

Dights Falls Weir Replacement and Fishway Project

What's happening at Dights Falls?

Studies have found the heritage listed Dights Falls Weir in Abbotsford has reached the end of its life and needs to be replaced.

Melbourne Water is working on a project to construct a new weir at Dights Falls that will be similar in shape, form and height to the existing structure.

The proposed design for the new weir also features a new fishway. The fishway will open up the Yarra and its tributaries to many species of migratory fish whose upstream passage has been restricted by Dights Falls for decades.

What does the weir do?

The existing weir at Dights Falls dates back to 1895 when it was built to provide water to the Melbourne Flour Milling Company, run by the Hon. James Bell.

Today the weir plays an important role controlling water levels in the Yarra – pooling water for approximately 17 kilometres upstream and protecting important social, economic and environmental values of the river.

For more information about the history of the Dights Falls Weir refer to the History of Dights Falls Fact Sheet.

Why do we need a fishway at Dights Falls?

Dights Falls is considered one of the most significant in-stream barriers to native fish passage in Victoria. A rock-fishway constructed at the site in 1993 is now largely ineffective.

The construction of a new and improved vertical slot fishway at Dights Falls is expected to directly benefit the Yarra and its upstream tributaries, boosting native migratory fish numbers and species diversity.

For more information about the proposed fishway and why fish passage is important refer to the Fishways Fact Sheet.

What will the new weir and fishway look like?

The proposed new weir will be similar in shape, form and height to the existing structure and the water fall effect will be retained.

The fishway will be a concrete channel in a v-shape. The two long arms of the channel will be landscaped into the northern river bank to minimise its visual impact. The fishway is proposed to be accessible by the public as a platform to view Dights Falls.

To view the design impression visit our website – www.melbournewater.com.au

What's going to happen to the old weir?

The existing weir will be partially removed so that it is no longer visible once the new weir is constructed. Parts of the original wooden weir built in 1895 are likely to be retained under water.

Why don't we repair the old weir?

Structural assessments of the Dights Falls Weir determined that it is not feasible to repair or strengthen the existing structure due to the poor condition of the piles and timbers that support it.

Working with stakeholders

Melbourne Water has worked with Heritage Victoria, Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council, City of Yarra, river users and environment groups in developing the proposed design for the new weir and fishway.

A workshop with stakeholders was held in March this year. Questions relating to the environmental, recreational, cultural and heritage values of Dights Falls were discussed and the outcomes considered during the design process.

An impression of the proposed new weir and fishway will be presented to the community and stakeholder groups for comment in August and early September. To view the design impression visit our website – www.melbournewater.com.au

Respecting heritage values at Dights Falls

The proposed design for the new weir and fishway seeks to maintain the existing values of the site, balancing heritage, environmental, recreational and cultural values.

Melbourne Water has submitted an application under section 67 of the Heritage Act 1995 to Heritage Victoria seeking a permit to replace the weir and construct the fishway. The application can be viewed at www.melbournewater.com.au

What's ahead?

We expect to finalise the design of the new weir and fishway around October once all feedback and comment has been considered. Construction is proposed to occur in summer 2010/11. It is likely the project will take up to six months to construct.

Who's delivering the project?

The project is being delivered by the Waterways Alliance on behalf of Melbourne Water.

The Waterways Alliance is a partnership between Ecodynamics, Fulton Hogan, SMEC and Melbourne Water created to deliver a five year \$75 million program to improve stormwater quality and the health of Melbourne's rivers and Creeks.

How can I get more information about the project?

For more information call Melbourne Water's Dights Falls Project Hotline on 1800 673 151 or visit www.melbournewater.com.au



For an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 13 14 50.



Geotechnical investigations at Dights Falls, 2009