

COMMUNITY UPDATE | MAY 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.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The community and stakeholder reference group have had two meetings 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 or as a community and/or regional asset.

The process is assisting South Gippsland Water in a long term vision for the sites and to determine the capital works required on the dam walls. This process is to provide direction for the structural changes and any potential future projects and activities on the

sites will be completed via additional stakeholder community partnerships.

INTERIM SAFETY MEASURES COMPLETE

During February the Corporation lowered the water level at each of the sites. The lowering of levels prepares these storages that are no longer in use for autumn, winter and spring rainfall and has reduced dam safety monitoring to a monthly inspection at each site.

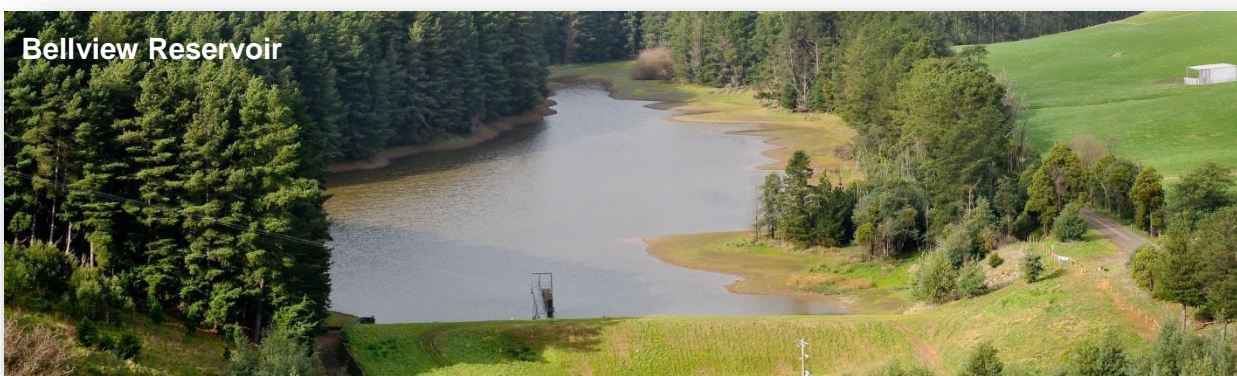
At normal capacity, under Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD) guidelines, dam safety monitoring is completed five times a week at Coalition Creek, three times a week at Ness Gully and Little Bass and twice per week at Bellview.

South Gippsland Water has been able to redirect staff time historically utilised in dam safety monitoring to alternate activities as a result of this process.

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

South Gippsland Water continues to complete maintenance and dam safety monitoring at all four reservoirs.

The storages will remain at a lower water level, and the areas will be monitored over the autumn, winter and spring. South Gippsland Water will continue to attend to



dam wall maintenance and other structural works to meet operational and safety requirements. This has included a major cleanup of non-native vegetation at Coalition Creek and assessment of environmental impacts due to the lowering of the supplies, Ness Gully in particular, which is essentially empty.

DETERMINING LONG TERM WORKS

In determining the capital works to be completed, consideration must be given not only to the future use of the four sites, but that there is a clear understanding of required works to achieve an acceptable balance between community preference, regulatory requirements and cost.

Progress has been made in the each of the analysis areas above. The stakeholder workshop completed in February developed a community position for each of the sites;

Coalition Creek: A level of water retained to be developed and used for golf club irrigation and a range of recreation purposes

Ness Gully: Lower spillway to become natural streamflow again

Little Bass: A level of water retained and eventually utilised as a recreational facility to benefit the local community (recognising the challenges)

Bellview Reservoir: Multi use site – industrial/commercial and recreational - with considerations to access

These views will be taken into consideration along with the analysis of long term regulatory requirements and cost to reach a final decision.

South Gippsland Water commissioned a report, to provide a high level analysis of regulatory requirements, cost, safety requirements, and environmental impacts such as risk of associated flooding at a number of water level options for each dam.

The report has been completed, however, does not provide enough information for South Gippsland Water, community and stakeholders to confidently develop a recommendation to South Gippsland Water's Board for June 2019.

As a result, the Corporation has requested further investigations in order to develop deeper understandings. These include;

- Detailed costings for identified options
- Cultural and heritage assessment
- Ecological assessment
- Planning and Environment assessment – including catchment and yield

NEXT STEPS

At the commencement of the Rethinking Reservoir project South Gippsland Water provided an undertaking to community and stakeholders that the engagement process would be completed via a four stage process and resulting in a Board recommendation in June 2019.

As noted above; further analysis is required to develop a Board recommendation. This process is underway, however, has delayed the original project timeline slightly.

South Gippsland Water will continue to keep interested persons up dated on the progress of this project.

