

# Lake Mokoan Project

The return of Lake Mokoan to its natural state as a wetland system, will deliver major environmental benefits and a more efficient supply system for irrigators without affecting reliability of supply.

As a water storage for irrigators, Lake Mokoan is highly inefficient — it loses 50 billion litres a year to evaporation and has a chronic blue-green algal problem, which means that it is often closed in summer as it threatens the health of downstream users including Shepparton and other towns.

Unlike deep water storages, such as Lake Eildon which deliver real benefits to irrigators, a significant volume of water from the Broken system is required to simply replace Lake Mokoan water lost to evaporation every year.

In addition 3 million litres of water needs to be released from the system to deliver irrigators with 1 million litres. It is 30% efficient compared, for example with the Goulburn system which is 70% efficient.

Despite extensive investigations and research, investment in control measures has failed to eliminate blue green algae and other water quality issues and make the lake viable.

In deciding to decommission the lake in 2004 as part of the *Our Water Our Future* action plan, the Government committed to maintaining the reliability of supply to irrigators and at the same time significantly improve the existing poor irrigation delivery efficiency, one of the worst in Victoria.

The existing system is not sustainable socially, economically or environmentally.

While irrigators are increasing on-farm water efficiency and rivers are stressed, we can't afford this waste of water, particularly during drought conditions.

Now that the implementation of the project is well advanced with the Tungamah pipeline project almost complete, Goulburn Murray Water, DSE and the Goulburn Broken CMA have recently commenced discussion with irrigators on a package of offset options which will increase the operating efficiency of the Broken system.

Key stakeholders, including the Victorian Farmers Federation and local irrigators are now commenting on the proposed options.

At the same time consultation with the community on the future land use strategy is almost complete.

This is an opportunity for the community to ensure that it achieves the best outcome for the region, its lake restoration and improving the Broken system, to provide a more efficient system for the future of the regions irrigated agriculture.

Detailed information and advice is available from the Benalla DSE Project Office, to address many of the concerns that have been raised and to ensure accurate information is provided.

The Mokoan rehabilitation is one of the biggest wetland restoration projects in Australia's history and will create new local opportunities for education, research, recreation and tourism. Community participation and key stakeholder involvement such as local government will be critical to realising the project's full potential.



If you would like more information please contact the Benalla office on (03) 5761 1611, visit the website ([www.lakemokoan.com](http://www.lakemokoan.com)) and/or come in and meet the project staff in person to discuss the details of the project.

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