

# Recreation Management Framework



# Background

The Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority, trading as Seqwater, began operation on 1 July 2008 as the new water service provider for the South East Queensland (SEQ) region managing approximately \$2 billion in water supply, water storages and treatment assets. Seqwater is committed to the long term sustainable management of these assets which protects and improves their environmental, social and financial values.

On 1 July 2008 water and catchment assets were transferred to Seqwater from the following entities: Aquagen; Beaudesert Shire Council; Brisbane City Council; Caboolture Shire Council; Caloundra City Council; Esk Shire Council; Gold Coast City Council; Kilcoy Shire Council; Maroochy Shire Council; Noosa Shire Council; Redland City Council; Pine Rivers Shire Council; SEQWater; and SunWater.

The above entities managed recreation at the individual sites in various ways from providing little recreation infrastructure, to using the sites as an integral part of the regional open space and recreation network. As part of the transfer of the water and catchment assets, the responsibility for the ongoing management and maintenance of these recreation sites also transferred to Seqwater. With the transfer of these responsibilities, the need for comprehensive framework to manage recreation was recognised.

The use of assets for recreational purposes is secondary to Seqwater's main function of water supply and treatment, Recreation pursuits must be managed in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner to ensure that Seqwater's core responsibilities and accountabilities are not adversely impacted.

## Regional Context

Seqwater now has responsibility for managing all of the major water storages in South East Queensland, including all of the associated recreation planning, development and management functions. These water storages provide the majority of sites in South East Queensland for recreation on/in freshwater. Collectively these water storages provide a "recreational landscape" of regional significance.

Recreation is integral to the management of water storages and in to meeting the expectations of the general public. There is ongoing public demand for use of lakes and the surrounding land for recreation and this demand is increasing as the South East Queensland population continues to escalate.

# Overall Direction

The use of assets for recreational purposes is secondary to Seqwater's main function of water supply and treatment. As such it is important to understand what Seqwater aim to achieve in regard to recreation management.

## To manage access to recreation opportunities while protecting natural resources and water quality

The above objective will be achieved through the implementation of a number of key principles. These are the foundation for the decision making framework in assessing recreational opportunities.

### 1 Minimise risks to water quality

Through:

- Understanding recreation impacts on water quality and developing effective risk mitigation strategies
- Ensuring compliance with Seqwater's Water Quality Policy
- Educating stakeholders and the community

### 2 Ensure environmental sustainability

Through:

- Acknowledging and protecting the natural and cultural values of the landscape
- Monitoring and managing the capacity of recreation areas and facilities
- Partnering with key agencies

### 3 Diversity in the range of outdoor recreation activities, locations and settings

Through:

- Consistent framework for classifying recreation settings
- Maintaining natural settings
- Planning for a range of activities geographically across the region
- Collaborating with other key agencies tasked with land management

### 4 Ensure all use is consistent with Seqwater's asset and land management practices

Through:

- Determining current land use and implementing appropriate management structures
- Ensure assets are fit for purpose and are adequately maintained
- Establishing and documenting land management agreements
- Allocating adequate resources
- Effectively managing recreation within internal structures
- Considering strategies established for the management of recreation on land that is outside Seqwater control

### 5 Facilitating sustainable recreation

Through:

- Partnerships and engagement with key agencies and representative bodies from the recreation sector
- Implementation and enforcement of policies
- Strategic and management planning
- Effective communication and education
- Managing existing and future infrastructure

### 6 Engage with external regulating agencies

Through:

- Partnerships created to assist with enforcement strategies
- Understanding policies and requirements or regulating agencies
- Communication and ongoing planning with regulating agencies

### 7 Meet financial management outcomes

Through:

- Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure and sourcing appropriate resources
- Developing financial policies for development or upgrade based on a user pays concept
- Ongoing management and development of commercial revenue streams and cost minimisation strategies
- Recognising the financial implication of necessary risk management strategies

# Recreation Management Framework

In order to effectively manage recreation, it is important to have a framework to guide decision making and frame policy. This Recreation Framework will enable Seqwater to undertake planning in collaboration with key stakeholders and within the broader picture of recreational planning across South East Queensland.

## **The Recreation Framework encompasses the following aspects:**

- Recreation planning in South East Queensland and the contribution of Seqwater to the provision of recreation opportunities.
- Collaborative planning processes - both internally within Seqwater and more particularly externally with key stakeholders.
- Planning and provision of facilities both at a regional level and at a local level.
- Assessment of recreational opportunities using the Recreation Management Principles (including the recreation setting classification) as the decision making criteria.

## **Collaborative Planning**

Seqwater is considered a major contributor to the provision of open space and recreation facilities in South East Queensland. Other major contributors to the open space network are the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management and various Local Government Authorities. Although recreation is not always considered the main focus of these organisations, it is part of their mandate to provide recreation opportunities that meet the growing demands of the community.

Seqwater plays a significant part in the implementation of State and regional planning strategies and it is crucial that Seqwater participates in the wider planning processes to keep abreast of changing trends and climates within recreation.

Collaborative recreation planning with the various stakeholders will enable Seqwater to have partners in recreation provision and partners that research and monitor community recreation needs and demands. Recreation planning and the development of skills and knowledge in recreation will ensure Seqwater's role and responsibilities fit within a collaborative planning framework.

It is crucial Seqwater adopts a collaborative planning process with other key stakeholders (local and State) to:

- share the responsibilities of recreation provision
- undertake joint projects and research
- educate key stakeholders about water quality and control

## **Regional Recreation Planning**

In support of Seqwater's recreation planning principle three: Diversity in the range of outdoor recreation activities, locations and settings, the 24 water storages and catchments have been broken into geographical clusters of North, Central and South.

These clusters allow for a more detailed analysis of the diversity occurring within a sub-regional level. This planning provides diversity to support individuals to access a full range of activities within their immediate geographical area.

## Recreation Setting Classification System

The Recreation Setting Classification System is a tool used to classify recreation areas based on the type of setting in which the recreation activities are being undertaken.

**TABLE: Outline of Recreation Classifications**

NATURAL		VERY NATURAL		SOMEWHAT NATURAL			NOT NATURAL	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Wild and remote places with few visitors and no facilities. Expect solitude		May have rough trails. Remote camping and walking	Usually accessible by vehicle. Tracks are main facility. Expect to see other visitors	Popular recreation sties. Basic visitor facilities such as formed tracks, picnic facilities.		Includes park picnic areas and developed camp grounds.		Highly modified setting rarely found on parks.

PREDOMINANTLY NATURAL ←————→ NOT NATURAL

Various water storages and catchments can be highly developed with commercial operators, lots of people and a multitude of activities being conducted, while other water storage and catchments are not developed providing a remote natural setting. The SEQ Recreation Outdoor Demand Study 2007 identified the demand for a range of settings to accommodate the individual's needs.

The aim is to provide a variety of settings so a range of experiences are available to the public.

## Local Cluster Management

Local cluster groups provide the opportunity to manage water storages and catchments in conjunction with one another, which will also provide opportunities for differing experiences and settings and support for spill over areas to prevent water storage overuse. There is an opportunity when developing management plans to group the water storages into local cluster groups:

- Cedar Pocket; Lake MacDonald and Borumba
- Cooloolabin; Wappa; and Poona
- Baroon Pocket; and Ewen Maddock
- Somerset; and Wivenhoe
- Lake Kurwongbah; and North Pine
- Atkinson; Clarendon; and Bill Gunn
- Enoggera; Gold Creek; and Lake Manchester
- Maroon; and Moogerah
- Hinze; and Little Nerang

By grouping the water storages and catchments at a local level it will highlight the management requirements and streamline practices and systems for local level staff.

## Future Development

Future planning and provision of recreation needs to be considerate of the activities that are currently available within the cluster group and ensure there is diversity in the activities being provided and not a continued duplication of activities permitted.

When Seqwater is considering future development opportunities for water storage sites, the recreation management principles should be used as the criteria to guide the decision making process. This would encompass decisions regarding whether:

- The development supports diversity within the region and sub-regional clusters
- The development is supported by external organisations and/or partners
- There is evidence of demand for the development
- The development is compatible with the strategic intent of the water storage site
- The development is compatible with the recreation setting classification

# Strategic Planning

Strategic planning will define Seqwater's direction and assist in the decision making on recreation management at water storages and catchments. Strategic planning will assist the organisation to manage sites pro-actively and make informed decisions based on agreed principles and processes and not ad-hoc, one-off decisions.

Water storages and catchments that are heavily utilised and have a high demand should have a management and/or a master plan over the site.

A Site-Based Management Plan will identify how the site will be managed, including infrastructure and services currently provided, intended to be provided, or have opportunities to provide. The Management Plan will plan for each site in conjunction with any partnership agreements and any lease arrangement.

The Management Plan will identify ongoing and capital budget requirements for that storage or catchment and will include asset management requirements.

## Implementation

The development of a framework for recreation management is the first and key step towards implementing a recreation management framework. Any changes to existing facilities or activities that may result from the implementation of the framework will be implemented over a period of the time with appropriate consultation with stakeholders.

Implementation of the framework will include:

### 1. Develop and implement a recreation management plan for each individual Lake

This includes:

- Developing strategic management partnerships with relevant Local Government Authorities

### 2. Effective management of permitted recreation activities

This includes:

- Rationalising underutilised or poorly maintained facilities
- Providing a diversity of recreational settings
- Community education
- Development of lease and approval of use policies
- Implementation of a standardised motorised boating permit system
- Working through the SIP (Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme and Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries regarding fish stocking
- Working with Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads regarding the management of boat ramps.

### 3. Developing partnerships with key stakeholders

This includes:

- Partnerships with key enforcement agencies
- Collaborative partnerships for regional recreational planning and policy development

### 4. Internal Management Structure

This includes:

- Establish internal processes and systems

### 5. Manage recreation risks

This includes:

- Develop and implement effective risk management processes and mitigation measures

### 6. Develop and implement recreation related policy

This includes:

- A Dam Water Level Recreation Policy
- A Boat Permit Policy and Procedure
- A Recreation Trails Policy
- An Enforcement Policy

### 7. Implement a communication and education program

This includes:

- Information brochures
- School education programs
- Website information and functionality
- Signage

### 8. Undertake relevant recreation research

This includes:

- Research on the effects of various recreation on the environment and water quality
- Research into the use, visitor numbers and experience quality

### 9. Undertake forward financial planning

This includes:

- Establish a capital funding strategy
- Establish cross/joint funding partnerships



