

Guide to site assessments

Camping on licensed Crown river frontage

The Land (Regulated Watercourse Land) Regulations 2021 manage the recreational use of Crown river frontages, including rules for camping.

Camping on licensed Crown water frontages will be permitted in specific, designated areas that have been assessed and deemed suitable for camping. The assessment process involves both desktop and on ground site assessments.

Desktop assessment

The desktop assessment of potential camping areas considers:

Alignment to the regulations :

- Confirming land tenure (relevant licence type noting riparian licences are excluded)
 - Ability to camp more than 20 metres from the waterway (and not on private land)
 - Ability to camp more than 200 metres from any nearby residence
 - Ability to dispose of human waste and soap, including:
 - > Human waste must be buried more than 100 metres from the waterway (and not on private property)
 - > Where portable toilets are used/required, must be located more than 50 metres from the waterway

Appropriate access

The ability for the public to access the area, minimising likelihood of trespass, including considering:

- Road access
- Pedestrian access through public land, including 'unused road' licensed areas
- Ability for legal vehicle use and management/emergency vehicle access.

Other information

Where a site is deemed suitable based on the regulations and accessibility, further information is gathered to inform assessments, including assessing bushfire or flood risk, environmental values and other considerations.

Notification of licence holders

Licensees will be notified of on-ground site assessments via a letter and/or email. Where possible licensees will also be called prior to staff and Traditional Owners attending on site.

On-ground site assessments

Possible camping areas identified through the desktop process will then be subject to two forms of on-ground site assessment.

Victorian Traditional Owners, through Registered Aboriginal Parties, will undertake an assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage. These assessments will determine if appropriate measures can be adopted to ensure Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected.

The site will also be assessed to:

- Confirm implied access (appropriate and safe access to site, trespass risk for private land, access barriers)
- Confirm safety and suitability for camping (e.g. terrain features, vegetation density)
- Assessment of whether campfires should be permitted if the area is designated for camping
- Identify any other risks/hazards or ongoing management requirements if the area is designated for camping

The outcomes of both these assessments will inform whether camping can be permitted, and any recommended conditions for the management of those areas.

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Designation of camping areas

Once an area is confirmed as a suitable camping area, the land manager (DELWP or Parks Victoria) can make the determination to 'set-aside' that licensed Crown water frontage as an area where camping is permitted.

This determination will confirm the boundaries of the area, and any additional conditions that apply (e.g. whether campfires are permitted, or where a portable toilet is required etc.).

Notification of licence holders

Prior to a site being set-aside for camping, licensees will again be contacted via a letter and/or email. Where possible licensees will also be called.

Identifying and accessing designated camping areas

Licensed areas that have been designated as areas where camping is permitted, will be listed on the DELWP website:

<https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/land-management/managing-crown-land/access-to-crown-water-frontages>.

This information includes maps of the areas and appropriate access, and any information or conditions specific to the use of that area (e.g. whether campfires are permitted).

Access to camping sites on licensed Crown river frontages is only permitted via public access points. Trespassing on private land is illegal.

Where camping is permitted, signs will be erected to indicate the area available for camping.

Vehicle access on licensed Crown river frontages, other than on formed roads, remains prohibited and subject to the Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Regulations 2013.

The identification of licensed Crown water frontages where camping is permitted is intended for dispersed camping. It is not expected that any additional facilities be provided, or site maintenance undertaken.

Campers and recreational visitors to Crown water frontages are responsible for their own safety and the safety of those in their care. Campers should be prepared for any natural hazards or outdoor risks when visiting public land.

Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering Crown land water frontages during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at www.emergency.vic.gov.au. No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days

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