

Progress Report

Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Study

The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee (LMFLUSC) has been meeting to develop a vision, strategy and plan for the future land use of the reclaimed site following the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan.

Information Bulletin No. 3 (November 2005) described five land use concepts, identified that the primary study area had been divided into a set of precincts and identified a set of preliminary land use options for each of these precincts.

Stage Two

Stage Two of the Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy is well advanced. Stage Two involves three main steps:

- the development of preliminary land use options (completed)
- the refinement of these options down to more detailed land use options (where we are currently)
- the development of a preferred land use plan

Land use options to be / not to be considered further

On pages 3 and 4 of this Information Bulletin (No 4), the findings of the community response to the preliminary land use options and the further work that has been completed are described. These comments were received at the Community Meeting held in Benalla in November and in written submissions.

The analysis of the community response provides the following broad assessment of the preliminary land use options:

- the restoration of the wetland was strongly supported
- the wetland research/education facilities were consistently supported.
- the non-commercial aspects of wetland eco-tourism gained the highest level of support. This included bird hides, interpretive signage, etc.
- The café and accommodation were not as well received there was limited support overall for grazing and cropping (in each precinct more people were against than for)
- there was limited support for commercial plantation forestry (but better support than for agriculture and more evenly divided between those for and against)
- recreation overall and where suggested (i.e. in the specific precincts) was the activity/land use that gained the highest level of support

Following a review of the response of the community and further technical assessment it was identified that the following land uses did not warrant further assessment (i.e. they were considered either not comand/or unsuitable):

- Transport/freight hub
- Alternative energy production
- Industrial development
- Car rallies/ power boat regattas
- Rock processing

The limited support overall for grazing and cropping and commercial plantation forestry appeared to be because respondents considered them to be incompatible with the protection of ecological values. Further analysis and advice from the ecological specialist indicated that these uses had the potential to enhance ecological values, particularly in regard to the control and spread of invasive weed species and the provision of additional habitat if appropriately managed. The further assessment of these uses is therefore warranted.

All other options warranted further assessment.

Further Assessment

It was originally intended to refine the preliminary land use options down to a set of more detailed land use options following community consultation. Further analysis, however, identified that for the remaining land use options, some fundamental decisions needed to be made on what can be classified as primary land uses before decisions about other land uses (secondary and tertiary) can be made.

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Wetland restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpretive signage• Wetland research, education facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated sporting hooters facility
Dryland restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wildlife sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycle paths, movement easements
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Native seed nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orienteering, marathon course
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wetland interpretive facilities• Wetland tourism facilities• Aquaculture• Recreational fishing• Yachting/boating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public art trail• Golf course resort• Winery/Winton Raceway related accommodation

LakeMOKOAN

Primary Land Use Options

The primary land use options are those for which fundamental decisions need to be made in regard to the allocation and balance of land across the primary study area. Three land uses, wetland core (wetland and dryland restoration), agriculture and forestry have the potential to occupy the majority of the land available, so decisions about the amount of land allocated for each land use, the location of this land and the balance between them are central to the outcomes of the study.

In particular, the most important decision that needs to be made is on the size of the area that needs to be managed for ecological purposes (i.e. the footprint of the wetland complex).

Secondary Land Use Options

The secondary land use options are dependent on the primary land use options, specifically the wetland complex (i.e. the wetland and dryland restoration). These are land uses that would be unlikely to be developed if, for example, a wetland complex did not exist. These are not, however, land use options that drive key decisions about the size and balance of the primary land uses (e.g. it is not important for the wetland complex interpretive facilities whether the wetland occupies 4,000, 5,000 or 6,000 hectares).

Tertiary Land Use Options

The tertiary land use options are those uses that are less dependent on the primary and secondary land use options. These are land uses that could be developed separately, though they may be enhanced by linkages to the primary and secondary land uses. For example, a cycle path could be constructed between Benalla, Wangaratta and Glenrowan regardless of the wetland. However, the experience of using such a facility would be enhanced if it was linked to a wetland complex and/or with associated interpretive and tourist facilities.

Further Fieldwork

To help decide on the primary land use options, in particular the footprint of the wetland complex, additional flora and fauna and heritage studies were completed during January and February 2006. The results of this additional fieldwork are being finalised, will help to finalise the more detailed land use options and will be made publicly available.

The more detailed land use options will be discussed by the LMFLUSC at a workshop on 27 March 2006 and will be presented for discussion at the next Community Information Sessions (times for these are provided below).

Discussion paper

A discussion paper on all of the work undertaken to date in Stage Two of this study has been prepared. This discussion paper can be viewed on the Lake Mokoan website and at the following public venues:

Benalla Rural City Council Office
Wangaratta Rural City Council Office
DSE's Benalla Office
Benalla library

Community Information Session Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Study

The next and more detailed set of land use options for the future land use of the site of the present Lake Mokoan

Meet with members of the consultant team, Beca and members of the steering committee to discuss the future use of the site after decommissioning

11 April 2pm to 5pm
Lake Mokoan Yacht Club, Lake Mokoan
Road, Chesney Vale

11 April 6pm to 9pm
DSE Offices Benalla

For further information contact:
Phil Stevenson Ph: 57611673

Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee

C/- Department of Sustainability and Environment
35 Sydney Road, Benalla 3672. Telephone: 57611611 Fax: 57611628
www.lakemokoan.com.au

LakeMOKOAN

Community Information Session No.2

The second community information session was held at DSE's Benalla office on Tuesday 22 November 2005. Between 80 and 100 people attended to discuss the preliminary land use options. Comments were recorded at the session and 37 survey sheets were completed fully or in part by the attendees at the session or during the following week.

Community Response

The precincts of the study area and the preliminary land use options for these precincts are shown in Figure 1. Following is a summary of the community's response to the preliminary land use options.

Precinct A: The Wetland Core. Defined on the basis of land that is subject to a 1 in 5 year flood event and includes those areas occupied by the Winton Swamp wetland complex prior to the creation of Lake Mokoan. Precinct A included approximately 4,200 hectares.

There was very strong support for the restoration of the wetland complex. There was strong support for most of the wetland eco-tourism facilities although less people were for than against the tourism centre which included a café, accommodation and car park. There was a strong level of support for the wetland research/education facilities and very high support for recreation facilities. There were less people for than against the community facilities including a hall and meeting rooms. Overall the main level of support was for the less commercial aspects of eco-tourism and development

Precinct B: The Spit – An area of high geomorphological and archaeological significance. Precinct B included approximately 250 hectares.

There was a very high level of support for its inclusion in the wetland core. There was also a high level of support for the provision of wetland research/education and heritage interpretive facilities. A similar outcome was evident in relation to community facilities, as for Precinct A (i.e. less for than against). There were more against than for dryland stock grazing.

Precinct C: Creeks and Drainage Lines. Incorporates the creeks and drainage lines that feed the wetland core and some areas of ecological significance including several box woodland areas. Precinct C included approximately 900 hectares.

The response to C1 and C2 was essentially the same, with a very high level of support for their inclusion in the wetland core. This was particularly so for C2. More were for than against the provision of cycle paths/trail network. Far more respondents were against than for dryland stock grazing and commercial plantation forestry. This result would indicate relatively strong support for the protection of this precinct and its inclusion in the wetland core and its management primarily for ecological purposes.

Precinct D: Wetland Fringe. Included areas of ecological significance and/or are sensitively located adjacent to the wetland core. Precinct D included approximately 900 hectares.

The response to D1, D2 and D3 was essentially the same, with a high level of support for inclusion in the wetland core. Far more people were against than for dryland stock grazing, broadacre cropping, commercial plantation forestry and alternative energy production. There was a relatively even division of opinion in relation to the provision of cycle paths and a few more were for than against a wildlife sanctuary/reserve in Precinct D2 and D3 (an even result for D1).

Precinct E: South-western Dryland Area. Incorporated land generally considered more suitable for a range of alternative uses as it was generally considered less constrained by environmental considerations than precincts C and D. Precinct E included 1,400 hectares.

More respondents were against than for dryland stock grazing, broadacre cropping and commercial plantation forestry (with marginally more support overall for forestry than agriculture). There was a relatively even result for the provision of wetland eco-tourism facilities and for the cycle paths/trail network. Far more were against than for the provision of community facilities (hall and meeting rooms). There was strong support for the provision of an integrated sporting shooters facility, particularly in Precinct E1.

Precinct F: Eastern Dryland Area. As for Precinct E. Precinct F included approximately 150 hectares.

More respondents were against than for dryland stock grazing, broadacre cropping, a golf course/sports complex and tourist accommodation. There was a generally even outcome in relation to commercial plantation and forestry. More respondents were for than against the provision of cycle paths/trail network and a wildlife sanctuary/reserve.

Precinct G: Northern Dryland Area. The narrow strip of land north of the core wetland has some important environmental values. It includes some public facilities and generally has good public access. Precinct G included approximately 300 hectares.

There was strong support for its inclusion in the wetland core and a very strong level of support for the provision of recreation and community facilities (e.g. picnic facilities, boat ramp, multi-purpose community centre). The provision of wetland eco-tourism facilities and the cycle paths/trail network was similarly favoured. There was a strong level of opposition to commercial plantation forestry.

Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee

C/- Department of Sustainability and Environment

35 Sydney Road, Benalla 3672. Telephone: 57611611 Fax: 57611628

www.lakemokoan.com.au