

Recreation Management Plan

Lakes Clarendon and Dyer

June 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 around two million visitors each year.

Natural Value

Seqwater owns or manages approximately 60,000 hectares of land across South East Queensland. These assets 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.

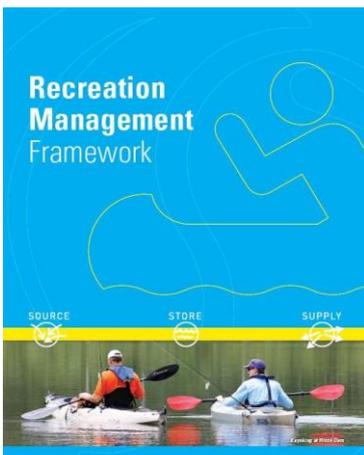
Scope

This recreation management plan encompasses all land based and water based recreation undertaken on Seqwater owned or controlled sites at Lakes Clarendon and Dyer, 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 Clarendon and Dyer are closely located 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.

The primary purpose of Lakes Clarendon and Dyer is to provide water to irrigators. Seqwater has statutory obligations to supply water from the lakes to irrigators, and cannot keep the lake levels high enough for recreation activities by refusing to release water to irrigators in times of low rainfall.

Recognising the range of other agencies, community groups and individuals who have an interest in the management and use of Lakes Clarendon and Dyer, 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 throughout the consultation period.

Lake Clarendon

Key findings:

- There is support for establishing a designated swimming area.
- Introducing non-motorised watercraft to the lake is highly supported.
- Majority are against the introduction of a boating permit scheme.
- There is support to allow fishing at the lake.
- There is support to change the opening hours to reflect seasonal daylight hours.

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
Swimming	Strong support for the establishment of a swimming area.	The lake levels at Lake Clarendon fluctuate frequently, and the lake levels are often very low. This makes the feasibility of a fit for purpose swimming area difficult. As such a designated swimming area will not be established at Lake Clarendon. A swimming area will be established at nearby Lake Dyer for visitors to enjoy.
Picnicking		No change. The picnic area at Lake Clarendon, including the shade shelters, tables and toilet, are provided and maintained by the Lockyer Valley Regional Council.
Playgrounds		No change. The picnic area is provided and maintained by the Lockyer Valley Regional Council.
Camping		Seqwater does not own any suitable land at Lake Clarendon for this purpose.
Motorised Watercraft		No change. Lake Clarendon has limited scope for suitable access points and has not historically been open to motorised watercraft due to its size, access constraints and fluctuation of water levels in the lake.
Non-motorised Watercraft	Majority in support for allowing non-motorised watercraft on the lake.	Paddle craft to be permitted once a launch point has been established in conjunction with Lockyer Valley Regional Council. It should be noted that Seqwater cannot ensure the accessibility to the lake due to

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
		frequent variation in lake levels.
	64% are against the introduction of a boating permit scheme.	Decision on a boating permit scheme will be made at the completion of the recreation review.
Fishing	Support for opening the lake to fishing.	Fishing will be permitted once a paddle craft launch point is established. Lake Clarendon is not currently stocked with fish.
Trails		Seqwater owns limited land around the lake. Due to operational requirements, public access to the dam wall is not allowed. Seqwater is investigating the option of establishing a walking trail adjacent to the dam wall which will allow community members to observe birdlife.
Dogs		No change. Domestic pets are not permitted on Seqwater land at Lake Clarendon.
Site Access		Opportunities for the provision of access points around Lake Clarendon are extremely limited. As such, alternate access points have not been considered.
Opening Hours	Support for a change in the opening hours to match seasonal influences.	A decision on opening hours will be made at the completion of the recreation review in late 2014.
Environment	Some agreement that areas of environmental significance exist. Commentary centred around the wildlife habitats in the area, particularly birdlife.	Seqwater is committed to protecting the environmentally sensitive areas, including the management of animal and plant pests. Seqwater to investigate possible vegetation areas.
Other	Community members would like increased recognition of local history.	Seqwater will work with local historical societies with regard to local historical matters.

Lake Dyer

Key findings:

- There is support to permit swimming.
- There is overall satisfaction with the playground and picnic areas.
- There is support for the introduction of a boating permit scheme.
- Majority are satisfied with motorised and non-motorised access.
- There is overall satisfaction with current fishing access.
- There is support to change the opening hours to reflect seasonal daylight hours.

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
Swimming	Majority in support for establishing a designated swimming area. Commentary focused on the need to have a designated area for safety reasons.	Seqwater to establish a designated swimming area. Obstructions in water such as old fence posts are to be investigated before a swimming area is established. The area is likely to become dry when water levels in the lake fall. During these periods swimming would not be a permitted activity at the lake as there are no safe alternate areas to swim.
Picnicking	Majority believe the picnic facilities are satisfactory. Some commentary around the lack of Seqwater signage onsite.	Seqwater to improve signage at recreation area.
Playgrounds	Overall agreement that the playground facilities are satisfactory.	Nil required.
Camping		The campground at Lake Dyer is operated by the Lockyer Valley Regional Council.
Motorised Watercraft	Majority are satisfied with the current access for motorised watercraft. Strong commentary around the need for more patrols and enforcement of safety on the lake. Some feedback that there should be a limit on the number of boats on the lake at any one time. Some concern regarding the loading area near the boat ramp and its congestion during busy periods. Residents around the lake are concerned with the noise level early in the morning.	Seqwater will continue to work with other enforcement agencies regarding additional patrols.
	58% agree with the introduction of a boating permit scheme, 17% are indifferent, and 25% disagree.	Decision on a boating permit scheme will be made at the completion of the recreation review.

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
	<p>Participants believe the boating permit scheme would work if the money received is put into improvements to recreation facilities.</p> <p>Others believe there are already too many costs, or that all users should pay.</p>	
Non-motorised Watercraft	<p>Majority are satisfied with the access for non-motorised watercraft.</p> <p>Some commentary around the desire for a designated launch area for paddle craft.</p>	Nil required.
Fishing	Strong support for the current access for fishing.	Nil required.
Trails		Seqwater is investigating the option of establishing a walking trail adjacent to the dam wall.
Dogs		No change. Domestic pets are not permitted on Seqwater land at Lake Dyer.
Site Access		Opportunities for the provision of access points around Lake Dyer are extremely limited due to the limited land Seqwater owns. As such, alternate access points have not been considered.
Opening Hours	More than 74% would like to see the opening hours adjusted to reflect seasonal daylight hours.	A decision on opening hours will be made at the completion of the recreation review in late 2014.
Environment	<p>Participants were split between agreement and indifference to environmental areas around Lake Dyer.</p> <p>Participants would like to see the bird sanctuary protected and more trees planted.</p>	<p>Seqwater is committed to protecting the environmentally sensitive areas, including the management of animal and plant pests.</p> <p>Seqwater to investigate possible vegetation areas.</p>

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 Clarendon

<p>Outcome</p> <p>Permit paddle craft on the lake</p> <p><i>Planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority. Works to be scheduled when funding available.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Establish designated launch point in conjunction with the Lockyer Valley Regional Council</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Permit fishing on the lake</p> <p><i>This will be delivered as part of the establishment of the launch point.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Fishing to be permitted once a paddle craft launch point has been established</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Enhance access for bird watchers at the lake</p> <p><i>Planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i></p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Establish walking trail adjacent to dam wall for bird watching</p>

Lake Dyer

Outcome	Action
Permit swimming at Lake Dyer	Establish designated swimming area
<i>It is anticipated this will be implemented by August 2014.</i>	

Outcome	Action
Improve signage at recreation area	Install Seqwater sign
<i>It is anticipated this will be implemented by September 2014.</i>	

Outcome	Action
Establish walking trail adjacent to dam wall	Seqwater to investigate feasibility
<i>Planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i>	

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.