

1. INTRODUCTION

GWMWater acknowledges:

- a) the valuable connection of Indigenous cultures to the heritage of all Australians;
- b) the historic occupation of the Wimmera, Mallee and Grampians regions by Aboriginal peoples;
- c) the importance of protecting sites of high significance to traditional owners being Indigenous places, objects, ancestral remains and intangible heritage.
- d) the historical, artistic, scientific, social or spiritual value that places, objects and collections have for past, present and future generations.
- e) the cultural heritage significance of Aboriginal traditions related to land and water.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to promote:

- Effective engagement with Traditional Owners, representative groups and Registered Aboriginal Parties;
- Cultural benefits from the delivery of services, projects and partnerships;
- The ongoing protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage,
- Recognition of and respect for the importance and significance of cultural heritage;
- Cultural knowledge and capacity building, and
- Supportive and inclusive relationships with Traditional Owners, representative groups and Registered Aboriginal Parties.

3. SCOPE

The policy applies to all activities undertaken by GWMWater.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Manager Infrastructure is responsible for administration this policy.

5. METHOD

GWMWater commits to:

- a) Supporting Aboriginal self-determination as a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- b) Development and implementation of a strategy and action plan;
- c) Consultation with the appropriate RAPs and/or traditional owner groups through direct dialogue, referrals, project management and governance processes, and regional partnership opportunities;

- d) Developing a better appreciation of the Indigenous culture and heritage including adhering to cultural protocols and practices among staff; through training and awareness raising activities.
- e) Incorporating native title and Aboriginal cultural heritage considerations in project planning and management;
- f) Avoiding and minimising the impact of operations on sites of high significance to traditional owners being Indigenous places, objects, ancestral remains and intangible heritage
- g) Following the principles of equal employment opportunity and striving for inclusion and diversity in the workplace.
- h) Following social procurement principles that seek to provide business and economic opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION

International

- a) *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007*

Commonwealth

- a) *Native Title Act 1993*
- b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*

Victorian

- a) *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- b) *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*
- c) *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*
- d) *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*
- e) *Water is Life – Traditional Owner Roadmap 2022*

7. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURE

- a) [Sustainability Policy](#)
- b) [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#)
- c) [GWMWater Employee Code of Conduct](#)
- d) [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)
- e) [Social Procurement Strategy](#)

8. REFERENCES

[GWMWater Vision, Mission and Value statements](#)
[GWMWater Strategic Directions](#)