

# VICTORIAN DESALINATION PROJECT

## FACT SHEET

**WATER NOW  
AND FOR THE FUTURE.  
FOR SURE.**

## WELCOME TO THE VICTORIAN DESALINATION PLANT AND ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

We acknowledge this area as being on the traditional lands of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung people of the Kulin nation. The plant site is within the traditional land of the Yowengarra which were based between the Bass and Tarwin Rivers.

Situated 140 kilometres south-east of Melbourne the Victorian Desalination Plant (VDP) and ecological reserve is a fascinating mix of architectural and engineering ingenuity and natural beauty.

Designed to minimise its ecological impacts and to actively enhance the local environment the VDP includes a world-class revegetation project, which has transformed the area into the rich ecologies that existed here before settlement.

Prior uses, including grazing and mining made a large break in the otherwise continuous line of coastal vegetation of the region.

By reconnecting important coastal reserves the restoration project greatly enhances the region's habitat values.

Included in the reserve are eight kilometres of trails for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, a bird hide, viewing decks and boardwalks and picnic shelters.

The ecological reserve is open to the general public. The desalination plant itself cannot be accessed by the general public. However the VDP does run site tours for community groups or organisations that have formally pre-booked through the community contact line (1800 811 214).

### Key features of the ecological reserve

#### Trails

There are eight kilometres of horse riding, cycling and pedestrian trails within the reserve.

The walking and cycling trails include a number of vantage points and viewing decks from which visitors can get a good look at the Desalination Plant buildings and green roof, as well as learn about some of the historical facts of the area.

Depending on which route you take, the trails can be easily covered by foot within one and a half to two hours. Access to the beautiful Williamson's Beach is possible from one of the newly constructed pedestrian trails at the south west corner of the reserve which leads down to the Williamson's Beach car park.

Horse riding is permitted within the specially designated area adjacent to the main entrance of the VDP in Lower Powlett Road (marked on the attached map). We ask horse riders to please be mindful of pedestrians at common cross-over points, as well as cyclists and other traffic.



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## Wetlands

The wetlands are part of the floodplain of the Powlett River. A very changeable environment, it is periodically inundated by both the fresh water of the River and in storm events by salty tidal waters. During summer the area may even be dry.

The wetlands also receive water from the desalination plant's green roof and run-off from the roads and other hard surfaces. The run-off is treated in bio-retention ponds and carefully designed planted swales before entering the wetland.

Walking tracks, elevated walkways and bird hides have been provided to enhance your enjoyment of the area – please stick to the designated areas.

## Wildlife

The ecological reserve is rich in wildlife.

Grey Teal, Hoary-Headed and Australasian Grebes, Black Swans, Purple Swamphens, Eastern Great Egrets, Royal Spoonbills, Australian White Ibis, Masked Lapwings, Golden-headed Cisticolas, Little Grassbirds and Australian Reed Warblers are just some examples of birdlife that may be found in the wetlands.

The Southern Bullfrog, Common Froglet, Southern Brown Tree Frog, Whistling Tree Frog, Spotted Marsh Frog and Striped Marsh Frog can all be heard especially on warm nights and in the spring mating season.

The reserve contains a series of natural and constructed dunes. The constructed dune system has reused the 1.45 million cubic meters of soil excavated during the construction of the desalination plant – that's enough to fill the MCG. Local indigenous vegetation has been planted to stabilise the dunes, integrating the desalination plant into the landscape and providing visual and acoustic protection to nearby neighbours.

The dunes provide nesting sites for the Hooded Plover, Red-capped Plovers and Pied Oystercatchers.

Ravens, White-fronted Chats, Superb Fairy-wrens, and Striated Fieldwrens can all be seen in the fore-dunes.



On the beach you may also see Pacific and Silver Gulls, Crested Terns, Pied Cormorants, and the Australian Gannet. In winter the Double-banded Plover migrates here from New Zealand, and in spring and summer the Arctic-breeding migrant Red-necked Stint.



### The largest green roof in the southern hemisphere

The VDP's green roof covers an area of more than 25,000M2 (2 hectares) making it the largest green roof in the southern hemisphere.

Green roofs are environmental champions – they filter pollutants, improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, act as insulation, create habitat, increase agricultural space and reduce the urban island effect.

The harsh coastal conditions and the variable rainfall and temperature characteristic of South Gippsland have all been considered in the green roof's design. It has been planted entirely with local plants adapted to the harsh salty and arid conditions of the Bass Coast. Seeds were collected locally and cultivated on site.

The VDP's green roof is classified as an "extensive green roof". It has been designed with very thin soil layers and to be self sustaining so that it is required to be accessed only periodically for maintenance.

All systems necessary to support the plant life of the roof – irrigation and filtering systems, drainage, waterproofing, and the root repellent system – are all built into the roof structure.



### Picnic Shelters and amenities

Picnic shelters and public amenities are located just inside the VDP's main entrance.

### Park maintenance

We are pleased to be working with the Bass Coast Shire Council to ensure the fullest possible community enjoyment of the ecological reserve and surrounding areas.

The VDP ecological reserve is maintained by WaterSure, the sub-contracted operator of the VDP.

If you observe any issues with path access or vegetation please phone the VDP community contact line: 1800 811 214.

To report injured wildlife please call *Help for Wildlife* on 0417 380 687.



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## Visiting the ecological reserve

Visitors are responsible for their own safety and those in their care. Please take care, be aware of potential hazards and make sure you take appropriate precautions:

- Be prepared to share trails with others
- Be bike safe! Always wear a helmet when riding
- Ensure shared trails are enjoyed by all:
  - Ride at a safe speed
  - Keep to the left
  - Warn when you are approaching on a bike
  - Move off the trail when you stop

**Please note: to help protect wildlife dogs are not permitted in the ecological reserve**

**In an emergency:** Call Triple Zero 000 to access police and emergency services.

## CONTACT US



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