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pipingit
for our kids' future

Major reservoirs not required following completion of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline will provide a reliable, high quality water supply to farms and towns across the region, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Completion of the pipeline project will mean that some bulk water supply reservoirs and other in-stream assets currently servicing the region's existing water distribution system will not be required for water supply purposes in the future.

It has been determined that Dairy Creek Reservoir, Green Lake, Dock Lake, Lake Lonsdale, Lake Batyo Catyo, Lake Toolondo, Marma Lake and Natimuk Lake will not be required by GWMWater for water supply purposes following completion of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

Future operation and management of redundant reservoirs

The Reservoirs Review Stakeholder Working Group is recommending that some of these redundant reservoirs continue to operate for other purposes including recreation and flood mitigation.

Reservoirs no longer required for water supply purposes, but which may continue to be operated for other purposes, will incur costs and carry risks that need to be borne by an appropriate organisation.

In accordance with the White Paper 'Securing Our Water Future Together', GWMWater has advised the Victorian Government that these reservoirs will not be required for water supply purposes in the future.

GWMWater is proposing that its customers should not be responsible for the future cost of operating or maintaining reservoirs that are not required for water supply purposes.

Community consultation

Community comment is now being sought by the Reservoirs Review Stakeholder Working Group on the proposed operating scenarios for these redundant reservoirs:

Lake Toolondo

Capacity: 106,600 ML

Surface area: 1,400 ha

Maximum depth: 11 m

Year constructed: 1953

Current use:
Lake Toolondo is used to supply water for domestic and stock purposes. The lake is widely renowned as a trout fishing venue and is popular with water-skiers and swimmers. There is also a caravan park at the lake.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
It is proposed that Lake Toolondo be operated at just over half-full supply to maintain recreational values, reduce evaporation and to ensure through-flow to avoid the accumulation of salt and nutrients in the lake.

Lake Batyo Catyo

Capacity: 2,250 ML

Surface area: 230 ha

Maximum depth: 2.5 m

Year constructed: 1961

Current use:
At present, Lake Batyo Catyo is used to store water diverted from the Richardson River during high-flow periods. This water is used in the north-east parts of the Wimmera Mallee open channel system. The lake is important to Donald and surrounding district, as it is one of the only recreational lakes in this area. With recreational infrastructure such as toilets and a caravan park, it is a favourite spot for swimming, camping, picnicking, boating and other water sports.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
Lake Batyo Catyo is one of the 11 nominated lakes that will be supplied recreation water following completion of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

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Dock Lake

Capacity: 5,920 ML

Surface area: 215 ha

Maximum depth: 3.3 m

Year constructed: 1935

Current use:
When full, Dock Lake is another one of the Wimmera's favourite water playgrounds; with swimming, boating, fishing and sightseeing attracting many people. It is also an important birdlife habitat. The lake is no longer used for water supply purposes due to poor water quality.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
The proposed operational regime is the same as the current arrangement, with water spilling into the lake when all other regional water supply demands have been met and after Green Lake reaches full level. This means the lake will only fill in extremely wet years.

Alternative scenarios considered:
Supplying Dock Lake exclusively from natural catchment via Green Lake was considered, but rejected because it would lead to infrequent supply to Dock Lake and significantly reduced recreational value. A proposal to circulate a greater volume of water through the lake to prevent an accumulation of nutrients from the lake to reduce the frequency of algal blooms was not supported.

Dairy Creek

Capacity: 51 ML

Surface area: 2 ha

Maximum depth: 7.5 m

Year constructed: 1956

Current use:
Dairy Creek is an urban water supply source for Halls Gap.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
Redundant owing to replacement supply from Lake Bellfield.

Lake Lonsdale

Capacity: 65,480 ML

Surface area: 2,440 ha

Maximum depth: 4.5 m

Year constructed: 1903

Current use:
Lake Lonsdale is used for domestic and stock and urban supply and plays a key role in mitigating flooding downstream in the Wimmera River. One of the largest lakes in close proximity to Stawell, it plays an important social and recreational role for Stawell and district communities. It boasts some of the best trout fishing in the region and is a favourite camping spot. The lake also has special significance because of its indigenous heritage.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
The proposed future operational regime is that the lake operate at 80% of its full supply level to protect its indigenous heritage and maintain recreational and flood mitigation benefits, while at the same time reducing evaporation losses.

Alternative scenarios considered:
A plan to retain Lake Lonsdale at its full supply level was rejected because it would lead to increased evaporation and hence reduced volume available for flow into rivers. Another suggestion, to allow uncontrolled through-flow, was dismissed because of the potential damage to indigenous heritage values.

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Green Lake

Capacity: 5,350 ML

Surface area: 180 ha

Maximum depth: 3.7 m

Year constructed: 1935

Current use:
Located just 10 minutes from Horsham, Green Lake's primary use is recreational. It is filled when all other supply demand has been met. The original purpose of Green Lake was to supplement the irrigation system, but it has not been used for this purpose in recent decades. When full, Green Lake is a key water body for recreation. The lake has boat ramps and toilets and has been a popular summertime destination for Wimmera people for many years. It is known for its swimming, boating, fishing and sightseeing.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
The proposed operational regime is the same as the current arrangement, with water spilling into the lake when all other regional water supply demands have been met. This means the lake will only be full in wet years.

Alternative scenarios considered:
Supplying Green Lake exclusively from natural catchment was considered, but rejected because it would lead to infrequent supply to the lake and significantly reduced recreational value.

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Natimuk Lake

Surface area: 300 ha

Current use: Natimuk Lake is managed by Parks Vic and is not used for water supply purposes by GWMWater. The lake is important to Natimuk and surrounding district as a recreational lake. With infrastructure such as toilets and a caravan park, it is a popular spot for swimming, fishing, camping, picnicking, boating and other water sports.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
The proposed operational regime is the same as the current arrangement with water flowing into the lake from its natural catchment.

Alternative scenarios considered:
A proposal to fill Natimuk Lake from the channel system was rejected because it would require a new entitlement under the Murray Darling Basin Cap, having no regular history of supply from the GWMWater system.

Marma Lake

Location: Murtoa

Surface area: 17.3 ha

Current use:
Lake Marma at Murtoa is used for stock and domestic purposes and as a back-up for the town supply. Residents walk, run and picnic on its banks.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
Supply to the lake via the existing irrigation channel may be possible if an entitlement is secured.

Green Hill Lake

Surface area: 238 ha

Current use:
Green Hill Lake is managed by Ararat Rural City Council and is not used for water supply purposes by GWMWater. The lake is important to Ararat and surrounding district as a recreational lake. With infrastructure such as toilets and picnic facilities, it is a popular spot for fishing, camping, picnicking, boating and other water sports.

Role in water supply system post WMPP: Not required

Proposed operating regime:
The proposed operational regime is the same as the current arrangement with water flowing into the lake from its natural catchment.

Alternative scenarios considered:
A plan to provide water from Langi Ghiran Reservoir to Green Hill Lake was rejected as only 45 ML is available annually from this source. Evaporation of more than 100 ML per year can occur when the lake is full. Hence the benefit of the additional supply is considered to be too small to justify the cost of the works required to supplement the volume.

Call for submissions

The Reservoirs Review Stakeholder Working Group is now seeking submissions from stakeholders and the regional community, on these proposed operating scenarios for consideration prior to developing a final recommendation for submission to the GWMWater Board.

Written submissions should be addressed to:

Reservoirs Review
GWMWater
PO Box 481
HORSHAM 3402

Submissions close on Friday, 14 September 2007.

Further information is available by contacting Paul Atherton at GWMWater on 1300 659 961.