

Recreation Management Plan

Lakes Borumba and Macdonald

September 2014

It's your water! Have your say...



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Overview

Healthy communities. Prosperous region. This is Seqwater's vision and is intrinsic to our operations. Seqwater is responsible for ensuring a safe, secure and reliable water supply for almost three million people across South East Queensland. We are unique in South East Queensland in that our catchments are more open from both a recreational and broader land use perspective.

Seqwater recognises the importance of recreation to the community and encourages the responsible enjoyment of our natural areas. In June 2013, Seqwater began the most extensive review of recreational activities and facilities at South East Queensland dams and catchments ever undertaken.

Our Objective: Manage access to recreation opportunities while protecting natural resources and water quality.

The challenge that faces Seqwater is how to manage our core role of providing water to a growing population, while satisfying growing community demands and expectations for access to lakes and catchment lands. Achieving our objective requires a risk based approach to the management of recreation, and the cooperation and support from the community.

Our promise to the community at the outset of the Recreation Review was to listen and learn about the recreational opportunities in and around the lakes, and within our constraints, deliver a management plan based on this feedback.

The response by the community and stakeholders to the Review has been outstanding. Special thanks are extended to the many people who provided input and participated in the surveys and workshops that helped us shape the new plans.



The Value of Our Natural Areas

Seqwater currently provide more than 50 per cent of the region's green space (excluding areas of conservation), with our recreation assets attracting over two million visitors each year.

Natural Value

Seqwater owns or manages approximately 60,000 hectares of land across South East Queensland. Our lakes not only supply water to a growing region, but also encompass some of the most scenic and picturesque sites in the region.

The natural areas around our lakes are home to an abundance of native wildlife, including providing important habitat for koalas that are listed as a vulnerable species.

Cultural Value

Seqwater catchments encompass landscapes and places of great importance to Aboriginal communities in South East Queensland. Seqwater is committed to managing those places sensitively and in partnership with those communities.

Social Value

Seqwater sites provide a range of social benefits, including recreation, tourism, education and social interaction between groups, families and others. They also support community wellbeing and provide opportunities for improving general health through outdoor recreation.

Economic Value

Seqwater sites are being increasingly recognised for their potential to encourage economic activity in regional areas. Expenditure by people visiting Seqwater lakes encourages local economic activity and generates local employment.

Seqwater commissioned external advice on the *Economic Value of Recreation Undertaken on Seqwater's Land*. A travel cost study supported by an independent survey of dam visitors was undertaken in June 2013 to understand the value visitors place on recreation. In summary the study found:

- Queensland households place a significant value on visits to Seqwater lakes. On average, an adult visitor to a Seqwater lake values the experience at around \$60 per trip. This translates to a total intrinsic value of recreation of over **\$150 million per annum**.
- A high proportion of people stop at regional towns on the way to and from Seqwater sites providing significant benefits to local businesses.
- Almost 80% of respondents said they visited as part of a group
- 40% of respondents who visited Seqwater sites are in the 55+ age bracket
- The top 3 main reasons for visiting an Seqwater site were

- Relaxing with families and friends
- Enjoying the natural environment
- Picnicking

Both the feedback from the community, and the results of the independent review, has highlighted that visiting our lakes and recreation areas is a highly valued experience. The majority of people that come want to enjoy the environment and natural areas. This aligns well with our objective regarding recreation management – *To manage access to recreation opportunities while protecting natural resources and water quality.*

Recreation also provides an opportunity to educate people regarding the importance of maintaining healthy catchments to protect our source water.

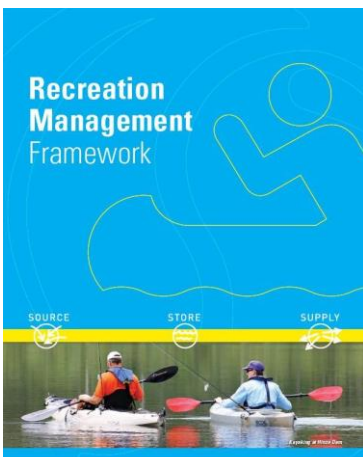
Scope

This recreation management plan encompasses all land based and water based recreation undertaken on Seqwater owned or controlled sites at Lakes Borumba and Macdonald, unless specifically addressed through legislation or other access arrangements including permits, licences or leases.

Management Approach

Seqwater's Recreation Management Framework recognises recreation in natural areas as a legitimate use, however not all activities can be provided at every site, nor is it desirable to do so. The purpose of the Recreation Management Framework is to inform policy and guide decision making regarding recreational use of Seqwater sites.

The Recreation Management Framework has seven key principles:



- Minimise risks to water quality
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Diversity in the range of recreation activities, locations and settings
- Ensure all use is consistent with Seqwater's land management practices
- Facilitate sustainable recreation
- Engage with external regulating agencies
- Meet financial management outcomes

A key management principle in the Framework is *Diversity*. This principle recognises the importance of ensuring that there is a range of recreational experiences catered for so that recreation spaces meet the needs of the wider community. The fact that Lakes Borumba and Macdonald are located relatively close to one another provides an ideal opportunity to embrace and enhance the diversity of recreational settings and experiences in the region, thereby maximizing the benefits to both the users and the local community.

Lakes Borumba and Macdonald are located in a region that already has a variety of recreational opportunities provided by local Councils and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Demand for greater access must be weighed against the primary role of these assets. Lake Macdonald is primarily used for drinking water, while Lake Borumba is primarily an irrigation source.

Recognising the range of other agencies, community groups and individuals who have an interest in the management and use of Lakes Borumba and Macdonald, Seqwater will continue to work collaboratively with these groups to achieve sustainable recreational use and deliver on

the changes to access and facilities highlighted through the consultation process for the Recreation Review.

Seqwater will continue to consult with the community and relevant stakeholders to address significant emerging issues for recreation and any new management arrangements.

Funding

Seqwater's primary focus is to "*deliver safe, secure, resilient and reliable water supplies at least cost to its customers*". While we recognise that recreation is an important element of the services we provide to the community, the provision of extensive recreation facilities and services is not something we are explicitly funded for. Seqwater's *Statement of Obligations* requires us, amongst other things, to "*review opportunities for recreation including strategies to recover costs from users and/or beneficiaries where appropriate*". This will be an ongoing consideration in regard to the management and delivery of recreational facilities.

Funding for Recreation Review Outcomes

The timing of the implementation of the changes highlighted in the recreation review will largely be dependent on when funding can be secured. Some outcomes may be achieved with minimal expenditure, however it will be necessary for Seqwater to secure funding and develop an implementation plan for delivery of other recreation review outcomes.

The implementation plan as well as regular updates on the progress of these initiatives will be forwarded to everyone who registered interest for these lakes online, key stakeholders, as well as updates on our website.

Commercial Undertakings

Seqwater recognises that the use of its sites for commercial undertakings contributes to the economic activity in regional areas.

While our primary objective in the management of recreation is to manage access to recreation opportunities for the **public**, we recognise that commercial operators can play a role in supporting visitor needs and increasing the public's enjoyment and appreciation of our natural areas.

Seqwater has developed a *Commercial Activities Policy* which outlines the process and requirements for any commercial use of sites. Where sites are used either temporarily or more permanently for commercial purposes, a commercial fee will be applied.

Further information can be found on the Seqwater website at www.seqwater.com.au

Recreation Management

Conditions of Access and Use

The *Seqwater Rules* outline the conditions of access and use by all visitors to Seqwater sites. These are referenced on the on-site signage. A full copy of the rules can be found on the website www.seqwater.com.au.

The primary purpose of the *Seqwater Rules* is to ensure the safety of visitors and to protect the environment and infrastructure provided so that the areas are safe for all to enjoy. All visitors are asked to comply with these rules.

Public Notices

Seqwater endeavours to ensure that visitors are well informed about any issues at sites that may impact the visitor's experience. A number of methods are used to keep everyone informed including:

- Seqwater Website
- Facebook
- Direct stakeholder email notifications
- On-site signage

Seqwater recommends that all visitors check the Seqwater website or facebook page before visiting any sites.

Enforcement

Seqwater actively enforces the use and activities on its sites. Enforcement activities are primarily aimed at visitor education and voluntary compliance to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all users.

Seqwater also partners with key enforcement agencies such as Queensland Police and coordinates the management and enforcement activities across all sites.

Feedback through the Recreation Review has highlighted how important appropriate enforcement is to visitors. As a result Seqwater will be reviewing its resourcing, its enforcement powers and the partnering opportunities that may exist to improve enforcement across all of its sites.

Recreation Infrastructure

Visitors expect a range of settings, experiences and facilities reflecting wide-ranging outdoor interests and cultural diversity.

Any new facilities and amenities should be in harmony with existing settings and should not impact water quality or the environmental values of the area. They need to respect the cultural

values, be functional and address visitor needs. Where practical Seqwater will utilise recyclable and/or renewable materials and adhere to energy and water efficiency guidelines.

Seqwater will endeavour to provide adequate, well maintained recreational infrastructure within its budgetary constraints.

Education

There are a variety of opportunities to encourage the uptake of best practices by recreational users and for them to be active stewards for Seqwater lakes and catchments. Seqwater will make available and promote ways for the community and recreational users to contribute to the ongoing protection of our natural areas and drinking water catchments, and thereby ensure sustainable recreation.

All efforts will be made to ensure that visitors are better informed of the opportunities at each Seqwater recreation site, and that the information provided enhances visitor experiences, understanding and appreciation.

Safety

Seqwater's dams and lakes are part of natural systems and have naturally occurring characteristics that visitors need to be mindful of when recreating. These characteristics change regularly and include changing bacteria levels and hazards above and below water. This is a very normal and an expected occurrence in any natural system. Visitors are encouraged to comply with all on site signage, check the website for updates/changes to conditions, and take care when recreating.

Summary of Feedback and Outcomes

Consultation Feedback

The following provides a summary of all the issues raised throughout the consultation process identifying the common themes across all the data collected.

Lake Borumba

Key findings:

- The existing picnic facilities are of a good standard and require little change.
- There is division among the community as to whether a boating permit scheme should be introduced.
- Respondents believe more water patrols are required to improve public safety.
- The community is divided on allowing dogs on leash.
- Access to the lake could be improved.
- There is support for access to multi-use trails in neighbouring National Park and State Forest land.
- There is support to change the opening hours to reflect seasonal daylight hours.
- There is concern around the mix of skiing, fishing and paddling on the lake.
- Feedback indicates that there is some dissatisfaction with the boat ramp and subsequent congestion.

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
Swimming		For safety reasons, swimming is only permitted at sites that have a designated swimming area. No safe location could be identified at Lake Borumba for the establishment of a swimming area. Therefore swimming cannot be a permitted activity.
Picnicking	Majority believe the picnic facilities are satisfactory.	Nil required.
Playgrounds	Little support for installing a playground in the day use area.	Nil required.
Camping		The camp ground at Lake Borumba is currently under a commercial lease to a third party operator. The land owned/controlled by Seqwater at Lake Borumba is extremely limited. Given access and suitable land around the lake is limited, the establishment of any additional camping areas would need to be implemented by other parties.
Motorised	Feedback divided on whether a	Decision on a boating permit scheme will be

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
Watercraft	boating permit scheme should be introduced.	made at the completion of the recreation review.
	Majority in support for more on-water patrols. Commentary around improving on-water safety.	Seqwater will continue to work with other enforcement agencies regarding additional patrols. Seqwater will work with Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) to gazette the speed limit in the arms of the lake.
Non-motorised Watercraft	Some support for changes to access for non-motorised watercraft.	A viable location for a separate launch point could not be identified that would provide better access than the area near the boat ramp.
Fishing	Feedback divided on whether changes to access for fishing are required. Some requests for the lake zoning to separate fishing and skiing.	Nil required.
Trails	Commentary received during community engagement in regards to access to trails in neighbouring National Park and State Forest land. Potential trail linkages from Lake Borumba are identified in Gympie Regional Council Tracks and Trails Plan (draft September 2014).	Seqwater to work with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in relation to access to multi-use trails on land adjacent to Lake Borumba.
Dogs	Participants divided on whether dogs should be permitted in the day use area.	No change. The impact to the wildlife and the potential conflicts with other park users remains a concern for Seqwater, particularly given the visitation in peak periods.
Site Access	Strong support for access to the lake to be changed. Some commentary around providing an additional access point, improvements to current access point and reducing congestion at the current boat ramp.	Establishing a new access point is not feasible due to the limited land owned by Seqwater and the costs that would be involved. Seqwater will investigate upgrading the existing boat ramp facilities in collaboration with Department of Transport and Main Roads and Gympie Regional Council. On-site signage to be reviewed and improved where required.
Opening Hours	Over 80% support adjusting opening hours to more closely correspond with daylight hours.	A decision on opening hours will be made at the completion of the recreation review in 2014.
Environment	Some agreement that areas of environmental significance exist for both flora and fauna.	Seqwater is committed to protecting the environmentally sensitive areas, including the management of animal and plant pests.

Lake Macdonald

Key findings:

- There is support for a swimming area; however there is a contingent that does not wish to see swimming as a permitted activity.
- There is satisfaction with the picnic facilities; however feedback has indicated that more barbeques would be welcomed.
- The community does not support the introduction of a boating permit scheme.
- There was division among the community on access for fishing.
- There is overall satisfaction with the trails.
- There is community support to continue to permit dogs on leash at Lake Macdonald Park.
- There is support to change the opening hours to reflect seasonal daylight hours.

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
Swimming	There is support for a designated swimming area to be established. Some commentary around safety, water quality and possible impacts from increased visitation to the area.	There are public swimming pools and beautiful beaches in the Noosa Council area to satisfy the demand for swimming. Based on that, and concerns raised by Noosa Council, Seqwater will not be establishing a swimming area at Lake Macdonald.
Picnicking	Majority are satisfied with the current picnic facilities. Some commentary around the need for more barbeques, particularly at Mary River Cod Park.	Cosmetic improvements to be made to Mary River Cod Park and Lake Macdonald Park, including installation of a BBQ at Mary River Cod Park. It should be noted that some of the picnic areas at Lake Macdonald are provided and maintained by Noosa Council, including the Noosa Botanic Gardens, Kookaburra Park and the bird hide at Jabiru Park.
Playgrounds	Majority are satisfied with the current playground facilities.	Nil required.
Camping		There is a privately run Scout camp adjacent to Lake Macdonald at Camp Cooroora. The camp also caters for schools and groups. Seqwater land around the lake is limited. The establishment of additional camping areas would need to be implemented by other agencies.
Motorised Watercraft		Motorised water craft are not permitted on Lake Macdonald due to the presence of the Cabomba weed. This weed cannot be successfully eradicated, only controlled. Due to the risks of weed transfer and the cost of control, having motorised watercraft on the lake is not an option that can be considered.

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
Non-motorised Watercraft	Over 63% disagree with the introduction of a boating permit scheme. Commentary focused on the lake only being used by non-motorised water craft.	Decision on a boating permit scheme will be made at the completion of the recreation review. Signage to be reviewed and improved where required.
Fishing	Feedback was divided on whether changes to access for fishing are required.	Nil required.
Trails	Majority of participants find the trails to be satisfactory, with some suggestions for improvement.	Seqwater to continue to maintain canoe trails, and improve trail signage. A walking trail loop around the lake is not feasible due to the limited land Seqwater owns, and impact on neighbours.
Dogs	Strong support for dogs on leash to continue at Lake Macdonald Park.	Dogs on leash to remain permitted at Lake Macdonald Park.
Site Access		Opportunities for the provision of additional access points around the lake are limited.
Opening Hours	Over 73% support adjusting opening hours to more closely correspond with daylight hours.	A decision on opening hours will be made at the completion of the recreation review in 2014.
Environment	Agreement that areas of environmental significance exist. Commentary focused on the abundance of birdlife in the area, and the control of weeds and pest species.	Seqwater is committed to protecting the environmentally sensitive areas, including the management of animal and plant pests. Wash down facilities to be installed at Lake Macdonald Park, and upgraded at Mary River Cod Park. On-site signage to be reviewed and improved where required.

Recreation Review Outcomes

Based on the feedback received, priorities for changes to recreational activities and access have been identified at each lake as follows:

Lake Borumba

<p>Outcome</p> <p>Improve on-site signage</p> <p><i>Planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Review and improve current signage where required.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Investigate the establishment of “restricted” zones due to heavily timbered areas of the lake</p> <p><i>This is being progressed as a priority with Maritime Safety Queensland.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Gazette a 6 knot speed limit in the arms of the lake through Maritime Safety Queensland.</p> <p>Install buoys and update signage.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Investigate improvements to boat ramp</p> <p><i>Investigation, planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Seqwater will investigate upgrading the existing boat ramp facilities in collaboration with Department of Transport and Main Roads and Gympie Regional Council.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Investigate access to multi-use trails on land adjacent to Lake Borumba.</p> <p><i>Investigation, planning and scoping of works to be progressed. Timing of works and funding required are being worked through with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Seqwater will work with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in relation to access to multi-use trails on land adjacent to Lake Borumba.</p> <p>Investigate establishing additional car parking facilities to support the site being used as a trailhead.</p>

Lake Macdonald

<p>Outcome</p> <p>Improve on-site signage</p> <p><i>Planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Review and improve current signage where required.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Improve wash down facilities on site</p> <p><i>To be completed by December 2014.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Install wash down facility at Lake Macdonald Park and upgrade the wash down facility at Mary River Cod Park.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Upgrade picnic facilities</p> <p><i>To be completed by December 2014.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Implement cosmetic changes to the picnic area at Mary River Cod Park and Lake Macdonald Park.</p> <p>Install BBQ at Mary River Cod Park.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Dogs on leash to remain permitted at Lake Macdonald Park</p> <p><i>Effective immediately.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Distribute stakeholder notifications and update signage.</p>

In addition to website notices, Seqwater will provide regular updates on the progress of these initiatives to key stakeholders and to people who registered interest in these lakes via the Recreation Review website.