

15 December 2023

OFFICIAL

Winton Wetlands Expression of Interest Q&A

General

Q. Why are DEECA and the Winton Wetlands Committee of Management (CoM) changing the land manager for the site?

A. DEECA and the Winton Wetlands CoM have been working together to determine a new management structure for the wetlands site. The decision to proceed with an Expression of Interest (EOI) for a land manager follows an independent review of the site and its current operations. The review found that the current operating structure was not viable into the future.

Q. How will the EOI be undertaken and when will a new land manager be appointed?

A. The EOI for a new land manager will be undertaken through the Tenders Vic website. The EOI will commence on 15 December 2023 and close on 22 February 2024. DEECA will then assess the submissions and determine if there is a suitable applicant which has the resources and the operating experience to further deliver the Winton Wetlands Master Plan. A decision on the outcome of the EOI is anticipated next year. The appointment of the current Winton Wetlands CoM will expire on 30 June 2024.

Q. Will the EOI process impact current operations of Winton Wetlands?

A. Projects being undertaken by the Winton Wetlands CoM will continue until a new land manager is appointed. Winton Wetlands staff have been extended until 30 June 2024. The Winton Wetlands Café will continue to operate. The EOI process requires prospective new land managers to outline how they intend to manage the site.

Q. How will a change of land manager help with the restoration of the Winton Wetlands?

A. The funding provided to the Winton Wetlands project over the past 12 years has successfully established the site, constructed key infrastructure and essential services, and delivered stage 1 of the Winton Master Plan.

The new land manager will build on the work of the current committee, and fully realise the environmental and cultural significance of the site. This includes developing a financial operating model which will continue restoration works and be sustainable into the future.

Q. How are the Traditional Owners of the land being engaged in the process?

A. People of the Yorta Yorta Nation are the recognised Traditional Owners of the land on which Winton Wetlands is located.

Yorta Yorta National Aboriginal Corporation has been engaged as part of the EOI process to identify a new land manager for the site. As part of the EOI process prospective land managers will need to identify how they will partner with Traditional Owners on aspects of land management at the wetlands.

DEECA will continue to work with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation on matters relating to the management of Winton Wetlands.

Q. I have a grazing licence at Winton Wetlands, what does this mean for me?

A. Current grazing licences at Winton Wetlands held by individuals or businesses will be honoured to the end of their current duration. The appointed land manager will determine any future arrangements for grazing licences at Winton Wetlands.

Q. Who will manage Winton Wetlands if there are no suitable expressions of interest?

A. If no suitable organisation is identified through the EOI process, DEECA will pursue alternate options for appointing a land manager. These include, but are not limited to, conducting a subsequent expression of interest process or entering direct negotiations with an organisation.