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Subordinate Legislation Act 1994

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with section 11 of the **Subordinate Legislation Act 1994**, I, Harriet Shing, Minister for Water, and Minister responsible for administering the **Water Act 1989**, give notice that a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) has been prepared in relation to the proposed Water (Lake Eildon Recreational Area) (Houseboats) Regulations 2024 (proposed Regulations).

The reasons for, and the objectives of the proposed Regulations are:

- (a) to provide for the continued control and management of houseboats in the Lake Eildon recreational area;
- (b) to mitigate risks to human health and the environment from houseboat wastewater through the inclusion of requirements relating to the management of greywater and blackwater;
- (c) to support continued community benefits from use and enjoyment of waters and surrounds of Lake Eildon Recreational Area through achieving low risks (likelihood and consequence) to human health and environment associated with pollutants from houseboat wastewater entering Lake Eildon.

The RIS examines the costs and benefits of four options in respect of licencing of houseboats and the management of greywater and blackwater. The four options considered within the RIS are detailed below in Table 1.

Table 1: Packages of options for assessment

Package	Licensing	Blackwater	Greywater
Base case	Licensing through other means.	No specific regulation.	No specific regulation.
Package A – low	Licensing provision through updated regulations.	Replicate and update the current blackwater provisions in regulations.	Simple greywater treatment interventions for all Category 3 and above houseboats (i.e. simple devices such as sink strainers/filters and under-sink grease traps).
Package B – central	Licensing provision through updated regulations.	Replicate and update the current blackwater provisions in regulations.	Simple greywater treatment interventions for all private Category 3 and above houseboats (i.e. simple devices such as sink strainers/filters and under-sink grease traps) and comprehensive greywater treatment systems for new and commercial hire Category 3 and above houseboats.
Package C – high	Licensing provision through updated regulations.	Replicate and update the current blackwater provisions in regulations.	Comprehensive greywater treatment systems for all Category 3 and above houseboats.

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The RIS concludes that the preferred package is Package B.

The proposed Regulations have been prepared in accordance with preferred Option B. The RIS found that:

- It is expected to best balance the anticipated additional costs for houseboat owners with the benefits to the broader community.
- It requires houseboat owners to make changes that are reasonably practicable to limit risk and targets a key source of the highest risk pollutants: pathogens and nutrients from kitchen wastewater. Existing private owners with Category 3–6 houseboats would face a modest upfront cost of around \$1,000 to install a simple greywater intervention (i.e. devices such as sink strainers/filters and under-sink grease traps).
- It provides a practical implementation pathway with an extended transition period that allows installation of greywater interventions to align with slipping of the houseboat fleet and accommodates industry capacity to undertake installations. Other initiatives will support and encourage uptake.
- New houseboats Category 3 and above would need to install a comprehensive greywater treatment system by 11 June 2027 (three years after the regulations are remade). For commercial houseboats Category 3 and above a comprehensive greywater treatment system would need to be installed by 1 January 2034 (almost 10 years after the regulations are remade). Private houseboats Category 3 and above would need to install simple greywater treatment interventions by 1 January 2034 (same date as commercial houseboats).
- It is assumed a comprehensive system will be available on the market within two years. This assumption is based on there already being suppliers with comprehensive greywater treatment system technologies being developed and tested on Lake Eildon houseboats. The technology for simple interventions is readily available to houseboat owners.

Copies of the RIS and the proposed Regulations can be obtained at www.engage.vic.gov.au or by phoning 136 186.

Public comments and submission are invited on the RIS and the proposed Regulations.

All submissions must be received no later than 11.59 pm, 9 May 2024 and can be sent: via the Engage Victoria website at www.engage.vic.gov.au or by post to Rural Water Policy, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, PO Box 500, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002.

All comments and submissions will be treated as public documents and published on Engage Victoria's website, www.engage.vic.gov.au unless the person making the comment or submission clearly indicates that the comment or submission is confidential.

HON. HARRIET SHING MP
Minister for Water

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