

Lake Mokoan Project - Community Update

Department of
Sustainability and
Environment

Future Land Use Strategy

The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee recently met with the Minister for Water and Climate Change, John Thwaites. The meeting provided the opportunity for the Committee to present and discuss the Future Land Use Strategy (FLUS).

Committee representatives highlighted the importance of establishing an appropriate management structure for implementation of the strategy, with adequate early funding to provide for effective wetland rehabilitation and to attract visitors to the new recreation and environmental experience. The committee also highlighted the importance of ongoing community involvement in the delivery of the strategy.

The majority of the issues raised by the community, and by the committee, will be covered through the implementation of the Future Land Use Strategy and the development of more detailed management plans for the area.

The Strategy, which will help guide the restoration of the wetland, and assist in the development of community, recreational and tourism opportunities, is now with the Government for determination.

Lake Mokoan Diverters

The Preliminary Design for the scheme has been completed. Information packs on the proposed scheme will be sent to Lake Mokoan diverters in June.

The purpose of the information pack is to provide a summary of information relating to the pipeline scheme and provide an opportunity for diverters to confirm individual details and raise any issues they may have with the proposed scheme.

The project team will provide diverters with the opportunity to arrange individual meetings with staff to discuss or clarify any further issues. The project team is also consulting with external stakeholders on details of the design and subsequent construction.

Reliability Offset Package

Submission of expressions of interest from water users in the sale of their water entitlement have continued, up to the closing date of Thursday, 31 May.

In response to a range of queries, Fact Sheets have been prepared to provide responses to frequently asked questions relating to basin pricing and sale of water entitlements. These Fact Sheets are available at www.lakemokoan.com or by contacting the Project Office on 03 5761 1611.

In coming weeks a water broker will be engaged to negotiate directly with those water users whose offers of sale of water entitlement fall within the project guidelines.

The final Reliability Offset package will be submitted for approval once volumes of entitlement purchase have been confirmed.

Design of remote control and monitoring equipment to allow more efficient operation of the Broken system in the future has continued. Investigation of remote operation and improved stream flow monitoring at Lake Nillahcootie has been completed. G-MW staff have commenced visiting approximately 70 locations throughout the basin to develop installation designs for improved diversion flow meters, which will include remote monitoring capability.

Environmental assessment

The Lake Mokoan Project was referred to the Federal and Victorian governments in mid March 2007 for environmental assessment. The Victorian Minister for Planning determined recently that the project does not require an Environment Effects Statement. Detailed Environmental Management Plans will be developed for each element of the project.

The determination stated that the environmental investigations undertaken were comprehensive and that the project is unlikely to give rise to any significant adverse environmental effects. The determination also noted that the project is expected to provide a clear net environmental benefit to the Broken, Goulburn, Murray and Snowy Rivers and Winton wetlands.

Alternative Project Proposal

At the request of the Minister, DSE has continued with the assessment of an Alternative Storage Proposal to decommissioning. This proposal entails provision of a 3.5m deep storage, holding about 60,000 ML of water and located within the current Lake Mokoan site. The proposal was formally presented by the Justice for the Broken Group to DSE, G-MW and technical reviewers on 11 May. Technical assessment of the proposal is underway, with the outcome of the review to be discussed at a further meeting in early June. The proposal and the review is then to be submitted to the Minister for a final determination.

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