

# Recreation Management Plan

## Hinze Dam

October 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.

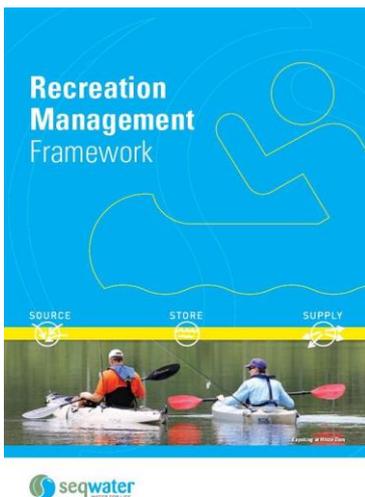
## Scope

This recreation management plan encompasses all land based and water based recreation undertaken on Seqwater owned or controlled sites at Hinze Dam (also known as Advancetown Lake), 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 of South East Queensland.

Hinze Dam is located in a region that has a variety of recreational opportunities managed by Gold Coast City Council, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, and commercial providers. Demand for greater recreational access to Hinze Dam must be weighed against the primary role of this asset, to provide drinking water.

Recognising the range of other agencies, community groups and individuals who have an interest in the management and use of Hinze Dam, Seqwater will continue to work collaboratively 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 and 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](http://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](http://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 Service 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.

### Hinze Dam

#### Key findings:

- The picnic facilities are generally of a good standard, however concern exists regarding their location.
- Majority in support for a boating permit scheme.
- Feedback indicated a desire to have access for fishing improved, particularly around shoreline fishing opportunities and the number of access points.
- Feedback divided on whether the current trails are satisfactory.
- There is support to allow dogs on leash.
- Access to the water can be improved, including providing a designated paddle craft launch point.
- Majority would like to see opening hours more closely correspond to daylight hours.

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
Swimming		For safety reasons, swimming is only permitted at sites that have a designated swimming area. Swimming will not be permitted at Hinze Dam due to concerns relating to water quality.  The Gold Coast region provides various swimming opportunities including local beaches and aquatic centres.
Picnicking	Majority believe the picnic facilities are satisfactory. Significant commentary was received regarding the location of the picnic areas and the lack of water views and access.	Picnic tables and shade shelters will be installed at Waterside Park. A shade shelter will be installed over the existing picnic table at the Western Boat Ramp.  Additional picnic areas with water access near the dam wall are not feasible.
Playgrounds	Majority find the available playground equipment to be satisfactory. Feedback indicated that shade over the playground should be considered.	Seqwater will install shade over the existing playground once funding is secured.
Camping		Due to access restrictions and lack of suitable land around the lake, the establishment of camping areas would need

Activity	Issue Summary	Seqwater Response
		to be implemented by other agencies.
Motorised Watercraft		Due to the potential water quality impacts on drinking water supply, introducing fuel-powered motorised watercraft to the lake was not considered.
Non-motorised Watercraft	Majority in support of the introduction of a boating permit scheme.	A decision on a boating permit scheme will be made at the completion of the Recreation Review.
Fishing	Some support for changes to access for fishing. Feedback centred around the lack of areas for shore based fishing and the location and number of access points.	Public boat ramps cannot be established close to the dam wall due to physical and legislative restrictions. Seqwater will install a rigging/de-rigging area within the car park at each boat ramp. Signage will be updated. Both the Eastern and Western boat ramp recreation areas provide access for shoreline fishing.
Trails	Feedback divided on whether the current trails are satisfactory. Some commentary around extending mountain bike and horse riding trails, establishing a full loop trail around the lake; and improving signage, mapping and connectivity. Comments also included formalising trail entry for clearer access.	Seqwater will formalise the trail entry point on Advancetown Road to allow for clearer and easier access to existing trails. Seqwater will improve awareness of the trails and pathways within the recreation areas from Picnic Parkland up to the Visitor Information Centre, and across the dam wall. A full loop trail around the lake is not feasible due to the topography. The old fire trails were inundated when the water level was increased. There is now no operational requirement to reinstate these fire trails.
Dogs	Support for permitting dogs on leash in recreation areas. Some feedback around the impact of dogs on visitors and the wildlife.	Dogs on leash will be permitted in Picnic Parkland, Pocket Park and on the pathway from Picnic Parkland to the upper car park. Dogs will not be permitted in Waterside Park, the Visitor Information Centre area, on the dam wall, or on any trails around the lake.
Site Access	Support for improved paddle craft access to the lake.	A paddle craft entry point will be established near the Western Boat Ramp. The launch point will facilitate the easy launch and retrieval of canoes and kayaks, which will reduce congestion at the boat ramp.
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 conclusion of the Recreation Review in 2014.
Environment	Agreement that areas of environmental significance exist for both flora and fauna. Commentary did not identify specific environmental concerns.	Seqwater is committed to protecting environmentally sensitive areas, including the management of animal and plant pests.

## Recreation Review Outcomes

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

### Hinze Dam

Outcome	Action
<b>Improve picnic areas</b>	Install picnic tables and shade shelters at Waterside Park.
<i>The timing of works will be dependent on funding.</i>	Install shade shelter over the existing picnic table at Western Boat Ramp.

Outcome	Action
<b>Improve playground area</b>	Install shade over the current playground area.
<i>The timing of works will be dependent on funding.</i>	

Outcome	Action
<b>Address congestion at boat ramps</b>	Establish a rigging/de-rigging area at the Eastern and Western Boat Ramps.
<i>It is anticipated that this will be implemented by 31 December 2014.</i>	

Outcome	Action
<b>Improve on-site signage</b>	Review and improve current signage where required.
<i>The planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i>	

Outcome	Action
<b>Improve access to trail network</b>	Formalise the trail entry point on Advancetown Road.
<i>The planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i>	Update signage, and provide community education around trails including the existing trails and pathways within the recreation areas.

Outcome	Action
<b>Improve paddle craft access</b>	Establish paddle craft launch point at Western Boat Ramp.
<i>The planning and scoping of works will be progressed as a priority.</i>	

Outcome	Action
<p><b>Permit dogs on leash at Picnic Parkland, Pocket Park and on the pathway from Picnic Parkland to the upper car park.</b></p>	<p>Update signage and distribute stakeholder notifications.</p>
<p><i>To be implemented prior to 1 December 2014.</i></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 the lake via the Recreation Review website.