



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Department of Sustainability and Environment

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NEW \$10 MILLION MID MURRAY STORAGE WORKS TO BEGIN SOON

Initial work will begin soon developing the new northern Victoria water storage system between Kerang and Swan Hill.

The \$10 million project follows extensive consultation, investigation and design work during the past two years and contributes to Victoria's Living Murray commitments outlined in the Government's water reform policy, *Our Water Our Future*.

Department of Sustainability and Environment General Manager, Office of Water, Mr David Downie, said Lake Boga, Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm will now form the new system, which will hold some of the water saved by decommissioning the inefficient Lake Mokoan.

He said the system would help manage distribution of an extra 19 gigalitres in environmental flows for the Snowy River by holding water for downstream irrigation as well as town and domestic and stock supply.

"By storing some of these water savings in the Mid Murray Storage, this now enables an equivalent volume of water to be released down the Snowy River," Mr Downie said.

He said the extra environmental flows in the Snowy River would contribute to Victoria's work to restore the river's environment and reverse degradation over the past 50 years.

The remaining water savings resulting from decommissioning of Lake Mokoan would provide environmental flows each year for the Murray.

Initial work is expected to start in the next few months with completion scheduled for August 2008.

The on-ground works for the storage will include two outfalls: a channel from Lake Boga to the Little Murray River, downstream of the Little Murray Weir, and a refurbished channel or floodway connecting Kangaroo Lake to the Avoca floodway.

Mr Downie said the new storage system would not increase the amount of water used along the Murray, but manage the same amount of water in a better way to achieve real environmental outcomes and other benefits.

"Recreational and tourism users at the lakes will have more certainty about water levels because of water being stored there each year, particularly at Lake Boga," Mr Downie said.

He said the storage also would give greater flexibility in delivering water to downstream areas by allowing water to be released downstream of the major flow restrictions along the Murray, such as the Barmah Choke.

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He said investigations had shown there would be minimal impact on the Kerang lakes environment and operation of the Torumburry Irrigation System.

The Mid Murray Storage is being developed in collaboration with key stakeholders including Goulburn-Murray Water, the North-Central Catchment Management Authority, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Gannawarra Shire Council, tourism and recreation businesses and the local community.

The project is being funded by multiple investors including Living Murray and Water for Rivers (Snowy).

For further information about the Lake Mokoan Project visit www.lakemokoan.com