

MOKOAN

RETURN TO WETLANDS



Outlet Channel



Environmental assessment

Environmental assessments of the project have been submitted to the Federal and Victorian Governments. The project has been referred to the Victorian Minister for Planning under the Environment Effects Act and to the Federal Minister for Environment and Water Resources under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

These assessments looked at a broad range of environmental issues for all components of the project including protected species listed under Victorian and Federal legislation. They were supported by several detailed technical investigations undertaken to clarify potential environmental impacts. A decision from each Minister about the need for further assessment is expected in mid April 2007.

"...assessments looked at a broad range of environmental issues.."

Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy

The Future Land Use Strategy (FLUS) consultation process has ended and the Future Land Use Steering Committee has reviewed the public comments. In all twenty five submissions were received from individuals, organisations and groups within the community.

The submissions generally supported the directions outlined in the FLUS. Many of the comments received will assist in the implementation of the FLUS program. A number of issues will be covered with the development of more detailed management plans. These plans will involve discussions and involvement with key stakeholder groups including all groups that have commented on the FLUS.

The Future Land Use Steering committee made several additional recommendations and will meet the Minister soon to discuss implementation and resourcing options.

The FLUS identifies a number of management plans to be developed prior to decommissioning. Fish management is an important issue during the draw down of Lake Mokoan. A fish management plan is currently being developed in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries. Once a draft plan has been developed, DSE will consult with other relevant stakeholders.

A Restoration Plan will be developed that will deal with issues post decommissioning including the re-establishment of a diverse range of habitat for native fauna and the control of pest plants and animals.

A monitoring plan is being developed for the decommissioning of the Lake. Initial monitoring has commenced at Lake Mokoan, focussing on a migratory water bird species (Latham's Snipe) and wetland fringing vegetation. A monitoring plan for the restoration of the wetlands will be developed in the next 6 to 12 months to assess the effectiveness of wetland rehabilitation.

Goulburn-Murray Water, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority are working together to protect and prepare the site for the future wetland. This includes seed collection of various *Eucalypt* species for restoration, ecological grazing strategies and pest management, such as the recent fox-baiting program with the Carpet Python Project.



White Box tree



White Box flowers



Carpet Python

Asset Decommissioning

Investigations into the decommissioning of each of the 300 plus assets which form the current Lake Mokoan system have continued.

Consultants GHD and Goulburn-Murray Water staff have undertaken interviews with all landowners whose property adjoin the Lake Mokoan Inlet and Outlet Channels and the Lake Mokoan embankment to discuss proposals for the future of those assets and any issues that may arise from the proposals.

Over 40 individual meetings have been conducted. Common issues and themes arising from discussions and the number of times raised [x]:

- Opportunities to lease/buy channel land to landowners [21];
- Maintain channel land in public ownership (6);
- Future and use of spoil banks [9];
- Future water diversion opportunities from channels [21];
- Proper management of pest plants and animals [16];
- Channel capacity to carry local drainage, including maintain inlets and flapgates [15];
- Against public access along channels [11];
- Maintain access/bridges [8];
- Runoff rates from local area [6];
- Potential impact of temporary storage in Inlet Channel on the Broken River or Hollands Creek [2];
- Wetland sill level [1];
- Land subsidence and groundwater impacts [1];
- Future land use of Lake Mokoan area [1];
- Wetland restoration [1]; and
- Lake Mokoan Embankment breach [1].

Various other key stakeholders were engaged including Benalla Council, VicRoads, NERWA, VicTrack, GBCMA, Telstra, Thales, SPI Powernet.

Based on feedback received GHD are continuing their assessment of local drainage impacts and identification of opportunities to provide good solutions for future drainage, access, visual amenity and domestic and stock supply in asset decommissioning.

Key issues for asset decommissioning are channel land management, access and local drainage

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Lake Mokoan – Return to Wetland website has been provided to better inform the community of the project's progress. Features of the website include information on key elements of the project including river health, future land use, wetland rehabilitation and irrigation and sustainable water delivery.

Visit www.lakemokoan.com or contact the Mokoan Project Office on (03) 5761 1611.

Supply Reliability Offset Packages

Submissions on a range of possible packages of measures to reinstate supply reliability to Broken system irrigators received from irrigators have been assessed. This followed a communications process involving release of information packs, and briefings for irrigator groups, VFF, councils and individual contact with many irrigators.

Key issues raised in presentations, meetings, telephone contacts and submissions are summarised below, with the number of times raised [x]:

- Concern or uncertainty over impact on tariffs and pricing [17]
- Level of Service provided by pipelines needs to be considered [10]
- Flooding concerns of decommissioning [5]
- Entitlement purchase not supported [3]
- Future investment impacts [3]
- Lack of consultation [2]
- Other, including loss of entitlement, not happy with packages [4]

Considerable comment was also received regarding the fact that the packages provide for reinstating 91% reliability whereas many irrigators have the view that 97% reliability of supply should be provided.

To assist with the development of a final package of measures to reinstate supply reliability to Broken system irrigators, a process of seeking expressions of interest from irrigators in the sale of water entitlement has commenced. Once the volumes and locations of possible entitlement purchase are confirmed, pipelines and re-regulating storages can be defined and the final offset package submitted for approval.

Work has commenced on the design of a range of measures which are common to all offset packages. This includes equipment for remote control and monitoring of existing storages, weirs and flow monitoring stations. New metering equipment will allow remote monitoring of a range of individual diversion flow meters. These measures will provide at least 100OML of "...water savings and considerably more. They will also assist with improving the efficiency of operation of the supply system.

Nillahcootie valve

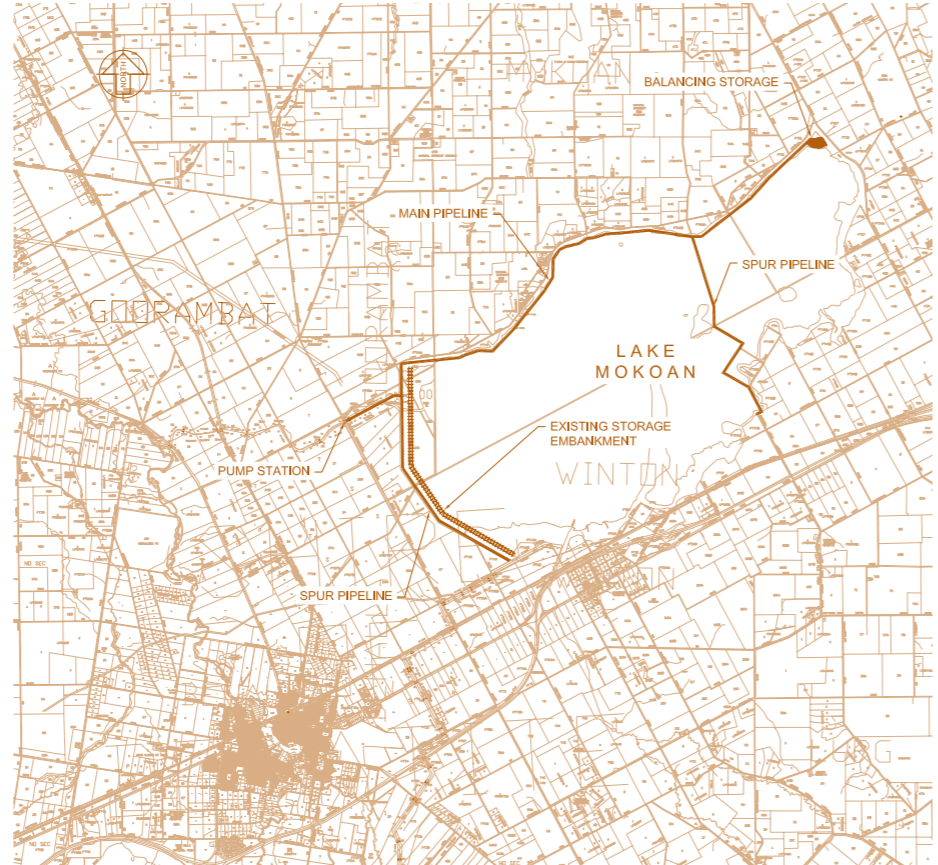


Lake Diverter Pipeline

The preliminary design for the proposed Lake Mokoan Diverters Pipeline has progressed well over the past few months. Finalisation of the preliminary design is expected to be complete mid-April, which will allow Goulburn-Murray Water to undertake discussions with key stakeholders and Lake Mokoan diversion customers.

Key activities that are planned to occur throughout the projects program are outlined below. During the consultation period Goulburn-Murray Water will provide each customer with information to help them understand their access to the scheme and give them an opportunity to raise any queries regarding the scheme's design and operating rules.

Key Project Milestone	Timeline
Preliminary Design Complete	Mid-April 2007
Stakeholder Consultation	Mid April 2007
Approvals	May 2007
Detailed Design	May – July 2007
Outlet Channel Deepening	June – July 2007
Procurement Phase	June – July 2007
Pipe Supply & Construction	July – November 2007
Commissioning	November – December 2007



The pump station is likely to be located at the corner of the outlet channel and Benalla-Yarrowonga Road. There is one main trunk pipeline alignment along the main northern shore of Lake Mokoan with two spur pipelines. There will be a main earthen balancing storage located within the vicinity of the Duck Pond. Size optimisation of these components is currently being undertaken.

For further information specifically about the pipeline project please contact Goulburn-Murray Water Project Manager Jeremy Nolan (03) 5833 5645 or Project Engineer Nicole Baud on (03) 5833 5458.

Goulburn- Murray Water Chairperson Don Cummins, Minister for Water John Thwaites and Chair of the Tungamah Water Services Committee Rod Squires



The scheme replaces 520 km of leaky channels which were previously losing 4,800 megalitres of water a year and will supply year round water to 450 customers over 65,000 ha.

Tungamah Pipeline

The \$20.4 Million Pipeline scheme has been officially launched by the Minister Thwaites.

The Tungamah Pipeline will provide year round water supply for the first time to 400 properties over 63,000 ha. The scheme replaces 520 km of leaky channels, which previously were losing 4,800 megalitres a year. This scheme is a major part of the Water Supply Reliability Offset Package.

The \$20.4 million Tungamah Pipeline will deliver significant environmental benefits for the Murray and Snowy Rivers.

Water Minister John Thwaites officially opened the pipeline on the 23rd March 2007.

The pipeline will supply stock and domestic water to about 450 individual farmers and customers in the Tungamah Water District over a 63,000 hectare supply area.

"The old domestic and stock water supply system for Tungamah was inefficient, unsafe and had reached the end of its useful life," Mr Thwaites said.

"In its place we have built a new, 370 kilometre pipeline distribution system, a 140 megalitre winter storage and a dedicated pump station.

Goulburn-Murray Water Chair Don Cummins said the new pipeline allowed customers to receive supply 365 days a year instead of the previous once a year fill to dams.

The project which commenced in February 2006, was completed and operational in December 2006, an extremely short period given the size of the project.

A related pipeline, being built by North East Water, will supply water from Yarrowonga to the towns of Tungamah, Devenish and St James.

The Tungamah Pipeline will provide one-third of the savings required to maintain reliable supply to Broken system irrigators when Lake Mokoan is decommissioned.

"We are making a major investment in decommissioning Lake Mokoan to transform the Broken irrigation system from being



Tungamah pumps

the most inefficient in the state to something worthy of the 21st century," Mr Thwaites said.

Mr Thwaites congratulated the local community and Goulburn-Murray Water, which completed construction of the Tungamah pipeline within a year.