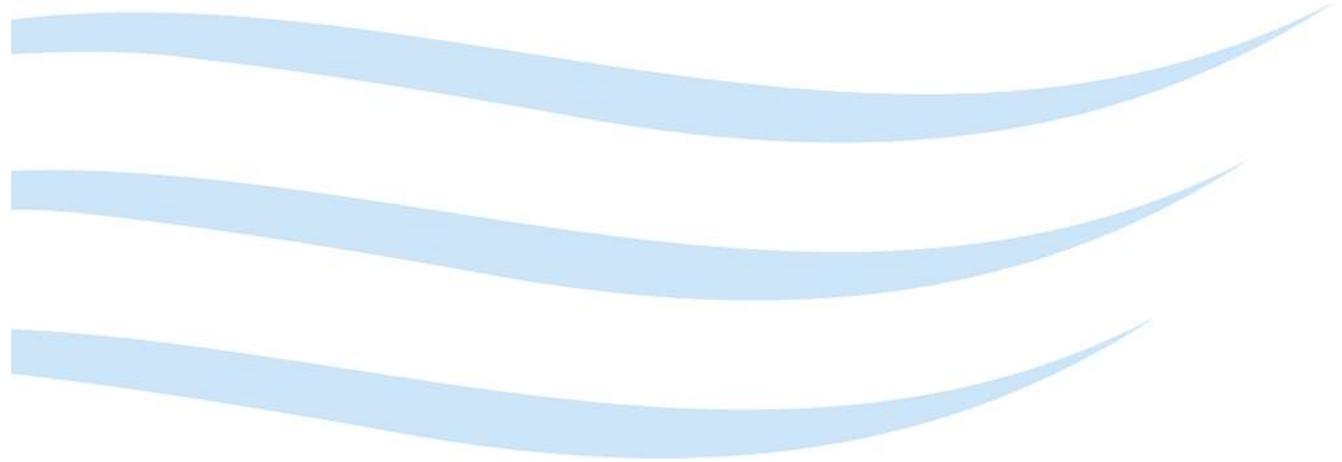


Strategic Assessment for the Water Access Program Midlands Water Scheme, Tasmania

Quality Assurance Protocol *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*



August 2012

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Preferred Citation

DPIPWE (2012), *Strategic Assessment for the Water Access Program, Midlands Water Scheme, Tasmania – Quality Assurance Protocol*, Hobart

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Policy and Projects Group

GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, 7001

www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au

Published August 2012

The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE)

The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment provides leadership in the sustainable management and development of Tasmania's natural resources. The Mission of the Department is to support Tasmania's development by ensuring effective management of our natural resources.

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The Structure of the Report

This report has the following structure –

- Part 1** **Background** - introduces the document and provides the context for the development of the Landscape Monitoring and Quality Assurance Protocols and describes the Farm Water Access Planning process. Briefly describes the purpose of the QA protocol.
- Part 2** **The QA Protocol** – identifies Quality Assurance components required under the endorsed Water Access Program, and describes how these will be met via a pre-qualification and training process for consultants, quality assurance and compliance auditing processes for Farm Water Access Plans, independent verification of the quality assurance system, processes for review and reporting and sets out key performance measures.
- Part 3** Lists the references used in the preparation of this document.
- Part 4** Appendices containing further details on the pre-qualification tender process and requirements or standards set out in the endorsed Program for each Farm Water Access Plan.

PART 1 BACKGROUND

The following information provides background to the development of the Quality Assurance Protocol set out in Part 2.

1.1 The Water Access Program

In April 2011, the Commonwealth Environment Minister endorsed the *Strategic Assessment for the Water Access Program, Midlands Water Scheme, Tasmania – Program Report*, Hobart DPIPWE (2011), (the Program) under S.146 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Program provides the system for assessment and approvals to deliver irrigation water to the Arthurs Pipeline and the Lower South Esk irrigation schemes in the Midlands region of Tasmania.

The Water Access Program describes the policies, regulatory framework and processes in Tasmania that will govern how irrigation water is to be made available under two proposed irrigation schemes in the Midlands region of Tasmania so as to meet commitments and undertakings for the protection and management of the matters of national environmental significance (MNES) (DPIPWE, 2011). Specifically it covers construction of the schemes, the sourcing of water and the planning processes required at the farm level to receive water.

The Program has three components:

- Planning and assessment processes for infrastructure development to service the MWS (construction).
- Water availability/certainty of access: water management planning, licensing and allocation (operation).
- Systems and processes developed to meet legal requirements and enable sustainable on-farm use of irrigation water provided by the MWS (the Water Access System).

Each of these components has assessment and monitoring requirements. Monitoring of the compliance with the Program and the effectiveness of prescriptions developed in response to management needs of MNES will be undertaken at three different levels: strategic, targeted and random.

The Program Report requires the development of a strategic level monitoring program supported by two protocols to ensure that Program commitments are met and that management prescriptions are appropriate to deliver positive conservation outcomes for MNES. The application of these protocols to the operation of the Midlands Water Scheme provides the foundation for monitoring and evaluation subject to approval by the Commonwealth Environment Minister. While the protocols collectively report on the efficacy of the Program, each has different objectives in terms of Program evaluation and monitoring.

1.2 The Landscape Monitoring Protocol

The Landscape Monitoring Protocol forms one part of the endorsed Program's adaptive management approach, which is described in part 5 of the Program report (DPIPWE 2011). Landscape monitoring has three key roles in the context of the Program:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of management actions undertaken as part of the Program to avoid or mitigate impacts on MNES.
- To provide timely and appropriate information relating to whether or not thresholds for natural values are being approached, and hence whether adaptive management/feedback mechanisms are required to be implemented.

- To provide early feedback on unforeseen impacts from the proposed activities.

The Landscape Monitoring Protocol is designed to report at the landscape scale over the strategic assessment area for medium to long term decisions regarding adaptive management and compliance with strategic assessment. The protocol is the subject of a separate document (DPIPWE, 2012a) that fully describes the monitoring required at the landscape scale.

The landscape monitoring protocol takes advantage of all components of the Program that provide relevant information on MNES. Building from the base up, farm level assessments required under the Water Access System, and information gathered during them will be uploaded into State databases as a requirement of the Program. A tiered monitoring approach at the farm, irrigation district and landscape scale will allow different assessments to be compiled across the MWS area to provide information on cumulative impacts from the Program's implementation. This approach ensures that over time important efficacy information is reported against and that this results in management actions where required.

1.3 The Farm Water Access Planning Process

Farm Water Access Plans (referred to as FWAPs within the Water Access Program and Farm WAPs by Tasmanian Irrigation and thereafter in this document) are required in accordance with the Program in order for water to be available for use on farms. These plans must identify values within the areas to be impacted by the irrigation water.

As part of the water access planning process each land manager will need to complete a risk assessment of existing property management practices in respect of biodiversity, soil and water, as a minimum. This will be the basis for developing management actions and monitoring programs, specific to the Farm WAP area, aimed at minimising potential and known risks associated with the application of irrigation water to the land in question.

Assessment of the impacts of the Midlands Water Scheme on MNES and monitoring requirements at the farm scale will be determined by a pre-qualified consultant as part of the component planning modules required for the Farm WAPs (biodiversity, soil and water). The Farm WAP will indicate how often monitoring should occur, what type of monitoring is required, and how this relates to regional scale monitoring to be undertaken. It will also outline who is to undertake the monitoring.

Individual property planning modules for biodiversity (Tasmanian Irrigation 2012a), water (Tasmanian Irrigation 2012b) and soil (Tasmanian Irrigation 2012c) were initially developed by the Tasmanian Irrigation Development Board (TIDB – now Tasmanian Irrigation) in consultation with DPIPWE and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA), in accord with the Property Management Systems Framework for Tasmania (TFGA, 2009). As a result of using the Biodiversity Module on other irrigation schemes now operating in Tasmania, the module has been reviewed and updated since first described in the Program. The biodiversity module has been augmented (Tasmanian Irrigation 2012a) to incorporate a set of minimum standards identified in the Program report (DPIPWE, 2011) which must be met by the Farm WAP in relation to MNES.

A Farm WAP is required for every property that receives water from Tasmanian Irrigation (the current Water Entity) under the Program. The purpose of a Farm WAP is to identify the area that Tasmanian Irrigation (TI) water will be applied (now and into the future), identify any risks to natural assets on farm associated with the application of TI water and outline actions to manage and monitor the identified risks. As part of the Farm WAP process detailed risk assessments are completed and natural assets within and directly adjacent to the Farm WAP area are mapped. The Farm WAP area, where TI water will be

applied, includes the land, dams and areas of irrigation infrastructure that will be affected by the use of TI water.

Consequently, all irrigators receiving water via the MWS will be required to have an approved Farm WAP in place prior to the receipt of any water from the MWS. Under the Program these property specific plans must be completed by prequalified service providers in accordance with the endorsed Farm WAP Soil, Water and Biodiversity modules and incorporate any species specific management prescriptions that are required. All Farm WAPs must be approved by the Water Entity through a quality assurance and verification process (described in Section 2).

Prior to the allocation of irrigation water to any property, the Water Entity will ensure that a qualified ecological expert has conducted a risk assessment and that an appropriate property-based survey by a qualified consultant has been conducted. The outcomes of these surveys will be incorporated into the relevant Farm WAPs and used as the basis for the ongoing ecologically sustainable management of MWS water on these properties. The outcomes of these surveys and the relevant Farm WAPs will also be used to inform the targeted aquatic habitat and water quality monitoring programs required under the overall Water Access Program particularly the Landscape Monitoring Program.

1.4 The Quality Assurance (QA) Protocol

In addition to the Landscape Monitoring Protocol, the Program requires development of a Quality Assurance (QA) Protocol approved by the Commonwealth and State Governments. Efficacy monitoring to identify how well the Farm WAPs identify MNES and provide management prescriptions that are appropriate for the species and ensure Program commitments are met, will be measured through the QA protocol.

The Program requires the QA Protocol to include the following components:

- Initial training for prequalified consultants on the Program and its commitments (addressed in Section 2.2).
- Quality assurance audits for each pre-qualified consultant after the completion of one Farm WAP (addressed in Section 2.3).
- Feedback to prequalified consultants and changes to plans which are identified as being deficient (addressed in Section 2.3).
- Quality assurance audits for each pre-qualified consultant after the completion of three Farm WAPs (addressed in Section 2.3).
- Ongoing random quality assurance audits for each pre-qualified consultant throughout the operation of the MWS (addressed in Section 2.3).
- Feedback to prequalified consultants, changes to plans which are identified as being deficient and retraining where required ensuring that initial plans are being undertaken appropriately, and that lessons learned are being applied (addressed in Section 2.3).

In addition to these requirements the Program includes a range of other quality standards and audit requirements, which have been tabulated and included in full at Appendix B. The QA protocol elements described in section 2 collectively address all of these Program requirements.

PART 2 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROTOCOL

The following Quality Assurance Protocol has been developed to meet the requirements of the Midlands Water Scheme Water Access Program as outlined in the background information in Part 1 and Appendix B. These requirements will be collectively met through the following mechanisms:

- Pre-qualification process for consultants preparing Farm WAPs.
- Initial training provided to consultants.
- Quality assurance and compliance auditing of Farm WAPs.
- Independant verification of the quality assurance system.
- Regular reporting to the Commonwealth and State Governments.
- Information management and delivery to Tasmanian environmental databases arising from the preparation of Farm WAPs.

2.1 The role of pre-qualified consultants and Farm Water Access Plans

2.1.1 Role of pre-qualified consultants

Farm WAPs will be prepared, developed and validated by consultants who have been pre-qualified in accordance with the Program. This process is underpinned by irrigation district conditions and by-laws requiring Farm WAPs as a precondition for the access and use of water from the Midlands Water Scheme. Mandatory requirements from the soil, water and biodiversity modules described in Section 1 will be implemented by the consultants in accordance with the Program. Completed Farm WAPs will be verified by the pre-qualified consultants as meeting the requirements of the Program.

2.1.2 Selection of pre-qualified consultants

The selection of pre-qualified consultants will be undertaken by tender processes for consultants to pre-qualify for preparation of Farm WAPs. An initial request for tender for pre-qualified consultants was advertised nationally and locally in August 2009.

The purpose of pre-qualification will be to undertake due diligence on the qualifications, experience and organisational professionalism of prospective consultants. To maintain accountability, the Request for Tender will advise that contracts for preparation of Farm WAPs will be made with a single legal entity which will be the lead contractor responsible for overall project performance. Pre-qualification of consultants for individual modules (soil, water, biodiversity) will not be considered. However lead contractors will be able to nominate venture parties to join with them in their submission for prequalification.

The pre-qualification process will be reviewed annually and if indicated by that review, repeated to maintain currency. Further consultants may be pre-qualified in intervening periods as the opportunity arises. A full description of the tender process is provided in Appendix A.

The above selection process has been approved by the Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries and Water. Those consultants selected as pre-qualified under this process are also taken to be approved by the Minister for the purposes of the Program.

2.2 Training

2.2.1 Scope of training

Initial training of pre-qualified consultants is a requirement of the Program. The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment in conjunction with the Water Entity will provide specialist training in minimum standards required for biodiversity assessments for Farm WAPs. Such training will be undertaken following each pre-qualification process and relate to conservation and scientific advice in relation to MNES. The training will include instruction on the Program's overall commitment to no significant impact on MNES and how the Farm WAPs are designed to implement this. Training will include what the Program requires for each Farm WAP (see Appendix B), provision of an information kit by the Water Entity, and requirements for and information on the use of EPBC Act databases and tools including but not limited to:

- The Protected Matters Search Tool (undertaken by the Water Entity).
 - Includes information on all EPBC MNES such as heritage, wetlands, and migratory species.
- The species profile and threats database, which includes links to:
 - Recovery Plans and conservation advices.
 - EPBC Act policy statements and impact guidelines.

The training program will also provide:

- Advice on all three Farm WAP modules, how they should be applied and the relevance of modules and Farm WAPs in the Water Access Program. Information on the process of developing management actions to avoid significant impacts on MNES with pre-qualified consultants.
- Provide updates on the EPBC Act and other protocols and procedures as they are developed or refined.

In order to ensure that key issues associated with irrigation schemes (including the MWS) are taken into account, consultants will be encouraged to use the *DPIPWE NRM Data Library Portal* online search tool. The NRM Data Library Portal is a web based data and metadata management tool for Natural Resource Management practitioners to search, access, catalogue, store and view data and information related to natural resource management activities in Tasmania. It provides an ideal resource for use by prequalified consultants undertaking assessments on irrigation developments across the state including the Midlands Water Scheme.

Ongoing training of prequalified consultants will occur through the Quality Assurance Process and feedback to consultants undertaken by the Water Entity in assessing Farm WAPs.

2.2.2 Provision of standardised information to pre-qualified consultants

The soil, water and biodiversity modules originally developed under the Property Management Systems Framework and incorporated within the Program have been amended to require any relevant prescriptions from the endorsed Program to be considered (Tasmanian Irrigation 2012a, 2012b and 2012c). The modules and their requirements (particularly those relating to Program prescriptions) will be provided to pre-qualified consultants in any tender brief for the development of Farm WAPs.

Prior to the development of a Farm WAP, a desktop assessment will be completed by either the consultant or water entity for each property incorporating Natural Values reports and the EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Tool in conjunction with any other prescribed data sets. This information forms the Baseline Resource Assessment.

The information generated from the Baseline Resource Assessment that will be most relevant for the completion of the Biodiversity Module will include¹:

- A property map including an ortho-rectified image, property boundaries, paddock boundaries, infrastructure and any significant landscape features.
- The TASVEG mapping layer and threatened species records.
- A tabulated summary of a Natural Values Report and EPBC Search Tool report for the property from the Natural Values Atlas.
- A tabulated summary of any CFEV² freshwater values likely to exist on the property from the CFEV data set.
- Threatened Species Listing Statements and Recovery Plans and the Threatened Species Advisor.

A site visit will follow this assessment to confirm the accuracy of the desktop assessment. Further surveys may be required if MNES are present and cannot be avoided (see DPIPWE 2012b – Priority Species Code).

Pre-qualified consultants will complete the Farm WAP. This may utilise standardised information provided by the Water Entity, but must follow the process outlined in the endorsed modules. The Farm WAPs undertaken by pre-qualified consultants will then be submitted upon completion to the Water Entity.

Prior to the allocation of irrigation water to any property, the Water Entity will ensure that a qualified ecological expert has conducted a risk assessment and that an appropriate property-based survey by a qualified consultant has been conducted.

As a minimum the property based surveys must include the following elements:

- Determination of the location of local populations and known or potential habitat, including connective habitat.
- Assessment of the habitat condition.

¹ Note that the data sources listed here will evolve over time. This section is intended to include either the data sources listed or their best equivalents as they evolve into the future.

² CFEV – The Conservation of Freshwater Ecosystem Values database

- Provision of recommendations for maintenance and enhancement of local populations and habitat as listed in Appendix 3 of the Farm WAP Biodiversity module: biodiversity action plan (Tasmanian Irrigation 2012a).

To minimise the risk of inconsistent data between neighbouring properties the Water Entity will endeavor to complete geographical batching of Farm WAPs.

2.3 Quality assurance and auditing of Farm Water Access Plans

2.3.1 Quality assurance process undertaken by the water entity

Qualified environmental auditors within the Water Entity will undertake a Quality Assurance Audit (QA) which is described below.

Water Entity staff who are qualified environmental auditors will complete quality assurance for each Farm WAP ensuring they comply with the process outlined in each of the modules and that any prescriptions under the Program and EPBC Act associated tools have been incorporated where relevant.

The QA process will:

- Review the Risk Assessment and determine if those areas of high risk have had appropriate management actions outlined in the Action Plan. Where appropriate, on-ground management actions and mitigation options should be consistent with decision pathways outlined in the Priority Species Code (Figure 1, DPIPWE 2012b) and the Biodiversity module (Tasmanian Irrigation 2012a).
- Check that threatened species and vegetation communities have been mapped appropriately and that management actions have been identified if the application of water provided by the Water Entity presents a risk to these species and vegetation communities. Appropriate management actions include those contained within the Biodiversity Module, relevant Recovery Plans and listing advice and EPBC policy statements (see section 2.2.1).
- Ensure that land use matches land capability and that any risks associated with land use are managed.
- Address relevant Program requirements listed in Table 1 of Appendix B.

Where prescriptions apply under the endorsed Program, the Water Entity will check that the Farm WAP action plan complies with the management actions outlined in the prescriptions if the species or vegetation community is determined to be present within the Farm WAP area. The action plan may include buffers for a given MNES provided in the Priority Species Code (DPIPWE 2012b).

If the Quality Assurance Process determines that the process outlined within the modules has not been followed or that the action plan does not contain the appropriate management actions for the identified risks, the pre-qualified consultant will be asked to amend the Farm WAP accordingly. The Farm WAP will not be accepted by the Water Entity until these standards are met.

2.3.2 Random compliance audits of Farm Water Access Plans

A random compliance audit of 15% of completed Farm WAPs in the Program area (on a property basis) will be completed annually by qualified environmental auditors within the Water Entity or other suitably qualified persons, approved by the Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries and Water. Those properties that have Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) identified within the Farm WAP area will be audited on an annual basis, or in accordance with an audit protocol agreed by the Water Entity and the State in consultation with SEWPAC, to ensure that the required management actions are being implemented. The quality assurance and compliance auditing programs outlined above ensure the program requirement to undertake quality assurance for consultants after one Farm WAP, three Farm WAPs and on an ongoing random basis will be met.

The compliance audit is designed to ensure that:

- Water is only supplied where an approved Farm WAP is in place.
- Landowners are operating in accordance with their individual plans.
- Water is only being supplied by the Water Entity to those parts of a property approved under a Farm WAP.
- Relevant data from the Farm WAP has been supplied to Tasmanian environmental databases within four weeks from the sign-off of Farm WAP data by the consultant.
- Compliance audits address relevant Program requirements listed in Table 1 and Table 3 of Appendix B ("*Minimum standards for a Farm WAP from Appendix C of the Program* ").

2.3.3 Independent verification

The Water Entity will engage an independent auditor every 3-5 years from the commencement of irrigation operations (expected to be in June 2014) to ensure that its quality assurance and auditing processes are of an appropriate standard. The independent environmental auditor will undertake a review of the following for the Midlands Water Scheme:

- Analysis of 15% of Farm WAPs across the Midlands Water Scheme. The analysis must include the extent of adoption of measures detailed in Farm WAPs and the effectiveness of monitoring and mitigation measures applied under the sampled Farm WAPs. The auditor will review the results of the annual 15% compliance audits (having regard to Appendix B) rather than undertake the 15% audit itself.
- Review of the Water Access System elements in relation to relevant Program requirements listed in Table 2 of Appendix B.

The audit criteria and the independent environmental auditor must be endorsed by the State in consultation with SEWPAC before the commencement of the review. The State will have regard to the Program requirements set out in Tables 1 - 3 of Appendix B in drafting the audit criteria. The auditor must be accredited by an appropriate body as agreed between the State and Commonwealth governments. The review report must be provided to the Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries and Water within one month of its completion and must address audit criteria to the satisfaction of the Minister.

2.4 Post audit Processes

The completed Farm WAP will be sent to the irrigator for verification and signature to document that content is correct and that obligations are understood. Once the verified Farm WAP is returned to the Water Entity, the completed Farm WAP will be placed on the irrigator's file within a documentation system within the Water Entity.

The audit program will be required to take into account outcomes of the Landscape Monitoring Program in relation to adaptive management particularly where it determines that changes at the farm scale are required to reduce impacts on MNES. Operational agreements between DPIPWE and the Water Entity and individual water connection agreements between the Water Entity and each irrigation right holder will need to take this into account via adaptive management clauses in each agreement. The audit program will also ensure that the existing Farm WAPs effectively address the relevant irrigable areas of each property. In circumstances where the landowner decides to expand irrigable areas beyond the initial assessment area for the Farm WAP due to landowner decisions, relevant assessment and mitigation measures will be undertaken to ensure the Farm WAP continues to address relevant MNES.

Extent and Condition for Matters of National Environmental Significance and their habitats must be documented and mapped for the relevant area (which may be directly or indirectly impacted). The Tasmanian repository for natural values information (the Natural Values Atlas) currently managed by DPIPWE will be used by pre-qualified consultants to plan Farm WAPs. This database will be updated with relevant mapping and species information relating to MNES within at least four weeks from the sign-off of Farm WAP data by the consultant.

The verification by irrigator signature on a Farm WAP will also confirm the water users understanding that any records within Farm WAPs will be public information. On that basis final Farm WAPs must be verified via irrigator signature prior to sign-off by the consultant. The Water Entity will be responsible for the update of all relevant state environmental databases. Upload of data will occur within at least four weeks from the sign-off of Farm WAP data by the consultant. The responsible entity will also ensure that copies of all Farm WAPs can be supplied to the Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries and Water on request in a timely fashion.

2.5 Reporting

The Responsible Water Entity must prepare an annual report to the Commonwealth Environment Minister and the Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries and Water on the administration and operation of the irrigation district as a condition of its approval. The report will be prepared for the financial year and will be delivered to both Ministers within six months after the end of the reporting period (e.g. no later than 31 December of each year). The report must contain the following information:

- Results of the 15% random audit
 - Demonstration that the water entity has ensured that water is only being supplied where an approved Farm WAP is in place.
 - Landowners are operating in accordance with their individual plans.
 - Landowners applying the Farm WAPs to ensure there is no significant impact.
 - Water is only supplied to those parts of the property where there is an approved Farm WAP.
 - Details and evidence of the transfer of FWAP environmental data to the Tasmanian government databases within the specified time (within 4 weeks from the sign-off of Farm WAP data by the consultant).

- Other Quality Assurance Audits
 - Details of initial training for consultants on the Program and its commitments.
 - Quality assurance audits after one Farm WAP, three Farm WAPs and on an ongoing random basis thereafter (This is met by the water entities commitment to undertake annual audits of all Farm WAPs that contain MNES in the Midlands Water Scheme).
 - Feedback to prequalified consultants and changes to plans that are identified as being deficient and retraining if required.
 - The details of audit results, identification of any breaches that have occurred and what action was taken by the Water Entity to comply with EPBC Act conditions including any action undertaken against non-compliant landowners.
 - An analysis of annual results from farm scale monitoring required by Farm WAPs;
 - Details of approval status where only a proportion of water requested is being supplied due to outstanding Farm WAP approvals required.
 - Details of any changes to pre-qualified consultants.
 - Details and evidence of the transfer of Farm WAP environmental data (in a suitable format) to the Tasmanian government databases within the specified time (within 4 weeks from the sign-off of Farm WAP data by the consultant).

2.6 Review of Farm Water Access Plan modules

The biodiversity water and soil modules will be reviewed internally by the Water Entity every 2 years at a minimum to take into account changes in technology, information and legislation.

2.7 Performance Measures

The Program's overall objectives are:

- Zero clearance and conversion of Lowland Native Grassland of Tasmania.
- No significant impact on other relevant MNES unless otherwise approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister.

Performance measures identified in the Water Access Program are that the annual audit of 15% of Farm WAPs demonstrates 100% compliance with requirements of the Farm WAP process and that Quality Assurance indicates values are being identified and managed appropriately through the Farm WAP process.

The Program sets out the requirements for each Farm WAP as summarised at Appendix B. Whether these requirements have been met will be assessed by different elements of the QA protocol. The linkage between various Farm WAP requirements or standards set out in the endorsed Program and the relevant audit element under this QA protocol is also provided in Appendix B. Collectively audit processes (Quality assurance audits, 15% annual compliance audits or independent verification) need to take into account and assess all requirements listed in Appendix B to ensure that standards set out in the endorsed Program will be met by Farm WAPs.

2.8 Review of the Protocol

The QA Protocol will be reviewed on an as needs basis determined after consultation between the State and Commonwealth Governments.

2.9 Management Response

If the performance measures in this report are not met then the following actions will be taken:

- Determine where the non-compliance is occurring and take remedial steps as required to:
 - Ensure Farm WAPs that are deficient under the Program are being amended to ensure Farm WAPs and farm management comply with the Program.
 - Review and refine, as required, actions taken by the Water Entity in response to non-compliant Farm WAPs.
 - Ensure feedback and retraining of pre-qualified consultants is occurring and that lessons learned are being applied.
 - Amend Water Entity processes.

The Minister will determine whether or not the response is commensurate with the non-compliance in assessing the annual report received from the Water Entity. In doing so, requirements for future monitoring of changes made to determine their adequacy in protecting MNES may be put in place.

PART 3 REFERENCES

DPIPWE (2011) *Strategic Assessment for the Water Access Program, Midlands Water Scheme, Tasmania – Program Report*, Hobart.

DPIPWE (2012a) *Strategic Assessment for the Water Access Program, Midlands Water Scheme, Tasmania – Landscape Monitoring Protocol*, Hobart

DPIPWE (2012b) *Strategic Assessment for the Water Access Program, Midlands Water Scheme, Tasmania – Priority Species Code*, Hobart

Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (2009) *Tasmania Property Management Planning Framework Information Series*, Booklets 1-4, version 1, December 2009, viewed 11 February 2010, <http://www.tfga.com.au/policies/tfga-projects/framework-publications-and-tools.aspxLaunceston> (TFGA 2009)

Tasmanian Irrigation (2012a) *Farm Water Access Plans – Biodiversity Module* (Version 5 – Midlands Water Scheme May 2012), Launceston

Tasmanian Irrigation (2012b) *Farm Water Access Plans – Water Module* (Version 4 – February 2012), Launceston

Tasmanian Irrigation (2012c) *Farm Water Access Plans – Soil Module* (Version 4 – February 2012), Launceston

PART 4 APPENDICES

- Appendix A Tender process for the selection of pre-qualified consultants
- Appendix B Requirements or standards set out in the endorsed Program for each Farm WAP

Appendix A: Tender Process for the selection of pre-qualified consultants

The prequalification Request for Tender will seek the following information.

Contractor Information

Lead contractor corporate information, venture party corporate information and consent (if any nominated venture parties), the tenderer's management structure, clarification of the management relationship with the lead contractor and venture parties (if any), a list of relevant project experience (covering project description, location, client and client contacts, project value and contract period, and whether venture parties had been involved), details of lead contractor managements systems (quality management, environmental management, OH&S management and risk management), details of lead contractor insurances (workers compensation, public liability, works or products insurance, professional indemnity), a list of nominated personnel proposed to be utilised in a senior, expert or management capacity either by the lead contractor or by a venture party (to include name, current position, qualifications, experience and resume in each case) and information on logistics, availability and timing (lead time, mobilisation needs, previous relevant Tasmanian experience, capacity to prepare multiple property management plans, subcontracting policy/procedures.)

Technical ability and professional capacity

Technical ability and professional capacity will be assessed against a number of project assessment criteria that will be used to evaluate submissions from contractors seeking prequalification. The contractor information will be used to supplement the assessment.

Assessment criteria that will be used in the assessment are as follows:

1. Appropriate tertiary qualifications/ documented equivalent experience in the areas of water management, water use efficiency and water quality;
2. Appropriate tertiary qualifications/ documented equivalent experience in soil science and its relationship to agriculture;
3. Appropriate tertiary qualifications/ documented equivalent experience in the areas of flora, fauna and terrestrial ecology;
4. Proven experience including documented examples of having undertaken similar tasks;
5. Demonstrated past abilities to meet stipulated timeframes; and,
6. Project management and experience.

Tenderers will be required to supply the full CVs of all staff who will work on the project and identify the principal and key operational members. This part will also invite tenderers to address the issue of project management and project experience in the form of a technical commentary on how projects will be managed to meet client requirements, time management and project scheduling, management of third party interactions (land owners, regulatory authorities, political interactions, the general public and media) and management of venture parties and sub-contractors.

Assessment of pre-qualified consultants

Responses to the prequalification RFT will be assessed by a four-person tender assessment panel comprising personnel experienced in the work of irrigation development, land management regulation and policy, natural resource management and agriculture. One member of the panel will represent the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (or a future or derivative Government Agency with equivalent regulatory function).

Responses to the RFT will be evaluated on the basis of the degree of achievement by the tenderer of each of the six criteria. A maximum score (of 10) will be given if the achievement of that particular criterion is fully compliant with no risks or weaknesses. The score will be reduced proportionately to the extent of non-conformities, discrepancies, errors, omissions or risks. A score of 8-9 (superior) will be awarded if the criterion is achieved soundly with only minor weaknesses which are acceptable without further action.

The pre-qualification Request for Tender will stipulate that any changes to key personnel and/or venture parties must be communicated to the Water Entity. This process of disclosure will apply to future water entities. Only prequalified consultants will be asked by the Water Entity to tender for preparation of Farm WAPs.

Appendix B: Requirements or standards set out in the endorsed Program for each Farm WAP.

Table 1. Program requirements assessed primarily by the quality assurance (QA) and 15% compliance audits (CA) of Farm WAPs

<p>The Farm WAP will cover the area of land which will be affected by the proposed irrigation. This includes areas which contain infrastructure required in order to receive and use the irrigation water, for example, dams which are required to hold water supplied through the MWS.</p>
<p>Develop and formally require implementation of farm management options/actions according to current best practice that will apply to the area impacted by the proposed irrigation to achieve the program outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ zero clearance and conversion of Lowland Native Grassland of Tasmania and ○ no significant impact on other relevant MNES unless otherwise approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister.
<p>Identify the core natural assets on the area of the property that will be directly impacted by the supply and use of irrigation water from the MWS (i.e. the irrigation and the associated infrastructure footprint). This identification will include a property visit to ground truth the baseline resource assessment data.</p>
<p>Include a comprehensive risk management assessment to determine any likely impacts on the natural assets on the relevant areas of the property that may result from activities associated with the application of irrigation water.</p>
<p>The Tasmanian repository for natural values information currently managed by DPIPWEE will be used by pre-qualified consultants to plan FWAPs.</p> <p>This database will be updated with relevant mapping and species information relating to MNES within 4 weeks from the sign-off of Farm WAP data by the consultant.</p>
<p>Each Farm WAP will comprise at a minimum, a water component, a soil component and a biodiversity component, each of which will address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ relevant issues relating to the land area directly affected by the application of irrigation water; as well as ○ identifying any farm-scale monitoring deemed necessary to avoid off farm or off irrigation area impacts (indirect impacts).
<p>Information arising out of each component of the Farm WAP will be documented in generic property planning modules.</p>
<p>The biodiversity module will be the primary tool for the identification and management of MNES that have the potential to be impacted by the application of irrigation water at the property level.</p>
<p>A set of minimum standards which must be met by the Farm WAP in relation to MNES have been identified (See Minimum Standards below).</p>
<p>FWAP Monitoring</p>
<p>Farm WAP monitoring must achieve program outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ zero clearance and conversion of Lowland Native Grassland of Tasmania and ○ no significant impact on other relevant MNES unless otherwise approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister.

The Program requires that all Farm WAPs outline monitoring requirements. Monitoring requirements must include a description of what actions will be taken should the farm scale monitoring put in place indicate management changes are required.
Property-scale monitoring will be determined by a prequalified consultant as part of the component planning modules required for the Farm WAPs (biodiversity, soil and water).
<p>The Farm WAP will indicate how often monitoring should occur, what type of monitoring is required, and how this relates to regional scale monitoring to be undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It will also outline who is to undertake the monitoring; ○ The monitoring may include species population information; ○ condition and extent; ○ trend information; ○ monitoring of associated species (e.g. predators); ○ habitat information.
<p>All monitoring is to be based around best practice, with the requirement to use published literature relating to MNES including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ recovery plans; ○ listing statements; ○ EPBC Act Policy Statements.

Table 2. Audit criteria assessed primarily by independent verification (IV) or other audit process

Identify any additional legislative or regulatory processes which must be completed prior to the application of irrigation water.
A Farm WAP may only be developed and validated by a prequalified consultant appointed in accordance with a prequalification process (Appendix B).
The Program requires that information gathered during the Farm WAP process is provided to DPIPWE in a form suitable for incorporation into existing databases.
<p>The Tasmanian repository for natural values information currently managed by DPIPWE will be used by pre-qualified consultants to plan Farm WAPs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This database will be updated with relevant mapping and species information relating to MNES within 4 weeks from the sign-off of Farm WAP data by the consultant.
Each Farm WAP must be consistent with any relevant legislation. In order to ensure heritage issues are adequately addressed State and National heritage registers must be interrogated to ensure any MNES present are identified and managed.

Table 3. Minimum standards for a Farm WAP Appendix C Program

The table below indicates mandatory requirements for the completion of a Biodiversity Module (TFGA, 2010) for use in the development of a Farm WAP. The plan will cover the area of land which will be affected by the proposed irrigation. This includes areas which contain infrastructure required in order to receive and use the irrigation water (for example on farm dams and pipes to deliver water supplied by the MWS).

Stage of Biodiversity Assessment	Relevant Sub-Stage in Module	Mandatory Requirements
All		<p>The Biodiversity module must address the areas of the property to be directly impacted by the proposed irrigation. This must include areas which contain infrastructure required in order to receive and use the irrigation water.</p> <p>The Biodiversity module must also address the potential indirect impacts on MNES, if relevant, including impacts from fertilizers, biocides, salinity and hydrological changes.</p> <p>The Biodiversity module must address all relevant MNES covered by the program.</p>
Before the Property Visit	Baseline Resource Assessment	A baseline resource assessment is required for each Farm WAP.
		In addition to information outlined in the Biodiversity Module, each baseline assessment must specifically take account of published literature relating to MNES including, but not limited to: recovery plans, listing statements, Policy Statements, EPBC Act environmental reporting tool, key threatening processes, threat abatement plans and conservation advice.
	Goals and Management Objectives	The goal for the Midlands Water Scheme is for no significant impact on any MNES. This goal will be achieved through the Farm WAPs by following the management objectives (below).
	Management Objectives	<p>Each Farm WAP must demonstrate the following management objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clearance and conversion of Lowland Native Grasslands of Tasmania. • Avoidance of all MNES.

Stage of Biodiversity Assessment	Relevant Sub-Stage in Module	Mandatory Requirements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoidance of all potential MNES habitat No significant impacts on MNES as a result of the operation of the Midlands Water Scheme and the associated Irrigations Districts within it unless clearance and conversion or significant impacts are otherwise approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister.
	Risk and Opportunity Assessment	A risk and opportunity assessment is required for each Farm WAP.
During the Property Visit	Site Visit	The baseline assessment will be verified through ground-truthing by the consultant to confirm the baseline information assessment is accurate. Ground-truthing and mapping at an appropriate scale is required for the relevant area of all properties.
	Observations and Discussion of Biodiversity Values and Management Options	<p>Extent and condition for all identified MNES and their habitats must be documented and mapped for the relevant area.</p> <p>This information must be provided by the Water Entity to DPIPWE in a format able to be incorporated into the NVA (and relevant layers within it) within timeframes agreed to under the Program.</p>
		Surveys must be undertaken at the appropriate time of year for MNES.
		Seasonality and the effects it may have on the identification of cryptic MNES must be taken into account during survey work.
After the Property Visit	Biodiversity Management Report	<p>Each Farm WAP must include a report indicating future monitoring requirements at the farm scale to monitor the effectiveness of management actions put in place to avoid impacts on MNES.</p> <p>It must also include a description of what actions will be required should management need to be changed as indicated by monitoring.</p> <p>Monitoring must be based around best practice guidelines and published literature relating to MNES including but not limited to: recovery plans, listing statements and EPBC Act Policy Statements, key threatening processes, Conservation Advice and</p>

Stage of Biodiversity Assessment	Relevant Sub-Stage in Module	Mandatory Requirements
		<p>Threat Abatement Plans.</p> <p>Each Farm WAP must include a recommendation about when it should be reviewed. This review must be at least be 5 yearly or whenever there are changes to infrastructure including movement of pipes, dam construction etc. or changes in the location and volume of water used. The review must be undertaken by a pre-qualified consultant.</p>