

FACT SHEET

Water Management Amendment (Dam Works) Bill 2015

Part 8 of the *Water Management Act 1999* provides for the authorisation of dam works, and the establishment, membership and operation of the Assessment Committee for Dam Construction. The role and functions of the Assessment Committee focus on consideration and determination of applications for dam works permits.

Amendments to Part 8 of the Act over time, notably in 2007, have aimed to make the dam works approval process simpler and more effective. Whilst the current dam works approval process has been streamlined over time, it is still reported to be too complex and potentially acting as barrier to further dam development.

The purpose of the *Water Management Amendment (Dam Works) Bill 2015* is to simplify and further streamline the dam works approval process.

The Bill is relatively simple in structure, repealing Part 8 of the *Water Management Act 1999* and replacing it with a new Part 8. The Assessment Committee for Dam Construction is abolished through the repeal of Part 8, with the new Part 8 providing that the Minister, or Minister's delegate, will make decisions on dam works permit applications.

In addition to abolishing the Assessment Committee, the Bill focusses on a range of other measures designed to improve the dam works approval process, which includes:

- (i) providing a pathway for obtaining dam works permits without need of making an application;
- (ii) better defining the nature and scope of dam works permits;
- (iii) specifying criteria under which dam works permit applications must be approved;
- (iv) specifying the matters to be considered by the decision-maker in relation to dam works permit applications;
- (v) simplifying the provisions regarding the timeframe for decision on dam works permit applications;
- (vi) providing for conditional approval of dam works permit applications in some circumstances; and, lastly
- (vii) the requirement for the Minister to prepare an annual report on the implementation of Part 8 of the *Water Management Act 1999* and conduct an annual review of the implementation of the dam works approval process.

A number of other matters are dealt with in the Bill which relate to the operation of Part 8 of the *Water Management Act 1999* generally, and the operation of the measures set out above.

The Bill does not include savings and transitional measures or consequential amendments to other Acts. These provisions are to be included in a related amendment bill.