

Lake Mokoan Project - Community Update

Department of
Sustainability and
Environment

Modified Mokoan Storage Proposal

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) are currently reviewing further information submitted by the Justice for the Broken group in relation to their Modified Mokoan storage proposal. A final meeting involving Justice for the Broken Group, DSE and consultants is planned for a date yet to be fixed. The proposal and the review outcomes, will then be submitted to the Minister for Water for a final determination.

The following elements of the Mokoan Project are common to both full decommissioning and the Modified Mokoan Proposal, work on these elements has therefore continued.

Future Land Use Strategy

A delegation for the Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee met with the new Minister for Water, the Hon. Tim Holding, to discuss the Future Land Use Strategy and funding requirements. A decision will not be made on key aspects concerning the implementation of the Strategy, until a determination is finalised regarding the Alternative Proposal.

Fish Management

A draft Fish Management Plan has been developed in conjunction with DPI Fisheries and the Wetlands Technical Reference Group. The Management Plan will focus on reducing the likelihood of negative impacts on fish as a result of low water levels due to the dry conditions over the next 12 months.

Scientific Research

Interest from sections of the scientific community in the restoration of the wetlands at Mokoan is growing. A delegation from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) from all corners of the globe, recently visited the area and discussed the future wetland restoration. Monash University has also discussed research opportunities at Lake Mokoan. An honours student utilised the site for research into the soils of inundated areas and plant establishment. This will provide useful information in the restoration of the wetland and control of invasive weed species.

Lake Mokoan Diverters Pipeline

Detailed design of the pipeline is now well underway. A small operational pondage at the eastern end of the pipeline has now been included in the design. This storage will aid in the operation of the pipeline system. Design will include collecting detailed information regarding customer service points.

Reliability Offset Package

Design of facilities for the remote control and monitoring of key structures in the Broken system, including the Lake Nillahcootie Outlet, catchment gauging stations and other structures on the Broken River and Creek has continued.

Installation of approximately 70 upgraded diversion flow meters within the Broken system is expected to commence in October. These meters will help with improved system operation and reduction in water losses.

Engagement of a Water Broker to negotiate with irrigators on the purchase of water entitlements has been postponed and will continue subject to the outcome of the Modified Mokoan Proposal.

Environmental Assessment

The Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources determined recently that the Lake Mokoan Decommissioning and Mid Murray Storage project was not a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). The decision can be viewed on the EPBC Act website (<http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/index.html>) by searching for referral number 2007/3342.

Broken River Hydrology and Flooding

In response to community interest, the Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority and Goulburn-Murray Water have provided a briefing on hydrology and flooding issues to representatives of the Justice for the Broken Group, the Benalla Flood Awareness Group, Benalla and Shepparton Council staff and other community members. This briefing provided an opportunity for the groups and agencies to discuss community concerns regarding future flooding risks.

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