

Protection of water authority assets

Purpose

The aim of this practice note is to encourage customers to identify water authority assets during the design phase of development. We hope that by reminding customers and designers that they play an important role in ensuring our assets are protected, they will continue to include this stage in all future developments.

Summary

The following information reminds customers of the potential implications where developers do not appropriately identify the location of water authority assets prior to design and during construction. Contributing factors to these ongoing issues include:

- Planning and building permits that are issued without any reference to the location of water authority assets.
- Planning and building designers that do not adequately identify the location of assets in relation to proposed developments
- Building designer plans that do not address water authority asset protection and water servicing requirements.
- Water authority assets that have been damaged by construction works, prior to consent being granted by the water authority.

It is critical that designers consider that assets are **not** always located within an easement, especially when located in an adjacent open space. In addition, assets are not always located in the centre of an easement. These assets still need to be identified and protected.

Determining the location of any assets prior to the project design phase commencing is critical in order to establish the minimum clearances that will be required by the water authority.

NOTE: Location of assets within adjoining properties should also be considered when designing boundary to boundary or where ground anchors will be utilised.

Background

Water authorities continue to receive applications for developments, which upon investigation are found to have been designed without consideration of water authority assets. In many cases planning and building permits have already been issued. Often, developers have pre-sold multi-unit developments that are in breach of water authority assets and require re-designing. In some cases, works have commenced without asset location taking place. Both of these scenarios can result in:

- Costly redesigns
- Time delays
- Possible litigation
- Impact to the environment
- Unnecessary stress to property owners and developers.

Unfortunately, the sewer connection branch is often not considered when applying adequate clearance distances. An emerging trend is for buildings to be designed boundary to boundary, however this leaves no room for the sewer connection branch to either remain or be constructed within the title boundary. Without clearance surrounding the branch, the water authority is unable to safely manage their asset.

In order to gain consent from the water authority, it is essential to investigate these requirements prior to design commencing. Unfortunately, failure to do this may impact on your development.

Regulatory requirements

Water authorities operating under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1994 or the Water Act 1989 rely on Section 66 of the Water Industry Act 1994 or Section 148 of the Water Act 1989. These require property owners to make an application for consent to construct any works within one metre laterally of an asset or to place or remove fill which covers a water authority asset.

Information to assist

Melbourne's three water retailers have collaborated to launch the Customer Guide – *Guidelines for Proposed Structures/Works Over/Adjacent to Water Authority Assets up to and including 225mm diameter*. Developed with customers and stakeholders in mind, our aim was to make the guide simple and easy to understand. The guide details the requirements for building and conducting works near water retailer assets and includes simple explanations and diagrams to assist understanding.

The Customer Guide uses simple explanation, diagrams, and detailed requirements to assist our customers understand the water authority's requirements. It has been developed to be easily read and understood.

By understanding these requirements we hope it will help customers maximise the use of their land while adhering to best practice procedures and protecting and maintaining access to water and sewer assets.

We encourage you to use and review the Customer Guide and welcome any feedback. Comments and suggestions can be addressed to Steve Paterson, Land Development Manager at steve.paterson@sewl.com.au

To download the Customer Guide, visit the property page at southeastwater.com.au

You can also access the Customer Guide from both citywestwater.com.au and yvw.com.au

