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Nagambie Growth Management Strategy
Lake Access & Activities Framework

FINAL

FOR THE STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL
December 2008



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1 Introduction

Nagambie's population is growing dramatically, albeit from a relatively small base. In recent times, the Strathbogie Shire has experienced increasing interest from the Melbourne and Shepparton property markets, particularly in the Strathbogie Ranges, Avenel and Nagambie. Building approvals leapt from \$2.25M to \$7.25M in value in the year to 2006. The permanent population is expected to grow to around 4,000 people, and there will be a need to service some 7,000 altogether, including visitors and tourists. Proposed / approved developments include:

- Hotel resort accommodation including 13 units and conference facility
- Retirement village/caravan park, 208 units, 323 cabins and 72 van sites
- Proposed commercial and residential development
- New medical centre and 90 place child care facility
- The completed redevelopment of the Chinaman's Bridge caravan park, renamed the Nagambie Lakes Leisure Park, into a 5-star leisure resort, including licensed restaurant incorporating numerous annual cabin sites, powered caravan sites, camping sites and bunk houses. It has the ability to accommodate 2,000-2,500 people when full.

It is within this context that the Nagambie Growth Management Strategy will be developed. In order to deliver this comprehensive Strategy, it will consist of five separate projects that all look at individual aspects of the town, but which will be interconnected and operate as one final Strategy. They six components of the Strategy are:

- Nagambie Growth Management Strategy
- Main Street Plan
- Lakeside Connectivity and Recreation Plan
- Lake Activities and Access Framework
- Nagambie Style Guidelines
- Background Report & Appendices



1.1 Vision

Vision for Nagambie

Nagambie will grow as both an agricultural service centre, and as a visitor / lifestyle / retirement centre. This is to be done in a way that:

- Maximises the economic benefits of a lakeside location to the town and the Shire.
- Strengthens character of the town in its lakeside and rural setting.
- Protects and enhances the environmental values of the lake and other natural features.
- Improves the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the town.



1.2 Structure of the Nagambie Growth Management Strategy

As part of the development of the Strategy, a number of different pieces of work were commissioned by Shire. The Nagambie Growth Management Strategy is the major document, with other studies informing a number of the individual components.

The structure of the Nagambie Growth Management Strategy is detailed below.

<p>THE STRATEGY</p>	<p>Nagambie Growth Management Strategy</p>	<p>Directs the growth and development of Nagambie over coming decades</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Background 3. Residential areas 4. Commercial areas 5. The Industrial area 6. Rural Areas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Access & Transport 8. The Lake & Recreation 9. Service Provision 10. Infrastructure 11. Built Form 12. Implementation Plan
<p>THE PROJECT DOCUMENTS</p>	<p>Main Street Plan</p> <p>Provides direction for the future of High Street as the town grows and in light of the proposed highway bypass</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. A Sound Future for High Street 3. Streetscape Concept 4. Public Space Design 5. Built Form 	<p>Lakeside Connectivity & Recreation Plan</p> <p>Improves connectivity between the township and developments on the south side of the Lake</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Ownership & Management 3. Lakeside Development 4. Lakeside Access 5. Existing Recreation Areas 	<p>Lake Activities & Access Framework</p> <p>Improves recreational and tourist access to the Lake</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Key Background Documents 3. Boating 4. Swimming & Fishing 5. Associated On-Land Facilities 6. The Regatta Centre Peninsula 7. Commercial Operations 	<p>'Nagambie Style' Guidelines</p> <p>Planning guidelines for the future development of Nagambie</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Developing a 'Nagambie Style' 3. High Street Built Form Guidelines 4. Existing Residential Area Guidelines 5. New Residential Area Principles 6. ESD Guidelines
<p>THE BACKGROUND</p>	<p>Background Report & Appendices</p>	<p>Describes the study's brief, process & method. Details results from Community Engagement exercises</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Brief & Process 2. Policy Context 3. Background Documents 4. Demographics & Scenarios Development 5. Community Engagement 6. Appendices (inc. Neighbourhood Character Assessment) 	



1.3 The Study Area

The study area focuses upon Lake Nagambie, from the southern shore along the Regatta Centre, to the area to the north of Deliah Island.



-  Study Area Focus
-  Existing Business area
-  Existing Residential area
-  Existing Farm area
-  Existing Industrial area

Study Area - Lake Access and Activities Framework
Nagambie Growth Management Strategy
 date | July / 08 revision | 01 client | Shire of Strathbogie
 **planisphere**



2 Key Background Documents

Two workshops were held in the second half of 2007 that brought together a number of key stakeholders and users groups to workshop the issues and desires for the future of Lake Nagambie. The outcomes are summarised below.

2.1 Planning the Planning, 2007

The preferred vision for the Nagambie Lake in 2012 seeks *a sustainable water asset that is the focus of the region with multiple recreation users, both locals and visitors. The use of the lake, river and surrounds is supposed to be safe, non-conflicting, and equitable.*

In relation to long term planning requirements, the Infrastructure of Lake and River should be upgraded including boat ramps, car parks and public open spaces. Jacobsen's Outlook should be utilised. A minimum 50 metre development setback in the Lake foreshore and a walkway connection between town, Regatta Centre and Nagambie Lake Leisure Park is necessary.

The quality of the waterways needs to be improved by re-locating stumps and developing a weir for powerboat use. Recreational Land has to be increased. Furthermore the community requires an extension of the rowing course with retractable buoys.

The Report also identifies that the boating rules need to be implemented for the coming season, with the important issues being an extension of the Peninsular, implementing a 5 knot transit zone during lake closures and resolution of issues around temporary water ski zones when lake is closed.

2.2 Goulburn-Murray Water Nagambie Lakes Workshop, 2007

The preferred vision for the Nagambie Lake demands a better managed lake through a cooperative approach to sustainable use and development. In 2012 the Lake is to be a social and cultural focus with green fringe and clean water.

Issues that require action are:

- the public has to be educated regarding the need to seek approval for works on G-MW land and about management purpose of the storage,
- develop an agreed vision for the lake,
- Provide an increase in resources; e.g. Appointment of Land and Water Officer, oversee construction, and joint improvement ventures funded by beneficiaries
- Improve technical understanding of lake function (ecological under operating conditions)
- Engineer out all negative impacts to water quality
- Clear and agree guidelines re work standards
- Clearing stumps where deemed necessary and relocating them to build an ecological habitat
- Improve bank stability – possibly utilising the stumps to be relocated

3 Boating



Many different vessels use Lake Nagambie. Providing safe access for all is a key objective of this Strategy.

The management of on-water activities on Lake Nagambie is vital to maintain user safety, provide equitable access to the Lake and to control excessive noise, whilst protecting the water quality of the Lake.

There is anecdotal evidence that the demand for the use of Lake Nagambie for many different types of water activities is growing. This is mainly due to the prolonged drought currently being experienced and the effect that it is having on other waterways and Lakes throughout Victoria. Lake Nagambie is unique in that the operations of the Goulburn Weir provide a relatively constant water level. This is attracting users to Lake Nagambie who normally undertake water activities in areas which are currently unable to accommodate those activities due to reduced water levels.

Issues arising from this increase in use of the Lake include,

- Determining the 'boating carrying capacity' of the Lake
- Lake closures during events at the Regatta Centre
- Increased demand for 'on-land' facilities such as launching areas
- Where vessels are allowed to operate
- What type of vessels should be allowed to operate on the Lake
- Environmental impacts, particularly on water quality.

3.1 Lake Nagambie Operating Zones

A number of operating zones currently apply to Lake Nagambie, with a non-powered boating zone along the Regatta Centre course, 5 knot zones along foreshore areas, no boating areas at Buckley Park and two other areas, as well as a general area (with water skiing permitted) in the remainder of the Lake.





These operating zones are allocated to reflect the existing and preferred uses that currently exist on the Lake and the foreshore.

Strategies

- Provide safe access for recreational boating use

Actions

- Enforce the current boating operating zones that apply to Lake Nagambie.

3.2 Powered vessels

Lake Nagambie is used by a number of different types of powered vessels including jet skis, small personal boats (tinnies), wakeboarding, water skiing and river cruise boats.

Other craft which have the potential to operate on the lake include BBQ boats, day barges, water taxis, and other powered boats such as cruising boats. It is important to note that House boats are not permitted to use the Lake, and that this is unlikely to change into the future.

The potential for congestion and even collisions increases with the amount of craft on the water, as does the location and time of use of these craft. The 'on-land' amenity impacts of engine noise are also a factor to take into account, particularly when these craft are used in close proximity to noise-sensitive land uses such as the Nagambie Hospital.

There is however great potential for the Lake and surrounding rivers to be used as a 'water link' to all the locations and services that are provided in and around the greater Nagambie Lakes region. This included the potential for persons at the Nagambie Lakes Leisure Park to access High Street via boat, continued river access to the Tahbilk and Mitchelton Wineries, and for tourist vessels to depart from areas close to High Street such as Jacobson's Outlook.

It is important however that any powered vessels do not travel within 100 metres of the Nagambie town water intake to reduce the risk that the quality of the town's drinking water is not compromised.

Strategies

- Provide safe access for recreational boating use.

Actions

- Develop a policy in regards to the use of vessels like BBQ boats, house boats and day barges on Lake Nagambie
- Provide facilities for smaller boats to use the Lake, through the design of car and trailer parking areas and boat ramps.
- Provide short term docking facilities at Jacobson's Outlook for private boats, water taxis and tourist boats to improve the integration of High Street with the Lake.

3.3 Non-powered vessels

Lake Nagambie is used by a number of different types of non-powered vessels which include rowing, canoeing and sailing. These activities can be undertaken in a structured competition setting, as currently occurs at the Regatta Centre, or in a recreational manner with individuals or groups using the Lake at their leisure.

Other non-powered vessels with the potential to operate on the Lake include windsurfers, row boats, paddle boats, floating restaurants (anchored), and various types of pontoons.



The existing Nagambie Lake operating zones indicate the unpowered boat zone that covers the Regatta Centre, as well as a 5 knot zone that skirts the edge of the Lake. This includes parts of the Lake near High Street (the 'bowl') and to the north of the Regatta Centre. These areas are the obvious points to encourage unpowered vessels as they are close to the shoreline, and avoid potential conflicts with powered vessels on other parts of the Lake.

To further encourage Nagambie's integration with the lake, there is the potential to establish areas for the licensing of hiring non powered vessels such as canoes, paddle boats and sailing boats.

There are three potential locations for this to occur, however each has its own advantages and disadvantages:

- 1) Jacobson's Outlook – this area is in close proximity to High Street and presents a larger potential customer base for operators and also improves the town's integration with the Lake. Conversely access to the water is down a steep slope and there is no existing boating infrastructure in place.
- 2) Buckley Park – this area is still close to High Street, and has a number of existing facilities such as the boat ramp, car parking, toilets etc. Conversely it is slightly removed from High Street.
- 3) Regatta Centre – this area is well serviced by launching facilities, car parking etc. It is close to the Nagambie Lakes Leisure Park. On the negative side it is far removed from High Street and could be hidden from the casual tourist, resulting in a less attractive commercial proposition for any operators.

Strategies

- Provide safe access for recreational boating use.

Actions

- Encourage non powered vessels to operate in the unpowered and 5 knot zones as indicated on the Lake Nagambie operating zones map.

3.4

Rowing



The Lake is home to both the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre and the Nagambie Rowing Club.

The Regatta Centre is located along the southern shore and the artificially created Peninsula. It incorporates a 2,000 metre, fully buoyed, national standard rowing and canoeing course, with an associated headquarters building. Major events that are held at the Centre include the Heads of the River Regatta, the National Rowing Championships, and the State and National Canoeing Titles.

The centre is operated by the Strathbogie Shire and a 2003-04 study showed that the number of visitors generated from the Centre numbered an estimated 31,340 people, with a net economic benefit to the Shire of \$3.3 million.

The Nagambie Rowing Club is located at Buckley Park and leases land in the north-east of the Park from the Shire.

For the Regatta Centre to operate properly during major rowing and canoeing events, the Lake needs to be closed to other on-water activities to ensure the safe operation of the events. This also impacts on the ability of the public to use the boat ramp on the northern section of the Regatta Centre Peninsula and the boat ramp as both are required to be closed during events.

Strategies

- Maintain the primacy of the Regatta Centre events on Lake Nagambie to ensure its economic benefits are continued to be delivered to the Shire and local community.



Actions

- Undertake amenity improvements to the Regatta Centre Peninsula as detailed in the 'Nagambie Regatta Concept Plan'
- Investigate the feasibility of lengthening the Regatta Centre Peninsula to the 1000 metre mark of the rowing course.

4 Swimming and Fishing

4.1 Swimming



The de-commissioned swimming pool at Buckley Park.

The community engagement exercises undertaken showed there to be a high demand for swimming to be permitted in the Lake. However it is understood that to allow or even encourage swimming in Lake Nagambie could potentially expose the Shire and Goulburn-Murray Water to a number of liability issues.

Unfortunately this creates a situation where the wants of the community are understood and sympathised with by the Shire and G-MW; however the potential liability issues preclude the Shire and G-MW from facilitating the activity in the Lake.

Nagambie does have a swimming pool, located at the Sports Complex on Vickers Lane. There is also a decommissioned swimming structure at Buckley Park which is earmarked for removal.

The 2007 Shire Aquatic Facilities Strategy mentioned that the pool at the Sports Complex is the least patronised in the Shire and recommends that monitoring of its patronage occur over the next 5 years. There is a further recommendation that in the future, the Shires aquatic facilities be rationalised and that Nagambie residents can use pools in either Seymour or Shepparton.

During the development of the Nagambie Growth Management Strategy there has been strong interest in the potential development of a swimming structure within Buckley Park (not in the Lake), located nearby the existing swimming structure footings. A pool in this location would have many benefits such as providing swimming 'near' the Lake without the liability issues of being in the Lake; it would be more visible than the existing facility and could attract additional people to the Buckley Park area.

Further to the potential development of a pool complex at Buckley Park, investigations should be undertaken to determine if there are any other ways that people will be able to interact with the Lake without actually swimming in it. This could include a shallow 'wading ledge', seating areas for dangling legs in the water, water spouts or cantilevered boardwalks at specific locations in conjunction with a waterside accessway.

Strategies

- Provide a well located swimming facility for Nagambie's community and its visitors.

Actions

- Investigate the costs and benefits of developing a swimming facility in Buckley Park in conjunction with any further review of the recommendations of the 2007 Aquatic Facilities Strategy.

4.2 Fishing

Fishing from boats and from the shorelines is a significant recreational activity undertaken in and around Lake Nagambie. It is recommended that fishing be encouraged around the Lake, particularly from the shoreline, to further encourage people to interact with the Lake

Strategies

- Encourage fishing as a recreational activity to be undertaken in Lake Nagambie.



Actions

- Create on-shore areas where fishing is encouraged. These areas could include boardwalks or raised platforms.
- Ensure that shore fishing does not occur in areas where boats come near to the shore (public jetties, launching areas etc).
- Provide fish cleaning areas at the boat launching areas.
- Provide interpretive signage about fish types and catch limits at areas where fishing may be undertaken.

5 Associated On-Land Facilities



The existing boat ramp at Buckley Park

The 'on-land' facilities that are associated with activities on the Lake can be divided into two categories. The first is those that provide access to the water (such as boat ramps) and the second being buildings and structures which are required to support activities (such as the Regatta Centre headquarters and boat sheds).

As has been discussed, the number of craft entering Lake Nagambie should be limited to protect the safety of the users and the amenity of the waters and surrounding areas. The location and design of the 'on-land' facilities that give access to the Lake have the potential to influence the types and amount of uses that the Lake can accommodate.

There are currently 2 'official' access points to Lake Nagambie within the study area. They are the boat ramps at the Regatta Centre and at Buckley Park (often considered as closed to the public). There are also 'unofficial' access points such as the unmade track below the old Chinaman's Bridge and multiple private jetties and boat ramps on private land that fronts the Lake.

The boat ramp at the Regatta Centre is well used, however is closed during the staging of major events at the Centre. Conversely the ramp at Buckley Park is understood to be a Shire asset for non-powered craft, however there are issues surrounding its operation and community perceptions of whether it is a public boat ramp or not.

The confusion around access points to the Lake, and their times of operation causes a situation where many people prefer to launch their boats from the unofficial ramps. The development of a clear plan for access points and locations is therefore encouraged to control and simplify access to the Lake.

5.1 Criteria for development / rationalisation of on-land infrastructure

To obtain the best social, economic and environmental outcomes for the users of the Lake and the Nagambie community, a rationalisation of the public access points is suggested. The benefits of this approach include:

- The ability to focus financial investment in infrastructure (car parking, lighting etc) in key areas whilst rationalising maintenance requirements and expenditure
- Reducing environmental damage, such as lake edge erosion, through the use of informal launching places
- Simplified revenue collection from launching and car parking fees
- The ability to provide increased information to Lake users through centralised information such as signage
- The provision of well located, high quality launching areas has the potential to discourage Lake users from utilising informal access points

The purpose of this Framework is not to identify specific areas where access points should, or should not be located, but to provide a set of criteria to evaluate and assess the potential key locations where lake access should or should not be.

The assessment criteria should include:



Access and Parking

The location should have good road access and car parking capacity to cater for Lake users. The location should avoid areas where there is likely to be parking problems created in local streets. Access to these areas by means other than cars (pedestrians and cycling) should also be considered

Existing Infrastructure

The potential to re-use or improve existing infrastructure should be assessed to reduce the financial cost of establishing the access areas.

User conflicts

Areas where the activities of Lake users are likely to come into conflict with surrounding areas should be avoided. These include areas of environmental significance, infrastructure requirements or where existing uses would be detrimentally affected.

Safety

The location on on-land facilities will strongly influence the location of boating uses on the water. It is essential that within the context of the creation of new facilities, (or even new commercial water-based tourism facilities) that the Shire as the 'Boating Authority' and G-MW take into account safe water activity and provide guidance to minimise risks.

Amenity impacts on surrounding areas

Areas where the activities of Lake users are likely to detrimentally affect the amenity of surrounding areas should be avoided if possible. This includes residential areas where noise, lighting and waste disposal could effect residents.

Synergies

Areas that have the potential to create synergies of uses should be considered. This includes areas that currently have access to boating infrastructure, access to goods and services and locations that improve the social and economic aspects of the Nagambie township.

5.2

Private Infrastructure



Many private jetties protrude into Lake Nagambie. Some are in poor condition and might present a liability hazard.

There are a number of private jetties, wharfs, slipways and boat ramps that currently exist along the Lake edge. Due to the existing property boundary issues, some of these are within existing private property boundaries whilst others are not.

There are also a number of private land-based infrastructures such as buildings, sheds and private BBQ shelters around the edge of the Lake. It is important to note that Goulburn Murray Water requires that no private on-land structure should be built within 50 metres of the water's edge without approval from G-MW for construction and ongoing licensing if located on G-MW land.

In some cases these jetties and wharfs are in poor condition and could provide a liability hazard for the owners, the Shire or Goulburn-Murray Water. There is also a lack of information about their 'legal' status. There may also be circumstances where some jetties have been licensed, and others not, representing unfair arrangements for all.

Actions

- Determine 'legal' status of jetties and slipways that might be wholly contained within private property boundaries, but are located in the waters of Lake Nagambie.
- Develop 'guidelines' to assist in decision making about whether to permit private jetties, boat ramps, moorings and associated landed infrastructure (including retaining walls, steps, pump sheds, lighting facilities, landscaping) in or on Lake Nagambie.



- Introduce a design guidelines and licensing system for private jetties, boat ramps, moorings and associated infrastructure (including retaining walls, steps, pump sheds, lighting facilities, landscaping) in Lake Nagambie.
- Determine what level of structural development should occur on G-MW land around Lake Nagambie inside of the 50 metre exclusion zone and introduce design guidelines and a licensing system for these approved structures.



6 The Regatta Centre Peninsula

As has been detailed above, the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre is a major visitor drawcard to Nagambie and the Shire of Strathbogie, whilst also providing a large amount of economic benefits to Nagambie and the Shire as a whole.

To ensure that this facility continues to retain and attract major events, it is important to review the facilities and amenity that currently exist across the entire peninsula. A number of issues have been raised about the on-going maintenance of the land along the peninsula, including vehicle access and parking, the quality of the viewing areas, watering costs, the lack of shade, and the lack of facilities at the eastern-most point of the peninsula.

In response to these issues a Landscape Masterplan has been prepared which proposes a number of interventions that can be undertaken over a number of years. It is proposed that this Masterplan be used to identify a schedule of works to be undertaken which can then be used to apply for external funding sources outside of the Shire of Strathbogie.

The Landscape Masterplan is detailed on the following page.



7 Commercial Operations

7.1 Existing

The existing licence agreement between Goulburn Murray Water and the Shire sees the Regatta Centre being operated by the Shire. As previously identified the Centre generates very large visitation numbers to the area as well as providing financial benefits to Nagambie, the Shire and the Region. This is a key commercial asset for Nagambie and its operations should be protected and augmented where possible through the improvement of the facilities and attraction of additional major events.

G-MW is also exploring ways for there to be an improved financial return from the use of their land perimeter and water assets which can contribute to the management and enhancement of Lake Nagambie. As part of the licence agreement with the Shire, G-MW retains the right to enter into commercial arrangements with third parties for portions of the Lake permitter land. The establishment of commercial opportunities for the Lake should also have social and environmental benefits for Nagambie and its community.

Another potential area where income could be generated for G-MW is through the licensing of private jetties and pontoons that currently exist within the Lake. However there needs to be a clear understanding of the land ownership arrangements around and within the Lake for this to occur.

7.2 Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities for licensing boating activities on Lake Nagambie which have the potential to generate a financial return for G-MW. However, this must be balanced against the 'carrying capacity' of the Lake, and a determination of the types of boating to be permitted in the Lake.

From interviews with stakeholders and community engagement there appears to be demand for facilities such as tourist boats where visitors can take 'day trips' to surrounding areas such as wineries.

As previously discussed, there are also opportunities for the licensing of non powered boat hire operators, as well as for tourist boat operators. These opportunities should also be further explored, once a 'carrying capacity' for the Lake has been determined. Determining the 'carrying capacity' will also begin to inform the 'value' of any commercial operations that can occur on or around the Lake.

Strategies

- Encourage commercial development opportunities on Lake Nagambie that also contributes to recreational and tourism opportunities for Nagambie.

Actions

- Explore commercial development opportunities available for Lake Nagambie and that provide financial, social and environmental benefits for the key stakeholders and Nagambie community.