

Farm Water Access Plan

What are Farm Water Access Plans?

A Farm Water Access Plan (Farm WAP) is a plan that is required for every property that receives water from a Tasmanian Irrigation (TI) irrigation scheme. Farm WAPs are used as a management tool to demonstrate the responsible management of water in accordance with Australian and Tasmanian Government requirements including the Federal *Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999*.

What is included in a Farm WAP?

A Farm WAP is property specific and will include modules covering soil, water and biodiversity. The plan will identify the area of the property that TI water will be applied to and detail any potential risks and opportunities associated with managing the resource. This information will assist in the development of specific management actions to address the identified risks and opportunities to mitigate any potential impacts. Farm WAPs are attached to the land. If the land is sold or leased, the Farm WAP can be transferred to another owner or irrigator with approval from TI.

The area that water will be applied to includes land, dams and irrigation infrastructure that is directly affected by TI water both now and in the future. A Farm WAP is not a property management plan as it does not cover the entire property.

Farm WAPs are prepared when irrigators want to access irrigation water, generally under a new scheme or when looking to irrigate land beyond an existing Farm WAP. Irrigators should consider the potential future irrigation for the property to reduce the need for additional plans being completed.

How do you complete a Farm WAP?

Farm WAPs are completed by a pre-qualified consultant approved and authorised by the Minister for Water.

Farm WAPs are paid for by irrigators, who will be given a copy once it is finalised. The time and cost in preparing a Farm WAP will depend on:

- The size of the area being assessed,
- Existing soil and land capability data for the area to be assessed,
- The likelihood of threatened species, ecological communities or other matters of environmental significance occurring in or near the area to be assessed.



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Who is responsible for the Farm WAP?

Compliance with the Farm WAP is the responsibility of the irrigator. Irrigators accessing TI water must ensure they:

- Have a Farm WAP in place,
- Only apply TI water where a current Farm WAP is in place,
- Inform TI of any changes to and within the Farm WAP area,
- Apply the TI water in accordance with the Farm WAP requirements including ensuring the volume of water applied matches the land capability and crop water usage volumes, and
- Comply with the management actions and monitoring schedules prescribed within the Farm WAP.

Where the landowner and irrigator differ, a business arrangement between the parties may be required prior to obtaining the Farm WAP. It is recommended that irrigators review their Farm WAPs regularly including when transferring water and prior to each irrigation season to ensure the area covered by the Farm WAP covers the proposed area and that the land capability is appropriate.

Monitoring and compliance

Under the Tasmanian *Water Management Act 1999*, TI has implemented a Farm WAP auditing program. The program includes annual audits from randomly selected Farm WAP and triggered audits where non-compliance is identified, or monitoring results indicate a decline in scheme quality water.

Irrigators who have been selected for audit will be notified by the TI Farm WAP team and an audit plan detailing the audit activities and arrangements will be provided. The purpose of the audit is to verify that the management prescriptions outlined in the Farm WAP have been conformed with, to review any changed farm operations that pose potential risks to the environment and review any changed environmental aspects that may be affected and may be at risk from irrigation activities.

It is the responsibility of the irrigator to prepare and provide documents required for the audit process. The process will include an interview stage and site inspection. Documents that may be required during a Farm WAP audit include:

- Irrigation scheduling records/soil moisture monitoring records/rainfall records
- Crop records/paddock books
- Water licences/dam licences
- Soil analysis results/chemical application records/consultant reports

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