

**Client: Gippsland Water**  
**Project: Future Options for the Dutson Downs Treatment Facility**

## **CLIENT**

Gippsland Water is Victoria's second largest non-metropolitan water authority. Its geographic region comprises the central Gippsland area in eastern Victoria including the Latrobe Valley. Gippsland Water is responsible for the provision of water and wastewater services to this area.

## **LOCATION**

The Dutson Downs Treatment Facility is located on an 8,000 ha property approximately 15 km south east of Sale in the eastern portion of the operational region of Gippsland Water.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Dutson Downs Treatment facility was established during the 1950s by the former Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board for the treatment of domestic and industrial wastewater. Today the property also supports one of the largest beef farming operations in Gippsland, has some 550 ha of land under plantation and is used for the disposal of solid waste.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The primary objective of the study was to determine beneficial future management options for the Dutson Downs property which ensure that the facility is operated in a sustainable manner by integrating economic, cultural and conservation values.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES**

The project was jointly undertaken by Earth Systems and Hyder Consulting. Key activities completed included:

- ❑ Conduct of an environmental audit of present liquid and solid waste disposal practices including an evaluation of impacts on both on-site and off-site values and land uses.
- ❑ An evaluation of the long term viability of the site to manage liquid waste facilities.
- ❑ Identification and evaluation of options for developing the site as a major prescribed waste facility for the whole of Victoria.
- ❑ Development of guidelines for the management of existing solid waste streams.
- ❑ Evaluation of land tenure options.
- ❑ Conduct of a land capability assessment for the property in order to determine the optimum level and type of agricultural and forestry land uses.
- ❑ Identification and cost benefit analysis of alternative agricultural land improvements and innovative management methods.
- ❑ Identification of land affected by salinity on the Dutson Downs property followed by an evaluation, including cost benefit analysis, of alternative methods for the restoration of these areas.
- ❑ Assessment of the ecological and cultural values of the property.

## **OUTCOME**

The findings of this feasibility study will form the basis for the development of a management plan for Dutson Downs. The plan will assist in decision making processes, increasing economic benefit through land optimisation, while minimising adverse cultural, economic and ecological impacts.