

9 Review of Public Comment

This chapter presents a summary of public comments on the preliminary land use options. It incorporates comments recorded by the consultant team at the community information session held at DSE's Benalla office on Tuesday 22 November 2005. It also incorporates comments recorded on survey sheets by participants at the session or returned during the following week.

9.1 Responses to survey sheets.

Between 80 and 100 people attended the community information session. A total of 37 survey sheets were completed fully or in part. There was some variation in the detail of responses- varying from some respondents only filling in one box in one precinct through to some participants filling in all boxes in all precincts and providing additional detailed comment.

- 37 survey sheets completed fully or in part.
- 22 participants responded to every proposed land use in every precinct.
- 10 participants responded to more than one precinct- but not all precincts.
- 5 participants responded to only one precinct.
- 24 participants provided additional comments.

Table 9.1 Summary of Community Response

Precinct	Land use option	Yes	No
Precinct A: Wetland Complex			
	Wetland eco-tourism facilities:	16	10
	- boardwalks, bird hides	16	9
	- interpretive signage, public art trail	15	9
	- cycle paths/trail network	17	9
	- tourism centre (café, accommodation, car park)	10	11
	- seed nursery/bank	14	9
	Wetland research/education facilities	18	8
	Community facilities (hall, meeting rooms)	11	13
	Recreation activities	24	4
Precinct B: The Spit			
	Inclusion in wetland complex (Precinct A)	20	3
	Dryland stock grazing	9	15
	Community facilities (hall, meeting rooms)	10	12
	Wetland research/education facilities	15	9
	Heritage interpretive facilities	14	10

Precinct	Land use option	Yes	No
Precinct C1: Creeks and drainage lines			
	Inclusion in wetland complex (Precinct A)	19	2
	Dryland stock grazing	6	17
	Commercial plantation forestry	9	15
	Cycle paths/trail network	13	10
Precinct C2: Creeks and drainage lines			
	Inclusion in wetland complex (Precinct A)	20	2
	Dryland stock grazing	6	17
	Commercial plantation forestry	7	17
	Cycle paths/trail network	12	10
Precinct D1: Wetland fringe			
	Inclusion in wetland complex (Precinct A)	13	6
	Dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping	7	15
	Commercial plantation forestry	8	13
	Cycle paths/trail network	9	11
	Wildlife sanctuary/reserve	10	10
	Alternative energy production (biomass, solar)	5	12
Precinct D2: Wetland fringe			
	Inclusion in wetland complex (Precinct A)	13	7
	Dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping	7	15
	Commercial plantation forestry	7	14
	Cycle paths/trail network	10	10
	Wildlife sanctuary/reserve	11	9
	Alternative energy production (biomass, solar)	4	13
Precinct D3: Wetland fringe			
	Inclusion in wetland complex (Precinct A)	15	7
	Dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping	9	15
	Commercial plantation forestry	10	14
	Cycle paths/trail network	12	10
	Wildlife sanctuary/reserve	13	9
	Alternative energy production (biomass, solar)	8	12
Precinct E1: Southern dryland area			
	Dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping	9	14
	Commercial plantation forestry	11	13

Precinct	Land use option	Yes	No
	Wetland eco-tourism facilities (as for Precinct A)	12	11
	Community facilities (hall, meeting rooms)	5	13
	Cycle paths/trail network	13	10
	Integrated sporting shooters facility	17	10
Precinct E2: Southern dryland area			
	Dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping	9	13
	Commercial plantation forestry	11	12
	Wetland eco-tourism facilities (as for Precinct A)	11	11
	Community facilities (hall, meeting rooms)	6	14
	Cycle paths/trail network	11	12
	Integrated sporting shooters facility	15	12
Precinct F: Western dryland area			
	Dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping	9	13
	Commercial plantation forestry	13	12
	Cycle paths/trail network	15	9
	Golf course/sports complex	10	14
	Tourist accommodation	11	12
	Wildlife sanctuary /reserve	14	8
Precinct G: Northern dryland area			
	Inclusion in wetland complex (Precinct A)	18	4
	Wetland Eco-tourism facilities	14	8
	Cycle paths/trail network	15	6
	Recreation/community facilities (e.g. picnic facilities, boat ramp, multi-purpose community centre)	23	4
	Commercial plantation forestry	8	15

Table 9.2 Summary of Community Comments

Worksheet	Precinct	Comments
1	A	Retain as a permanent wetland for security of supply and for breeding and habitat.
	A	Mainly dispersive clay soils high in Sodium. If drained, Sodium will be released into the water table and appear as salinity elsewhere.
	B	This area has many native burial sites that must not be disturbed.
2	A	An ephemeral wetland will not be suitable for yachting. Yacht club needs permanent water to generate income for costs of rescue facilities, insurance, rent and rates. Water skiers will go elsewhere if water level and quality is uncertain.
	A	Duck hunting should continue on the remaining wetland as it is an activity that has been present on Winton swamp (Lake Mokoan).
	A	Every effort should be made to eradicate carp from the new wetland.
3	A	The expansion of this area has created an unnecessarily large core area and thus reducing the land area for other precincts / land uses.
4	A	I am extremely concerned that there is no idea of the cost of maintenance of the wetland. The wetland must be in public hands. It appears that the large map that is not real in terms of current usable land. The linkage of tourist attraction to the wetland (Glenrowan and Wineries in the area should be a must).
5	A	Must have permanent water surrounding board walks and interpretive centre to supply birdlife, etc, and be visibly pleasing to tourists - which a dry bed won't be.
	G	Push into A creates buffer and potential high sites with views over wetland for future development.
	A	Wetland must be designed to deliver immediate benefits and become a tourist attraction, which will build with time but must have enough investment and creative design to draw tourists immediately. The lake is decommissioned so there is not a lag period of negative tourism and impact on community.
	A	Should be linked with Glenrowan Development \$18m Federal funding for Ned Kelly Interpretive Centre. Must also link in with local wineries and other surrounding tourism facilities. Be well signed on Hume Freeway to encourage diversion of visitors to visit.
	A	Must have a small section surrounding Interpretive section that is always carrying water and wildlife so as to meet visitors perception of wetland.

Worksheet	Precinct	Comments
	E - dryland	Must be sold as large parcels and commercially viable and ideally sold to adjoining existing land holders.
	A	Wetland complex must have boardwalks/interpretive signage, self guided tours that will hold tourists' interest including the tourists that are not purely environmentalists.
	A-C-B-D	Must be managed by single public authority that will ensure weed and vermin control.
	G	Should be added to A due to dimensions and unsuitability.
	W/S	Why can't W/S for mid stream storage and provide permanent water body with balance of A forming wetland. Deliver benefits to community recreation/tourism deliver wetland to improve security for Irrigators delivering security levels as originally promised.
6	A	Retain or improve for boating yachting
7		Highlighted area (south west corner near dam wall) would be more than enough area to be managed. The cost of managing land at a level, which would be beneficial to all parties, would not be sustainable. Small areas may be sustainable. Lake system would still be needed for flood mitigation for Benalla and Shepparton.
8		Future site for high quality ecotourism hotel. Site must be surrounded by fox proofed fenced to maximise native fauna opportunity. Grazing activity <i>only</i> to enhance native vegetation and landscape restoration. Opportunity and obligation to have end result as an icon of community and landscape.
9	C2, E1 & 2	Shooting Range for all types.
10	A	Native Fish Hatchery in area of current wall.
	Total Area (where relics occur)	Fenced (No Trespassing) areas to protect indigenous relics under control and management of appropriate local indigenous community.
	Total Area	Subject to intense exotic weed and feral animal management.
11	G	Golf course, sporting facilities
	A	Rowing Course
	G	Additional Residential Development from 1 acre to 10 acre size.

Worksheet	Precinct	Comments
	G	To create larger community base.
	D1, D2, D3, E2	Sporting shooters facility
	A & Part G	Create recreational boating (non powered) facility.
		Generally improve access roads from Glenrowan/Freeway to all areas of Lake Region.
12	A & G	Create more community facilities to maintain existing assets.
	G	Golf course.
	A	Rowing course.
	G & F	Sporting shooters facility
	A	Maintain yachting, fishing.
13		Keep as much land as possible in the wetland and make sure it is wet! Very limited access. The land should be as far as possible for native flora and fauna. Limited land required for research activities- good idea to learn from the experience here. Permanent water body a plus. Leave the dead trees – not removed for personal gain. Who benefits from their removal?
14		Overall – the study area needs to be properly managed to avoid pest species, weeds. Python study being undertaken at the moment. Would be opposed to any small-scale residential subdivision.
15		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Held and game clay target range 2. Benalla Gun Club clay target range 3. Pistol range 4. Small Bore range 5. Large Bore range 6. 100 acres required to operate = complex shared by all clubs. Easy access.
		Duck hunting is now a lawful activity, supported by the Government – what will change?
		Fishing – what will happen to the fish population? Pressure on other storages for recreation!!!

Worksheet	Precinct	Comments
		Vermin control - leave lake as it is and manage better!!
16	Inlet channel	Retain for flooding
17	Precinct G	Forestry not compatible with ecotourism /cycling, views. Good access to the wetland services/facilities.
18	A (wetland core)	Dispersive clay; currently sodium is locked into the soil profile. Drying will release sodium into water table - affecting aquifers downstream - endemic problem - how much will the 'wetlands' dry out in between flood season - are there any mitigation measures? i) red gums, river sheoaks, casuarinas. (Makes a difference on 20 year flood but not a 100 year.
		Development to minimise mitigation loss during dry period. Try to turn development/restoration of site into a temporary attraction. Community impacts. Iconic outcome - does have high quality hotel. - Near water - exceptional views. -Vermin proof fence
19	G Jammick area	SKM identified an opportunity to develop a horticultural area potential to employ 300. This is an opportunity lost to the region. Consideration must be given to replacing that employment opportunity back to the Benalla community. The community has suffered a nett loss in economic development. Invest some state \$ of a site is wrong. Make a win win not a win loss.
20		There is a big opportunity to develop plantations across the site. Depending on site conditions (soils, level of inundation locations in relation to adjoining landholders) plantations would provide the basis for developing a timber industry, particularly low rainfall species such as sugar gum, spotted gum, possibly Sydney Blue Gum and where it is subject to inundation Red Gum. There is also an opportunity to use the plantations for firewood which is becoming scarce at both a local and regional level. A commercial firewood plantation could potentially supply firewood into the Melbourne market which is finding it increasingly difficult to source firewood.
21	A	The zone between the "old" swamps and edge of A could be used for agricultural activities even if "wet" 1 year in 5. The issue is length of inundation. A review of this zone could open up profitable land sales provided adequate safeguards were included on title.
22	E, B, F, G	1. The dryland areas could be used for a mixture of environmental and agroforestry tree planting sites. The

Worksheet	Precinct	Comments
		<p>environmental plantings could be strategically located to link existing areas of remnant vegetation and corridors including Precinct C Creeks and Drainage Lines. The enviro plantings could also buffer the larger agroforestry sites. Any areas that were above the water line of the new Mokoan Swamp could be potential revegetation sites. Agroforestry plantings could have a variety of environmental, social and financial positive outcomes. Any revegetation of the site would also act as an important greenhouse sink, requesting excess levels of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Agroforestry plantings will sequester more GHG in the future, particularly if the harvested timber is used in long life products such as floorboards.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The thinnings from agroforestry could also be utilised for alternative fuel energies such as wood fired burners. Landholders who own the agroforestry trees may also have the potential to trade any carbon credits in the event of a national or state carbon trading scheme. The areas of revegetation could also be designed in such a way as to allow recreation links in the landscape such as walking/cycling paths. Funding for environmental plantings could be accessed through the Regional Catchment Investment Process. 3. Precinct A - Could be used primarily on the eastern section for environmental planting. Planting the site out with River Red Gums and associated floodplain rip vegetation would enhance the environmental attributes of the site. 4. Another alternative for E2-E1 is to make the site a public firewood site. This would reduce the pressures on private and public forests in the adjacent areas. Again this management usage could contribute positively to reducing GHG emissions. Firewood used from plantations is considered as a positive gain in terms of carbon accounting.
23	<p>A</p> <p>C</p>	<p>Routes need to connect elsewhere within local region. Think about accommodation that already exists, expand first (funding for existing business) Recreation activities - depending on how managed, water depths, yacht club will not be viable if there is no permanent water - compensation for asset. No duck shooting. Concern - ongoing management especially if Parks Victoria manage site. Must stop "uncontrolled" activity/camping - "Hoons" Think about Public Toilets - who will look after? Make sure "change" in each areas is managed over time.</p>

Worksheet	Precinct	Comments
		Commercial plantation forestry - ok subject to study.
	D	If an area is subdivided, make sure ratepayers don't pay for roads.
	E	Don't want log trucks on Lake Mokoan Road, could still do Agroforestry but must access to Hume; preference for no agroforestry. Roads must be provided if Agroforestry considered.
	G	Adjacent property owners want G "Public" - must provide public access across G.
24	A	This wetland wont be big drawcard. Swimming - question of feasibility! Tourism centre/Seed nursery/bank - feasibility? Parks Victoria budget allocation. Move edge of Precinct A upslope because of fauna issues - recreation only.
	E	Dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping - constraints of soil-uneconomical, very limited.
	F	Golf course - feasibility? May be better in C1 due to landscape features. F = marginal wetlands/lowlands.
	G	Recreation/community facilities - these already exist, they should not be taken away/wasted.

*Each precinct and comment listed separately

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9.2 Summary of community comment:

- Precinct A – the Wetland Core. 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 (the highest). 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. 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. 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 – the Wetland Fringe. 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. 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 – Western Dryland Area. 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. 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.

Precinct A -The picture emerging from a review of the response sheets indicates that, overall the main level of support was for the less commercial aspects of eco-tourism/development and recreational activities and for the wetland research and education facilities.

Precinct B drew a similar response in regard to its inclusion in the wetland core and the development of research/ education and interpretive facilities. Dryland stock grazing was generally not supported.

Precinct C drew strong support for being included in the wetland core, and little support for dryland stock grazing or plantation forestry.

Precinct D also drew support for inclusion in the wetland core (but not as strongly as for B, C and G) and little support for dryland stock grazing, broadacre cropping and plantation forestry (similar to response for Precinct C).

Precinct E was notable for the support for the sporting shooters facility (particularly E1) and opposition to the community facilities (hall, meeting rooms). There were almost as many for and against the other proposed land uses, with marginally more support for forestry than agriculture. Agricultural activities were not well favoured.

Precinct F was not preferred as a location for dryland stock grazing and broadacre cropping or the golf course/complex. A majority considered the precinct suitable for cycle paths/trail network and for a wildlife sanctuary reserve.

Precinct G gained strong support for inclusion in the wetland core, for wetland eco-tourism facilities and very strong support as a location of recreation and community facilities. Commercial plantation forestry was opposed in this location.

The precincts that were suggested for inclusion in the wetland all drew more responses for than against – B (20/3), C (19/2 and 20/2), G (18/4), D (13/6, 13/7 and 13/7). The

comments however continue to raise concern about the ability to manage such an area of land and the cost of doing so. The support for the wetland also comes with the proviso that it has to be 'the best' and should not be allowed to become a 'short-term' eyesore.

All responses will continue to be taken into account in the refinement of options. In this respect, the community has not yet suggested any options other than those proposed and is in fact starting to narrow the range considered suitable.

D Broad overview of optional land uses: (based on those that tended to receive most response or divergent opinion and are most closely related to the primary and secondary land use classifications):

- 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 received so well.
- Limited support overall for grazing and cropping (in each precinct more people were against than for)
- Limited support for commercial plantation forestry (but better supported than 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

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10 Classification of Land Use Options

10.1 Land Use Hierarchy

Further analysis has led to the identification of a hierarchy of the preliminary land use options. This hierarchy is presented in Table 10.1:

- 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, agriculture and agri-forestry will 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
- 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 options that drive key decisions about the size and balance of the primary land uses (e.g. it is not important for the wetland interpretive facilities whether the wetland occupies 4,000, 5,000 or 6,000 hectares. The size of the wetland will be based on other factors including management, ecological and biodiversity considerations and community response)
- 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, Glenrowan and Wangaratta regardless of the wetland. However, the experience of using such a facility would be enhanced if it was linked to a wetland complex and its anticipated values, and/or with associated interpretive and tourist facilities.

For the purposes of this study it is a fundamental that the secondary and tertiary land uses are compatible with the primary and with each other.

Table 10.1 Classification of preliminary land use options

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

10.2 Primary Land Use Options

10.2.1 Wetland Complex

As indicated during the development and assessment of the preliminary land use options, the restoration of the wetland complex is the core precinct around which other land use options are to be developed and assessed. The initial footprint of the wetland complex, which was presented as Precinct A in Information Bulletin No 3 (November 2005), was based on two data sets:

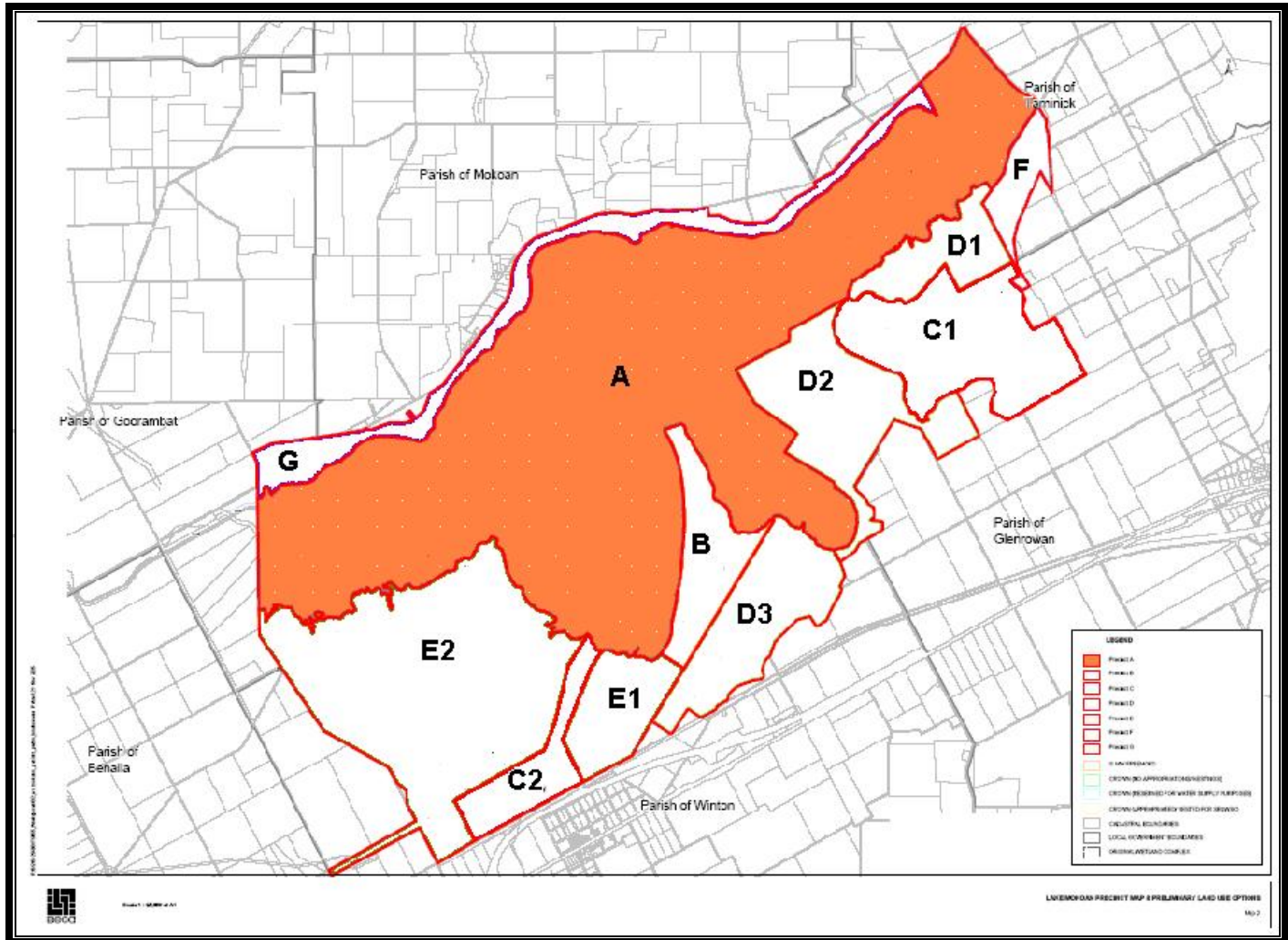
- the footprint of the Winton Swamp complex that existed prior to the flooding to create Lake Mokoan
- the mapping of the 1 in 5 year flood event, which indicated areas that are frequently inundated and are representative of the prior wetlands and surface flows that sustain them.

There was an apparent misconception during the assessment of the preliminary land use options that the boundary of Precinct A, and the 4,200 hectares that it encompassed also marked the boundary between public land ownership. This is not correct. The boundary of Precinct A actually delineates an area within which the primary management objectives are ecological restoration, management and protection. Certainly, most of the critical areas of conservation value in Precinct A are likely to be owned and managed publicly including, for example, the wetland system. However, subject to the assessment of its suitability and compatibility, some areas could also be for forestry. Some areas could, in the short and long term, be used for agriculture, though this is unlikely to be a suitable and compatible land use over the longer term. These management principles apply to all options (and their associated footprints) for Precinct A, which are to be developed and assessed further in the study.

It is clear that the assessment of what land should be included in the wetland core, and how this may affect other land use and management decisions, need to be addressed as a priority. In the development of the preliminary land use options, it was indicated that the size and scale of the wetland, woodland and grassland components of the primary study area that are to be included in the wetland complex had yet to be finally decided. For this reason, one of the options identified for a number of the precincts adjacent to the wetland core (Precinct A) was that they be included in the wetland core. This applied to Precinct B (the Spit), C (Creeks and Drainage Lines), D (Wetland Fringe) and G (Northern Dryland Area).

To assist with the assessment of the appropriate footprint for Precinct A, three options for the wetland core have been prepared. These options represent a range of wetland core footprints, shown on Figures 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 and described as follows

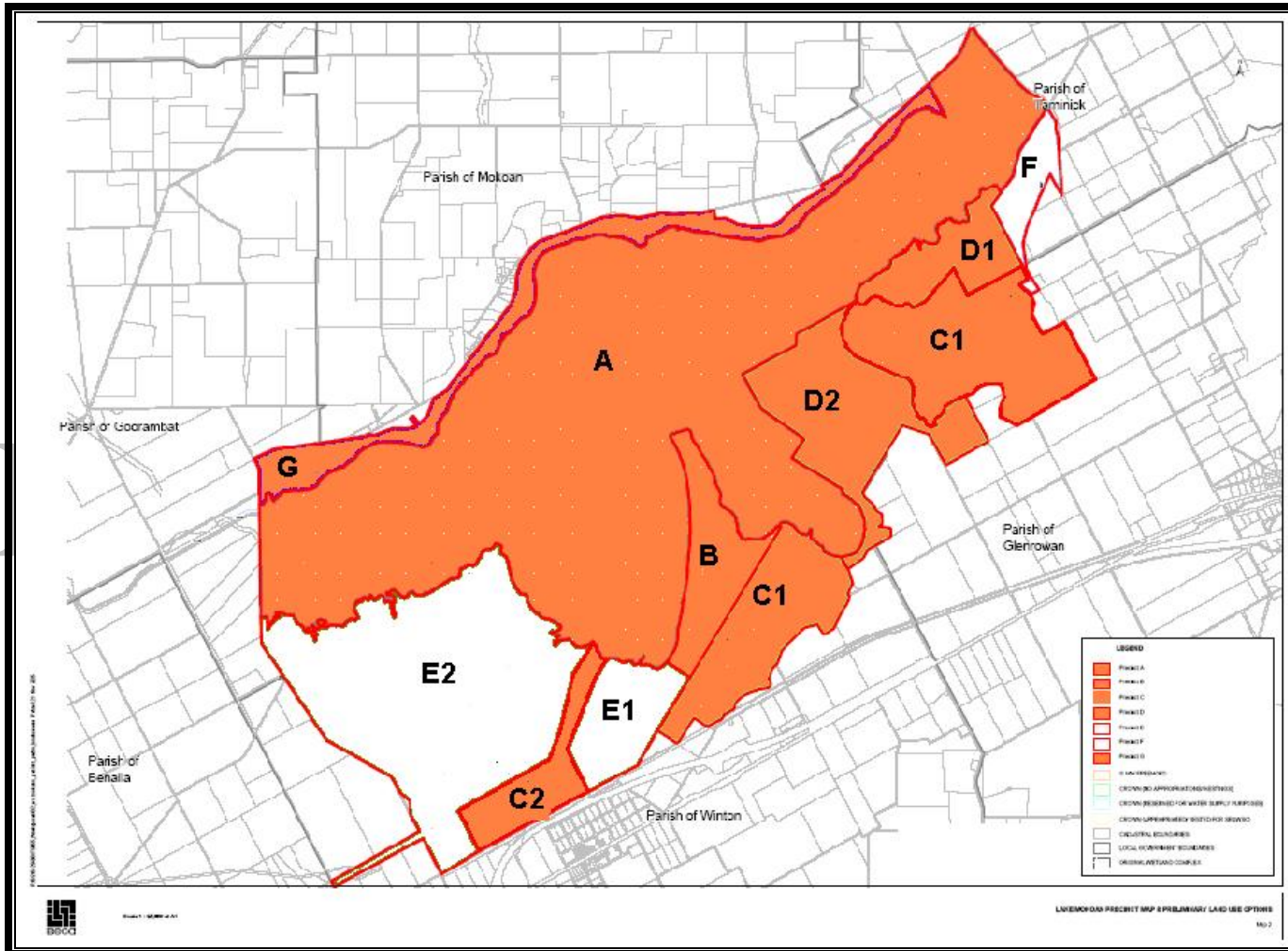
Figure 10.1
Wetland Core Precinct A1 (Minimum)



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Figure 10.2
Wetland Core Precinct A2 (Maximum)

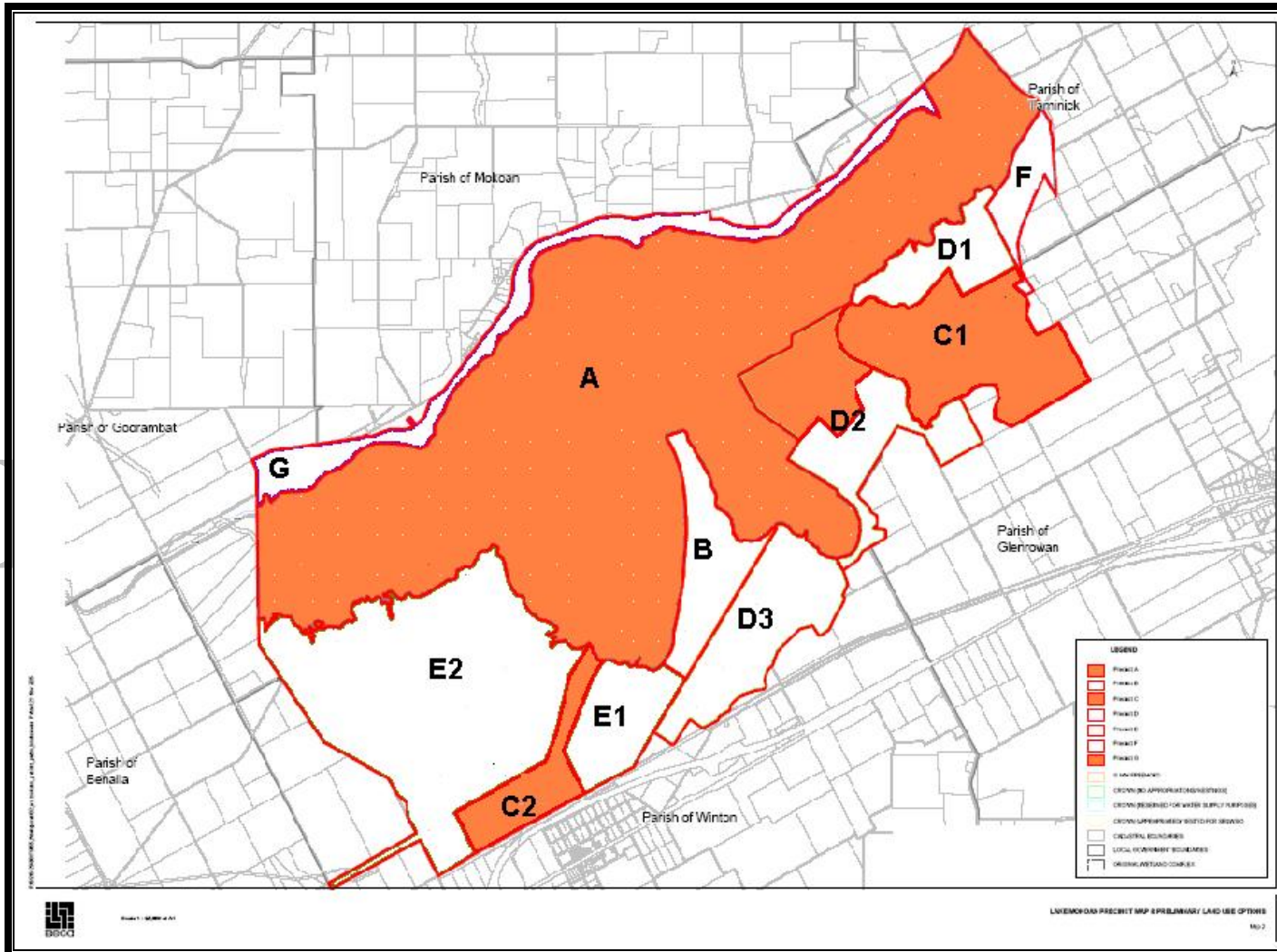


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Figure 10.3
Wetland Core Precinct A3 (Middle)

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- Wetland Core (Precinct A1): this is the same as the option included in Information Bulletin No 3 (November 2005) and discussed at the Community Information Session. This includes approximately 4,400 hectares and can be considered the minimum footprint (Figure 10.1)
- Wetland Core (Precinct A2): this includes all of the land in the precincts (Precincts B, C, D and G) identified for potential inclusion in the wetland core. This includes approximately 6,750 hectares and can be considered the maximum footprint (Figure 10.2)
- Wetland Core (Precinct A3): this includes Precinct C (Creeks and Drainage Lines) and G (Northern Dryland Area). Precinct B has been included due to its high geomorphological and archaeological significance. Precinct C has been included because it contains creek and drainage lines that feed the wetland system. Precinct G has been included because it is a long narrow strip of land, some of which is already located in a reserve. This option includes approximately 5,850 hectares and can be considered as falling roughly between the minimum and maximum options.

Again, it should be borne in mind that these footprints denote a spectrum of land use areas being managed primarily for ecological purposes, not a boundary between public and private ownership. They have been prepared because they represent a realistic range of possible outcomes. They also enable the possible range of private and public land management issues to be assessed in greater detail.

Ecological investigations of the key precincts of the primary study area are scheduled for early January 2006 to provide more detailed information on which of the footprints outlined above most closely encompasses the areas that should be managed primarily for ecological purposes. The investigations will also help to identify areas within this footprint that may be suitable for either public or private land management, and the covenants that might apply to management.

10.2.2 Agriculture

The initial assessment of agriculture indicated that it had the potential to be compatible with the protection of the ecological and conservation wetland values of the wetland complex and with the use of adjoining land. Management was considered important, as poor management has the potential to exacerbate pest plant and animal invasion and to affect drainage lines. Effects on surface water quality, including the potential for fertilizers to wash into creeks and drainage lines, could also have negative effects on downstream wetland and ecological values.

Agriculture was listed as a possible land use option for Precinct B (the Spit), C (Creeks and Drainage Lines), D (Wetland Fringe), E (South-western Dryland Area) and F (Eastern Dryland Area). While there is limited data available on soil conditions, it was generally considered that land in the south-eastern areas of the primary study areas were more suitable for dryland stock grazing while those in the north-west were more suitable for broadacre cropping. Agriculture was not listed as an option for Precinct G (Northern Dryland Area) as it was considered that achieving good management would be difficult in this narrow wetland fringing strip of land.

Further ecological surveys will help to identify whether there are areas within the wetland core that may be suitable for agriculture in the short and/or longer term. In response to the three different wetland cores described in the previous section, the following comments on agriculture can be made:

- Wetland Precinct A1 (Minimum). Under this option, precincts identified above as potentially suitable for agricultural activities, including Precinct B (the Spit), C (Creeks and Drainage Lines) and D (Wetland Fringe) would be included in the wetland core and their suitability for some form of agriculture will need to be re-assessed. It may be possible in the short term, perhaps before restoration and regeneration activities are extended into those precincts. If short-term dryland grazing was to occur, it would need to be subject to strict management requirements.
- Wetland Precinct A2 (Maximum). Under this option, precincts identified above as potentially suitable for agricultural activities, including Precinct B (the Spit) and Precinct C (Creeks and Drainage Lines) would be included in the wetland core and their suitability for some form of agriculture will need to be re-assessed. It may be possible in the short term, subject to strict management requirements.

It is unlikely that long-term grazing or broadacre cropping will be a suitable and compatible land use in the wetland core. This option would, therefore, practically restrict the potential for agricultural activities to Precinct E (South-western Dryland Area), with a total of approximately 1,400 hectares. Precinct E1 would be abutted on on three sides by the wetland core and setbacks would be required for the areas of interface. The smaller land area of this precinct and the extent of its interfaces with the wetland core would make sound long-term management more difficult than for the larger E2 precinct (although this precinct would also have extensive areas of interface).

- Wetland Precinct A3 (Middle). Under this option, precincts identified above as potentially suitable for agricultural activities, including Precinct B (the Spit) and Precinct C (Creeks and Drainage Lines) would be included in the wetland core and their suitability for some form of agriculture will need to be re-assessed. It may be possible in the short term, subject to strict management requirements. It is unlikely that long-term dryland grazing or broadacre cropping will be a suitable and compatible land use in the wetland core.

This option would therefore, practically restrict the potential for agricultural activities to Precincts D (Wetland Fringe) and E (South-western Dryland Area), with a total area of approximately 2,300 hectares. Precincts D and E would have extensive boundaries with the wetland core and strict management requirements would need to be placed on agricultural activities and the areas of interface.

The agricultural land use option will remain possible for all footprints of the wetland core, though the area available would vary from 3,900 hectares (A1) to 1,400 hectares (A2). Strict management requirements would be necessary under all footprint options, particularly in regard to surface water run-off and the boundary interface areas.

10.2.3 Agri-forestry

The initial assessment of agri-forestry indicated that it had the potential to be compatible with the protection of the wetland complex and with existing adjoining land uses. It was considered that care would need to be taken with its siting and management and its potential impacts on the capacity and

condition of the local road network. The capacity to manage agri-forestry for both commercial and ecological purposes was identified as depending on the type of tree species to be grown and the operational regime to be put in place.

Agri-forestry was listed as a possible land use option for Precinct C (Creeks and Drainage Lines), D (Wetland Fringe), E (South-western Dryland Area), F (Eastern Dryland Area) and G (Northern Dryland Area). It has been estimated that around 1,000 hectares would be required as a minimum for a viable commercial forestry plantation and around 200 to 400 hectares has been identified as a viable land area for forestry grown for firewood. Agri-forestry was not listed as an option for Precinct B (the Spit) as it was considered that intensive planting would be inconsistent with the geomorphological and archaeological values of this precinct.

Further ecological surveys will help to identify whether there are areas within the wetland core that may be suitable for agri-forestry in the short and/or longer term. In response to the three different wetland cores described above, the following comments on agri-forestry can be made:

- Wetland Precinct A1 (Minimum). This option is the same as that presented in Information Bulletin No. 3. Agri-forestry would continue to be a possible land use option for the precincts outlined above. Strict management requirements and the potential use of conservation covenants would need to be considered for the areas of interface with the wetland core. This would apply to all precincts, particularly to any agri-forestry activity proposed for Precincts C (Creeks and Drainage Lines), D (Wetland Fringe) and G (Northern Dryland Area). This option would be potentially suitable for these precincts with a total area of approximately 3,650 hectares.
- Wetland Precinct A2 (Maximum). Under this option, precincts defined as potentially suitable for agri-forestry activities, including Precincts C (Creeks and Drainage Lines), D (Wetland Fringe) and G (Northern Dryland Area) would be included in the wetland core and their suitability for some form of agri-forestry need to be re-assessed. It is possible that, subject to the species to be planted and how it would be managed, agri-forestry could be a suitable and compatible land use for some of the land included in the wetland core.

Agri-forestry may not be suitable for Precinct G (Northern Dryland), as it is a narrow wetland fringing strip of land which also adjoins an area of rural living. Noise, traffic and visual screening issues may have an adverse impact on the amenity of the residents in this area of rural living. Strict management requirements would need to be considered for the interface (within and adjoining the wetland core) with areas of high conservation significance, particularly for any agri-forestry prospect for Precinct C (Creeks and Drainage Lines).

If land within the wetland core is deemed unsuitable for agri-forestry, the option would practically restrict the potential for agri-forestry to Precinct E (South-western Dryland Area), with a total area of approximately 1,400 hectares. As indicated previously, this precinct also has been identified as being potentially suitable for agriculture, so these two uses would be in competition for this land. Precinct F (Eastern Dryland Area) includes approximately 150 hectares and is unlikely to be viable on its own.

- Wetland Precinct A3 (Middle). Under this option precincts identified as potentially suitable for agri-forestry activities, including Precinct C (Creeks and Drainage Lines) and G (Northern Dryland Area), would be included in the wetland core and their suitability for some form of agri-forestry will need to be re-assessed.

If land within the wetland core is deemed unsuitable for agri-forestry, this option would practically restrict the potential for agri-forestry to Precincts D (Wetland Fringe), E (South-western Dryland Area), F (Eastern Dryland Area) and G (Northern Dryland Area) with a total area of 2,750 hectares. These precincts would have extensive boundaries with the wetland core and strict management requirements would need to be placed on agri-forestry activities and the areas of interface.

The agri-forestry land use option will remain possible for all footprints of the wetland core, though the area available (outside the wetland core) would vary from 3,650 hectares (A1) to 1,550 (A2). In the latter, the land available would potentially place agri-forestry in direct competition with other land uses, particularly agriculture.

10.3 Secondary Land Uses

Further analysis is currently being undertaken on the potential viability of these uses, grouped together and on their own. It is likely that most of these uses would be located together to create a tourism node with sufficient critical mass to generate the levels of visitation and expenditure needed to be financially viable. The following land use options would logically locate together:

- interpretive signage
- wetland research/education facilities
- wildlife sanctuary/park
- native seed nursery/bank
- wetland interpretive facilities
- wetland tourism facilities

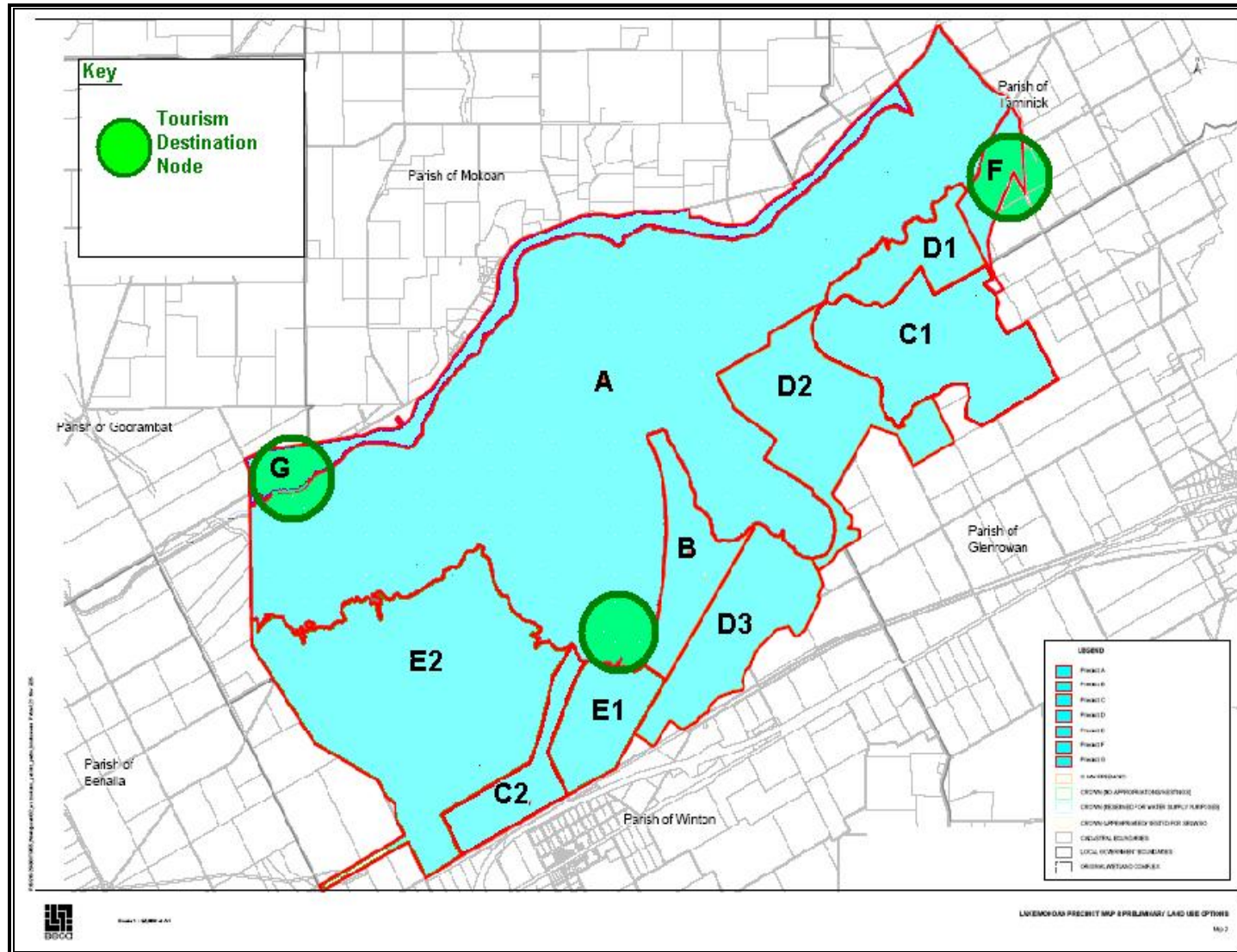
The land uses would be able to share an access road, car parking and servicing infrastructure. It may also be possible for them to share certain facilities such as meeting rooms, a theatriette, conveniences etc. The objective would be to create a sufficient range of activities for the node to act as a destination as well as stopping off point. Three possible locations for the tourism node are being considered (Figure 10.4):

- Location 1: This is the existing Goulburn Murray Water facility with access from Lake Mokoan Road. There would be the capacity to utilise the existing buildings and to incorporate cycle paths and viewing points along the existing dam wall. A node in this location would have good access to Benalla and generally good access from the Hume Freeway. It may, however, be at some distance from the wetland water body.
- Location 2: This is located on the southern side of the wetland core. Access would be either from Ashmead Road or a new access road from the Hume Freeway. It would be located on the southern

shoreline of the prior Winton Swamp. The consultant ecologists have identified that this is likely to be one of the more interesting parts of the restored wetland complex and would be particularly suitable for the development of wetland interpretive facilities, including signage, boardwalks, bird-hides, etc.

D
R
A
F
T

Figure 10.4
Possible tourism nodes



D

T

It could also provide a starting point for an archaeological interpretive trail around the Spit. It could also be linked with a cycle trail that could connect Benalla and Glenrowan.

- Location 3: This is located on the north-eastern side of the primary study area with access from the Glenrowan-Boweya Road. This location would have good linkages with the wineries and Glenrowan. It would, however, be distant from the main areas of the restored wetland complex and may be more suitable for the development of a golf course resort and accommodation than for wetland tourism and interpretive facilities.

A preferred location will be identified in this phase of the study.

During Stage One and the development of the preliminary land use options at the beginning of Stage Two, there has been considerable community interest in the potential to maintain current recreational fishing and yachting/boating activities. As indicated in the preliminary land use option discussion paper:

- The assessment indicated that the recreational fishing option has the potential to contribute to the range of tourism and recreational opportunities available to visitors (including locals) to the site, though it would need to be conducted and managed in a manner consistent with ecological and conservation values. The ephemeral nature of the wetland complex to be restored may also inhibit the capacity to maintain consistent levels of fish stocks and/or to enable the launching of small boats. It was identified that further analysis of water levels and depths, water quality and temperature are required to better understand the capacity of the restored wetland complex to support either regular or periodic recreational fishing. Based on the advice of DSE, DPI and Goulburn Murray Water, it is unlikely that current levels and patterns of recreational fishing will be maintained given the likely fluctuations in water depth and temperature and the likelihood that fish stocking will not be continued. The opportunity for recreational fishing will not however, be precluded, though it will be dependent on the natural conditions and cycles.
- The assessment indicated that the yachting/boating option has the potential to contribute to the range of tourism and recreational opportunities available to visitors (including locals) to the site, although it would need to be conducted in a manner consistent with ecological and conservation values. It was identified that the ephemeral nature of the wetland complex may inhibit/preclude the capacity to maintain a water body with sufficient area and depth to enable regular or periodic yachting activities (as currently undertaken). It was identified that the opportunities for yachting and boating will not be precluded, although it is unlikely that current levels and patterns of activity will be maintained. Different types of boats (perhaps with a shallower draught) and less formal activities over a smaller area may still be possible.

10.4 Tertiary land uses

A range of tertiary land uses are being assessed:

- Integrated sporting shooters facility. There has been considerable support for the development of this facility. The preferred location has been identified adjacent to the existing dam wall in Precinct E (South-western Dryland Area).
- Cycle paths. There has been considerable support for a cycle path connection that links Benalla to Glenrowan and Wangaratta through the primary study area. The location of the cycle paths will depend on decisions made about the siting of the tourism node.
- Orienteering and marathon course. This option has not been assessed in detail and can be considered further once decisions have been made about the location of the tourism node and linked cycle paths.
- Public art trail. The public art trail could be integrated with the wetland tourism and interpretive facilities and cycle paths. This option can be considered further once decisions have been made on the location of the tourism destination node and linked cycle paths.

Golf course resort and Winery/Winton Raceway related accommodation. These two options have generally been considered as being suitably located together or close by. Further analysis is being undertaken on the potential viability of these facilities. A preferred location is Precinct F (Eastern Dryland Area) although they could be located adjacent to the tourism destination node (particularly location 2).

F

T