

Houseboat greywater system review

The *Water (Lake Eildon Recreational Area) (Houseboats) Regulations 2013* aim to improve water quality on Lake Eildon for the community and the environment.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has engaged Jacobs to conduct an independent review of these regulations. This is in response to concerns raised by houseboat owners about the feasibility of meeting greywater treatment system installation requirements under the regulations.

What is happening?

Jacobs are reviewing the regulations for DELWP. The review will investigate issues raised by houseboat owners and consider whether the regulations could be updated to deliver the desired improvement in water quality with a lower impact on existing boat owners.

This review will involve an assessment of current regulations and greywater treatment systems. The assessment will also involve an inspection of houseboats that have already installed greywater treatment systems as well as consultation with manufacturers. Jacobs will provide a final review report to DELWP in January 2017, identifying opportunities to improve the regulations while meeting the desired improvement in water quality.

What is the role of DELWP and GMW in the review?

DELWP will use the outputs of the review to determine whether any changes to the regulations should be recommended to the minister. GMW, as manager of Lake Eildon, is responsible for the implementation of the regulations.

History of the regulations

Lake Eildon is the only inland waterway in Victoria where houseboats can operate. In addition to hosting 720 licenced houseboats, the lake is a popular recreational site, used for camping, swimming, water skiing, sailing and fishing. Together these activities make a significant contribution to the local community and economy.

However, greywater discharge from houseboats impacts water quality and poses a risk to environmental and public health. This is a particular problem in sheltered bays where larger numbers of houseboats are moored. The combined greywater discharge in these areas increases the risk of blue-green algae outbreaks and the level of harmful bacteria and pathogens. This creates a hazard for swimmers, other recreational water users, downstream irrigators, urban drinking water supplies and for houseboats which use lake water on board.

To manage greywater discharge from houseboats, the Victorian Government introduced greywater treatment requirements into the *Water (Lake Eildon Recreational Area) (Houseboats) Regulations 2013* on June 12, 2013. These regulations require all houseboats to fit an on-board greywater treatment system by July 1st, 2020.

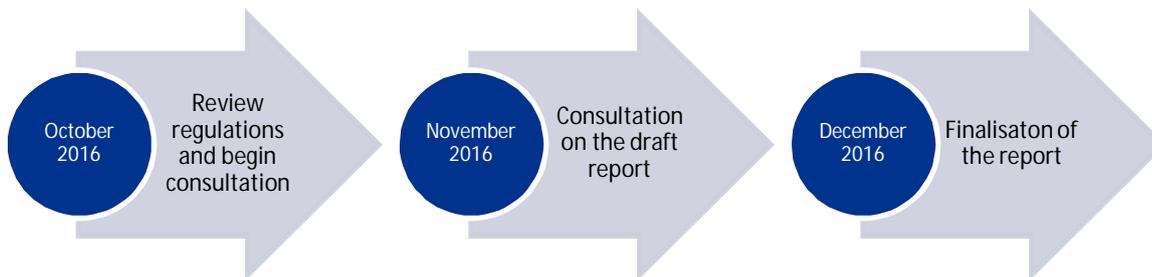
Engagement approach

Boat owners have already provided significant feedback on the regulations to DELWP and GMW. The Lake Eildon – Houseboat Greywater Workshop held in December 2015 provided a valuable opportunity for DELWP to hear the views of local boat owners on the barriers to meeting the requirements of the regulations. This feedback will be considered by Jacobs as part of the review. A series of follow up meetings with boat owners and inspections of their existing greywater systems will also inform the review.

The draft findings of the review will be presented to a sub set of houseboat owners for comment prior to finalisation. This sub set will include owners with and without greywater systems. We will also present the final report to this group to demonstrate how their feedback has been incorporated in the final report submitted to DELWP.

Timeline for the review

We plan to present the draft report in November and the final in December this year.



Contact details

For more information, please contact the project team by email at ro058200@jacobs.com