



Local Management Plan Lake Meran

May 2018



Endorsement

This local management plan (the Plan) has been developed to provide a clear operational framework for managing surface water resources on Lake Meran and provides specific information to Goulburn-Murray Water's customers about the taking and using of surface water on the lake.

The Plan fulfils Sustainable Water Strategy obligations and relevant Ministerial guidelines by explaining to Goulburn-Murray Water's customers and the broader community the specific management arrangements governing the licensed extraction of surface water on Lake Meran.

The Plan aims to provide simple and flexible rules to support surface water use while recognising the need to protect social, cultural and economic features.

Goulburn-Murray Water will continue to work with customers, local communities and other stakeholders to ensure that the Plan is reviewed and updated as necessary.

The Plan was endorsed by the Goulburn-Murray Water Board on 24th of May 2018.

Introduction

This document is a Local Management Plan (the LMP) prepared in accordance with the Local Management Plan Guidelines (2014) (the Guidelines) of the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning.

The LMP describes how GMW as the Minister's Delegate will manage licences to take and use water under section 51 of the *Water Act 1989* (the Act) using the powers delegated under the Act and in accordance with the Policies for Managing Take and Use Licences and Policies for Management of Works Licences (the policies).

Management Objectives

The key objective of the LMP is to ensure the equitable sharing of available water between water users, to protect the environment and ensure the long term sustainability of the water resource in the area.

Specific Management Objectives:

- The operation of water provided to the environment from the Environmental Water Reserve is protected in line with the Environmental Objective under s. 7(4) of the Act.
- Reasonable access is provided for water users in consideration of the needs of the environment.
- Rules relating to use of water from the lake are clearly documented to allow for proper consideration by stakeholders in the management of the lake – including informing decisions regarding the use of environmental water to the lake.

Water System

Lake Meran (Lake Meran Water System) is an unregulated waterway located approximately 18 km south-west of Kerang. The lake encompasses an area of approximately 3.3 km² when full. Lake Meran is referred to by the Victorian Water Register by stream code 4070645.

At the maximum height of approximately 82.3 mAHD the lake contains approximately 8,450 ML. The lake is considered to be effectively dry at 75.4 mAHD.

Lake Meran which is sited in the Wandella Creek sub-catchment of mid-Loddon River floodplain is valued for its environmental assets, recreational amenity and as a source of water for irrigation of the adjoining farms. The lake receives minor natural inflows from a relatively small catchment area incorporating the Leaghur State Forest, and flood flows from the Loddon River.

Lake Meran is hydrologically poor relative to its natural state due largely to human intervention which has altered the frequency of natural flooding events to the lake. Under natural conditions the lake received some water in most years however now receives large inflows only in significant flood years such as 2011.

In the absence of flooding events, the majority of inflow to the lake now comes from water held by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder from the Environmental Water Reserve. Water is provided to the lake in consideration of the recommendations of the North Central Catchment Management Authority's Meran Lakes Complex Environmental Water Management Plan 2016 (EWMP).

A detailed description of the hydrological setting of the Lake and requirements for the management of water provided for the environment within the broader Meran Lakes complex is contained in the EWMP.

Licensed Water Entitlements and Use

Licence entitlement held on Lake Meran is captured in Table 1, with a total entitlement of 1,435 ML/yr across nine licences.

Table 1. Lake Meran licence entitlement

| Licence Type | Irrigation | | Domestic & Stock | | Totals |
|--------------|------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------------|
| | No | ML/yr | No | ML/yr | ML/yr |
| Lake Meran | 8 | 1433 | 1 | 2 | 1435 |

Water use from Lake Meran has been fully metered since 2012/13, use is shown below in Figure 1. Water taken from Lake Meran equates to a mean of 583 ML/yr over a five year period with a high of 906 ML in 2014/15. Prior to 2012 volumetric use was not systematically recorded and the Lake was dry from 2004 to 2010.

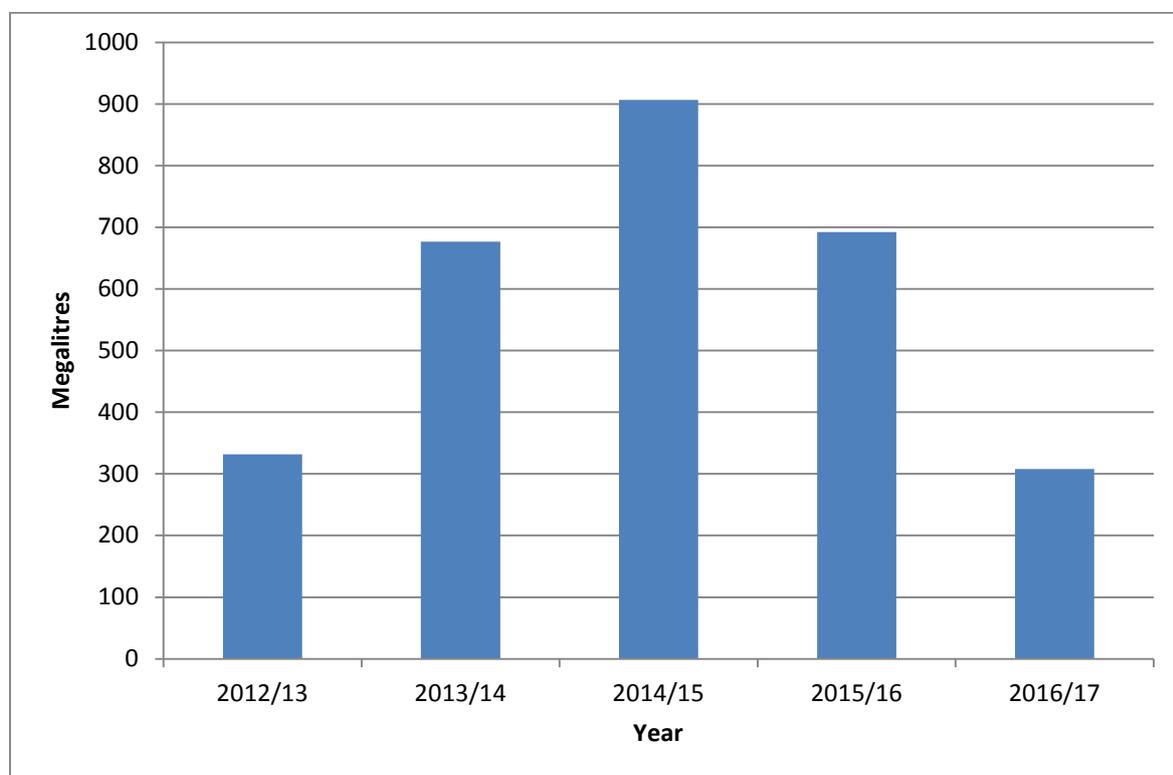


Figure 1 Water Use from Lake Meran

Rules

Rosters or Restrictions

- Take and Use licences held on Lake Meran allow for the take of water year round in accordance with the conditions of their licence, including an annual volume and rate of extraction.
- All licences on the lake include conditions requiring licence holders to comply with any rosters or restrictions when directed by the Authority (GMW).
- Restrictions are applied when needed to protect environmental values and rights of domestic and stock users.
- Restrictions to the take and use of water from the lake when water availability is low are initiated in accordance with the requirements of section 33AAA of the Act as a Declaration of Water Shortage.
- Licence holders will be directed to suspend irrigation when water levels fall to, or will shortly fall to the levels indicated in Table 2 below.
- All affected licence holders will be notified by mail of the implementation of restrictions. Other communications will also be used in conjunction with letters, including GMW's internet site to communicate restrictions.
- Unless specifically notified by GMW, restrictions do not apply to the take of water for Domestic and Stock use.

Table 2 Restrictions Applied to the Take of Water by Irrigation Licences from Lake Meran (Streamcode 4070645)

| Restriction Stages | Trigger Values for Introduction of Restriction (mAHD)* | Restriction |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------|
| No Restriction | >77.80 | None |
| Suspension | < 77.80 | Suspension of Irrigation |

*mAHD refers to metres in Australian Height Datum; a reference to metres above sea level.

Transfer of Licences

All applications to transfer licences are assessed in accordance with the requirements of section 62 of the *Water Act 1989* and Policies for the Management of Take and Use Licences 2014 (the Policies) which are available on the Water Register Website (<http://waterregister.vic.gov.au>).

- A licence holder may apply to transfer a licence held from Lake Meran (Stream code 4070645) to another person to take water from Lake Meran on a permanent or temporary basis.
- The trading zone is trading zone 151 – Lower Loddon Unregulated. Applications to transfer licences can be considered to, or from any other person subject to consideration of the section 62 of the *Water Act 1989* and the Policies.
- Temporary transfers can be considered for a period not exceeding 5 water years (a water year means 1st July to 30 June in a subsequent year).
- Licences transferred within the Lake Meran Water System are not considered to be a transfer downstream for the purposes of the Policies, hence are not required to forfeit 20% of the transferred licence volume which would be required for transfers on an unregulated stream.
- Application for transfers of unregulated licences onto Lake Meran will be refused.

Metering

Metering ensures that the water is shared equitably and licensees stay within their annual allocation. Meters must be read at least once a year and the data must be maintained on a database. Licences held in the Lake Meran Water System are subject to GMW's metering policies and guidelines.

Monitoring and Reporting

Water levels on Lake Meran will be recorded by GMW on a regular basis and will be available in coming months to be viewed on GMW's website (<https://www.g-mwater.com.au>).

An annual summary of observations will be prepared and updated to GMW's website for each water year. The report will include water use, restriction and water level information.

Review

The LMP concept is founded on adaptive management approach to the needs of water users, other authorised uses of water and the broader community.

The LMP will be reviewed each 5 years, or sooner if the EWMP is altered prior to this time. Any review of the LMP will take into account any revised requirements of the EWMP. The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is scheduled to undertake a formal review of the EWMP in 2026.

Contact Details

For more information relating to diversion licence management please contact Goulburn-Murray Water on **1800 013 357**.

References and Related Documents

- Local Management Plan Guidelines 2014, Department of Environment and Primary Industries Victoria EPI
- North Central CMA, 2016. *Meran Lakes Complex Environmental Water Management Plan*. North Central Catchment Management Authority, Huntly, Victoria.
- Minister's Policies for Management of Take and Use Licences, 2 February 2014

