

# Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy

## Overview

The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy (FLUS) has been prepared to outline the vision, desired outcomes and strategies for the future land use of Lake Mokoan, once the Lake is decommissioned.

The FLUS established two primary land use zones, being the Winton Wetlands and Primary Industries precincts. Twelve detailed strategies are included that address the social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of the management of this area. These strategies were developed with considerable community and stakeholder input and will guide the future land manager to ensure effective restoration of the Lake Mokoan site to an area of environmental, social and economic significance.

Principally, Lake Mokoan will be restored to the Winton Wetlands. Occupying an area of approximately 6788 hectares, the wetlands will establish varied Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC). The FLUS provides for the restoration of interconnected wetland/dryland areas that will place the Winton Wetlands as a landmark ecological site in North Eastern Victoria. The restoration of the wetlands is likely to be of high significance at a 'world scale' and will be monitored according to agreed targets.

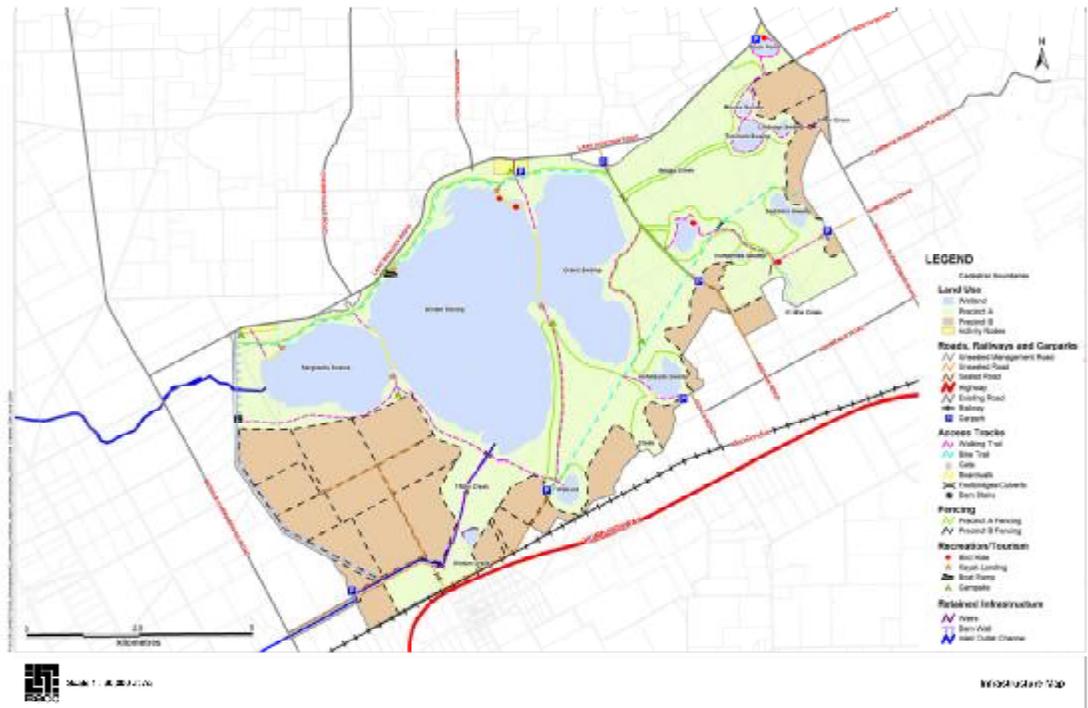
The Winton Wetland Tourism and Education Complex, is recommended to be developed in association with the wetland. This Complex will include a Winton Wetland Discovery Centre and associated boardwalks and trails.

A Master Plan will be prepared to guide the development of these facilities which will be developed in stages, in accordance with visitor demand and funding. The Master Plan will ensure that the ecological integrity of the Winton Wetlands is respected and that any development is sensitive to biodiversity conservation and minimising disturbance through appropriate human access.

Land within the Primary Industry Precinct (approximately 2066ha) is planned to be sold and made available for primary production. The preferred land use for the precinct is agriculture, predominately dryland grazing. The land will be offered for sale in parcels. Land sales will follow standard government guidelines in the sale of any crown land.

The Primary Industries Strategy defines the key considerations related to conservation and land management between agricultural land and the Wetland. Land management options will require further investigation to determine the optimal land management outcome. Some of this area may be appropriate to planting for forestry purposes particularly for firewood and carbon sequestration. Proposals to use this land for timber production would require further investigation and planning to reflect soil, water and cultural heritage issues. Planning provisions will reinforce the two optimal primary industries of the area and discourage development of housing and other land uses in the area.

The following map provides an overview of the land use areas proposed by the FLUS.



## Strategies

The detailed strategies provide specific recommendations for the future land manager of the Winton Wetlands, as well as future planning and regulatory authorities such as the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW), Benalla Rural City (BRC) and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

The key land use objectives and strategies are to encourage the effective and sustainable use of the resource for tourism, education, conservation and community space. The following table summarises the strategies of the FLUS.

### Land Use Strategies

Strategy	Explanation
Strategy 1 – Ecosystem Management	This strategy describes how the ecological and physical features of the study area will be protected and enhanced. The wetland system will be restored and maintained based on the original Winton Swamp area. Land uses for land abutting the restored wetland will be compatible with the protection of the wetland and dryland ecological values.
Strategy 2 – Cultural Heritage	As the Mokoan region possesses significant indigenous cultural heritage values as well as non-indigenous historic values, indigenous community organisations have assisted in shaping the FLUS. Implementation of the strategy will rely on continued consideration of key issues such as the conservation and preservation of indigenous archaeological sites. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) will be developed in consultation with the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP). This CHMP will be required for a range of activities proposed in the Wetlands, especially those which involve land disturbance.

Strategy	Explanation
Strategy 3 – Tourism and Commercial Development	The implementation of the FLUS in the study area, involves the development of a state-significant eco-tourism destination based mainly on the wetlands attractions, supplemented by interpretation of the indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage of the area.
Strategy 4 – Primary Industry	The FLUS recognises that the main land uses surrounding. The Winton Wetlands must be compatible with ecological and archaeological values. Agriculture, predominantly broad-acre grazing, is supported for the primary study area (The Primary Industry Precinct), subject to the implementation of appropriate land management controls. Forestry is also considered to be appropriate subject to meeting specific environmental and land management performance standards. The land to be utilised for forestry is expected to be small compared to the area to be utilised for agriculture.
Strategy 5 – Recreation and Community Facilities	Implementation of the FLUS will provide a number of benefits and changes to current and future recreation users and the local community. Some existing activities may be curtailed or unable to continue. However this will be countered by the provision of improved facilities, access and other new recreation opportunities created through restoration of the wetland and dryland areas and re-opening of access to the study area.
Strategy 6 – Land Ownership and Governance	Implementation of the FLUS will create new systems of land ownership and management. The governance of land management is an important element of this strategy. The strategy provides several options for future management and governance of the Winton Wetlands.
Strategy 7 – Research and Monitoring	The success of the FLUS will depend on ongoing research and monitoring to provide further support for the development of detailed management plans to decommission the lake while ensuring that ecological values are upheld. The strategy will ensure appropriate research and monitoring activities are undertaken.
Strategy 8 – Fire and Flood Management	Implementation of the FLUS will require a plan for the management of flood and fire risk.
Strategy 9 – Infrastructure and Services	The infrastructure strategy identifies physical infrastructure requirements. It is closely linked to the infrastructure plan and details road, fencing, gates, earthworks and infrastructure maintenance requirements involved in the FLUS.
Strategy 10 – Inlet and Outlet Channels	The inlet and outlet channels will continue to play a role in local water and floodplain management. This strategy was developed to assist the broader Lake Mokoan decommissioning project to develop a plan in terms of their future role, accessibility, and ongoing management arrangements.
Strategy 11 – Planning	Implementation of the FLUS will require the preparation of amendments to the Benalla Planning Scheme and consideration of the relevant planning approvals and assessments required. This strategy does not include consideration of any specific approvals that may be required, but rather, approvals for specific infrastructure, land uses or activities associated with the proposed land use plan. This strategy also summarises the key management planning documents and processes recommended within all strategies in the FLUS
Strategy 12 – Education and Enforcement	This strategy identifies the range of educational opportunities related to the Lake Mokoan site. The success of the FLUS will rely on the engagement of key stakeholders. Stakeholders will also ensure the sustainability of the strategy by providing an ongoing enforcement role throughout the life of the project.

## Project Activities

The detailed strategies outlined above will require a number of activities to be undertaken during implementation. The timing of the activities and costs will depend on their level of importance in meeting the objectives of the FLUS. The table below summarises the proposed activities outlined in the FLUS.

### Summary of activities associated with implementation of FLUS

Ecological Restoration	Management, community & recreation development	Tourism	Planning, technical, management and monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Seeding &amp; planting including seed collection &amp; ground preparation</li> <li>§ Fencing to protect wetlands</li> <li>§ Grazing management</li> <li>§ Pest plant &amp; animal control</li> <li>§ Fish management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Bike and walking track network</li> <li>§ Signing and interpretative material</li> <li>§ Upgrade &amp; maintenance of present visitor facilities</li> <li>§ New recreational facilities</li> <li>§ Construction of management access</li> <li>§ Construction of several new car parks</li> <li>§ Fire management works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Construction of some Boardwalks</li> <li>§ Winton Wetlands Tourism facility</li> <li>§ Kayak launching, bird hides and associated infrastructure</li> <li>§ Detailed interpretative signing and walks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Planning scheme amendments</li> <li>§ Rehabilitation Plan</li> <li>§ Monitoring Plan</li> <li>§ Cultural Heritage Management Plan</li> <li>§ Fire Management Plan</li> <li>§ Management costs for on-ground implementation</li> <li>§ Development of research partnerships</li> <li>§ Stakeholder &amp; community consultation involvement</li> <li>§ Governance arrangements</li> </ul>

## Project Costs

There are several factors which will determine project costs and how they will be managed to achieve the best land use outcomes. These include infrastructure requirements associated with land sales, maintenance costs and professional services including ecological research, field monitoring, planning, project management and consultation.

Ecological restoration will entail costs including fencing, rehabilitation planting and direct seeding, weed control, pest animal control and other maintenance activities. Similarly infrastructure associated with future stages of the FLUS will involve ongoing costs which will progressively build on the resource and the visitation. The FLUS provides a comprehensive breakdown of costs for each of the twelve strategies. These costs are indicative and the funding distribution may change between components depending on the progress of restoration, requirements of additional activities and the level of infrastructure required.



## Achieving the Vision

The Lake Mokoan FLUS sets out the vision for the study area aiming to capture the imagination, interest and commitment of a range of people.

The vision of the strategy is:

*“The restoration of the Winton Wetlands will be a project of national scientific, cultural and environmental significance with a focus on education, research, tourism, recreation and community development. The project will be known for its wide local, regional and national support.”*

Critical to achieving the vision will be government and community commitment to the outcomes and continued partnership between stakeholders. Partnerships between government, community and stakeholders will provide a high level of support for achieving the vision. Stakeholders will need to be involved at different times throughout the implementation of the strategy.

It is expected that the development of the Winton Wetlands will increase interest and investment in the area. Further enhancement of tourism and recreational opportunities in and around the Winton Wetlands will come by development of an integrated strategy that recognises the potential for investment to expand regional tourism and economic development.