

Lake Nillahcootie Flood Study released

An independent study commissioned by Benalla Rural City Council has found that the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan will not decrease the flood mitigation benefits of Lake Nillahcootie.

Consultants Cardno Lawson Treloar were engaged to complete the *Lake Nillahcootie Flood Study* following concerns raised by the Benalla and District Flood Awareness Group on behalf of the community.

Benalla Rural City General Manager Infrastructure Dimitri Scordalides said the study found that even if Benalla had a repeat of the major 1993 flood event, decommissioning would not lead to increased flooding or additional houses being impacted."

"Lake Nillahcootie, even when full, provides a level of flood protection for Benalla by reducing the passage of floodwaters downstream and storing and delaying flood waters," Mr Scordalides said.

"If it were possible to have Lake Nillahcootie at 75 per cent full or less, the 1993 flood levels would have been 9 centimetres lower, however, this situation is difficult to achieve as it would be necessary to predict a flood three weeks in advance so the storage could be lowered.

"This finding is supported by the study's findings that during the past four major floods, Lake Nillahcootie was either full or close to full prior to each event."

In addition to the *Lake Nillahcootie Flood Study*, additional studies have found that the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan will have negligible impact on flood levels downstream of Caseys Weir on the Broken River as the large capacity of the Winton Wetland and proposed 10-metre opening in the current dam wall will significantly limit overflows from the wetland.

Results from the studies were presented to members of the Benalla and District Flood Awareness Group on 9 December. The presentation also included detailed responses to 36 potential flooding impact questions raised by the group and other members of the community.

Mr Scordalides thanked the flood group for raising legitimate concerns with Council and acknowledged their hard work on behalf of the local community.

"Council is keen to continue working with the group to improve flood protection for Benalla using findings from the studies," he said.

The Lake Nillahcootie Flood Study was funded by the Victorian Government and commissioned by the Benalla Rural City in partnership with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and Goulburn-Murray Water.

Further information is available by visiting the Lake Mokoan website at **www.lakemokoan.com.au** The site includes a general fact sheet and a range of detailed reports, including the complete *Lake Nillahcootie Flood Study*.

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