

## Land and water management plans

The purpose of land and water management plans (LWMPs) is to ensure that irrigation water use does not cause land and water degradation, both on and off farms.

Approved LWMPs apply for up to 10 years, and remain a condition of water use on the land, regardless of change of ownership. The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) periodically reviews their performance in consultation with the landholder.

### Why prepare a LWMP?

Preparing a LWMP can be voluntary, or it can be a legislative requirement under the *Water Act 2000* or *Integrated Planning Act 1997* (IPA).

#### Voluntary LWMPs

You can use a LWMP as part of normal business practice to:

- plan and review an irrigation enterprise
- identify and manage the risks to land and water that are associated with irrigation practices
- record and measure improvements in practice
- demonstrate that you are managing the risks associated with your farming operation.

#### Mandatory LWMPs

Under the *Water Act*, you are required to have a LWMP approved by DERM before you can use water from an entitlement for irrigation when:

- you obtain a new or additional water allocation or interim water allocation
- you intend to use a seasonal assignment of water as your only source of water on the same land in any two out of three consecutive water years
- you intend to use, on the same land, a seasonal assignment of water and water taken under an allocation, or an interim allocation, in any two of three consecutive water years, and water use will exceed the nominal allocation volume
- your land is identified in a water use plan as land where a LWMP is required (see LWMPs and water use plans below)
- you move some or all of your existing water allocation from one resource operations plan (ROP) zone to another
- you are in an area where a ROP specifies that a LWMP is required to obtain a water licence

- you want to construct works to capture tail water or contaminated run-off, which require a development permit (requirement of IPA) under a water resource plan (WRP).

Unless there is already a requirement for a LWMP, you do not need one if:

- a water licence is converted to a water allocation and you have continuously owned the benefit of both
- you purchase a water allocation or interim water allocation with the associated land as an ongoing enterprise.

### LWMPs and water use plans

Under the *Water Act*, an area may be declared a water use plan area. In these areas certain water users may require LWMPs to manage land and water degradation risks identified by the water use plan. No water use plan areas are currently declared.

### Contents of an LWMP

A LWMP must include:

- a property map (e.g. aerial photo base map)
- overlays showing relevant detailed information
- a written report outlining how you intend to meet relevant desired outcomes.

### How to prepare an LWMP

Resources are available on the DERM website <[www.derm.qld.gov.au](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au)> to help you prepare a LWMP, including:

- regional guidelines for the Fitzroy, Burnett and Mary basins, Mackay–Whitsunday region and Lower Burdekin catchments
- state guidelines for landholders in all other areas
- state guidelines reference manual
- information kits for the Fitzroy and Mackay Whitsundays outlining the publicly available datasets stored by the department, including maps of areas covered
- fact sheet *W93—Using the guidelines for land and water management plans*.

You are also encouraged to make early contact with your local DERM LWMP officer who can discuss options and provide you with workbook materials to help you complete your LWMP.

## Where to find the required information

To assist in the development of a LWMP, DERM may be able to supply:

- maps showing information on soils, landform, natural drainage, and remnant vegetation
- information on the suitability of agricultural land in your region
- an aerial photo or satellite image property map (fees apply)
- information on the latest water-use efficiency and irrigation methods.

Regional natural resource management bodies or industry groups may:

- be able to supply land resource mapping products for some regions
- have programs on identifying best management practice options and developing a farm management system (FMS).

Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries (as part of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) provides crop advice and information on the latest water-use efficiency and irrigation methods.

The Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority (QRAA) may provide financial assistance for these activities.

## FMSs and LWMPs

FMSs certified under a DERM-accredited program can be approved as equivalent to a LWMP. Contact DERM for advice on accredited FMSs.

DERM can also advise if your existing property management plan or other plans and documents are suitable to use in the LWMP.

## Lodgement and assessment

Check with your local LWMP officer to ensure that your management plan is suitable before lodging it at a departmental business centre.

All plans undergo a technical assessment that may involve an industry representative. If an industry has formulated its own best management practices, a plan that meets these standards is likely to meet the minimum practice standards required.

## Changes to farming practices

It is recommended that your LWMP is regularly reviewed and kept up to date with the latest best management practices to improve productivity and manage risks to land and water.

An approved amendment to your plan is not necessary for minor changes that won't affect outcomes. However,

you should discuss any proposed significant changes (such as irrigating more land or using a different or additional irrigation method) with your local LWMP officer as, in this case, your plan may have to be formally amended and approved by DERM. The officer may also be able to advise on how to get the best outcome from any change.

## Progressive implementation of proposed developments

DERM will negotiate a mutually-suitable timeframe in which to implement changes in situations where:

- you propose further developments to management practices, farm infrastructure or layout
- you or DERM identify changes that need to be made to management practices, farm infrastructure or layout.

## Deferring preparation of an LWMP

If you have a valid reason for not developing a plan immediately, contact your local LWMP officer about a deferral. These can be granted for up to 12 months during which time you are allowed to use the irrigation water.

DERM will assess the information you provide and the potential risks posed to land and water before granting a deferral. You may be given more than one deferral period but these cannot total more than 12 months—at which time you must have an approved LWMP for continued use of the water for irrigation.

August 2009  
W56

For further information phone 13 13 04

For general enquiries contact the  
Queensland Government call centre 13 13 04  
or visit [www.derm.qld.gov.au](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au)