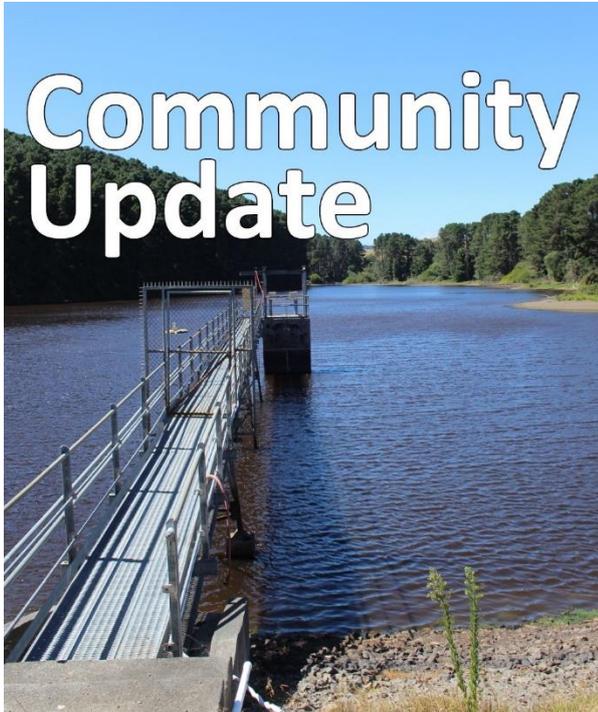


FEBRUARY - MARCH 2019



FUTURE USE OF WATER

The Lance Creek Water Connection was commissioned in November 2018 and, as a result, the four reservoirs that once supplied Korumburra, Poowong, Loch and Nyora's drinking water are no longer connected to the system.

South Gippsland Water is currently working with community and stakeholders to explore a range of possibilities and themes for the future use of the four reservoirs – Ness Gully, Bellview Creek, Coalition Creek and Little Bass.

Above: Little Bass Reservoir

CONSULTATION PROCESS

South Gippsland Water has been working with a community and stakeholder reference group to further understand the complexities of potential future uses, and seek guidance as to the repurposing of the local reservoirs to return to the natural environment of as a community and/or regional asset.

Expressions of interest were called for in September last year.

The purpose of the group is to assist SGW determine the capital works required on the dam walls.

The first steering group meeting was held on 7 November and the second just recently on 6 February where a number of options and challenges relating to the use of the reservoirs, associated catchment areas and water allocation were discussed.

EXPLORING THE OPTIONS

The themes identified during each workshop included environmental benefits for river health, biodiversity, recreation and as a base for alternate power generation, economic and regional benefits such as industry and agricultural use were also explored.



SAFETY & ONGOING MANAGEMENT

Information regarding dam safety requirements and costs associated with upgrading existing infrastructure has also been discussed by the group.

Safety is a major component of dam management and is currently managed under the Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD) guidelines.

Safety management is ongoing and the requirements will be dependent on the water level the reservoirs operate at in future years.



Top: Meeting no.2 - SGW staff, stakeholders and community members.

Above: Coalition Creek Reservoir at lower levels.

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

South Gippsland Water continues to complete maintenance and dam safety monitoring at Ness Gully, Belleview Creek, Coalition Creek and Little Bass.

As part of its management process, South Gippsland Water is currently lowering the water levels in all four reservoirs.

Lowering the water level serves a number of important management requirements. It mimics the drop in water level that would result from drier seasonal conditions at this time of year and, until recently, the drawdown of water to supply townships over summer.

The lowering of levels will prepare the reservoirs for autumn, winter and spring rainfall and allows South Gippsland Water to attend to dam wall maintenance and other structural works to meet operational and safety requirements.

NEXT STEPS

The next meeting of the Rethinking Reservoirs steering group is due to be held in May at a time to be confirmed.

The group will further review the requirement for Capital Works at the sites.