



ESSENTIAL ECONOMICS

Tourist Development Assessment

Winton Wetlands

Draft

Prepared for

Beca

By

Essential Economics Pty Ltd

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**LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT**

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Definitions	1
1 Wetlands Development	2
1.1 Cluster or Dispersal?	3
1.2 Site Evaluation	2
1.3 Development Scenarios	2
1.4 Description of Development Scenarios.....	2
1.5 Conclusion.....	5
2 Low Level Scenario Visitation Estimates.....	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Visitation.....	6
2.3 Conclusion.....	10
3 Feasibility of Eco-tourist Accommodation	12
3.1 Introduction.....	12
3.2 Eco-resort sizing.....	12
3.3 Winton Raceway Patron Demand	13
3.4 Critical Success Factors	13
3.5 Conclusion.....	14

INTRODUCTION

Background

This assessment of the tourism development scenarios has been prepared as input to the Lake Mokoan Land Use Strategy. In particular, this assessment will inform the land use strategies developed for tourism development (Strategy 8) and for recreation development (Strategy 6), and will also provide guidelines for development of infrastructure such as paths, trails, etc (Strategy 9) at the site.

Definitions

In undertaking this analysis of tourism facilities, we have distinguished between 'tourism' facilities and 'recreation' facilities. Tourists are visitors to an area, and can be visiting relatives or friends or be on a business trip. According to the definitions used in the National Visitor Survey, a daytrip visitor is a person who travels at least 50km (roundtrip) from his/her residence and is away for more than 4 hours, whereas the distance requirement for an overnight visitors is 40 km away from their home residence. Tourist facilities are therefore defined as facilities which are primarily designed to accommodate and/or entertain tourists (both day trip and overnight) while visiting region.

Recreation is typically defined in relation to 'sport', for example 'sport and recreation facilities', and in this context 'recreation' is typically defined as exercise and entertainment which is not in an organised or competitive environment. However, for this purpose we have defined 'recreation facilities' as being facilities primarily designed and constructed to service the local community. Naturally, some facilities like the boardwalks and trails will be used by both visitors and the local community, but if the main purpose for the construction is to service the local community, in the economic impacts, we have categorised them as recreation facilities.

1 WETLANDS DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Development Scenarios

The tourism development can potentially range from a low-level wetlands park development suitable for picnics and basic bird-watching to a full tourism node with interpretation centre, overnight accommodation, concessions, etc.

Estimating visitation for such development scenarios presents some challenges, including limited experience with developing wetlands as a tourist attraction in Victoria (and time series data on visitation impacts) and the low baseline of present visitation at Lake Mokoan, estimated as approximately 10,500 visitors per annum by URS.

In consideration of these challenges, our assessment of the development scenarios has been undertaken using the following approach:

- Establish three scenarios for tourism development ranging from low level development, medium development and high level development with accommodation, and describe the features and facilities which would be incorporated for each development scenario
- Estimate visitation to the low level development using a modified version of Parks Victoria's visitation estimation model.
- For the high level development, estimate overnight visitation necessary to make visitor accommodation feasible, ie to be able to support two people (a couple) operating an establishment. Divide overnight visitation into Winton Raceway patron demand and Other demand, based on information from Winton Raceway on likely accommodation demand to be directed by Winton Raceway patrons to the eco-tourism facility. Consider whether remaining overnight visitor demand is likely, taking existing accommodation, existing visitation to the region, and planned Ned Kelly development at Glenrowan into account.

1.2 Description of Development Scenarios

Low Level Development

This would be located in two or three zones around the wetlands, be under management of Parks Victoria, and comprise -

- maintained grassed areas
- picnic tables and benches
- gas barbeques
- associated car parking
- interpretative signage showing area trails, history and process of Lake Mokoan

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

- public toilets
- bird hides
- camping areas for tents and swags, no powered sites, no facilities apart from toilets.

Medium Level Development

With facilities remaining under the management of Parks Victoria, in addition to the components outlined above, this would also comprise:

- caravan park with powered sites
- construction of kiosks, storage areas and horse corrals to facilitate commercial tour operators (private enterprise), including guided tours on the subject of flora and fauna, indigenous and non-indigenous heritage and culture, Ned Kelly – history, canoe and kayak hire, bicycle hire, horse back riding tours or unaccompanied. Tour concessions are envisaged to all depart from a tourist node to assist in building the necessary traffic to support the visitor accommodation and potentially the development of facilities included in the High Level Development.

High Level Development

With lower-level facilities remaining under the management of Parks Victoria, the facilities which are envisaged as part of the high level development scenario are predominantly private owned and operated.

- Small-scale interpretative exhibit hall and souvenir sales (of same scale as the Koala Reserve on Phillip Island) with the potential to change this to a larger iconic interpretative exhibition hall subject to funding
- café/restaurant
- eco-tourist accommodation (private investment) with limited associated facilities

1.3 Cluster or Dispersal?

Through the analysis and community consultation, the development scenario for the wetlands has come to include a range of facilities and components. These facilities are envisaged to be developed / constructed over a number of years as demand for the components increase. However, part of the planning process is to assess whether the components best be located as a cluster or whether dispersal through the wetlands park is preferable.

One advantage of dispersal is less concentration of visitation and traffic to a single part of the wetlands with potential negative impacts on the environment (flora & fauna). At this point, however, there are no ecological impediments / constraints to providing a central hub for development.

Cradle Mountain, a National Park in Tasmania, provides an example of a dispersed natural destination development. At Cradle Mountain the attractions, trail heads, visitor centre, VIC, accommodation, etc, are located in a dispersed manner along Dove Lake Road with approximately 7 km from the start (Cradle Visitor Centre) to where the road ends in a carpark at Dove Lake. However, a new Masterplan for the area is proposing to cluster the tourist facilities in a single location, as this will assist in developing an 'un-natural' destination to complement

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

the natural attraction. The advantages cited for clustering of facilities include, assistance with achieving critical mass for commercial enterprises, simpler for tourists to find as having the Visitor Centre in one location and the Visitor Information Centre in another location causes confusion about the role of each and what services they provide.

Based on the experience at places like Cradle Mountain it is proposed to cluster the facilities in one location, particularly developments which require staffing, eg interpretation, tour-guide operations, canoe and kayak hire, visitor accommodation, and café / restaurant. Concentration in traffic will assist in generating critical mass for individual operators exemplified by the family staying at the visitor accommodation hiring kayaks because of the convenience, or the visitors studying the wetlands interpretation buying coffees at the café either before or after.

In summary, we propose clustering of facilities to be implemented as a guiding principle for tourist, recreation and infrastructure development.

1.4 Site Evaluation

Assuming clustering has been agreed on as a development principle it is important to identify the best site around which the development cluster will be focused.

Based on a number of criteria suitability of location for a eco-tourist facility with overnight accommodation, an evaluation was undertaken of the three sites identified as possible locations for an eco-tourist attraction and ancillary activities and infrastructure.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria for Selection Location for Tourism Node

№	Criteria	Location 1	Location 3	Location 5
		Outlet	North Shore	Freeway
1	Scenic outlook	2	1	2
2	Quiet at night (for eco-tourism accommodation)	1	1	2
3	Proximity to urban area (resident use as picnic spot, activity node)	1	2	1
4	Proximity to Winton Raceway (key for overnight accommodation)	2	2	1
5	Birdlife viewing (north to south is ideal) and vegetation to support birdlife	2	1	3
6	Access for users from outside (by car, on foot, on bike, on horseback)	1	2	1
7	Proximity to the main attraction – the wetland	2	1	3
8	Proximity to best walking territory	2	1	1
9	Cost effective in development	1	2	3
10	Cost effective to maintain	1	2	2
-	Total	15	15	19

Legend: 1= good, 2= medium, 3=poor

Method of Evaluation: using an un-weighted sum of criteria numbers (most simple assessment).

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

From these criteria it is not really possible to distinguish between the sites as each site has its advantages and disadvantages. Location 5 would have better access from Winton Raceway which is assumed to be a major client, but would potentially be more expensive to develop in infrastructure costs. Location 1 has not been identified as a tourist development site, but appears to perform as well as Location 3 and better than Location 5 on these simple criteria with the drawback that Location 1 does not have immediate access to open water, limiting the potential for a canoe/kayak concession at the identified tourism hub.

It would be a simple process to introduce weighted criteria instead of this un-weighted measure, for example through further discussion with DSE, Parks Victoria, local community, potential investors and operators and tourist user groups, and we suggest that further discussions be held before finalising the location of the tourist development cluster.

Prior to such discussion, however, Location 3 is suggested as the location in which to focus on for all development. As the wetlands develop, visitation outcomes may result in private operators considering development in other locations near the wetlands, or possibly on private land outside of the footprint of the original Lake Mokoan. Such applications should be considered by Council on their merits, and decisions made accordingly.

1.5 Conclusion

From the analysis in this section, it appears that a cluster tourism development is preferable over dispersed development of research facilities, tourist facilities, tourist concession hire locations, interpretation centres, etc around the perimeter of the wetlands. The preliminary analysis indicates that the location on the north side of Lake Mokoan would be the preferable location for tourism development.

In this section, three development scenarios (low level, medium, high level) are outlined in accordance with the outcomes of the Design Workshop (March 27, 2006). The following chapter (Chapter 2) provides an evaluation of visitation impacts for the low level scenario using a modified Parks Victoria model for visitation estimates.

Subsequently, the feasibility of investing in an eco-tourist accommodation establishment is undertaken based on required overnight stays and main customer segments (Chapter 3).

2 LOW LEVEL SCENARIO VISITATION ESTIMATES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides analysis of visitation based on a model developed by Parks Victoria. The analysis is undertaken in two parts:

1. the model is used to estimate visitation at Lake Mokoan and the results are compared with the estimates of current visitation prepared by URS (10,500 pa).
2. the model is modified to reflect increased service standards at the completed Winton Wetlands.

2.2 Visitation

A model is used to estimate the level of visitation to the 'Winton Wetlands', as the only estimate so far has been provided by URS in the background research (refer *Lake Mokoan Study*, URS, August 2003) and otherwise there is no survey data or visitors counts available which could be used to establish visitation levels.

Dino Zanon of Parks Victoria has developed a model which estimates the level of visitation based on variables such as local population, park size and services and facilities available in the park (refer *An Asset Management Approach: Modelling Visitor Demand and Open Space Requirements*, Dino Zanon 1996). This model is used to estimate current visitation and also estimate the impact of improving the service level through redevelopment of facilities at the wetlands.

The formula describing the relationship is:

$$\text{Visits} = 1.63 \times \text{Service Standard}^2 \times \text{Catchment Population}^{0.14} \times \text{Area}^{0.34}$$

The variables of the model are estimated in the following sections.

Accessible Size

The size of the land area which is open and accessible without restriction is one of the variables in estimating visitation to Winton Wetlands. A larger area tends to attract a higher number of visits. To this purpose, the land areas around the wetlands are defined as being the accessible area and are estimated to be approximately 2,000 hectares.

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

Catchment

Research undertaken by Melbourne Parks and Waterways, based on some 10,000 park user surveys across 13 parks, combined with a household survey of “attitudes to parks, open space and recreation”, indicates that depending on the type of park 60% of visitors live within a 15 minute drive radius of an urban park.

The catchment for Winton Wetlands, defined as residents living within 15 minutes’ drive of the park, which includes Benalla and the township of Glenrowan. For the purpose of this estimation the catchment population is estimated at 11,450 persons.

Service Standards

We estimated the service standard at Winton Wetlands using the methodology outlined by Dino Zanon of Parks Victoria in the 1996 paper “*An Asset Management Approach: Modelling Visitor Demand and Open Space Requirements*”.

Melbourne Parks and Waterways developed a Customer Charter designating the 17 park attributes that park users and the community rate as most important for open spaces. These 17 attributes are illustrated in Table 1 and are the attributes which are rated to provide the service standard rating.

The sum total of the ratings is an important factor in estimating the visitation to a park. The sum total of the attribute ratings, raised to the power of two (squared), is part of the formula for estimating park visitation.

The Winton Wetlands scores have been arrived at through discussion between Essential Economics and Conceptz and represent the extent of development envisaged at the wetlands.

The service standard approach provides a robust result, even when compared to more expensive methods of service standard rating, as demonstrated in later work by Dino Zanon.

Caveat: This model does not take marketing of a park into account, neither does it reflect the existence of competing parks in a region, and results for regional areas should therefore be interpreted with care.

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

Table 1: Service Standard Attribute Weighting

	Attribute	Maximum Score	Lake Mokoan Score	Winton Wetlands Score
1	Safe Access to Park Facilities Car parking and pedestrian trails that provide safe access to park facilities	5.8	Low 1.0	Mid 4.4
2	Adequate car parking Sufficient conveniently located car parking spaces	6.2	Limited 1.0	High 4.8
3	Adequate <u>number</u> of toilet facilities Sufficient number of toilets in suitable locations	6.7	None 0	Mid 3.7
4	Clean toilets Toilet facilities clean and well maintained	8.2	None 0	High 6.2
5	Tracks, trails and paths Adequate <u>number</u> of clearly defined tracks and trails in park for visitors to explore or use	6.4	None 0	High 5.4
6	Suitable surface for tracks, trails and paths	5.4	None 0	High 4.4
7	BBQ facilities Provision of sufficient BBQs in convenient locations	6.5	None 0	Mid 3.9
8	Picnic areas/furniture and facilities Sufficient seating and tables for BBQ for picnic purposes	7.2	None 0	Mid 4.3
9	Safe Children's playground/play areas Adequate provision for constructed playgrounds in natural areas suitable for unstructured play	6.1	None 0	None 0
10	Adequate litter control measures Information on park litter policy or sufficient number of rubbish bins for park users	6.3	Low 1.4	Mid 3.4
11	Signposting and directions Adequate signs/directions to specific points of interest, trails, picnic areas, exits etc	4.7	None 0	High 3.6
12	Shelter Sufficient shelter to provide relief from sun, wind and rain when required	8.0	None 0	High 6.6
13	Length of grass Grass not too long or too short	4.5	Low 1.4	Low 1.4
14	General high standards of maintenance Park is well maintained, things working as they should and everything neat and tidy	5.9	Mid 3.5	Mid 3.5
15	Ranger presence or available Ranger(s) on duty during official opening times to assist visitors, handle enquiries and monitor behaviour of park users	3.8	None 0	Mid 2.4
16	Information on the park being visited as well as the network of parks Sufficient information available either via brochures, displays, signs or other means	4.2	None 0	High 3.4
17	Suitable opening hours Adequate to meet visitor needs	4.2	Mid 2.5	Mid 2.3
18	Water related facilities (boat ramp, buoys, etc) Adequate to meet visitors needs – a custom variable to reflect water-based activities	Custom	Mid 3.0	Low 1.0
	Total	100.1	13.8	64.6
	Rounded Total		(14)	(65)

Source: Service standard attribute weightings by Dino Zanon (96), Winton Wetlands ratings are an average of ratings by Essential Economics and Conceptz.

**LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT**

The weightings in the first column represent the total points or 'weight' that an attribute would be able to achieve and the role of an attribute in attracting users to a park. For example, a safe children's playground has a total possible score of 6.1 and a high-quality playground (solid and safe construction of equipment, safe location, benches for parents, variety of equipment, good surface, etc) would probably be able to achieve a score of 5.0 to 6.0, indicating that it plays an important role in attracting users to a park.

At present the facilities at Lake Mokoan are quite limited, as indicated in the ratings in the second column above, where the service standard rating achieves an overall point score of 14 out of approximately 103 points, or 14% of the possible level of facilities.

The attribute ratings for the proposed Winton Wetlands reflect a vision for a park with service facilities which would achieve a rating of medium to high, compared with the existing low level of provision.

This list of service attributes also serves as a services checklist and shows the relative importance to visitors of the various facilities and services potentially offered at the wetlands.

Present Day Visitation Estimation

To understand the extent of current usage of Lake Mokoan by residents and visitors and to check the robustness of the model on this application we use the Parks Victoria model to estimate current usage and compare the results with estimates prepared by URS in the *Lake Mokoan Study – Current Situation Volume 1*.

In comparison with what is proposed for the Winton Wetlands, the service standards at Lake Mokoan are at a minimal level and the accessible area is smaller due to the extent of the lake, boggy areas and access limitations.

The formula describing the relationship between variables and visits is:

$$\text{Visits} = 1.63 \times \text{Service Standard}^2 \times \text{Catchment Population}^{0.14} \times \text{Area}^{0.34}$$

Calculation of variables:

Service Standard (measurement out of 100.1) = 14	$14^2 = 196$
Catchment population of Lake Mokoan = 11,450 persons	$11,450^{0.14} = 3.7$
Accessible area (in ha) of Lake Mokoan = 1,000 ha.	$1,000^{0.34} = 10.5$

$$\text{Visits} = 1.63 \times 196 \times 3.7 \times 10.5 = \underline{12,400 \text{ visits pa}}$$

This level of visitation compares well with the estimates prepared by URS of 10,650 visitors pa.

Low Level Visitation Estimation

Calculation of variables:

Service Standard (measurement out of 103.1) = 65	$65^2 = 4,225$
Catchment population of Winton Wetlands = 11,450 persons	$11,450^{0.14} = 3.7$

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

Accessible area (in ha) of Winton Wetlands = 2,000 ha. $2,000^{0.34} = 13.25$

Visits = $1.63 \times 4,225 \times 3.7 \times 13.25 = \underline{338,000 \text{ visits pa}}$

This visitation is comprised of visitation by Benalla and other local area residents and of visitors to the area. According to research undertaken by Parks Victoria approximately 60% of annual visitation is by residents living within 15 minutes drive of the park, with the remainder of visitation made up by residents in the wider area and visitors to a region. Based on these parameters, the visitation for recreation purposes (local residents) is likely to be in the order of 60% to 70% of total annual visitation or approximately 200,000 to 235,000 which means that each person in the catchment would, on average, visit the park approximately 17 times over the year. Visitors to a region are likely to account for approximately 100,000 to 140,000 pa.

This estimate appears reasonable when compared with the visitation estimates prepared for the Glenrowan Masterplan, where an estimated additional 250,000 day visitors are expected to result from the implementation of the Glenrowan Masterplan (refer *Glenrowan Masterplan Final Report*, April 2002, p 96). Assuming that the wetlands will be well signposted in Glenrowan, it is likely that a share of these visitors will also visit the wetlands while they are in the region. However, in our opinion, there is a degree of uncertainty associated with the visitation estimates for Glenrowan, and insofar that these visitation levels are optimistic, this may also impact negatively on potential visitation to Winton Wetlands.

With regard to visitation, it is also important to keep in mind the distinction between 'visitors' as defined in the *Introduction* and local resident users, particularly for the feasibility of tourist concessions where a large share of revenue is derived from 'visitors' and the feasibility of a wetlands interpretation centre.

2.3 Wetlands Interpretation Centre

Feasibility of a wetlands interpretation centre as such is not discussed in this document. The main reason for this is that a 'wetlands interpretation centre' can range in scale as follows:

- a few educational boards identifying birds and the restoration process;
- a small open shelter with interpretation – not staffed (eg Twelve Apostles interpretation);
- a small, staffed interpretation centre with low-scale sales of souvenirs, books, tea and coffee (eg Koala Reserve on Phillip Island); and
- a large-scale state-significant interpretation centre catering for educational groups, bus tours (eg Probus groups), and connected to a stunning restaurant/café (envisage a large sheltered deck with views over the wetlands) providing a good food and wine experience.

At Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre, Halls Gap in the Grampians National Park, there is an example of a larger-scale visitor and interpretation centre. While Grampians National Park is estimated to receive approximately 1.6 million visitors per annum, annual visitation to the Brambuk Visitor Centre is approximately 140,000 (2004 data). This shows a low-level conversion (less than 10%) of visitors/users to visitor centre visitation.

For a visitor centre to receive high levels of visitation on an on-going basis, there need to be a continuous stream of new visitors to the wetlands as repeat visitors are unlikely to require the interpretation services offered at an interpretation centre.

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

With a 10% conversion of visitors at Winton Wetlands (low-level scenario), the interpretation centre would receive approximately 30,000 to 40,000 visitors per annum once the initial surge in visitation is over. In our opinion, this level of visitation would not be sufficient to warrant the construction of a high-level visitor interpretation centre. As a benchmark, approximately 100,000 pa in estimated visitation would be required to warrant developing a large-scale visitor interpretation centre. In terms of floorspace, a staffed visitor interpretation centre would likely need to range from approximately 1,200m² to 2,000m² to accommodate visitor orientation, display space, theatre, education room, administrative functions and kiosk, gift shop, toilets, café with outdoor seating, etc.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the visitation to Lake Mokoan and to the proposed Winton Wetlands have been estimated. In undertaking these estimations, some key findings have emerged regarding the ability of a park to attract visitors and residents:

- Park visitation depends on number of residents in the local area as 60% of users are typically local, and the local residents also bring visiting friends and relatives to their local park for BBQs, picnics, a walk, waterskiing on the lake, etc.
- The level of service facilities is the key determinant in visitation as is evidenced by the present usage of Lake Mokoan which has almost no service facilities, to the proposed Winton Wetlands which is envisaged to provide a medium to high level of service facilities.
- Accessible size also has an impact on park visitation and usage, but less impact than service facilities. By doubling the accessible size from approximately 1,000 hectares to 2,000 hectares the visitation increases by approximately 25%. Note that the 'accessible' in accessible size means that there are paths and trails which provide access to included areas of the park and does not include the water section.
- In comparison with other Parks Victoria managed parks, usage / visitation of approximately 340,000 appears high, compared with, say, Chiltern Box-Ironbark National Park (8,700 visitors in 00/01), Cathedral Range State Park (72,600 visitors in 00/01), but low in comparison with what is achieved at Grampians National Park (1,505,000 visitors in 00/01). Marketing also plays an important part in achieving visitation by non-residents and this aspect is not included as a parameter in the estimation of usage / visitation.

3 FEASIBILITY OF ECO-TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

3.1 Introduction

Instead of estimating visitation for the High Level Scenario, the approach is to estimate the minimum threshold visitation which would be necessary to support the level of development which is envisaged as part of the High Level Scenario. In particular this section focuses on establishing whether an eco-tourist overnight accommodation facility would be commercially viable for the operators, as this facility would be privately run and the investment in constructing the facility would have to provide market returns.

3.2 Eco-resort sizing

Charge per Room

The eco-resort is envisaged to be comprised of individual, modern design cabins of a higher quality and better construction / design than the typical caravan park cabin. As such, the eco-resort can probably charge about \$120 per night per cabin once the wetlands have been rehabilitated and the paths, trails, interpretation and other tourism infrastructure is in place. However, average takings per occupied room likely to be in the order of \$100 per night per cabin to reflect low-season discounts, group discounts, student discounts, etc.

Necessary Revenue

As a minimum, the resort is assumed to provide employment to a couple (owners and managers) only. At a minimum, therefore, the resort would need to generate sufficient revenue to pay the owners – operators wages in the order of \$100,000 per annum. These wages represent the work the owner –operators undertake as managers of the property, ie reception, day-to-day maintenance, room servicing, etc. Additionally, the resort would need to generate revenue to provide a return on the construction investment and to pay Council rates, marketing costs, hospitality provisions in the cabins, etc. The revenue and cost streams are estimated as follows:

- Management wages at approximately \$100,000 pa (assume no more than 25 units)
- Construction investment is estimated at \$125,000 per cabin. At 7% pa interest, each cabin would require return on investment of \$8,750 pa.
- Costs are estimated at approximately \$2,000 per cabin per annum.

Conclusion

A development featuring 20 cabins (at minimum) and no additional facilities would be able to be serviced by two people, generate an income for the operators and cover costs of construction at 7% per annum at an occupancy rate of approximately 43%. This would mean that approximately 3,150 cabin-nights are sold at an average of \$100 per night.

This occupancy rate appears achievable, when taking the average occupancy in Rural City of Benalla (hotels, motels, guest houses, etc with 5 rooms or more) into consideration, as the occupancy rate there is 54% for 2005. This reflects Benalla's role as rural centre for a large region, and also reflecting the demand for accommodation that events generate, for example events held at Winton Raceway which are estimated to account for approximately 6% of occupancy at hotels/motels in Benalla (work undertaken by Essential Economics on the economic impacts of Winton Raceway in 2001).

3.3 Winton Raceway Patron Demand

To understand whether there would be demand for Winton Raceway patrons for accommodation branded as an eco-resort, Winton Raceway management was contacted and the concept discussed with them.

According to the Winton Raceway representative interviewed, there are approximately 13 two-day events per annum, and patrons at these events stay as far away as Shepparton due to shortage of overnight accommodation in the area. The most popular accommodation for patrons is self-contained units and there is little provision of this type in Benalla. According to the representative, modern self-contained cabins at Winton Wetlands would be fully booked by Raceway patrons for these events, with some demand likely outside of event-weekends as well. Many patrons would prefer the quiet environment offered at the Wetlands after a full day at the track. The fact that the accommodation would be branded 'eco-resort' is not considered a hindrance in booking – patrons will take anything available in the area.

Assuming all 20 cabins would be booked by Raceway patrons for the 13 events-weekends, ie 26 nights pa, Winton Raceway patrons would account for 520 cabin-nights pa or 17% of required bookings for an eco-resort consisting of 20 cabins.

3.4 Critical Success Factors

Given that the eco-resort depends on attracting private risk capital for investment, it is important that the wetlands development is well underway. The following critical success factors have been identified for the eco-resort to achieve financial viability:

- The rehabilitation is well underway and the wetland has a pleasing amenity
- There are trails and pathways around the wetlands
- There is interpretative signage, shelters, picnic areas, toilets, etc
- There are tourist concessions operating from the eco-resort site (horse rides, canoe and kayak hire, flora and fauna tours, etc)

LAKE MOKOAN - WINTON WETLANDS
DRAFT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

- The eco-resort is marketed on the internet, in Benalla, in Glenrowan, at Wangaratta, on the Winton Raceway webpage and Tourism Victoria marketing brochures for the region.

3.5 Conclusion

From the analysis undertaken it appears that an eco-tourism resort of approximately 20 cabins would be a commercially feasible operation for a couple as owners - operators.

This would represent the minimum investment and minimum recommended size of an accommodation establishment, and there would be considerable scope to increase the size of the resort at a later date.

Provisions should therefore be made in the land use plan for Winton Wetlands for the development and later expansion of an eco-tourist accommodation facility.