



SKIDERS FLAT RESERVOIR MASTER PLAN



LODDON
SHIRE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

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FOREWORD

Due to influencing factors, the recommendations and actions outlined in the Skinners Flat Reservoir Master Plan (this plan) are to be noted with these pre-conditions in mind.

It should be noted that:

- the completion of the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade engineering report and likely extensive works on the Reservoir wall will take a significant time to complete
- a possible outcome of the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade could be a significantly lower water capacity than previously seen, resulting in limitations on activities
- any development for recreation will be dependent on confirmation of a secure and affordable water supply to allow suitable water levels to be maintained in the Reservoir
- Council will not be able to make a decision about what and when recommendations and actions from the Master Plan will be implemented until outcomes of the above conditions are known.

Given the extensive interest in the project, shown by the considerable response to community and stakeholder engagement efforts, it is important to acknowledge and communicate that implementation of the Master Plan will take some time to complete and that the resulting actions will be determined by the above noted influencing factors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Loddon Shire Council seeks to develop a Master Plan for Skinners Flat Reservoir to provide the Wedderburn community and visitors with greater access to outdoor recreation activities and to address issues around ad hoc development and lack of maintenance of the asset. This need was identified in Wedderburn's Community Plan and contributes to Council's strategic objective to "support development of a prosperous and diverse economy". In doing so, this Master Plan will provide direction for future recreation activities, amenities and infrastructure improvements, as well as options for the delegation of management under the Local Government Act 2020.

Through deliberative engagement with stakeholders including but not limited to, private landholders at the site, local community groups and residents, Loddon Shire Council staff, DELWP, Parks Victoria, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water and Dja Dja Wurrung, this Master Plan has been developed.

Council owns the majority of the land on which the Reservoir is located and is likely to have an ongoing role relating to development of facilities, and the delegation of maintenance and management of the area.

Skinners Flat Reservoir is a location that locals and small numbers of visitors currently visit for recreation with limited infrastructure. An issue in recent years has been the consistently low water level, making many recreation activities impossible. An inflow from the South West Loddon Pipeline has been constructed to allow filling of the Reservoir with recreational water and negotiations are underway with Coliban Water and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water to secure consistent water inflows.

It has also been identified that some of the dam infrastructure may be failing, and is likely to require significant works to enable a consistent volume of water to be held in the Reservoir in future. These works will be the subject of a separate review, the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade, running in parallel with this Master Plan.

Individual community groups have expressed different ideas of how Skinners Flat Reservoir should be developed. Both active and passive recreation activities have been suggested and are investigated herein.

There is potential for this site to create nature based tourism experiences, which could attract tourism and increase jobs for the wider local economy. Many stakeholders and community members feel that this value is not compatible with developing the site for active recreation.

A considerable number of Wedderburn residents and the Friends of Skinners Flat group view the Reservoir as a place for locals to enjoy and are especially motivated to see water skiing return to the site.

As a result of the polarised views of the community, this Master Plan outlines two options for future development for Council to consider:

1. active and passive recreation co-existing, with strictly limited numbers of water skiers allowed over the summer months
2. passive recreation only, focussing on Wedderburn's emergent position as a premier birdwatching destination for tourism in Victoria

This Master Plan provides direction for the future development of the Reservoir and aims to assist in obtaining external funding to implement the plan.

1 PURPOSE

This strategic document aims to provide a Master Plan for Skinners Flat Reservoir. Through stakeholder engagement, the Master Plan identifies two future options for recreation, outlines the amenities and infrastructure required to deliver these options, and provides options for a management structure for further consideration.

Skinners Flat Reservoir is currently a location where locals and small numbers of visitors congregate for recreational activities with limited infrastructure. It has been identified in Wedderburn's Community Plan as an area to be developed in the future.

Individual community groups have expressed different ideas of how Skinners Flat Reservoir should be developed. Through stakeholder engagement, these groups and the Wedderburn community have provided input into the Master Plan as detailed in Section 6 of this report.

Potential recreational activities have been examined through a process of community engagement, with options for passive and active recreation put forward. Infrastructure elements for recreation are outlined in the recommendations and actions of this Master Plan in Section 7.

This Master Plan will assist in obtaining external funding to implement the plan in the future, as all actions will be dependent on the outcomes of a structural audit of the embankment currently underway that fall outside the scope of this Master Plan. It may also be used to seek funding to undertake the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade works.

2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Costing of the actions in this Master Plan are indicative only and all actions will require more up-to-date and detailed costing closer to implementation. The best efforts were made to provide costing for each action based on similar projects both in Loddon Shire and surrounding shires, from online sources and verbal quotes, as well as through consultation with Loddon Shire staff.

The cost to Council may be reduced, dependent on Council's success in attracting external grants or contributions towards identified actions listed within the strategy.

As there will be a lag time between noting this document's and implementation of its recommendations due to the timeframe for the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade works that must be completed before this plan is actioned, more accurate costing cannot reliably be provided.

For the above reason, potential funding sources are also indicative only, as current external funding streams will likely no longer be available at the time of implementation. Council will be required to identify potential funding sources to support the implementation / delivery of actions in preparation for implementation.

3 RISK ANALYSIS

Risk management is an integral part of good management practice and design. While this Master Plan aims to identify the potential risk of the recreation activities and amenities improvements recommended, a risk management plan should be produced prior to implementing actions from this Master Plan. Commitment to risk management will assist in keeping risk exposure to a minimum and help reduce injuries and potential loss.

A risk assessment of the recommendations from this Master Plan identified five main risk areas:

1. Time lapse between adoption and implementation
2. Dam safety audit factors
3. Water supply
4. Project delivery risks
5. Ongoing factors including management, maintenance and injury to users

The tables¹ below outline the risk framework applied in the process of identifying and calculating risk in this project.

Table 1: Risk management table of consequence criteria

		Consequence criteria				
		1 – Insignificant	2 – Minor	3 – Moderate	4 – Major	5 – Catastrophic
		Overall Rating				
Likelihood Criteria	A	Medium (11)	High (16)	High (20)	Very High (23)	Very High (25)
	B	Medium (7)	Medium (12)	High (17)	High (21)	Very High (24)
	C	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (13)	High (18)	High (22)
	D	Low (2)	Low (5)	Medium (9)	Medium (14)	High (19)
	E	Low (1)	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (10)	Medium (15)

Table 2: Risk management likelihood criteria

Likelihood Criteria				
A – Almost Certain	B – Likely	C – Possible	D – Unlikely	E – Rare
Consequence could occur within days or weeks	Consequence could occur within weeks to months	Consequence could occur within months to years	Consequence could occur within years to decades	Consequence is considered a 100-year event
Consequence is expected to occur in most circumstances	Consequence will probably occur in most circumstances	Consequence may occur but there is a distinct possibility that it won't occur	Consequence may occur but is not anticipated	Consequence would only occur in exceptional circumstances
There is a greater than 90% chance of it occurring within the next year	There is a greater than 50% chance of it occurring within the next year	There is a greater than 20% chance of it occurring within the next year	There is a greater than 5% chance of it occurring within the next year	Consequence is exceptionally unlikely event in the very long term

¹ Risk Management Policy, Loddon Shire Council, 2019

Table 3: Risk identification

Risk category refer note above	Risk description	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk rating	Mitigation strategy What actions can Council undertake to limit this risk?
Time lapse between adoption and implementation	Stakeholder willingness to manage and maintain asset	Major	Unlikely	Medium (14)	Ensure engagement with key stakeholders continues. Clearly define terms of management and maintenance delegation.
Time lapse between adoption and implementation	Community expectation for immediate action	Insignificant	Almost certain	Medium (11)	Ensure clear and ongoing communication with key stakeholders and community.
Time lapse between adoption and implementation	Changes in or lack of funding streams	Major	Rare	Medium (10)	Ensure sufficient time and resources are directed towards researching and securing funding in lead up to implementation.
Time lapse between adoption and implementation	Change in local sentiment towards chosen recreation options	Moderate	Rare	Low (6)	Steps to mitigate might include reassessing options recommended by the plan and choosing to proceed with another option.
Dam safety audit factors	Dam survey resulting in significantly lower water levels allowed	Major	Possible	High (18)	A review of options recommended in this plan. Passive recreation only possible.
Dam safety audit factors	Funding for dam safety engineering works unavailable	Moderate	Rare	Low (6)	Delay in engineering works would delay implementation of this plan, creating further time lapse. Continue to seek funding for engineering works.
Water supply	Agreement on supply of affordable recreational water not achieved	Major	Unlikely	Medium (14)	Continued negotiation with water authorities for access to affordable recreational water.

Risk category refer note above	Risk description	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk rating	Mitigation strategy What actions can Council undertake to limit this risk?
Water supply	Increase in price of water due to drought or other external factors	Major	Unlikely	Medium (14)	Continued negotiation with water authorities for access to affordable recreational water.
Project delivery	Loss of agency stakeholder support	Moderate	Rare	Low (6)	Continued communication with agency stakeholders
Project delivery	Council capacity in works schedule insufficient for timely delivery	Moderate	Likely	High (17)	Factor external project management and construction into budget for actions.
Project delivery	Funding for recommendations unavailable	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium (9)	Monitor funding streams in lead-up to implementation.
Ongoing	Asset maintenance not sufficient	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium (9)	Develop a maintenance plan in consultation with the Community Asset Committee or delegated management committee and fund annually.
Ongoing	User injury – both due to provided infrastructure and passive recreation	Moderate	Almost certain	High (20)	Reasonable action must be taken to eliminate injury risks for recreation users through design of infrastructure, recreation zoning and signage. Sufficient public liability insurance required.

Based on Council's risk matrix there are a range of risk ratings identified above. For each a mitigation strategy has been outlined as per Council policy.

To alleviate these risks, Council's policy suggests to reasonable steps to mitigate the risk. A risk management plan should be included in the design and project planning for future infrastructure and amenities improvements as actioned from this Master Plan.

4 PROJECT DRIVERS

This project contributes to Council's strategic objective: "Support development of a prosperous and diverse economy" under the Strategy Economic Infrastructure of the Council Plan. The Council Plan outlines Strategic Themes and Objectives necessary for Loddon Shire Council to achieve its vision and mission over the years 2017-2021.

Three of the five Strategic Themes and Objectives are potentially contributed to by developing Skinners Flat Reservoir for recreation. These are:

- **Population** - Grow and invigorate Loddon's population
- **Economic** - Support development of a prosperous and diverse economy
- **Liveability** - Develop attractive, vibrant and well-serviced communities

Restoration of the Reservoir's embankment is also required to meet Council's responsibilities under the Water Act in accordance with ANCOLD (Australian National Committee on Large Dams). While the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade engineering survey currently underway falls outside of scope of this Master Plan, returning the Reservoir to previous water capacity is a key driver for Council to consider developing the asset for recreation.

Community interest in restoring the Reservoir to a place for outdoor recreation is also a key driver for this project as reflected in the strong participation in engagement activities. With a possibility of securing permanent water for the Reservoir, community interest is likely to grow.

5 ASSUMPTIONS

5.1 Dam wall upgrade

Future use of the asset as a place for recreation is dependent on the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade report and possible restoration of the dam embankment due to Council's responsibilities under the Water Act in accordance with ANCOLD (Australian National Committee on Large Dams) guidelines and this is a separate issue to the Master Plan. This activity began before the production of this Master Plan and both projects are happening concurrently.

A key assumption of the Master Plan is that all conditions set by ANCOLD are met before recommendations are actioned. The outcomes of the safety audit, most notably the allowed water capacity and dam embankment height, will have a direct impact on which option from this Master Plan can be implemented. Active recreation, in particular water skiing, will be reliant on the water height of the Reservoir being sufficient for this activity to be safe and allowing enough area for safe navigation. Early indications from the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade investigations are that it is possible a lower water capacity will be required, and it is improbable that a higher water capacity will be permitted by ANCOLD. A desire to increase Reservoir capacity to allow for active recreation would need to consider the potential for water level encroachment on neighbouring residents' property.

Any structural works on the embankment and spillway would be subject to a works licence from Goulbourn Murray Water to complete the safety works and Vegetation removal permits from DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) as well as significant external funding including from the Victorian Government's Water for Victoria scheme.

Another key consideration is the timeline for the engineering report and subsequent works. Estimates of these are as follows:

- Hydrology, dambreak assessments, recommendations and concept upgrade costs to be completed by June 2021
- Full design working drawings and estimates completed by February 2022
- Seek funding streams for upgrade; timeline unknown, however cost of upgrading the Reservoir will likely be in excess of one million dollars and this will be the biggest impediment to progression
- Dam works would take approximately 12 months for construction from successfully securing funding

This timeline estimates the earliest completion of the dam infrastructure upgrade, subject to availability of funding, being in 2023, after which actions from this Master Plan could be commenced (again, subject to funding availability), given the reliance on water level for many of the actions to be successful. Given the uncertainty around a timeline for funding for the upgrade, it is possible these works could be significantly later.

5.2 Securing consistent water supply

An inflow from the South West Loddon Pipeline has been constructed to allow filling of the Reservoir with recreational water. For the best outcome for the project a maintained water level is required. Negotiation with water institutions to secure the estimated 200 megalitres of recreational water per annum required to keep the Reservoir full is currently underway.

Structural reinforcement work as outlined in section 5.1 will be required in order to maintain a sufficient water level to allow for active recreation activities. Passive recreation will also benefit from a maintained water level, however this could be at a lower level.

5.3 Project funding

Due to the lengthy timeline for structural works outlined in section 5.1, it is anticipated that any funding streams currently available may no longer be available when recommendations from the Master Plan are ready to be actioned. An assumption is that similar funding streams will become available closer to implementation. For this reason, any funding sources identified herein are indicative only.

Also, due to the time lag between adoption and implementation of the actions in this Master Plan, all costing contained herein is indicative only.

Consideration of any recommendations from this Master Plan must also align with Council's capacity for delivery, project management, resources and funding.

5.4 Delegation of management and maintenance

A key assumption for the implementation of this Master Plan is that the current interest registered by key local stakeholders to manage and maintain the asset under delegation by Council to a Community Asset Committee (CAC) will continue into the future. This assumption takes into account the lag time between the Master Plan being adopted by Council and recommendations of the plan being implemented, a period that could span three or more years.

It is recommended that communications with key stakeholders is maintained throughout the lifetime of this project including the Skinners Flat Dam Safety Upgrade.

The formulation of a CAC may be dependent on which recreational activities are able to proceed due to the outcomes of the dam safety works and decisions made by Council around passive and active recreation. This is especially a factor as due to the polarised views of key stakeholders that have indicated they are willing to help form the CAC.

6 STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community and stakeholder engagement efforts of this project aimed to identify the priorities for recreation activities, amenities improvements and establishing a Community Asset Committee (CAC) for Skinners Flat Reservoir. The findings of the engagement report² form the basis of this Master Plan.

Engagement focused on stakeholders directly involved with Skinners Flat Reservoir, neighbouring residents, the Wedderburn community, and active community groups from the nearby town of Wedderburn. Engagement efforts ran throughout March 2021.

It was essential to utilise a range of engagement methods to facilitate the widest possible participation. Local community networks and internal council staff were involved in identifying community stakeholders, their particular interests and needs and how best to engage with them.

Several key themes emerged through this engagement effort. They are summarised below:

- There is a divide in opinion around water skiing and the importance of birdwatching.
- This polarisation of opinion saw passive activities such as birdwatching identified as being incompatible with water skiing by both extremes of opinion, however a moderate majority cohort would be happy for passive and active recreation to co-exist in some form if planned for and managed.
- Key stakeholders of Wedderburn Tourism and Lions Club of Wedderburn see passive recreation focussed on birdwatching adds to Loddon's positioning as an outdoors and nature destination with the current public art project in Wedderburn focussing on birdlife.
- Guaranteed water level was universally seen as important.
- Improved amenities are wanted, including toilets, improved barbecues and picnicking facilities such as tables.
- Camping should continue however could be moved to the southern side of the embankment with the creation of new amenities and improved access.
- There is a desire to 'reclaim the heyday' of Skinners Flat for both locals and tourists to enjoy.

6.1 Key stakeholder groups

Engagement efforts included meeting with key community stakeholder groups in Wedderburn. These included:

- Friends of Skinners Flat
- Wedderburn Development Association (WDA)
- Wedderburn Tourism
- Lions Club of Wedderburn

Each group was presented with key project information, background on the engineering review currently underway that is out of scope for this project, detailed information on options for establishing a committee of management, provided an opportunity to ask questions, and requested to make a detailed submission.

Below are the main outcomes from each of these stakeholder meetings.

² Skinners Flat Reservoir Master Plan Engagement Report, Loddon Shire Council (internal document DOC/21/33441)

6.1.1 Friends of Skinners Flat (FoSKF)

Members of the FoSKF came to an agreement that having a defined 'ski season' over the warmer months would be a good compromise between active and passive recreation, with no skiing allowed outside of this season.

The group also thought that having an 'active zone' and 'passive zone' whereby swimmers, kayakers, stand-up paddle boarders (SUP), etc. could safely use the shallow water area to the west of the island, keeping (in season) the water ski area limited to the deeper water with a 'turn around zone' using the island as a navigation reference.

A suggestion was also made (by FoSKF) to move the overnight camping to the southern side of the Reservoir, providing access on the track below the embankment. This would require improvement to the access track to allow caravan access but this could be fed into the design of the new embankment should one be required.

Key points from the FoSKF formal submission are:

- Friends of Skinners Flat would be willing to assist in managing Skinners Flat Reservoir as a sub group under the incorporated body WDA.
- Zoning of areas to take place so that it enhances the usage of the area for both passive and active recreation.
- Access road from the Calder Highway requires review and possible widening to allow for passing of vehicles towing caravans and boat trailers.
- Future development on far side for camping and other use (notation A in Appendix 4).
- Barbecue area to be replaced with grass and sand.
- Parking for boat trailers.

Further recommendations made by FoSKF can be found on page 44 in Appendix 3.

6.1.2 Wedderburn Development Association (WDA)

No formal submission was received from WDA, however FoSKF is a sub-group of the WDA. A letter of acknowledgement received. Key points from this letter were:

- The WDA has historically supported FoSKF to maintain infrastructure at Skinners Flat Reservoir.
- WDA supports the establishment of a CAC and would consider taking on this role if needed.

6.1.3 Wedderburn Tourism Inc.

Wedderburn Tourism views the development of Skinners Flat Reservoir as being aligned with Wedderburn's positioning as a destination for birdwatching activities, supplementing the public art 'Birds Eye View' project, and as an outdoors and nature destination more generally.

The group supports Council's initiative to create a Master Plan for the asset and "would very much like to see the area improved for passive recreation only".

Key points from the Wedderburn Tourism formal submission are:

- This is an important opportunity to promote Wedderburn as a destination for birdwatchers, bringing tourists to Wedderburn.
- Skinners Flat already has a substantial amount of water birds and with permanent water the birdlife would increase.
- Introducing speed boats will have an impact on the breeding habitats of birds as well as their food supply.

- Noise is also an issue that could affect “grey nomads”, who are our largest camping group, who like to enjoy the peace and surrounds of Skinners Flat Reservoir while overnight camping.
- Speed boats also limit the number of people who can use the water at one time whereas with passive recreation the area is available to all.
- Agree that there needs to be a CAC for Skinners Flat Reservoir to oversee the running of the facility and maintaining any new structures that will be provided as per the recommendations from the Master Plan.

Further recommendations made by Wedderburn Tourism Inc. can be found on page 45 of Appendix 3.

6.1.4 Lions Club of Wedderburn

The Lions Club of Wedderburn identified Skinners Flat Reservoir as an important asset to the Wedderburn community that should be developed for passive recreation only and promoted as a place for eco-tourism. This is in line with the promotion of birdwatching as a key drawcard for tourist and the Birds Eye View public art project currently being undertaken in Wedderburn.

Key points from the Lions Club of Wedderburn are:

- That Skinners Flat be developed for passive recreation including such past times as picnics, fishing, camping, birdwatching, kayaking, sailboarding etc.
- That all watercraft using Skinners Flat Reservoir be unpowered and that a limit of 5 knots per hour be applied. This would avoid wakes, protect the banks, protect the dam wall and ensure the peace and serenity of the area.
- That any development be minimal and include the building of some composting toilets. Showers are not required, nor are rubbish bins. People should take out what they take in.
- The focus for Skinners Flat should be based around eco-tourism supported by the Bird's Eye View project in the town. The two go hand in hand.
- That the Wedderburn Lions Club, as an incorporated organisation that works for the community, would be prepared to be the body to oversee the CAC for Skinners.
- That Lions would commit to assisting in the maintenance and development of the area for the purposes stated above in conjunction with the council and the community.

Lions as an incorporated body would be prepared to take on the role of managing the CAC.

Further recommendations made by Lions Club of Wedderburn can be found on page 47 of Appendix 3.

6.1.5 Friends of Kooyoora

During the engagement process, the Friends of Kooyoora group also made a formal submission to the Master Plan. The group noted that their interest in sustainable development is not limited to Kooyoora State Park but also includes Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is nearby to Skinners Flat Reservoir.

Key points from the Friends of Kooyoora submission are:

- Skinners Flat is important in providing a breeding area and water source for birds with an estimated 273 species of animals, plants and birds in the area according to the Australian Living Atlas.
- They support the building of environmentally friendly toilets in the camping area, removal of existing barbecues and replacement with newer barbecue amenities.
- The Reservoir should be developed to provide greater habitat for birds and fish could be introduced to encourage ecological diversity.

- Any vessels on the water should be limited to 5 knots, to provide a quiet and natural environment and to have minimal impact on the environment and wildlife.
- Camping should be encouraged, but on a sustainable basis so that people take out their rubbish.
- The area should be promoted for eco-tourism.
- Many Friends of Kooyoora members have considerable experience in conservation and environmental monitoring, and the group is willing to assist in future planning if needed.

6.2 Neighbouring residents

Landowners directly adjoining Skinners Flat Reservoir were contacted twice by mail, encouraging them to make contact to determine the most suitable engagement method for each individual. Two of the eight households contacted replied to the letters, indicating they would like to be involved in the engagement process.

Of the two respondents, one opted for an in-person interview that was conducted at the Loddon Shire Wedderburn office. The other was happy to speak informally over the phone and wanted only to confirm that no power lines would encroach on his property.

The resident that opted for a face-to-face interview was in favour of future recreation being passive, noting that the noise from jet skis and ski boats would be a concern.

6.3 Government agency stakeholders

Table 4: Listing of key government agencies and their roles

Agency	Accountability
Victorian Government and Departments	Legislation Policy Regulation
Environment Protection Agency	Environmental regulation (including best practice guidelines and protection policies)
Water corporations	Water supply
Catchment management authorities	Waterway health Floodplain management Environmental water
Local government	Urban planning Building and planning approvals Dam Safety engineering review and works

6.4 Online survey and submissions

An online survey was hosted on the project web page of the Council's website for a period in March and early April. This survey was designed to provide the community with an opportunity to have input into the future recreation activities and amenities improvements at Skinners Flat Reservoir. Respondents were also asked to gauge if they saw the asset as a drawcard for tourism or if they would like to have local use preferenced.

The survey section of the project page was also used to collect comments, and participants (both individuals and stakeholder groups) were able to upload submission documents.

A total of 186 responses were received, although not all of these responses were survey responses, as document submissions (without completing the survey) are included in the total responses received. One submission was submitted in this way, from the Friends of Kooyoora, a local community group who had not previously been engaged with.

A total of 34 comments were received as part of the survey and these are published in full in the Appendix section at the end of this document.

Questions asked in the survey:

- Would you like to see the following activities at Skinners Flat Reservoir?
 - Water skiing
 - Swimming
 - Canoeing/Kayaking
 - Stand-up paddle boarding
 - Fishing
 - Yabbying
 - Bird Watching
 - Bushwalking
 - Camping
 - Picnicking
 - Other – please describe ‘

- What new or improved amenities would you like to see at Skinners Flat Reservoir?
 - New/more toilets
 - Shower block
 - Improved boat ramp
 - Parking for boat trailers
 - Picnic tables
 - New barbecues
 - Fish cleaning tables
 - Walking trails
 - Bird watching hides
 - Other – please describe

- Do you think Skinners Flat Reservoir should be promoted to attract visitors?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Unsure
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

- Further comments text box
- Upload a file
- (Optional) Name and email address

Note that survey responses were not mandatory so an individual could 'vote' for one activity only without voting for or against any others. This will explain not all activities total responses adding up to 186.

KEY POINTS

- The majority of respondents were in favour of all recreational activities put forward in the survey (Table 1 – Appendix 1).
- Water skiing and birdwatching were the two lowest rated activities with 126 and 127 'yes' votes for each and 48 and 25 'no' votes for each respectively. This can be attributed to a trend of polarisation where 21 respondents voted 'yes' for water skiing and 'no' for bird watching, while 43 respondents voted 'yes' for birdwatching and 'no' for water skiing (Table 1 – Appendix 1).
- Swimming and canoeing were the most favoured activities with 172 and 170 'yes' votes respectively and only 5 and 3 'no' votes. Picnicking was also highly favoured with 169 affirmative votes (Table 1 – Appendix 1).
- The three most popular suggested amenities improvements were picnic tables, toilets and barbecues, with 163, 161 and 154 votes for respectively (Table 2 – Appendix 1).
- The least favoured amenity improvement was a fish-cleaning table, with 56 votes against (Table 2 – Appendix 1).
- The majority of respondents (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that Skinners Flat Reservoir should be promoted to attract visitors to Wedderburn (Table 3 – Appendix 1).

Results from this online survey are provided in Appendix 1.

6.5 Paper-based survey responses

Postcard surveys were commercially printed and placed in High Street retailers and at a display set up at the front counter of Council's Wedderburn office. A total of 48 surveys were returned from the 200 that were distributed.

Results from the paper-based postcard survey were somewhat consistent with the online survey. Water skiing was again the most divisive activity surveyed, with 56% of respondents in favour of water skiing and 37.5% of respondents not in favour.

Results from this postcard survey are provided in Appendix 1.

6.6 Summary of engagement

The community and stakeholder engagement effort for this project generated a total of 234 responses. This level of engagement has produced a substantial amount of quantitative and qualitative data in the form of survey responses, comments and formal submissions. The quantitative data has been summarised in previous sections.

Comments supplied, discussions at stakeholder meetings and formal written submissions from key stakeholders form the qualitative output of this engagement effort and form the basis of the Master Plan.

A full list of comments from the paper-based and online surveys are supplied in Appendix 1, while a snapshot of comments is below. These also followed the trend of polarisation on the subject of water skiing:

"Skinners is ideal for passive recreation but far too small for ski boats. One boat would eliminate all other water sports and the noise will deter any birds from nesting as well as limit camping."

“All these activities have worked side by side since it was built, so no need to exclude any particular group.”

“There is a small percentage of ski boats in Wedderburn. To fill the Reservoir at great expense for so few cannot possibly be considered viable. Ski boats will also interfere with bird breeding, elderly campers, bird watchers and passive recreation users.”

“It needs to be made deeper for most boats. Also it needs all the trees in the water cleared. It’s only small so it should be for people in the local areas. The road in also needs to be wider. It’s too narrow and dangerous over the crests especially if towing a boat or trailer.”

This polarisation is also evident in the recommendations contained in key stakeholder submissions.

Wedderburn Tourism Inc. and Lions Club of Wedderburn’s submissions support developing Skinners Flat Reservoir for passive recreation only, in line with the positioning of Wedderburn as a birdwatching destination displayed by the current ‘Birds Eye View’ public art project in Wedderburn. Neighbouring residents also view active recreation as being unsuitable. The Lions Club of Wedderburn are willing to take on management and maintenance responsibilities.

The FoSKF submission supports a shared approach with both passive and active recreation zones established. The establishment of a water skiing season of three to four months per year was also posited during discussion with FoSKF and in subsequent correspondence. FoSKF are willing to take on management and maintenance responsibilities.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of consultation, a consensus between key stakeholders and individual community members was not found. This section outlines two possible options for Council to consider:

- Option 1 allows for passive and active recreation to co-exist, as supported by the Friends of Skinners Flat group.
- Option 2 allows passive recreation only, as supported by Wedderburn Tourism Inc., the Lions Club of Wedderburn and neighbouring landowners.

For more detail on community feedback refer to Section 6.

A further recommendation of this Master Plan is the continued communication with key stakeholders around the delegation of management and maintenance of the asset. Council will need to decide how the management of the asset will be delegated in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020. This is discussed in section 7.4.

This will most likely be guided by the choice of options, as individual stakeholder groups that have expressed interest in managing the asset will likely only be agreeable if their supported recreation option is adopted. A final decision on options and management structures may be dependent on the outcomes of the dam structural review and capacity limits.

7.1 Option 1: Co-existing passive and active recreation

This involves creating a shared facility with all recreation activities accommodated as listed below. Passive and active activities require appropriate separation to be clearly zoned and prominently displayed. This option allows water skiing to be undertaken and was supported by the majority of engagement respondents.



Figure 7.1 Map showing possible water skiing zone

Key recommendations from Option 1:

- A water skiing season of three to four months over summer

- Number of ski boats on the water to be limited to less than four, possibly no more than two at any one time subject to planning and waterways management investigation
- Zones established for water skiing, fishing, sailing, passive water sports including canoeing, paddle boarding and swimming
- Stocking the dam with fish and constructing a pontoon or jetty and possibly including a fish-cleaning table
- Wetland revegetation and environmental design to reduce water turbidity of Nardoo Creek inflow
- Walking trails
- Wetland board walk and birdwatching infrastructure
- Interpretive signage for birdlife
- Playground
- Improved or relocated camping area
- Improved access to relocated camping area
- Improved access road to main visitation area, allow for vehicles under tow to pass or improve line of site
- Replacement of existing toilet, barbecue and picnic facilities
- Establish a Community Asset Committee in consultation with the WDA and Friends of Skinners Flat group as well as other interested parties

The FoSKF group supports this option and could be the delegated management body under this arrangement as it is incorporated under the auspices of the WDA.

7.2 Option 2: Passive recreation only

This involves developing the asset for passive recreation only, with no powered water craft allowed or a 5 knot speed limit allowing only for fishing or small sailing craft. This is seen as capitalising on Wedderburn's positioning as a birdwatching destination consistent with the current public art project occurring in town by providing infrastructure such as birdwatching hides, interpretive signage, walking trails and areas for picnicking and low-impact camping.

Key recommendations from Option 2:

- Passive water sports including canoeing, paddle boarding and swimming would be provided for
- Establish a canoe trail with accessible kayak launch and trail interpretive signage
- Stocking the dam with fish and establishing a pontoon or jetty for fishing and possibly a fish-cleaning table
- Wetland revegetation and environmental design to reduce water turbidity of Nardoo Creek inflow
- Walking trail circuit
- Wetland board walk and birdwatching infrastructure
- Interpretive signage for birdlife
- Playground
- Improved access road to main visitation area, allow for vehicles under tow to pass or improve line of site
- Replacement of existing toilet, barbecue and picnic facilities
- Establish a Community Asset Committee in consultation with the Lions Club of Wedderburn and Wedderburn Tourism Inc. as well as other interested parties

This position is supported by both Wedderburn Tourism and the Lions Club of Wedderburn who could be the delegated management body under this arrangement.

7.3 Descriptions of recommended actions

7.3.1 Updated and relocated amenities block

The current toilet facilities at the site require replacement due to a number of factors. The amenities are in a poor state of repair and have been situated too close to the water's edge and boat ramp.

A new amenities block would be constructed adjacent to the picnic and car park area to the north west of the boat ramp. These amenities and toilets in particular, would serve both day visitors to the park and overnight campers should the current camping area be retained.

There has also been a suggestion to move overnight visitors to the south of the dam embankment. This would require the construction of a second amenities block, including disabled access, composting toilets and showers.

It is recommended that a waterless composting toilet system be considered, such as the Dry Vault Toilet System as used by Parks Victoria and NSW National Parks Service.



**Figure 7.2 Existing drop-toilet at Skinners Flat Reservoir.
Right: Example of a Dry Vault Toilet System.**

7.3.2 Boat ramp improvement

The existing boat ramp requires resurfacing due to cracking and erosion and possible redesign depending on the water level achieved by the dam safety works.



Figure 7.3 Existing boat ramp cracking and erosion.

7.3.3 Wetlands area

In the area to the west of the Reservoir, identified as the shallows on the far side of the island, a wetland area and native reeds and grasses have established naturally. Native birdlife and, in particular, waterbirds have been attracted to these wetlands and are now abundant.

There is the potential to improve this wetland habitat through revegetation, and with environmental design, this could be designed to reduce the turbidity of agricultural inflows from Nardoo Creek.³



Figure 7.4 Nardoo Creek inlet to north-west of current Reservoir

7.3.4 Stocking the dam with fish

Community feedback has highlighted the opportunity to increase the stock of fish in the dam. Fishing is a popular pastime in the Loddon region and this was also suggested as a control measure for leeches. A healthy aquatic ecosystem may also assist in reducing the turbidity of the waterway⁴.

7.3.5 Accessible kayak launch

An all-abilities canoe/kayak launch provides a stable platform on the static jetty and then a secure ramp to launch into the water for a person with mobility limitations, with hand rails and supportive rollers to guide them easily in and out of the water.

Similar accessible kayak launches have been installed across the Loddon Shire including on Serpentine Creek at Whytcross Road.

7.3.6 Wetland viewing platform

Birdlife forms an attractive aspect of the site, and to encourage participation in the study and understanding of native wildlife, it is proposed that a viewing platform be constructed at a suitable location.

³ Wetland Design Manual Supporting document: Planning, funding and management, Melbourne Water

⁴ <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/fish-stocking/fish-in-farm-dams/stocking-fish-in-farm-dams-information-sheet>

As shown in the image below, a typical viewing platform is covered, has comprehensive signage explaining the particular species likely to be seen and often seating for extended observation. Disability access would be a key feature.



Figure 7.5 Example of a wetlands and wildlife viewing platform

7.3.7 Wetlands boardwalk

The above wetland viewing platform could also be incorporated into a longer wetlands boardwalk of approximately 230m length, allowing for additional interpretive experiences. This boardwalk could also form a bridge over the Nardoo Creek inlet, to form a circuit walking trail as detailed below.



Figure 7.6 Map showing possible wetland boardwalk route

7.3.8 Walking trails

Construction of a walking trail was suggested during consultation. A walking path circumnavigating the Reservoir, allowing for the longest continuous loop at the site (approximately 1600m), is recommended. The above wetlands boardwalk could also be

incorporated into the walking trail, to showcase the variety of natural habitats present and could be constructed in the north west of the area to provide a bridge over Nardoo Creek. Should a new embankment be constructed, a walking path along the dam wall could be incorporated into the design, returning the path to the boat ramp and main day visitor carpark.



Figure 7.7 Map showing possible circuit walking trail route incorporating wetlands boardwalk

7.3.9 “Natural” playground

A natural playground is a play environment that consists of elements and textures from nature such as tree logs, tree stumps, boulders, plants, drainage paths, among others instead of a traditional steel playground structure that includes slides and climbers.



Figure 7.8 Example of a natural playground

7.3.10 Parking and roadways

It is proposed that two formal parking areas be established adjoining the camping area and close to the boat ramp which would also service the day visitor and picnic area. The latter will have the ability to store trailers.

A number of respondents also raised concerns with the limited line of sight and inability for two large vehicle or vehicles towing caravans or boats to pass on Mount Kerang Road. It has also been raised that the problem section of this road is winding and reversing vehicles that are towing would be difficult.



Figure 7.9 Narrow access on Mount Kerang Road identified as providing poor line-of-sight, no passing opportunities for large vehicles and caravans, and difficulty to reverse due to narrowness and bends in road

7.3.11 Barbecues and picnic areas

The currently available barbecue facilities are of traditional steel-sided construction and fuelled by burning wood. These old-style barbecues should be removed and visitors to the park would be able to use their own gas barbecues or electric powered barbecues provided in the day visitor picnic area.



Figure 7.10 Current barbecues in camping area (above). Current undercover picnic area and barbecue (bottom left)

The current under-cover eating area is in poor repair and needs to be replaced. This structure could be replaced and possibly duplicated with a more modern, open plan and accessible under-cover eating area with the provision of electric barbecues. Additional tables and seating would adjoin this area in close proximity to amenities and day visitor car park.



Figure 7.11 Area showing current camping area, which could be rezoned as a day visitor area



Figure 7.12 Map showing possible area for relocated camping area to the south of Reservoir

7.3.12 Relocation of camping area

During consultation with the Friends of Skinners Flat group it was recommended that the camping area be moved to the southern side of the dam embankment. This action would require considerable works, including tree removal and flattening of the site, construction of an amenities block, and improvements to the access track.

In return, the current camping area could form part of the day visitor area, providing more space for picnic facilities, a relocated toilet block for day users and formalised car park for day users.



Figure 7.13 Access trail to southern side of Reservoir. (Right) Image showing proposed area for development as southern camping area, requires substantial levelling.

7.3.13 Removal of metal structure at old pipeline intake

The metal structure above the old pipeline intake has been raised during engagement as a danger to water skiers. As the old pipeline has been flagged for decommissioning this metal structure could be removed.

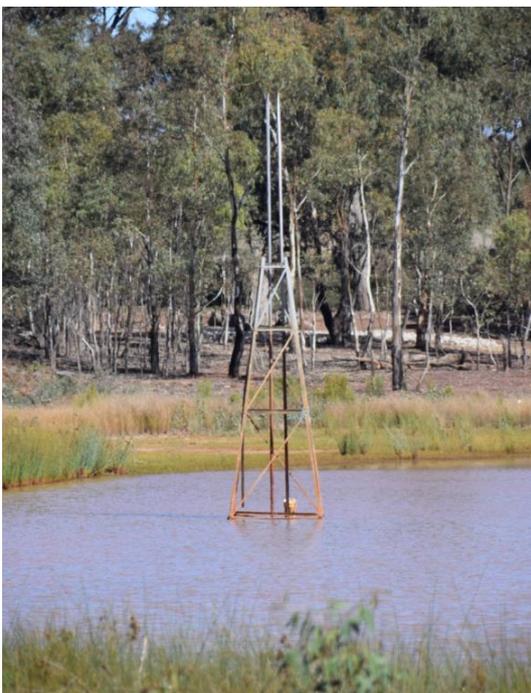


Figure 7.14 Metal structure above old pipeline

7.4 Section 65 – Community Asset Committees⁵

Under the Local Government Act 2020 a community asset committee is a committee with powers of the Council, established and with members appointed by Council, with powers delegated by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), subject to the terms and conditions specified by the CEO, for the purpose of managing a community asset in the municipal district (Section 65(2)).

Section 65 of the Act provides Council with the opportunity to create community asset committees of Council to undertake functions of the Council under delegation.

Section 65 states:

- (1) Council may establish a CAC and appoint as many members to the CAC as Council considers necessary to enable the CAC to achieve the purpose specified in subsection (2).
- (2) Council may only establish a CAC for the purpose of managing a community asset in the municipal district.

Note: see Section 47 for delegation to members of a CAC by the Chief Executive Officer. Unless anything in the instrument of delegation provides otherwise, the conduct of a meeting of a CAC is in the discretion of the CAC.

It is imperative that Council understands that the actions undertaken by a community asset committee are conducted within the limits of delegated authority, are binding, lawful and are effective.

It is therefore important that Council and members of Section 65 CACs understand their instruments of delegation and the limits of authority and areas within which they have been delegated authority to act and operate. The governance arrangements for these committees are specified by the CEO under Section 47(4)). These terms and conditions must include the limits and purpose of any financial delegation that can be exercised by the committee; governance arrangements; and monitoring and reporting requirements.

For the purpose of establishing a CAC for the management of Skinners Flat Reservoir, a number of considerations must be made:

- Will Council seek to delegate management to a single incorporated body to act as the CAC, or will the CAC be representative of many stakeholder groups?
- If delegating to a single stakeholder group, what are the risks involved?
- What will the role and responsibilities of the CAC be? Is the CAC responsible for raising funds for maintenance and upkeep? Will members of the CAC be responsible for performing upkeep duties? What contribution to upkeep and maintenance will Council commit ongoing?

It is recommend that these arrangements be developed in more detail upon establishment of the committee.

8 COSTING AND FUNDING OF ACTIONS

The two tables below outline the actions derived from the recommendations of this Master Plan. As there are two options for Council to consider, Table 5 provides actions for Option 1 (co-existing passive and active recreation) while Table 6 provides actions for Option 2 (passive recreation only). Please note that many of the actions are duplicated between the two options.

Table 5: Costing and funding of Option 1 – Active and Passive Recreation Co-exist

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* <small>*Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.</small>
Remove existing toilet amenities	\$7K	0	\$7K	Council Community Plan	2 to 3 weeks
New accessible enviro-friendly toilet block	\$200K	\$200K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Improve boat ramp	\$10K	\$10K	0	Boating Safety and Facilities Program	1 to 2 months
Remove existing picnic structure	\$5K	0	\$5K	Council Community Plan	2 to 3 weeks
Eco-designed picnic shelter x 2	\$80K	\$80K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
6x metal picnic benches	\$14K	\$14K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	2 to 3 weeks
3x Push-button gas bbqs	\$12K	\$12K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	2 to 3 weeks
Remove steel-sided bbqs	\$2K	0	\$2K	Council Community Plan	2 to 3 weeks
“Nature Play” Playground	\$40K	\$40K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* *Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.
Car park with trailer parking and turn-around	\$12K	\$12K	0	Boating Safety and Facilities Program	1 to 2 months
Car access to kayak launch and small carpark	\$25K	\$25K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Install accessible kayak launch	\$15K	\$15K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Design and installation of interpretive signage for canoe trail	\$30K	\$30K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Walking path design and construction	\$75K	\$75K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Wetlands boardwalk design and construction	\$80K	\$80K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
The construction of a raised timber bird hide (approx 4mx2m floor area), short board walk and internal interpretation	\$55K	\$55K	0	Australian Bird Environment Foundation – Community Grants / RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Interpretive signage (bird species) design and installation	\$20K	\$20K	0	Australian Bird Environment Foundation – Community Grants	3 to 4 months

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* *Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.
Clearing, widening and supply of gravel road base to 1500m of existing overgrown track	\$50K	\$50K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Amenities block (accessible toilets and showers) at southern campground	\$250K	\$250K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Levelling and landscaping of southern campground area	\$30K	0	\$30K	Council Community Plan	1 to 2 months
Swimming pontoon design and installation	\$5K	\$5K	0	SRV - Together More Active	3 to 4 months
Stock with fingerlings	\$5K	\$5K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	1 to 2 months
Fishing jetty	\$10K	\$10K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	3 to 4 months
Fish-cleaning table	\$2K	\$2K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	2 to 3 weeks
Improved wayfinding signage on Calder	\$5K	\$5K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Weed removal	\$2K	\$2k	0	Victorian Landcare Grants	1 to 2 months
Tree planting	\$8K	\$8K	0	Victorian Landcare Grants	1 to 2 months
Wetland species planting on Nardoo Creek inflow to reduce turbidity	\$10K	\$10K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	3 to 4 months
History-board of Skinners Flat	\$20K	\$20K	0	PROV - Local History Grants	6 months

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* <small>*Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.</small>
Netted swimming zone	\$4K	\$4K	0	SRV - Together More Active	1 to 2 months
Waterways management planning	\$4K	0	\$4K	Council Community Plan	3 to 4 months
Navigation/recreation zone signage	\$6K	\$6K	0	Boating Safety and Facilities Program	3 to 4 months
Design of amenities and recreation zoning	\$50K	\$50K	0	Boating Safety and Facilities Program	6 months
Project management and delivery	\$200K	\$200K	0	RDV - Regional Infrastructure Fund	6 months
Environmental and Native Title approvals	\$20K	0	\$20K	Council Community Plan	6 months
Total project costs	\$2.08M	\$2.01M	\$68K		

Table 6: Costing and funding of Option 2 – Passive Recreation Only

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* <small>*Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.</small>
Remove existing toilet amenities	\$7K	0	\$7K	Council Community Plan	2 to 3 weeks
New accessible enviro-friendly toilet block	\$200K	\$200K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Remove existing picnic structure	\$5K	0	\$5K	Council Community Plan	2 to 3 weeks

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* <small>*Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.</small>
Eco-designed picnic shelter x 2	\$80K	\$80K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
6x metal picnic benches	\$14K	\$14K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	< Weeks
3x Push-button gas bbqs	\$12K	\$12K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	< Weeks
Remove steel-sided bbqs	\$2K	0	\$2K	Council Community Plan	< Weeks
“Nature Play” Playground	\$40K	\$40K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Car access to kayak launch and small carpark	\$25K	\$25K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Install accessible kayak launch	\$15K	\$15K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Design and installation of interpretive signage for canoe trail	\$30K	\$30K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Walking path design and construction	\$75K	\$75K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* *Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.
Wetlands boardwalk design and construction	\$80K	\$80K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
The construction of a raised timber bird hide (approx 4mx2m floor area), short board walk and internal interpretation	\$55K	\$55K	0	Australian Bird Environment Foundation – Community Grants / RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Interpretive signage (bird species) design and installation	\$20K	\$20K	0	Australian Bird Environment Foundation – Community Grants	3 to 4 months
Clearing, widening and supply of gravel road base to 1500m of existing overgrown track	\$50K	\$50K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Amenities block (accessible toilets and showers) at southern campground	\$250K	\$250K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	3 to 4 months
Levelling and landscaping of southern campground area	\$30K	0	\$30K	Council Community Plan	1 to 2 months
Swimming pontoon design and installation	\$5K	\$5K	0	SRV - Together More Active	3 to 4 months
Stock with fingerlings	\$5K	\$5K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	1 to 2 months
Fishing jetty	\$10K	\$10K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	3 to 4 months

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source*	Completion timeframe approximate* *Physical implementation only, does not include design, procurement and planning.
Fish-cleaning table	\$2K	\$2K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	< Weeks
Improved wayfinding signage on Calder	\$5K	\$5K	0	RDV - Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund	1 to 2 months
Weed removal	\$2K	\$2k	0	Victorian Landcare Grants	1 to 2 months
Tree planting	\$8K	\$8K	0	Victorian Landcare Grants	1 to 2 months
Wetland species planting on Nardoo Creek inflow to reduce turbidity	\$10K	\$10K	0	Recreational Fishing Grants Program	3 to 4 months
History-board of Skinners Flat	\$20K	\$20K	0	PROV - Local History Grants	> 6 months
Netted swimming zone	\$4K	\$4K	0	SRV - Together More Active	1 to 2 months
Design of amenities and recreation zoning	\$50K	\$50K	0	Boating Safety and Facilities Program	> 6 months
Project management and delivery	\$200K	\$200K	0	RDV - Regional Infrastructure Fund	> 6 months
Environmental and Native Title approvals	\$20K	0	\$20K	Council Community Plan	> 6 months
Total project costs	\$1.33M	\$1.27M	\$64K		

*Note: Proposed funding source is indicative only, it is assumed that similar funding streams will be available at time of implementing this Master Plan.

8.1 Funding

A number of funding streams may be available to implement the actions of this Master Plan. These include Council's Community Planning, Council Community Grants, as well as potential

external sources such as Sports and Recreation Victoria, Recreational Fishing Grants, Regional Development Victoria and other future unknown opportunities.

As mentioned previously, the largest inhibitors for detailing funding opportunities for this project is the reliance on dam infrastructure works and unknown outcomes of the dam safety audit. Should the capacity of the dam be significantly reduced, many of the proposed actions from Option 1 of this Master Plan would be impossible, as active recreation such as water skiing is dependent on sufficient water levels. In this situation, actions from Option 2 would also need to be considered.

Given the two factors, lag time to implementation and unknown outcomes external to this Master Plan, no specific funding streams have been identified.

9 COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The benefits of participating in outdoor recreation are well documented and have been outlined in Council’s Recreation Strategy⁶ and Activating Open Space Strategy⁷. Not only do individuals benefit from health and wellbeing improvements, but the whole community benefits from a greater sense of community, economic opportunities, improvement to the environment, reduction in crime and a healthier society. Council’s Activating Open Space Strategy also identifies the benefits of public open spaces as:

Social benefits	Health benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect and build strong communities by providing opportunities for local people to come together for a range of leisure, cultural and celebratory activities. • Enhance opportunities for social cohesion and inclusion. • Improve liveability in urban environments by offering affordable recreation opportunities for all community sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages physical activity. • Enhances physical and mental health. • Helps to reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. • Assists in recovery from mental fatigue. • Enhances children’s development and well-being.
Environmental benefits	Economic benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of areas of conservation, biodiversity or cultural heritage value. • Managing climate change impacts by providing shade and cooling. • Contributing to storm water management. • Contributing to urban heat abatement. • Reduction of air and noise pollution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks are a major draw card for recreation and tourism industries and significant sources of employment for local communities and flow on economic benefits. • Active open spaces serve the same purpose on competition days by attracting participants and spectators beyond the district and this has significant flow on economic benefits.

Figure 9.1 Benefits to the community of open spaces

While it is challenging to place a monetary figure on the benefit of providing opportunities for outdoor recreation and open spaces to the community, the above social, health, environmental and economic benefits show the diversity of opportunities for beneficial outcomes.

Wedderburn Tourism Inc. and the Lions Club of Wedderburn, as well as many individual respondents to this project’s engagement efforts, raised the opportunity to capitalise on using Skinners Flat Reservoir to position Wedderburn as a premier destination for birdwatching tourism. This is consistent with the current “Birds Eye View” public art project being undertaken in Wedderburn. While the total cost of actioning all of the recommendations from either option of this Master Plan are considerable (\$1.3M to \$2M) significant funding options could be available and the potential benefits to the local community in providing opportunities for outdoor recreation and economic benefits of positioning Wedderburn as a premier birdwatching destination in central Victoria should be considered.

⁶ Recreation Strategy 2015-2020, Loddon Shire Council

⁷ Activating Open Space Strategy 2019-2024, Loddon Shire Council

APPENDIX 1: Engagement data

Table 7: Online survey result – Recreation activities preferences

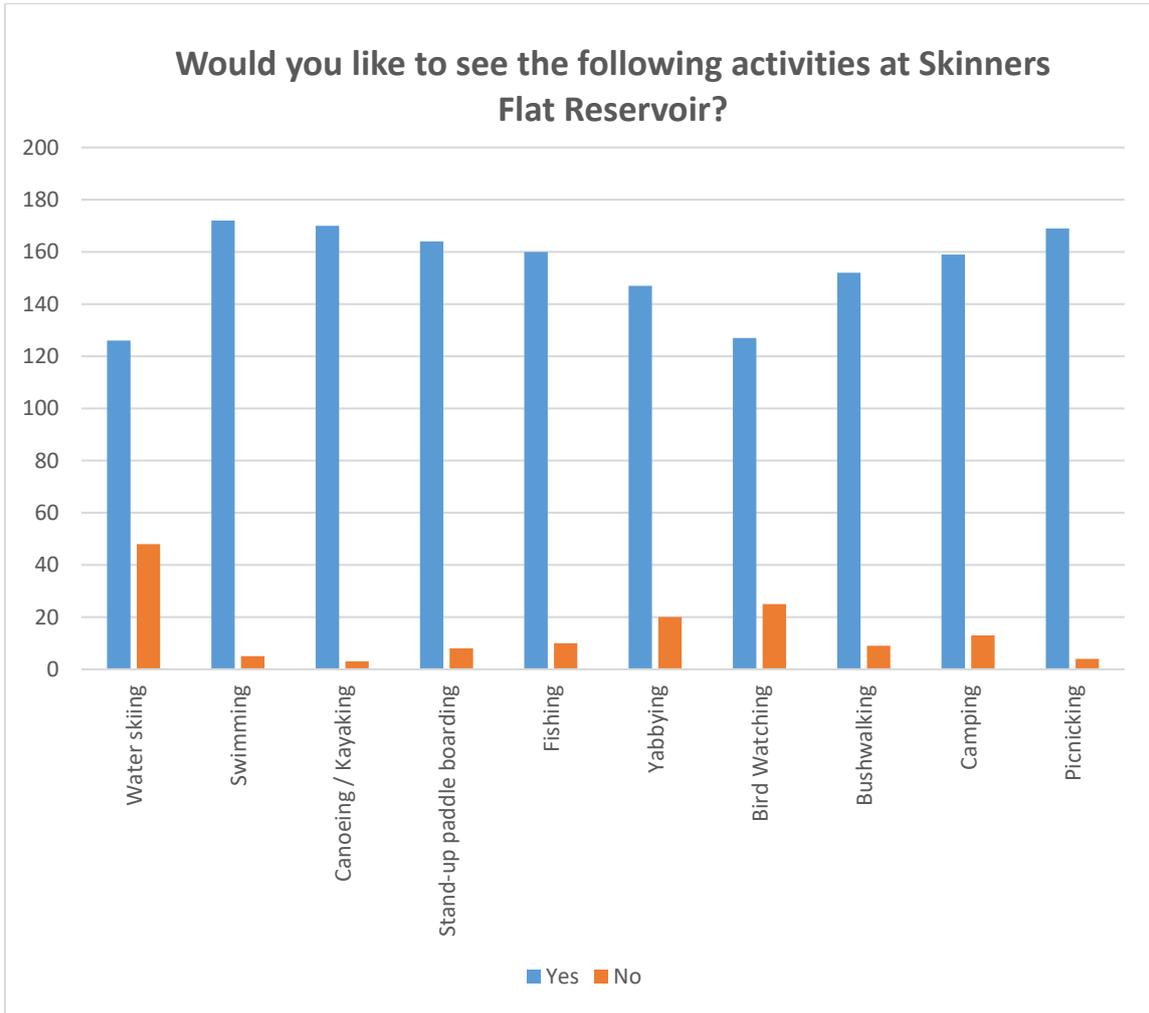


Table 8: Online survey result – Amenities improvement preferences

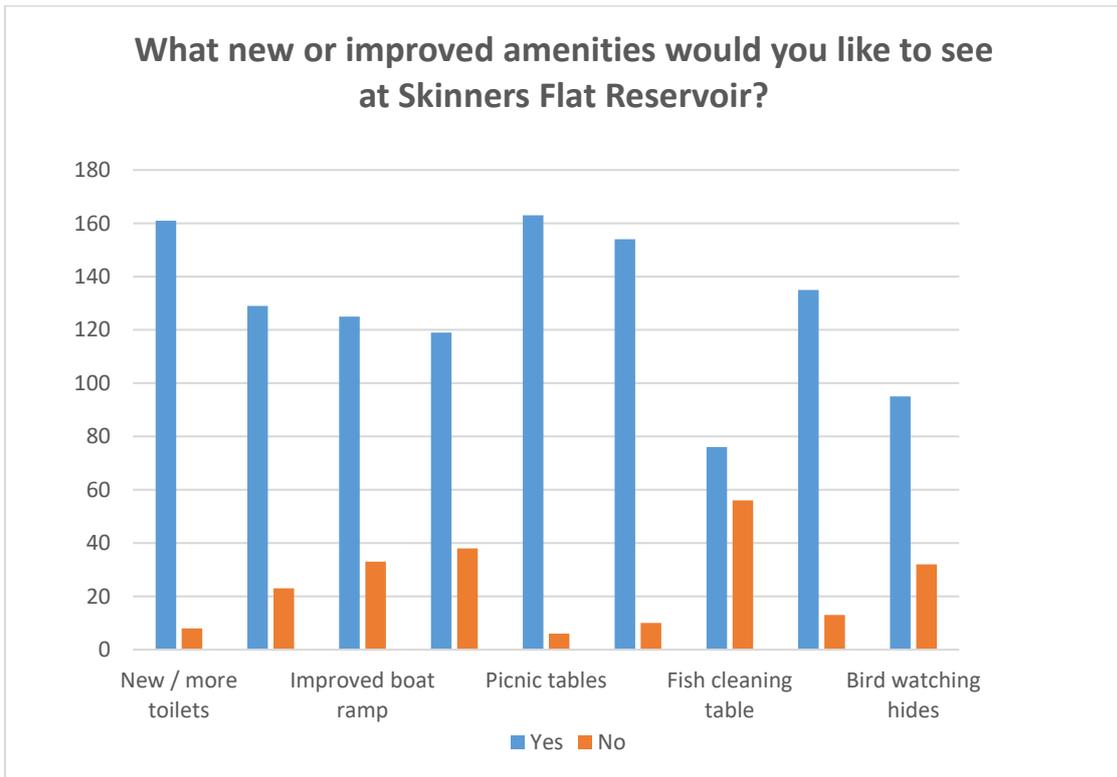


Table 9: Online survey result – Do you think Skinners Flat Reservoir should be promoted to attract visitors?

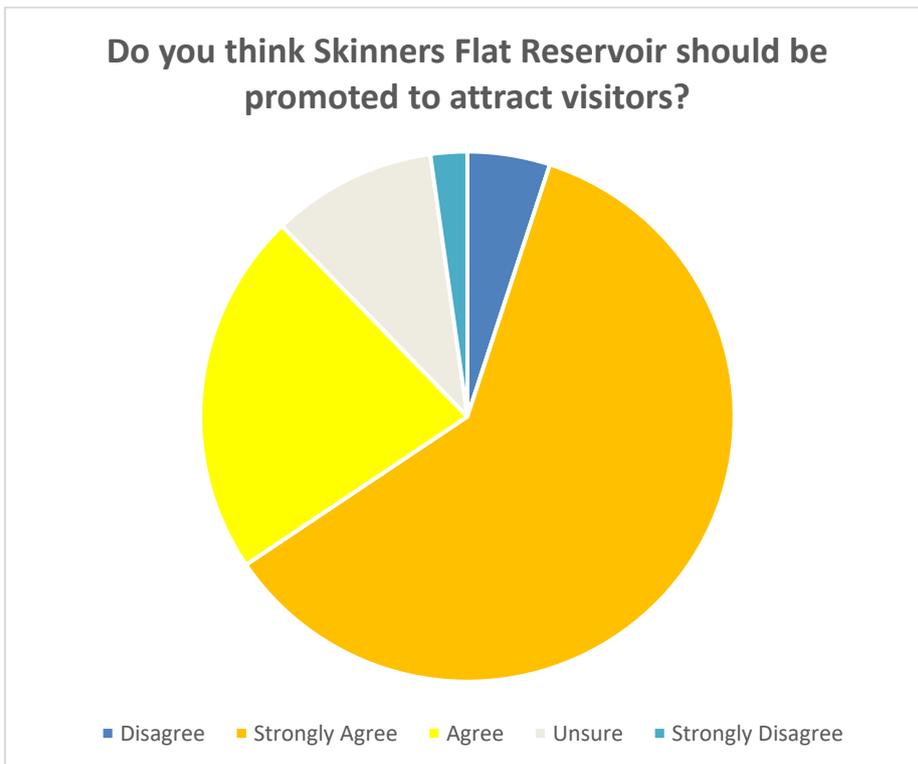
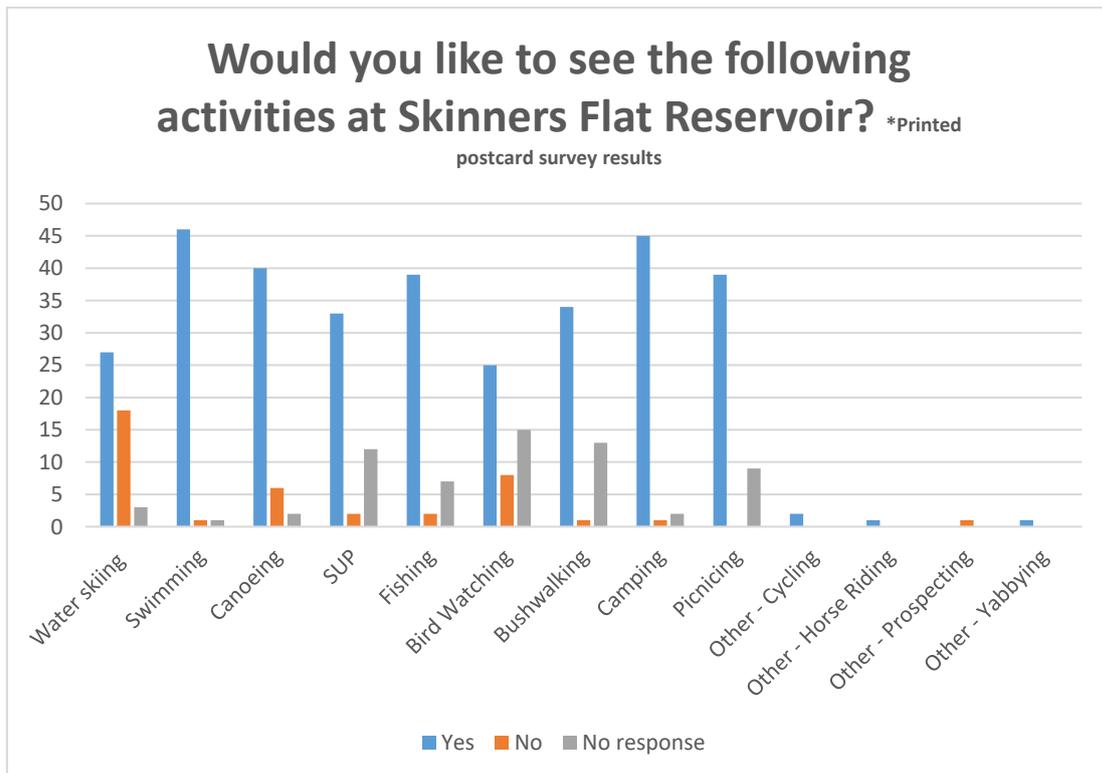


Table 10: Results from postcard survey

Activity	Yes	No	No response
Water skiing	27	18	3
Swimming	46	1	1
Canoeing	40	6	2
SUP	33	2	12
Fishing	39	2	7
Bird Watching	25	8	15
Bushwalking	34	1	13
Camping	45	1	2
Picnicking	39	0	9
Other - Cycling	2	0	0
Other - Horse Riding	1	0	0
Other - Prospecting	0	1	0
Other - Yabbying	1	0	0

Table 11: Graph results from postcard survey



APPENDIX 2: Full comments from surveys

Can't it be our hidden treasure?

Improved facilities may encourage people to camp for far too long. Toilets will be challenging for Shire to maintain due to vandalism and abuse of facilities. Will need big signs to tell campers that DUMP POINT is located at the Caravan Park. DO NOT PROVIDE BINS, this encourages people to treat the area like a tip (like has happened in Hard Hill). High risk of fire due to haphazard campfire placement and people removing firewood from surrounding bush and adjacent private property. Increased usage may need the access road widened from a single lane track. Best to promote it as a low impact environmentally friendly peaceful natural place.

Skidders is a jewel for the Wedderburn area. It has strong patronage from the bush camping community and is listed on Wikicamps. Whenever I go out there, which is regularly, there are often caravans spending a night or two there. These people are self-sustainable, take their rubbish out with them and more than likely spend money in Wedderburn.

Water skiing is not viable at Skidders. If there are ski boats on the water, no other boats can use it. Apart from that, you can have 100 people enjoying some quiet time at Skidders and you only need one ski boat or jet ski to disturb the ambience. Skidders is too small for ski boats as they would dominate total activities in the hands of a very small number of people.

Place a 5 knot limit on the water for any craft.

Skidders is ideal for passive recreation but far too small for ski boats
One boat would eliminate all other water sports and the noise will deter any birds from nesting as well as limit camping

It's not big enough for too many people, without ruining the place.

I think Wedderburn could be promoted as a premier birdwatching area. To this end there should be no motorised activity on the water. Attracting birdwatchers would help bring more people into the area who have low-key requirements.

Native Trees & plants to attract wild life and birds. Hides to be in an area where swimmers fisherman will not disturb the water birds. Powered boats will frighten away the water birds. Better access roads & parking area.
A history board telling the history of Skidders Flat Reservoir & better signs to advertise where the Reservoir is etc.

I see it as a local recreational nature based facility. Not over developed and largely for the local community. Note although it is private land in surrounds a lot of this is under Trust for Nature Covenant and some owned by Bush Heritage. Both of these organisations need to be consulted.

I think the local population need this facility for recreation, as we don't have close access to any lakes or rivers; they would regularly use this facility if there was a reliable water level. I don't believe we need to promote it to attract visitors to the area, as this would lead to overcrowding and environmental damage. It is not a large enough area to cater for large numbers of visitors at any one time.

Water skiing and speed boats, if allowed, would have a detrimental impact (noise, wake, danger to others) on both other users and the environment. They would lead to a loss of wildlife habitat, plus the noise would scare away the native birds.

a prominently exposed notice board explaining a list of the uses and behaviour expected by all users. The bush setting peace and ambience to be protected and observed.

Concerned that I would not be big enough to attract visitors for water sports although it would be a lovely camping spot for travellers.

It's a great spot and people spend money in our town.

Concerned that I would not be big enough to attract visitors for water sports although it would be a lovely camping spot for travellers.

As a regular visitor to Skinners I believe that it would create the most amount of tourism if it were kept to a fishing, camping, sightseeing (walking trails), birdwatching area.

All activity on the water should be kept to a MAXIMUM of 5km per hour as anything more will create TOO MUCH NOISE and probably erode the banks AND WILL DEFINITELY put extra pressures on the dam wall.

Also, too much noise will drive the birdwatchers and bushwalkers away. (I know that I would definitely NOT go there if water-skiing was allowed). A speed limit of 5km per hour will also not disturb the water birds anywhere near as much.

Has good potential to be developed and be promoted for nature tourism activities and cater to visitors to the area, which have economic gains to the area. The use of the venue for skiing will only cater for a few self-interested locals and have no economic net gain to the community. Skiers from outside the local region will still prefer to go the other established ski areas in the shire such as Bridgewater, Boort and Laanacoorie.

If promoted too widely you then need bigger & better facilities, It is only a small Reservoir , not a lake, and could not handle large numbers attending . Keep it simple & low maintenance open to campers/caravaners etc passing through with a small fee for overnight stays , & for the residents of Wedderburn & surrounding areas to enjoy.

WATER-constant water level, without this you may as well leave it as it is.

We don't want a 5 star resort, just a upgrade on one of Wedderburn's many hidden treasures that we can all enjoy.

Loved to see it used as a multipurpose area as it once was years ago.

With a little upgrade to the toilets, fix the little bbq pits up and maybe add another shelter near the shelter already there it would be a great spot to spend time out there and great use for our community.

It would be great to have a well maintained 'by the water' area for family picnics, gatherings etc.

All idea above are fantastic but thinking about the space and safety it might not be possible to have ski boats like Boort due to room and trying to promote other activities.

Get rid of the leaches lol

Flatten out highway side to allow for more camping areas. Keeping it full would attract more visitors to town therefore increasing all businesses trades in town. Needs more rubbish bins so kept tidy.

The priority should be for local users and should cater for a wide range of uses to enable all locals to enjoy the area.

It is a lovely quiet peaceful spot to camp, it should remain a free camp as Wedderburn has a van park & a low cost camp at Hard Hill. With the free camp everyone is catered for.

Areas to swim horses and wider access road with less over hanging trees. Need designated ski area marked by buoys to segregate swimming kayaking etc.

It needs to be made deeper for most boats. Also it needs all the trees in the water cleared.

It's only small so it should be for people in the local areas. The road in also needs to be wider. It's to narrow and dangerous over the crests especially if towing a boat or trailer.

An amenities building like Wooroonook has would encompass everything we need. Also a sandy and grassy area for kids to play. A netted off swimming area. Pontoon for kids to jump off.

The birdification of Wedderburn (6 murals) could be further enhanced by adding Skinners to the local bird experience and promoted as a natural birdwatching precinct. Low maintenance, durable structures/infrastructure should be considered re: barbecues, shade, tables and chairs. Well signed cycling/walking tracks. No speedboats! Peaceful precinct to appreciate nature, birds and other fauna. Thank you.

Children's play ground and some indigenous history of the area acknowledged.

This would be a valuable attraction for families. Free camping near by a water play area is a huge draw card. This would absolutely only add value to the shire.
100% tourist attraction. Will bring more busy to town.

I am granddaughter of Joan and Robert (bob) Burgess I remember this as one of my favourite places to go when I visited my nan and pabs farm one year I remember my uncle Colin Martin got a bunch of canoues for us to take out onto the reserve this place has special memories and values also the small water overflow I used to call a water fall I learn how to make chalk here please keep it safe

All these activities have worked side by side since it was built, so no need to exclude any particular group.

Let it be the locals secret. Don't let it get trashed and damaged by others.

It should be left alone for us locals to enjoy, When you install new amenities there is an on going maintenance cost. Council does not own this land, they manage it on behalf of the crown. All cost there for should be born by the crown not the ratepayers.

The area is poorly managed and allowed to dry out in summer. More controls need to be implemented to protect indigenous vegetation and wildlife. Public facilities are either non existent, poorly managed, or not serviced.

Please, test the water before, during and after all the new ideas are implemented. I don't think that such a small stretch of water can manage lots of tourists.

A good concept of seeing how they transformed Lake Lascelles up at Hopetoun. One, how much tourism it brings to a small Mallee town and two how they've constructed the layout their site. Toilet/shower block, large grassed area and powered sites. And to make the Reservoir as recreational as possible.

Don't let the green element take over and stuff up a good project.

All can co-exist.

Definitely an asset for town and businesses.

Fires only in fire places. Limit how long campers can LIVE there. Take your rubbish HOME with you. Better toilets – but very hard for shire to maintain as they will be abused. Sign to tell campers DUMP POINT is in town.

More toilets, pontoon (for swimmers), will need to be deepened (for fishing)/jetty too. A (bird watching) hide would be great. Will need horse-yards (for horse riding).

Shower and toilet facilities would be excellent for a free campsite.
Shared walks/cycling trails would be great.

As parks land is so close it would be better to develop the highway side for camping and caravan sites charging (eg) \$5 per night with a honesty box. It would go a long way towards paying for the water, having said that the track in would have to be upgrades and that side of the lake would have to be deepened for access for boats. Also would need a toilet block, I'm

sure there would be a lot of local voluntary help out there. If stocked with fish you would get people all year round.

All activities on the water to be passive.
No powered motor craft as these create erosion and loss of serenity.
Grassed areas and public facilities would attract visitors (tourism).

It would be a great spot for recreation.

Free camping (as now) would be appreciated but no restrictions on other placid activities as in drone flying of similar. NO restrictions on dogs. P.S. A lake in town would be more beneficial.

Clean up scrub in bottom of Skinners before it fills. Remove sapplings and scrub which will be a nuisance when full. They need to dig out highway side and boats should be allowed to travel around entire lake as it would be safe and makes sense.

Need to make more room for camping and facilities need upgrading.

It would be great if the NO CAMPING signs were removed from Skinners Flat and Hard Hill so people would feel welcome in this town. This would do wonders for the town.

Just curious to why several members of the local Lions Club camped at Skinners Flat with their caravans a few weeks ago, but there is a 'NO CAMPING' sign. There's also a 'NO CAMPING' sign at Hard Hill Reserve. How do you expect to attract visitors to our town with these signs up. Water attracts people to towns.

barbecue areas. Sand beaches. Green grass. Shaded areas.

Water skiing is noisy – spoils it for the other activities and is a downer!

Camping would be acceptable if the amenities were there, i.e. toilets and bins!

Having watched the rise and fall of water levels and with it Skinners Flat fortunes as a recreational destination for locals and visitors alike; the Reservoir is best suited to passive pursuits. Power boats and jet skis are not compatible with the asset's small surface area and shallow depth. For it to be a viable place for regular use guaranteed recreational water allocation is essential. Council must advocate forcefully with GWM Water!! Otherwise any other expenditure will be wasted.

Please keep water level up to a reasonable depth. Not a suitable area for water skiing or motorboats, this churns up the bottom and ruins the environment.

Skinners needs to be developed for passive recreation.

A committee of management would be a good idea. The toilet needs to be relocated as it is too close to the water. barbecues desperately need repairing and more picnic tables/seats made available.

Needs toilets/showers.

Needs toilets.

Loddon has numerous other locations for bushwalking and birdwatching such as Mt Korong, Melville Caves, Boort Lake, Loddon River.
Skinners needs to be developed as a recreational water venue for the youth, families and visitors.

We don't want a "5 star resort". Basically what activities happen there now with upgraded facilities and constant water supply. Upgrade the road to the south-west side and level out that side for extra camping, parking and boating activities.

Perhaps a barbecue to be able to use and upgraded toilet amenities.

These will be great activities and may bring a lot of tourism to our town.

This area developed would be a fantastic asset for our community, just disappointing it has been overlooked for the last 40 years, when we were young and trying to ski out there. Water is a great asset to any community and great for attracting tourism.

Beautiful spot, great the council is asking the public on their opinion:

- toilets
 - barbecue areas
 - parking.
-

There is a small percentage of ski boats in Wedderburn. To fill the Reservoir at great expense for so few cannot possibly be considered viable. Ski boats will also interfere with bird breeding elderly campers, bird watchers and passive recreation users.

APPENDIX 3: Submissions from Key Stakeholders

SUBMISSION NOTES : FRIENDS OF SKINNERS FLAT

- Friends of Skidders Flat would be willing to assist in managing SF as an incorporated group
- To be used for recreational activities such as skiing, boating, kayaking and fishing
- Zoning of areas to take place so that it enhances the usage of the area
- Road in needs work to allow for passing
- Floating jetty
- Future development on far North side for camping and other use (flatten)
- Dirt taken to fix the bank could be used to enhance the area
- barbecue area to be redone with grass and sand
- Solar lights/toilets to be upgraded (tank and tap needed, handbasin)
Continue to access grants to promote and develop SF
- Sand next to boat ramp
- Yearly membership for users to raise money for the upkeep
- **Communication with other groups and work together to develop and area for everyone and all interests (Zoning)**
- Parking for boat trailers
- Tree to be removed near boat ramp
- Shade trees to be planted
- Donation tin
- Steel table and chairs
- Signage
- Signs for wildlife
- Suckers to be removed

30 March 2021



A0111081B

Mr. Grant Banks
Strategic Plan Writer
Loddon Shire Council
High Street
Wedderburn 3518

Dear Grant

Submission for Skinners Flat Reservoir Master Plan

Wedderburn Tourism Incorporated, who are also the Community Assets Committee of Management Section 65 for Hard Hill Reserve thank you for coming to our meeting last night and giving a very informative presentation of the proposed Master Plan for Skinners Flat Reservoir.

We support Council's initiative in this important project for our community and would very much like to see the area improved for passive recreation only.

As you are no doubt aware the community have banded together to get the Open Air Gallery Project in our town. This project is to highlight the large number of birds in our area. Out of the 800 birds in Victoria around 200 of them are found here, the largest percentage breakdown in the State! This is an important opportunity to promote Wedderburn as a bird watchers paradise bringing much needed tourists to our town.

Skinners Flat already has a substantial amount of water birds and with permanent water the birdlife would increase dramatically. At present there are white faced and white necked herons, spoonbills, black fronted dotterels, masked lapwings and several species of ducks, even 2 pelicans have been spotted out on the water. Many field birds come to the water to drink and feed off the insects. The re introduction of fish to the Reservoir would also increase the bird life. We would also like to see bird hides constructed as part of the promotion of the area for bird watchers.

Introducing speed boats will have a huge impact on the breeding habitats of these birds as well as their food supply. Noise is also an issue and we doubt if you will attract many grey nomads, who are our largest camping group, who like to enjoy the peace and surrounds on their travels.

Speed boats also limit the number of people who can use the water at one time whereas passive recreation is available to all.

We agree that there needs to be a Committee of Management for Skinners Flat Reservoir to oversee the running of the facility and maintaining any new structures that will be provided as

per the recommendations from the Master Plan. A new toilet is certainly required as the old one is too close to the water and needs to be pumped out regularly. Perhaps composting toilets similar to those at Kooyoora State Park could be investigated. Bushwalking tracks and boardwalks around the Reservoir would be interesting and no doubt bring more visitors to the area.

We wish Council well in their endeavour to improve this important and special facility for our community.

Jude Raftis
Secretary

Lions Club of Wedderburn

Skidders Flat Master Plan Submission

As discussed when Grant Banks attended the recent meeting of the Wedderburn Lions, it was intended that we would do a submission. This had to be approved by a business meeting which occurred on the 7th April.

The Lions would like to firstly acknowledge your preparedness to allow a late submission from us given meeting structures and then need for approval by resolution at the club level.

Council would be well aware of the involvement that Lions has with the community and its service to the community. Lions has a considerable membership which at present totals 24 with 4 others interested in joining. In addition, the partners of these Lions virtually double the representation of Lions in the Wedderburn community.

The Lions Club of Wedderburn has been established for over 40 years. Over that time the club has contributed significantly to the Wedderburn community and continues to do so. The most major project recently undertaken has been the acquisition of the Coach House Gallery and Museum. Lions have enthusiastically tackled that project and completed considerable restoration work. This is clear evidence of the organisational skills, trade skills and commitment by Lions members.

We understand that the Loddon Shire owns the majority of the land comprising Skidders Flat Reservoir. The Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which adjoins Skidders is a significant piece of bushland. There are considerable numbers of species of plants, birds and animals in the area. We understand from the Open Air Birds Project that there are over 200 varieties of birds alone in the Wedderburn area of the 800 varieties in Australia.

Skidders Flat is important in providing a breeding area and water source for birds at present but could be considerably expanded with regular inflows. This would not require 100% fill either, but enough to provide permanent water in the lake.

Lions believe that Skidders Flat should be developed for passive recreation and eco tourism because of the above reasons. We also consider that this would maximise usage for our residents and visitors.

At our business meeting on the 7th April, the following motion was passed:-

That the Lions Club of Wedderburn make a submission to the Loddon Shire Council regarding the Master Plan for Skidders Flat.

The submission should include the following points that Lions support.

- That Skidders Flat be developed for passive recreation including such past times as picnics, fishing, camping, birdwatching, kayaking, sailboarding etc.
- That all watercraft using Skidders be unpowered and that a limit of 5 knots per hour be applied. This would avoid wakes, protect the banks, protect the dam wall and ensure the peace and serenity of the area.
- That any development be minimal and include the building of some composting toilets. Showers are not required, nor are rubbish bins. People should take out what they take in.
- That the focus for Skidders Flat should be based around eco tourism supported by the Open Air bird project in the town. The two go hand in hand.

- That the Wedderburn Lions Club as an incorporated organization that work for the community would be prepared to be the body to oversee the CAC for Skinners.
- That Lions would commit to assisting in the maintenance and development of the area for the purposes stated above in conjunction with the council and the community.

A second motion was also passed:-

That the Lions Club form a sub committee follow through on the above motion.

This was carried and a sub committee has been formed.

Expanding on the initial motion, Lions believe that camping should be encouraged, but on a self sufficient basis so that people take out their rubbish. Camping in the area and the development of Skinners along the lines proposed above would lead to a wider appreciation of the Wychitella NCR. This area can also be promoted for eco-tourism which simply leads to a greater awareness of the Loddon Shire area and what it has to offer.

As mentioned in the motion above, Lions as an incorporated body would be prepared to take on the role of managing the CAC. This would be similar to Wedderburn Tourism and Hard Hill. Several Lions members are also involved in the Hall Committee.

Lions look forward to the opportunity of working with the Shire on this project. We believe this will be of great benefit for our town and community. Visitors for eco tourism pursuits could contribute significantly to the local micro economy.

Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Jon Chandler
Secretary

Skidders Flat Master Plan Submission

Further to the Loddon Shire calling for submissions relating to Skidders Flat development, the Friends of Kooyoora would like to add their voice on the plan.

The Friends of Kooyoora has been incorporated since 2002. Its' purpose is the promotion and conservation of the Kooyoora State Park. This includes monitoring of various species of plants, birds and animals to ensure sustainable development. With the Kooyoora State Park moving to a joint management arrangement with the Dja Dja Wurrung, the Friends of Kooyoora are taking a wider interest in the area. This includes the Kingower State Forest, Mt Korong, Inglewood NCR and Wychitella NCR which adjoins Skidders Flat.

The Wychitella NCR is a significant piece of bushland. We are aware of several disused Mallee Fowl nests but also the existence of a number of active mounds. The species of plants, birds and animals in the area is significant. Large numbers of varieties have been seen in the Nardoo Hills Reserve belonging to Bush Heritage at the end of the Mt Kerang Road.

Skidders Flat is important in providing a breeding area and water source for birds. The Australian Living Atlas records 273 various species of animals, plants and birds at Skidders Flat alone. We would suggest that these records are not complete as many people do not record sightings.

If we look at the Nardoo Hills Reserve area using a 10km radius, there are 783 various species of animals, plants and birds. This area would include Skidders Flat and the surrounding bushland provides important conservation corridors and environment for many of these species.

It is for these reasons that Skidders Flat should be developed for passive recreation to build upon the existing environmental assets of the area.

The Friends of Kooyoora would support the building of environmentally friendly toilets in the camping area. These could be similar to the ones at the Kooyoora Camp Ground. The water area should be developed to provide greater habitat for birds and fish could be introduced. This would encourage ecological diversity and balance.

Apart from toilets, we do not see the necessity to develop any other assets that would require considerable cost and maintenance. The old barbecues should be removed and perhaps replaced with new ones if viable.

Any vessels on the water should be subjected to a speed limit of 5 knots. This would be in keeping with a quiet and natural environment where people could enjoy the water safely and have minimal impact on the environment and the wildlife. We would not under any circumstances support faster speeds on the water as this would discourage birdlife and detract from the peaceful nature of the environment. It would also considerably reduce the number of people able to enjoy the water area and engaged in other passive recreation at any one time, such as canoeing, paddle boarding, swimming, fishing or bird-watching.

Camping should be encouraged, but on a sustainable basis so that people take out their rubbish. No bins should be provided as they simply create a focal point for people to dump garbage. This can encourage foxes and other scavengers to create unsightly and unhealthy situations.

Camping in the area and the development of Skidders along the lines proposed above would lead to a wider appreciation of the Wychitella NCR. This area can also be promoted for eco-tourism which simply leads to a greater awareness of the Loddon Shire area and what it has to offer.

We look forward to working with the Shire and providing any further information or opinions on the development of the Master Plan. Many of our members have considerable experience in the

conservation area and environmental monitoring. These skills are available for the Shire to access should they choose to do so to enhance the development.

Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Robert Scholes
Convenor
Friends of Kooyoora

PS. Detailed Flora and Species Lists of Skinners Flat and surrounding/adjoining bushlands can be supplied or obtained from the Australian Living Atlas.

APPENDIX 4: Aerial view of Skinners Flat Reservoir

