

# MID-MURRAY STORAGE PROJECT

MARCH 2007



## OVERVIEW OF THE TORRUMBARRY AREA

### THE TORRUMBARRY AREA

The Torrumbarry Irrigation Area extends over 167,000 ha of northern Victoria along the River Murray from Gunbower to Nyah. Some 150,000 ha is considered suitable for irrigation. A diversity of agriculture is possible in the area due to the use of irrigation water supplied from the River Murray catchment.

Dairy farms dominate around Cohuna while mixed farming is more common around Kerang where fat lambs and beef cattle are raised extensively and cereal, fodder, lucerne and oil seed crops are also widely produced.

As well as dairying, fruit and vegetables are a significant part of irrigated production around Swan Hill. The sandy hills at Tresco and along the River Murray downstream from Swan Hill to Nyah are planted to horticulture – vineyards, stone fruit and market gardening.

*Mixed farming, courtesy of Tom Lowe*



### ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The use of many regional lakes and streams as part of the Torrumbarry Irrigation System has resulted in the same systems being shared for the purposes of water supply, flood mitigation and drainage in many cases.

It is of major importance that both the irrigation system with its sensitive wetlands and the productive farmlands, are carefully managed to ensure that the threat of high water tables, soil salinity and water quality degradation do not further harm the natural environment or farmlands within the Torrumbarry Irrigation Area.



*Straw necked Ibis courtesy of Tom Lowe*



*Water sports, courtesy of Tom Lowe.*

### RECREATION

The many lakes, creeks and rivers in the Torrumbarry System offer excellent opportunities for water sports and recreation. The Kerang Wetlands have long been a drawcard for duck shooters and fishing enthusiasts. Many of the lakes and marshes provide the ideal habitat for all types of water birds, with some areas declared sanctuaries.

Middle Lake is the site of one of the world's largest ibis rookeries. During the breeding season from August to April, an estimated 200,000 ibises are resident at the lake.

An elevated viewing 'hide' gives visitors a panoramic view of the lignum clumps on which the young are hatched.

Yachting, power boating and camping facilities are available at Lakes Charm, Kangaroo and Boga, with safe swimming beaches at all lakes.

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## OPERATION OF THE TORRUMBARRY IRRIGATION SYSTEM

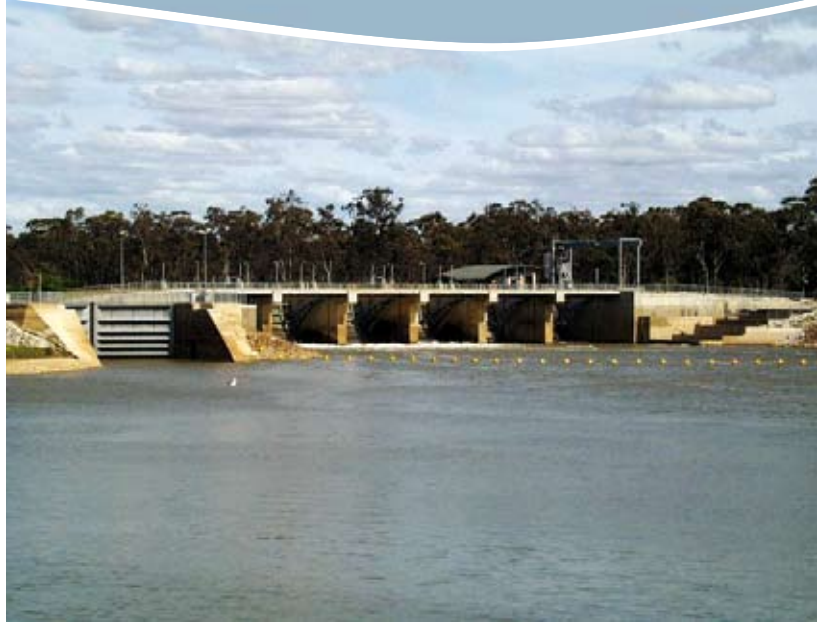
The water for the Torrumbarry Irrigation System comes from the upper reaches of the River Murray catchment for which the main storages are Lake Hume near Albury and Lake Dartmouth on the Mitta Mitta River. Water released at the Hume Dam takes 10 days to reach Torrumbarry Weir where water is diverted from the pool formed behind the weir into the irrigation system.

From Torrumbarry Weir, the water is regulated into a complex distribution system of natural waterways, lakes and constructed channels. In an average irrigation season, the system supplies over 500,000 megalitres of water to irrigators around Cohuna, Kerang and Swan Hill.

Approximately 300 km of natural waterways are used to transport water to various parts of the system which has several unique features adding to the complexity of the operation. Kow Swamp and Kangaroo Lake, with a total of 27,000 megalitres of useable storage, are used as in-system storages to overcome the long delay in receiving water from Lake Hume.

Kow Swamp is used to supply the system on 3 to 4 days notice from customers. Once the water arrives from Hume, Kow Swamp and Kangaroo Lake are replenished.

Water supply for the Nyah and Tresco districts is provided by means of a pumped pipeline system. Water for Tresco is pumped from the No. 7 channel at Lake Boga, while the pumped districts of Nyah and Woorinen draw water directly from the River Murray.



Torrumbarry Weir

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Torrumbarry System Map

