

Lake Mokoan Reference Committee
Meeting MINUTES
Thursday May 29, 2003

Location: Department of Primary Industries Offices, Benalla – 9.00 am to 10.30 am.

Present: Huw Davies, Bruce Anderson, Rod Berger, John Boal, Maureen Cottam, Bernie Evans, Michael Reid, Stuart Fraser, Doug Bain, Ken Whan, Peter Box

Apologies: Neville Fowler, Ray Henderson, Sally Simson

1. Feedback on Interim Report – members were provided with a summary of the responses to the Interim Report.

Huw Davies outlined the main points that were raised via the feedback and noted at the steering Committee meeting. He mentioned that these will be considered in the final report. These included:

- a revision of the figures relating to the value of agriculture in the region
- concerns raised in relation to flooding
- the value of environmental water if the system is operated at full supply level – the question of how do we value environmental water?
- how will wetlands be rehabilitated? What would be the costs associated with this? And, how effective will this be?
- dam improvement costs – final report tables will show each options costs with and without dam improvement costs. (also note that the dam improvement costs are estimates and that more accurate figures are being calculated – these will either be available for the final report or will be an addendum to the final report).

2. Steering Committee response to the feedback.

The Steering Committee resolved that the scenarios to be modelled and altered are:

- 2B3 (spit bank and reduce level to 164.0 metres, operate as existing) and 3B3 (spit bank and reduce level to 164.0 metres, operate as annual storage) to be retained for further study
- 3C2 (combined spit and contour banks, reduce to 165.0 metres) to be **discarded**

And two **additional** scenarios to be considered:

- 2B1 (spit bank and full supply level 166.9 metres, operate as existing) and 3B1 (spit bank and full supply level 166.9 metres, operate but with a minimum annual storage draw down level of 100,000 ML)

These are subject to additional funding being provided to do the analyses.

These are in addition to Option 1 – decommission and Option 4 - modify the current operating rules.

The Steering Committee also resolved that:

The Reference Committee be briefed on the final report before it is made public and that the Reference Committee be used as part of an extensive formal consultation process.

It was agreed that in the call for submissions, individuals be advised that their submission will be made public unless they formally request them to be withheld.

Huw advised the meeting that a press release on the feedback and next steps in the project is due to come from the Chair of the Steering Committee (Kevin Ritchie) in the near future.

3. Next steps and role for the Reference Committee

Draft Final report is due to come to the Reference Committee August 8

- request is for the consultants to present the main features of the final report to the Reference Committee members and provide them each with a copy. Electronic version to be posted on the web on the same day.

There will be a six week consultation period with submissions due October 3.

During this time there will be a meeting of the Reference Committee to canvas their responses to the Draft Final Report.

It is expected that Reference Committee members will communicate and inform their communities on the Draft Final Report.

Written submissions will be sought from the community on the Draft Final Report. It has been suggested that to assist the process the report will be available on the web and that submission writers be asked to provide a less than one-page executive summary to the front of their submissions for attaching to the Final Report (with full submissions also compiled for later reference).

General discussion:

Reference Committee members request that an executive summary of the Draft Final Report also be made available to help in the consultation process.

Concerns were raised in relation to the timelines and the possible impact on businesses in the region with plans for development – the uncertainty surrounding the future of Lake Mokoan requires any such plans to be put on hold.

The issue of transitional arrangements was raised – will the final report consider the costs of implementing any changes to the lake? How will water be supplied to users during any works period?

Bernie Evans indicated that the figure of 100,000 ML as the annual storage draw down level was an estimate provided by VRFish – this was to be considered as an estimate and not a definitive level.

Next meeting – to be advised – working towards August 8.

Meeting closed 10.25 am