



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Water

Thursday, 19 June, 2008

\$20 MILLION FOR LAKE MOKOAN RESTORATION PROJECT

The Brumby Government has today committed up to \$20 million to restore the former Winton wetlands after Lake Mokoan is decommissioned.

Water Minister Tim Holding said the Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy would create an outstanding recreational and tourism asset for Benalla and surrounding communities.

“The Brumby Government is taking action to provide water security for communities across the state and delivering on its commitment to return Lake Mokoan to a natural wetland following its decommissioning,” Mr Holding said.

“We are pleased with the progress of discussions with the Victorian Farmers Federation and affected irrigators on an offsets package to secure the reliability of their water supplies once the lake is decommissioned.

“No irreversible decommissioning works will be undertaken at Lake Mokoan before offset measures are implemented for irrigators.

“However, while those discussions continue, I want the community to be assured that the Brumby Government is committed to replacing Lake Mokoan with an environmental and recreational asset of international significance.

“Committing \$20 million to the Future Land Use Strategy will ensure that the community-inspired vision for this site can be realised in its entirety.

“I would like to thank the community-based Future Land Use Steering Committee and the Benalla Rural City Council for their hard work and commitment.”

The Brumby Government has also agreed in principle with the Committee’s proposal that a board of management, including community representatives, be established to oversee the planning, design, allocation of funds, and implementation of the Future Land Use Strategy.

Lake Mokoan is Victoria’s most inefficient water storage and loses three in every four litres released into the Broken irrigation system.

In December last year, the Brumby Government announced that the Lake Mokoan decommissioning project would proceed.

Mr Holding said the alternative proposals would have meant higher construction costs, significant water losses and increased operating costs.

“The decommissioning project will deliver between 45 and 54 billion litres in water savings annually to improve environmental flows in rivers, while maintaining irrigators’ reliability of supply and increasing the efficiency of the Broken delivery system,” he said.

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The Future Land Use Strategy will take up to eight years to complete and will include:

- restoring the former Winton wetlands;
- developing bike paths, boardwalks, signage and picnic facilities;
- the first stage of a visitor interpretative centre at the tourism precinct; and,
- ongoing maintenance and monitoring works

Mr Holding, who is also Tourism Minister, said the strategy would provide a valuable tourism asset for the region.

“Tourism attractions are so important to encourage more visitors to visit the region and I believe that the restored Winton wetlands will attract many more local, interstate and international visitors here each year.”