

# MOKOAN

## RETURN TO WETLANDS



## Offset Package

For the past 18 months investigations into a broad range of measures to address the Government commitment to maintain supply reliability following the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan have been underway and were assisted in the early stages by the Broken System Reliability Reference Committee. These investigations have now reached the stage where further consultation with water users is appropriate.

Investigations have narrowed down the extensive range of individual options into four offset packages (A, B, C, D). Each package provides measures which will maintain existing supply reliability following the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan and will secure the future of the Broken irrigation system. The packages include a range of potential infrastructure, efficiency improvement and water purchase options.

Water users and associated groups are invited to submit written comment on the packages by Wednesday 8 November 2006. Submissions should be forwarded to:

**MOKOAN PROJECT OFFICE**  
c/o - DSE Building  
89 Sydney Road, Benalla, VIC 3672

Details of the offset packages, fact sheets and responses to a range of frequently asked questions can be found on the project website [www.lakemokoan.com](http://www.lakemokoan.com) or by contacting the Mokoan Project Office on (03) 5761 1611.

Issues raised in the consultation process will be considered in the development of a draft final offset package which is to be submitted through the Project Control Board to the Minister for Water for approval.

## Tungamah Pipelining Scheme

A major water savings project that will provide a year-round water supply for the first time to 400 properties, covering 63,000 ha to the south and west of Tungamah, is nearing completion.

Goulburn-Murray Water's Tungamah pipeline project has replaced 520 kilometres of leaky earthen channels with 360 kilometres of pipelines, linking the entire Tungamah domestic and stock system between Shepparton and Yarrawonga. The new system will also be metered and requires landowners to provide a minimum of four days covered storage.

As well as providing property owners with a supply to their farm boundary 365 days a year, the pipeline will save 4,800 megalitres of water annually by reducing seepage, leakage and evaporation losses.

The Tungamah domestic and stock pipeline is a major reliability of supply offset for the Decommissioning of Lake Mokoan and will provide water savings representing approximately one third of the required demand reduction on the Broken System to maintain existing reliability of supply for irrigators.

Before the new pipeline was installed, customers had to take their water in a single dam fill and store it for

stock and domestic use for the rest of the year. The channels, some nearing a hundred years old, were notorious for losing five times more water than they delivered.

Developing the new system has involved significant consultation and assistance from customers, particularly the project Reference Committee and Tungamah Water Services Committee.

The State Government as part of the *Our Water, Our Future* initiative has made a major contribution of \$17 million towards the \$20.4 million project cost, and the project is currently running under budget.

Goulburn-Murray Water Chairperson Don Cummins said connection to the pipeline will be a landmark occasion for the district's farmers, as well as for the water authority.

"The Tungamah pipeline means there is now long-term water security for this area, and farmers can be confident of our commitment to their future," he said.

"With the pipeline now nearing completion, the program to return Mokoan to wetlands is taking another significant and positive step forward."

## Lake Diverter update

The completion of a recent engineering study has confirmed a preferred source of supply for the proposed main Lake Diverter pipeline. The study involved a review of three of the more feasible options assessed in late 2005:

- Supply from Hollands Creek (two possible pipeline alignments); and
- Supply from Casey's Weir Pool (with proposal to pump from this pool at a location along the Mokoan Outlet Channel)

The study found that supplying the scheme from Hollands Creek was cost prohibitive, as a large harvesting storage would need to be built to ensure reliability.

The most feasible supply source was found to be from the Casey's Weir pool, with the Mokoan Outlet Channel identified as the preferred scheme pumping location.

With the information gathered from two recent demand studies undertaken around Lake Mokoan and a scheme supply source finalised, Goulburn-Murray Water will now proceed into the preliminary design phase for this component of the project. Consideration will be given to the results from some limited exploratory drilling for groundwater as a possible source of supply for several remotely located diversion sites.

Preliminary design of the scheme involves consolidating information from various studies completed to date, finalising design criteria and optimising the pump station, pipeline and balancing storage capacities. Once completed the preliminary design details will be presented to customers for their consideration.

# Irrigation Efficiency Initiatives

## Melbourne University Study

The Melbourne Water Research Centre of the University of Melbourne (MWRC) is proposing to utilise new monitoring, metering and control instrumentation as part of a research project, to improve our understanding of how we may further optimise the irrigation delivery system. The research project integrates farm, river and catchment based studies. This will then consider groundwater/surface water interaction and detailed river hydraulics. The project will utilise the operational improvement offset as the foundation for creating a highly efficient, irrigation system in the Broken River Valley.

## The Integrated Grants Program

An outcome of a recent survey and the ensuing Broken River Environmental Improvement Report, released in March 2006, was the commencement of an Integrated Grants Program. This involves work from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and funding through the Department of Sustainability & Environment to offer landholders with irrigated properties on the Broken River and Broken Creek incentives to improve:

- Water-use efficiency;
- Productivity;
- River health and water quality;
- Native vegetation cover and quality; and
- Native species habitat.

## What is on offer to Landholders?

- Waterways grants
- Environmental management incentives
- Whole farm plan incentives
- Incentives for re-use systems (recycle dams)
- Automatic irrigation incentives
- Incentives for outfall structures

Progress to date has resulted in 44 site visits and 35 incentives being offered to landholders.

For further detail on the grants program, contact Jim Castles at the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (Shepparton Office) on (03) 5820 1100.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

A new Lake Mokoan – Return to Wetland website has been launched to better inform the community of the project's progress. Features of the new 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](http://www.lakemokoan.com) or contact the Mokoan Project Office on (03) 5761 1611.

## Wetland Technical Reference Group

An agency group has been formed to provide input into environmental issues which require consideration in the final drawdown of Lake Mokoan and future rehabilitation of the Mokoan wetlands.

The Wetland Technical Reference Group is required to ensure that the development of various management plans takes into consideration that Lake Mokoan will remain an active supply storage until all reliability offsets and an alternative supply scheme for Mokoan diverters have been commissioned.

The Wetland Technical Reference group has commenced planning of a monitoring program to initially establish baseline data & then expand to assess rehabilitation objectives.



## Future Land Use Strategy

The Future Land Use Steering Committee approved the release of the Strategy for public comment, with three additional recommendations. The consultation period has included a number of community information sessions and also group sessions. Comments received during the consultation period will be considered in the development of the Final Future Land Use Strategy.

The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy (FLUS) sets out a Vision for the future of the site currently occupied by Lake Mokoan. The Strategy describes the ways in which to achieve the Vision, dealing with environmental, cultural, economic land use, social and community issues.

The main element of the FLUS is the restoration of the Winton Wetlands, consisting of a number of wetlands and the surrounding dryland ecosystems. The other main land use is the Primary Industry Precinct area.

Background information and reports can be obtained from the website or the Project Office.

## Asset Decommissioning

A study on the future role of the Mokoan Inlet and Outlet Channels is currently underway. Goulburn-Murray Water together with engineering consultants GHD are progressing studies to understand the future drainage function of both the Inlet and Outlet Channels post decommissioning. The study will also involve meetings with landowners adjacent to the channels in order to understand local issues, including drainage and provide further information on the study. A fact sheet explaining the study will be available in the coming weeks.

## Flooding Q&As and Fact Sheet

A fact sheet is now available providing information on river flow regimes expected to follow the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan.

The fact sheet can be obtained from Benalla Rural City Council, The Department of Sustainability and Environment (Benalla), The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority at 168 Welsford St, Shepparton or visit the GBCMA website link

[www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/downloads/FloodplainManagement/Flow-Regime-Information-Bulletin.pdf](http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/downloads/FloodplainManagement/Flow-Regime-Information-Bulletin.pdf)

