



Kings Billabong Regulator – Community Update 5

January 31, 2012.

Construction of planned regulator deferred until 2013

Construction of the planned environmental regulator at Kings Billabong will be deferred until March 2013 to allow for unimpeded access to irrigation supplies during the removal of the Lock 11 weir.

The Mildura weir is scheduled to be removed to allow maintenance work to be completed during May this year. This may cause the water level of the Murray River to fall below the suction range of the Psyche Pumps, which means water may not be able to be pumped into Psyche Channel and Kings Billabong.

In order for irrigation needs to be met during the time the weir is out, the water in Kings Billabong needs to be available to be drawn on, which wouldn't be possible if the planned Kings Billabong regulator was being built.

Deferring construction of the planned regulator until next year will also allow:

- Two rounds of baseline data to be collected for each season, which will help to improve the understanding of the environmental conditions at Kings Billabong. This data will in turn contribute to informing the change in condition once the regulator is installed.
- The Mallee CMA to concentrate resources on major environmental construction works to be delivered at Hattah Lakes, Lindsay and Mulcra Islands. All projects are large and will require close involvement of Mallee CMA staff.
- Mallee CMA staff to provide support to the Friends of Kings Billabong project that will see the construction of a boardwalk in the park (see "Additional Information" for more details on this project).

Continuing to work with the community

In recognition of the Mallee CMA's ongoing commitment to community engagement, a new community advisory group will be set up to ensure continued community involvement in the Kings Billabong regulator.

This community advisory group will provide for community input into the transition from the Kings Billabong Operating Plan Community Advisory Group (KBOPCAG), which was established specifically to develop an operating plan for the Kings Billabong Regulator, to focus on future wetland management. (See below for more details on the operating plan).

A Terms of Reference will be developed for this advisory group in coming weeks, followed by a call for members.



Community Advisory Group develops Kings Billabong Operating Plan

The Kings Billabong Operating Plan Community Advisory Group (KBOPCAG) has been meeting regularly since April 2011 to develop the operating plan to guide the way the planned environmental regulator is used.

Advisory group members include representatives from the Friends of Kings Billabong, Sunraysia Bird Observers Club, the irrigation sector, nearby residents, and agencies such as Lower Murray Water and Parks Victoria.

The advisory group members have worked hard to represent the views of their groups/members in the development of the Kings Billabong Operating Plan. They also worked cohesively to develop key social values for the wetland, which helped to inform the way the operating plan was developed.

Members of the advisory group took the draft operating plan back to their groups during September-October 2011 to gather feedback, which was then considered and/or incorporated into the final Kings Billabong Operating Plan.

The Kings Billabong Operating Plan Community Advisory Group was presented with the final operating plan at its last meeting on January 5, 2012 and will be referred to the Mallee CMA Board for final endorsement, following the conclusion of the approvals process for the planned environmental regulator.

It is expected that the Kings Billabong Operating Plan Community Advisory Group will meet again in coming weeks to discuss the decision to defer construction of the planned regulator, along with the response to the referral of the planned regulator under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act).

Additional information

Funding for boardwalks at Kings Billabong

The Friends of Kings Billabong has received \$40,000 from the 2011 Victorian Landcare Grants, administered through the Mallee CMA, to help fund the installation of a boardwalk at Kings Billabong Park.

The boardwalk will provide and maintain safe access to areas affected by recent flooding and will be designed to protect the condition of riparian and floodplain ecosystems, and protect against erosion. The boardwalk will be built between Sandy Crossing and the Walks car park and the east side of Baggs Bridge.

The funding will also help cover some important works on walking and cycling tracks.



The Victorian Landcare Grants were open to Landcare and Friends Of groups across the state.

For more information on the project, contact the Friends of Kings Billabong.

Who receives these Community Updates?

- The Community Updates are produced by the Mallee CMA to keep the entire community up to date about the Kings Billabong Regulator project.
- The Community Updates are posted on the Mallee CMA website on the day of release (www.malleecma.vic.gov.au)
- Community Updates are emailed to the database of people interested in this project (names and emails were given to the Mallee CMA on the night of the February 8, 2011 Community Information Session).
- If you would like to be added to this list, please contact Lauren Murphy on 5051 4331 or email to lauren.murphy@dpi.vic.gov.au.

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