

## Update on the review and renewal of the Houseboats Regulations (August 2022)

DELWP is continuing to work with representatives from the Lake Eildon houseboating community to review and remake the [Water \(Lake Eildon Recreation Area\) \(Houseboats\) Regulations 2013](#) before they sunset (expire) on 30 June 2023.

Our work is largely focussed on exploring effective and practical ways to improve greywater management on houseboats, though opportunities to modernise and streamline other elements of the regulations are also being explored.

We'd like to share some current project highlights and opportunities with the houseboating community and relevant stakeholders and encourage you to on-share this update through your networks.

### Social research with Monash University

DELWP has brought Monash University back on board to undertake further social research with houseboat owners.

Following on from the survey and interviews undertaken last year ([click here for the snapshot report](#)), the independent researchers are running a focus group with category 5 and 6 houseboat owners to explore approaches for reducing food waste. This focus group is planned for late August, and invitations to participate have been emailed to GMW, all marinas and other contact points to pass on to interested houseboat owners.

More social research activities are planned for later in 2022, inviting houseboat owners to share ideas on what systems and supports would help them take up the proposed greywater management actions.



### Independent feasibility studies

DELWP has contracted NCEconomics to complete independent assessments of the technical and economic feasibility of greywater intervention options for each of three segments of the Lake Eildon houseboat fleet:

- New private and commercial houseboats (build after 1 July 2023)
- Existing private houseboats (broken down by categories 1 to 6)
- Existing commercial (for-hire) houseboats

The outcomes of the feasibility studies will help to shape DELWP's proposal for future greywater management, and any potential changes to the houseboat regulations.

The intervention options being assessed were developed by DELWP in consultation with representatives from the Eildon houseboat industry and houseboat owners. The Department of Health, Environmental Protection Authority, Goulburn Murray Water and Goulburn Valley Water have also been involved in exploring greywater management options.

## Expressions of interest for water quality testing

Devices that trap pollutants or treat houseboat greywater are some of the intervention options being explored. Any devices would need to be demonstrated to work effectively for Lake Eildon houseboat use.

To support this, DELWP is funding water quality testing for people who are trialling greywater management interventions for the Lake Eildon context. This means that people interested in making or modifying devices that trap pollutants or treat houseboat greywater can access laboratory testing to confirm what their intervention does, and use that information to design interventions that are suited for use on Eildon houseboats

Applications open from 1 August 2022 and are made by completing an Expression of Interest form. The form contains detailed information about the services available, who is eligible, and how to apply. [Click here to access the form](#)



### Alignment with new Recreation Area Regulations

The Recreation and Community Values team in DELWP is working on updates regulations for all recreational areas managed by water authorities under the *Water Act 1989*. This includes much of Lake Eildon. The new Recreation Area Regulations will replace the current Model by-law and subsequent Goulburn Murray Water by-law for Lake Eildon and will set clear requirements for all recreational users of the lake.

The Recreation Area Regulations will apply to all recreational boating activities, including houseboats, as well as to fishers, campers and other lake users. The updated Recreational Area Regulations will support ongoing enjoyment of Victoria's water storages by the public, while ensuring the safety of visitors and protection of water quality, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and environmental values.

We are working closely with the Recreation and Community Values team to integrate any requirements for houseboats between both regulations, and to work together on community consultation on all proposed new regulations.

To learn more about the Recreation Area Regulations, get in touch with the team on [recreational.water@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:recreational.water@delwp.vic.gov.au).

## Planning for a regulatory impact statement

Any significant changes proposed to be made to the houseboat regulations will need to go through a formal process of evaluation and consultation, referred to as a regulatory impact statement, or RIS. The requirements for a RIS are set under Victorian legislation. You can read about them here: <https://www.vic.gov.au/regulatory-impact-statements>.

DELWP is planning to kick off the RIS process for changes to the houseboat regulations soon. This will involve having independent experts assess the costs and benefits of new regulatory options to the Victorian community. Once the assessment is complete, DELWP will release a draft of the proposed new regulations and seek formal submissions from the community.

Community consultation on the draft houseboat regulations is planned for early 2023.

The outcomes of both the assessment and community consultation will be used to revise the proposed changes and finalise the draft regulations, which then go through government processes for approval. The remade regulations would come into effect on 1 July 2023.

## Further information

If you have any questions about anything in this update, please contact the project team on [rural.water@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:rural.water@delwp.vic.gov.au).

### Steps in undertaking a regulatory impact statement

1. Analyse the problem
2. Define the objectives
3. Identify feasible options
4. Assess the impacts of the options
5. Identify the preferred option
6. Plan the to implement the option
7. Develop an evaluation strategy
8. Consult with the community