

Southern Rural Water

Cowwarr Weir Recreational Area Management Plan DRAFT

June 2025



Contents

Acknowledgement to Country1

About Southern Rural Water2

Introduction3

Recreational Area Management Plans (RAMPs).....3

About Cowwarr Weir4

Objectives of the Plan4

Traditional Owner Rights and Participation4

Consultation5

Location5

Facilities Available7

Recreational Activities7

Water Safety9

Swimming.....10

Boating Safety10

Set Aside Areas10

Prohibited Areas11

Temporary Closures.....11

Events and Permits12

Compliance and Enforcement.....14

Monitoring and Evaluation14

Implementation Plan.....1

Appendix A – Event Application Guideline (December 2024)4

Appendix B - Future Development Aspirations5

Appendices

Appendix A – Event Application Guideline (December 2024)

Appendix B – Future Development Aspirations

Acknowledgement to Country

Southern Rural Water acknowledges and recognises Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters on which we work and live and we respect their deep and ongoing connection to Country.

We commit to foster mutual understanding and respect, to build trust and to develop meaningful working relationships with the Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal communities across our region.

We will work with Traditional Owners to understand their priorities and objectives and learn how we can help them to achieve their goals. This will enable us to better consider the values and needs of these important stakeholders in our decision-making and actions.

The rivers, waterways and deep water that support life and communities across our region have been doing so for millennia, for thousands of generations of First Nations peoples. Aboriginal culture remains deeply tied to this timeline and to Country, which includes land, air and water.

Their long history reminds us that when we consider the challenges we face now with a changing climate, the Gunaikurnai, Bunurong, Wurundjeri, Wadawurrung, Eastern Maar, Gunditjmara peoples, and the many other First Nations peoples still seeking formal recognition across our region, have lived through extreme climate change for tens of thousands of years.

As we play our part in managing this precious resource for customers and communities, we know that we have much to learn. We will continue to seek ways to build mutual understanding and respect as we work with Traditional Owner groups across our region to honour their knowledge and ongoing connection.

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About Southern Rural Water

Southern Rural Water (SRW) is proud to be the lifeblood of the agricultural economy of southern Victoria. With assets valued at \$2.1 billion, our irrigation districts deliver water from catchment to farm gate. As regulators of surface and groundwater, we provide fair, equitable and sustainable access to water resources. Our services support farmers to generate high quality, fresh and local produce, much of which ends up on tables across the globe ready to be enjoyed by consumers.

We supply water to irrigators, power generators, urban water corporations and we work with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder alongside Catchment Management Authorities and Melbourne Water to manage the release of environmental flows.

We service an area of 88,000 square kilometres, stretching from the South Australian to the New South Wales border and from the Great Dividing Range to the Victorian coastline.

We operate seven major dams, eight diversion weirs, three irrigation districts and manage take and use licences for waterways, licences relating to catchment dams and farm dam registration.

We recognise the important role we play as stewards of water resources, ensuring that we manage them sustainably for the long term.

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Introduction

The purpose of this Cowwarr Weir Recreational Area Management Plan (**‘the plan’**) is to provide clear guidelines for managing recreational activities at Cowwarr Weir while minimising impacts on water quality, the environment, and SRW assets and operations.

The plan provides a comprehensive and practical framework for SRW to manage recreational activities at Cowwarr Weir in a way that protects the natural environment, maintains water quality, and supports the safe enjoyment by visitors.

Key values referenced in the development of the plan include:

- Environmental protection;
- Recreational opportunities;
- Cultural heritage;
- Economic benefits; and
- Community engagement.

The plan details permitted recreational activities, management objectives, designated set aside areas to balance use and conservation, and highlights the variety of stakeholders involved in the management of Cowwarr Weir. Further, the plan references the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action’s (DEECA) guidance materials to ensure sustainable use and the protection of water resources.

Recreational Area Management Plans (RAMPs)

The *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023* (**‘the Regulations’**) apply to approximately 40 water storages across Victoria. These storages have been determined as recreational areas by the Minister for Water in accordance with section 122ZA of the *Water Act 1989*.

The Regulations provide for the control, management and use of recreational areas, as well as provide for infringement offences and penalties. These infringement penalties were not available in the superseded Recreational Area Model By-law 2012. The Regulations came into operation on 19 August 2023, replacing SRW’s Recreational Area By-law.

A key feature of the Regulations is the requirement for Water Corporations to develop management plans for recreational areas under their management. These plans support the control, management and use of recreational areas and provide for the ability to identify infringement offences and penalties.

For further information on the *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023* visit:

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/recreational-values-of-victorias-water/recreational-area-regulations>

In addition to the Regulations, SRW manages the recreational use of this storage in accordance with:

- *Water Act 1989*;
- *Marine Safety Act 2010*; and
- *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*.

The plan serves as a guiding document for SRW, local communities, and stakeholders in managing recreational activities at Cowwarr Weir.

It provides clear guidelines and actions to enable the sustainable use of the Cowwarr Weir recreational area while protecting its natural and cultural values.

It is intended to be a living document, to be reviewed and updated when appropriate based on the monitoring of recreational activities and in consultation with key stakeholders.

About Cowwarr Weir

Cowwarr Weir is located on Weir Road, near the township of Cowwarr in Victoria's Gippsland region. It lies approximately 27 kilometres north-east of Traralgon and about 35 kilometres north-west of Sale. Its location makes it a convenient destination for residents from these nearby towns as well as travellers and visitors who seek recreational activities and resting areas.

Constructed in 1959, Cowwarr Weir diverts water from the Thomson River into the Cowwarr Channel, supplementing Lake Glenmaggie in supplying the Macalister Irrigation District, which is one of the largest and most productive irrigation districts in Victoria due to a combination of fertile soils, reliable water supply and its irrigation infrastructure. The district therefore plays a crucial role in Victoria's agricultural economy through major products including milk, dairy products, fodder crops, vegetables and beef.

Cowwarr Weir consists of a small water storage (lake) created by a dam on Rainbow Creek and surrounding public park land. The lake is located in a scenic park ideal for family picnics and there are pleasant walks around the reserve which attract hikers and bird watchers. The weir is a popular spot that is well-patronised for swimming, kayaking, fishing and picnicking with plentiful shady spots by the water.

Objectives of the Plan

The objectives of this management plan for recreational areas at Cowwarr Weir are to:

- Protect the land, services and facilities in the area;
- Protect and maintain water quality in waterways in the area;
- Conserve and preserve flora, fauna and habitat in the area, including the biodiversity of that flora, fauna and habitat;
- Protect the health and safety of visitors to the area;
- Promote the enjoyment and recreation of visitors to the area;
- Protect and promote Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal intangible heritage in the area;
- Protect and promote any other heritage features in the area;
- Facilitate the participation of Traditional Owner groups in the management of the area, including in accordance with any agreements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* that apply to the area;
- Ensure that the area is managed and used in a way that respects and upholds the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owner groups who have a connection to the area.

SRW adopts in full the objectives specified within Regulation 7 of the *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023*.

Traditional Owner Rights and Participation

This plan has been developed in full recognition and support of Traditional Owner rights to self-determination. It welcomes input outside western frameworks, respecting the time and decision-making processes of the Traditional Owners of the land encompassing the Cowwarr Weir, being the **Gunaikurnai people**. To minimise pressures surrounding cultural load, a review of the plans can be initiated by the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) groups at any time under the Regulations.

Water corporations are subject to agreements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* and the *Native Title Act 1993*. This includes commitment to work in partnership with relevant Traditional Owner

groups. The Regulations provide for the incorporation of policy and legal frameworks that recognise Traditional Owners' rights recognised under these Acts.

Section in progress – to be completed following completion of traditional owner involvement in the development of the plan (Unearthed Heritage input required)

Consultation

Section in progress – to be completed following completion of traditional owner involvement in the development of the plan (Unearthed Heritage input required)

Location

Cowwarr Weir

Cowwarr Weir is located on Rainbow Creek, a tributary of the Thomson River, near the township of Cowwarr in Gippsland, Victoria. It serves as a crucial water source for the Macalister Irrigation District, resulting in varying water levels throughout the year.

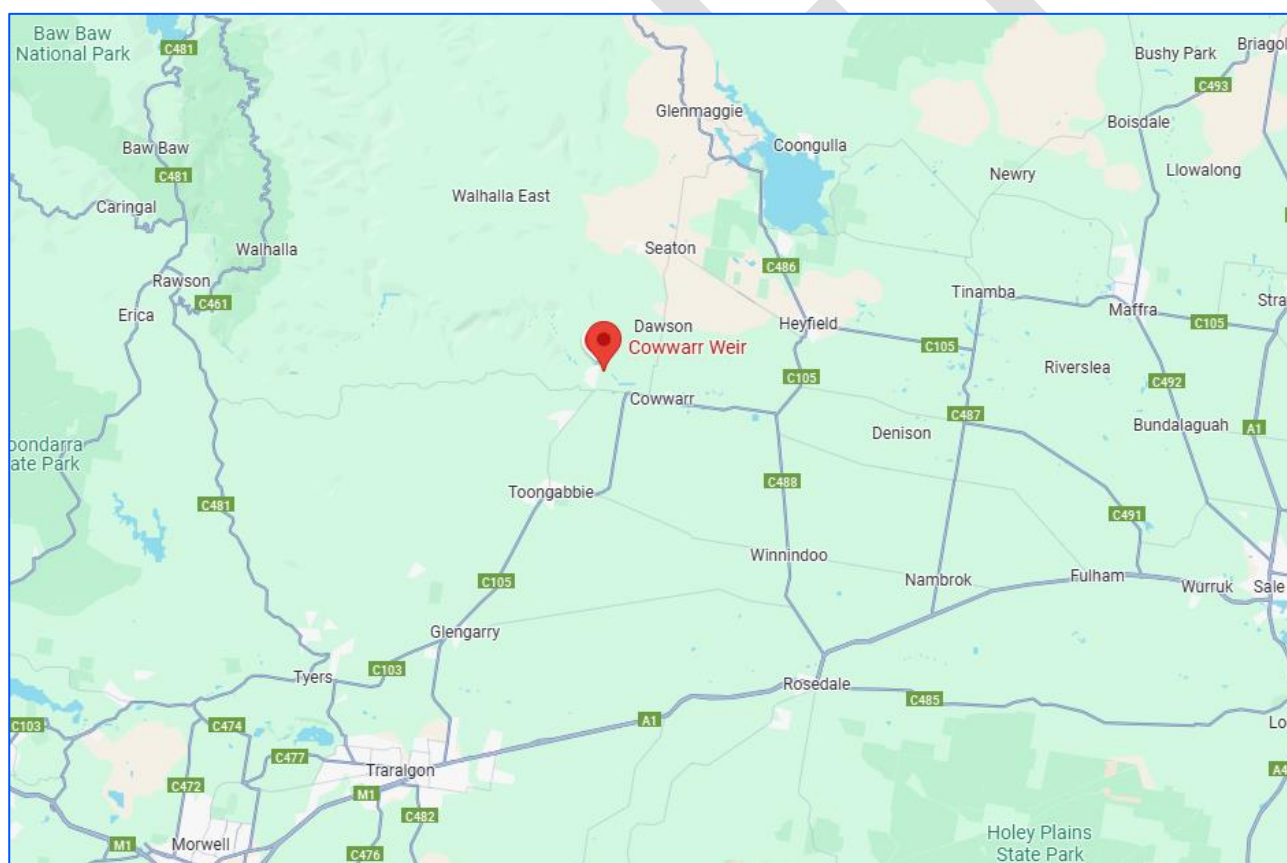


Figure 1: Cowwarr Weir Location Map. Source: Google Maps



Figure 2: Cowwarr Weir Recreational Facilities Area. Source: Google Maps

Cowwarr Weir Recreational Facilities Area

The Cowwarr Weir recreational area consists of an approximate area of 15 hectares which surrounds the Thompsons River / Cowwarr Weir Water Storage or Lake ('Cowwarr Weir Lake'), as defined in Figure 2.

The facilities area generally includes:

- **Picnic Areas:** Equipped with tables, providing an ideal setting for family gatherings and outdoor meals.

- **Toilets:** Public restroom facilities are available for visitor convenience; and
- **Car Parking:** Adequate parking facilities are provided for visitors.

The recreational reserve area has an active interface with the Cowwarr Weir Lake, inviting visitors to swim, fish and use non-powered boats for recreational purposes.

Facilities Available

Facilities available at Cowwarr Weir are summarised below in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Available Facilities

Recreational Activities

Public recreational areas managed by SRW are popular places for visitors to connect with the natural environment, and to undertake a variety of recreational activities. SRW places the highest priority on safety at the storages we manage.

Prohibited activities generally pose a risk to water quality, the environment, cultural heritage and to public safety. Any activity that is not specifically listed in this Section should be considered as prohibited, unless permission is explicitly granted by SRW. All activities must be generally in accordance with the *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023*.

Visitors must follow all instructions indicated on any official signage in and around the recreational areas.

The removal, replacement, damaging or harm to any native flora or fauna, or any cultural heritage is prohibited.

Table 1 below summarises the activities permitted and prohibited, including any applicable conditions, at Cowwarr Weir.

Table 1: Permitted or Prohibited Activities

Activity	Permitted (✓) or Prohibited (X)	Conditions / Notes
Dog walking	✓	Dogs must be on a lead and owners must keep them under control at all times. Any waste must be cleaned.
Picnic	✓	Permitted. However, visitors must not reserve picnic areas. BBQ facilities are not available.
Organised events	✓	You are welcome to enjoy our recreational facilities with your family and friends through organised events. You must have written permission to hold any organised event. To obtain permission, please review Appendix A Event Application Guideline (December 2024) and email all required information to srw@srw.com.au
Fishing	✓	Visitors are permitted to fish within the Cowwarr Weir Recreational Area. However, visitors must not access prohibited areas such as the Cowwarr Weir Dam which are defined via fencing or signage onsite.
Non-powered boats including canoes and kayaks	✓	Non-powered boats including canoes and kayaks are permitted. There is no boat ramp. When using the lake/waterway, boaters need to be aware of the vessel operating and zoning rules, including any supportive signage and buoyage in place. While in many instances there are state-wide rules in place, there are also localised zoning rules that can vary across the waterway. For more information on the vessel operating and zoning rules, signage and buoyage types, visit: https://safetransport.vic.gov.au/on-the-water/using-waterways/rules-and-exclusion-zones/
Swimming	✓	Swimming is permitted. However, SRW storages are not patrolled by lifeguards nor contain rescue equipment. Therefore, visitors are encouraged to wear life jackets, not swim alone and should make themselves aware of the local dangers (associated with alcohol consumption, diving, etc.) and other risks such as submerged objects, varying water depths and water temperature before entering the water. Children must be supervised at all times.
Power boating	X	No power boats are permitted.
Camping / caravanning	X	There are no designated camping areas. The recreational reserve area is only open to the public from 8am to 8pm daily.
Campfires / open fires	X	As part of its commitment to adopting the best environmental practices, SRW prohibits fires at all of its recreational areas at all times.

Other animals	X	Bringing other animals to SRW public recreation areas is prohibited, unless expressly permitted to do so by SRW.
Sound producing devices	X	Operating a sound producing device is prohibited unless expressly permitted to do so by SRW.
Drone flights	X	Permits may be able to be obtained. Please contact SRW for more information. If permission is granted, drone safety rules must be adhered to. For more information visit: https://www.casa.gov.au/
Bathing / washing	X	To maintain water quality, cleaning agents such as soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste or detergent must not be used.
4WD and trailbikes	X	Drive or ride vehicles such as motorbikes are prohibited along the shorelines or in fenced areas. Vehicles and trail bikes are only allowed on public roads. All vehicles must be roadworthy, registered and users must be licensed. Road rules must be obeyed at all times.
Hunting	X	There are no designated areas for hunting.
Prospecting, fossicking or digging	X	The removal of rocks, material or vegetation is prohibited within SRW public recreation areas.
Access Outside Hours	X	Access outside of the hours of 8am to 8pm (daily), is prohibited.
Leave rubbish	X	All rubbish must be taken and disposed off-site.
Undertake any dangerous activity including (but not limited to) abseiling, parafling, shooting, archery, wind-surfing or the like	X	Activities that may endanger participants, visitors, the general public or the environment are not permitted at any SRW recreation areas.

For more information on recreational activities and facilities, please observe all signs and directions at SRW's storages and visit SRW website at:

<https://www.srw.com.au/recreation/locations/cowwarr-weir>

Water Safety

SRW places the highest priority on safety at the storages we manage. Ensuring personal safety and adhering to posted guidance can help prevent accidents and ensure a safer experience for everyone.

Key themes are aimed at educating recreational users and reducing risk taking behaviours and include:

- Speed;
- Lifejackets;
- Boating alone;
- Checking conditions;

- Hazard awareness;
- Consumption of alcohol; and
- Diving.

Swimming

SRW storages are not patrolled by lifeguards nor contain rescue equipment.

Therefore, visitors are encouraged to wear life jackets, not swim alone and should make themselves aware of the local dangers (associated with alcohol consumption, diving, etc.) and other risks, such as submerged objects, varying water depths and water temperature, before entering the water.

Children must be supervised at all times.

Boating Safety

When using the waterway, boaters need to be aware of the vessel operating and zoning rules, including supportive signage and buoyage in place.

While in many instances there are state-wide rules in place, there are also localised zoning rules that can vary across the waterway.

For more information on the vessel operating and zoning rules, signage and buoyage types visit:

<https://safetransport.vic.gov.au/on-the-water/using-waterways/rules-and-exclusion-zones/>

Set Aside Areas

To accommodate the diverse range of recreational activities that occur at Cowwarr Weir, SRW may use 'set aside areas' to enable flexible or tailored management of the area, or part of an area, under the Regulations while ensuring the health, safety and enjoyment of visitors.

Regulation 14 (3) specifies that an Authority may 'set aside' any area for any activity not otherwise specified in the Regulations as permitted, restricted or prohibited. This occurs if the Authority considers this is necessary and consistent with the management plan for a recreational area, including its objectives and procedures.

Publishing a Determination of a Set Aside Area

A determination of a set aside area will be published on the SRW website and there will also be signs and notices placed on-site to demarcate the area, as far as practicable.

It is an offence not to comply with the conditions of determinations in set aside areas. If SRW revokes or amends a set aside area, any previous sign or notice that has been displayed under the Regulations must be removed or amended to reflect the revocation or amendment.

Signage for Set Aside Areas

Signs or notices will:

- Be displayed in a manner that is likely to be seen by any person affected by the determination;
- Indicate the area that is temporarily closed or set aside by the determination; and
- Where applicable, state the activities that are prohibited, restricted or permitted by the determination and any conditions specified in the determination.

Cowwarr Weir Set Aside Areas

Cowwarr Weir is a closed catchment where:

- Access to the public can occur within the sites opening hours of 8am – 8pm daily, unless otherwise restricted by signage or fencing;
- Camping is a prohibited activity;
- All fires, including for picnic and barbequing purposes are prohibited;
- The water should not be drunk;
- Hunting and carrying or discharging a firearm are prohibited actions;
- Riding motorbikes along the shoreline or within fenced areas is prohibited;
- No trail bikes are allowed outside public roads;
- Undertaking any dangerous activity is prohibited;
- No animals other than dogs are allowed, unless expressly permitted by SRW;
- Littering, vandalising or undertaking any dangerous activity are strictly prohibited actions.

For more details about prohibited actions or activities, please refer to Table 1 of this plan.

Prohibited Areas

Access is prohibited at all times at the following areas to protect the water supply infrastructure and to minimise risks to public safety:

- Weir structure and associated accessways (demarcated via fencing which must not be trespassed);
- Any other area restricted via fencing or signage onsite.

Visitors are generally expected to only access the recreational reserve area defined in Figure 2 of this plan.

Temporary Closures

Temporary closures of SRW recreational areas may occur on occasion as outlined in the Regulations.

A temporary closure will generally and primarily occur to:

- Support the safe management of events such as floods and fires;
- Allow for operational or maintenance works to take place;
- Manage amenities and access during periods of low water levels;
- Manage safety during periods of high water levels;
- Rationalise maintenance requirements during times of low visitation; and
- Manage safety during water quality events such as algal blooms.

In the event of an immediate temporary closure, SRW will:

- Publish the determination of a temporary closure on the SRW website and promote it through social media; and
- Where possible, display signs or notices on-site providing details of the temporary closure determination.

Any temporary closures will be communicated with impacted parties by SRW as soon as practicable, in accordance with the Regulations.

Events and Permits

Events

From time to time, people may wish to hold events at our recreational facilities including festivals, birthday parties and weddings. We cannot close our recreational facilities for private events, and you cannot book sites.

You must have permission to hold any organised entertainment, rally, boating event or regatta, festival, public meeting, training class or demonstration, wedding or similar ceremony, or private functions for 30 or more people.

To obtain permission to hold an event, please review **Appendix A of this plan (Event Application Guideline – December 2024)** and email all required information to SRW at srw@srw.com.au.

Permits

Under the Regulations, water corporations may issue permits to provide for the effective, proactive and appropriate management of activities within recreational areas. The permit system outlined in the Regulations provides a framework where a person can apply to enter and use a recreational area, or an area within a recreational area, for a specified purpose and for a specified period.

Permits can be provided for the following activities under the Regulations:

- Enter the area at a time during which it is closed for public access (r.23(2));
- Access to a temporarily closed recreational area (r.29(2));
- Remain in a prohibited access area (requires express permission) (r.36(1));
- Remain in a restricted access area (requires express permission) (r.36(2)(b));
- Possess or use a restricted item in a recreational area (r.38(5));
- Behave in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, a nuisance to any other person (requires express permission) (r.39(2)(b));
- Operate a sound producing device or any other equipment in a recreational area (r.41(4));
- Light or maintain the fire in a recreational area during a period in which there is no fire restriction in force for that area (requires express permission) (r.42(2)(d));
- Disturb, remove or cause any harm to fauna in a recreational area (requires express permission) (r.46(5)(b));
- Undertake timber harvesting operations (r.47(2)(b));
- Move, remove or cause damage to flora or other vegetation in a recreational area (requires express permission) (r.47(2)(c));
- Damage, destroy or remove a rock in a recreational area if the person has express permission to damage or destroy rocks in, or remove rocks from, a recreational area (requires express permission) (r.50(3));
- Dig into or remove the ground or ground cover from a recreational area, or bring any ground or ground cover into a recreational area (requires express permission) (r.51(3)(a));
- Bring an animal other than a dog, a horse or livestock into, or allow any such animal to enter and remain in, a recreational area (r.54(3));

- Allow an animal to enter and remain in a recreational area (under licence) (r.55(2)(a));
- Bring a dog into an area within a recreational area where dogs are prohibited (r.56(4));
- Bring a horse into, or allow a horse to enter and remain in, a recreational area (r.60(4));
- Bring livestock into, or allow livestock to enter and remain in, a recreational area (r.62(4));
- Erect or install a temporary or permanent structure in a recreational area (r.64(6));
- Enter, occupy or use a building or structure in a recreational area (r.65(3));
- Damage or destroy a temporary or permanent building or structure in a recreational area (r.66(4));
- Conduct an event in a recreational area (r.68(3)) (for example: entertainment, sporting or recreational event or show, rally, an organised boating event or regatta, a festival, tour, fete or public meeting, a demonstration, training class or other event, a wedding or celebration of civil union ceremony or event or a private function for 30 or more persons);
- Conduct a commercial activity in the recreational area (r.69(4));
- Make a commercial recording in the recreational area (film or audio, or radio broadcasts) (r.70(4));
- Soliciting money or collecting money, erecting a sign for the purpose of advertising, handing out or disseminating advertising, commercial or promotional material and delivering an address (r.71(6));
- Camp in the recreational area (r.74(4));
- Cause the vehicle, vessel or aircraft to enter the recreational area (requires express permission) (r.79(2)(b));
- Refuel a vehicle or vessel in the recreational area (requires express permission) (r.81(2)(d));
- Sink or scuttle a vessel, jetty or pontoon, or carry out the salvage of a sunken vessel, jetty or pontoon in a recreational area (r.90(3));
- Camp overnight on a vessel in the recreational area (requires express permission) (r.94);
- Launch or land an aircraft or a remotely piloted aircraft or deliver a thing by an aircraft or a remotely piloted aircraft in a recreational area (requires express permission) (r.95(4)(b)).

Please review the Regulations for details of each permit if/as applicable.

Please note using and developing land may require other permits under legislation other than the Regulations. Proponents are responsible for compliance with all of their statutory obligations.

Express Permission

In some cases, the Regulations permit activities via 'express permission'. Express permission can be granted by permit, lease or licence. Express permission can also include a contract or other agreement, or any other authorisation provided for under the *Water Act 1989*. This may include written agreement.

Under the Regulations, permits must remain in the holder's possession while engaging in the permitted activity or accessing an area authorised by the permit and produce the permit for inspection if requested to do so.

Permits can be varied or cancelled by either the holder or water corporation, and the water corporation can cancel a permit immediately as outlined in Regulation 19.

Permits and set aside areas can be used together or separately – to provide broader, more proactive management of these activities within recreational areas.

Compliance and Enforcement

The *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023* introduced the ability for SRW to issue Penalty Infringement Notices (PINs) for offences under the Regulations.

Water corporations can issue PINs to users undertaking activities that are in breach of the Regulations. These include activities that may risk land and water services, water quality, the environment, or the health, safety and enjoyment of other users within a recreational area.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This plan will be reviewed every 10 years, or sooner as needed, to assess its effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments. This review process will involve:

- Traditional Owner engagement and an open feedback process based on the principles of self-determination;
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Regularly monitoring the impact of recreational activities on the environment and water quality;
- Regulatory Compliance: Ensuring compliance with DEECA's guidelines and other relevant regulations;
- Community Feedback: Gathering input from local residents, recreational users, local government authorities (LGAs), special interest groups and other key stakeholders.

Implementation Plan

Table 2 provides a summary of the measures to be implemented to meet the objectives of this management plan.

Table 2: Implementation Plan

Objective	Actions to Meet Objectives	Implementation Timeframe	Responsibility
Protect the land, services and facilities in the area	Maintenance of facilities in accordance with O&M Manuals	Ongoing	SRW
	Development of Recreational Area Future Service Approach (including Service Standards)	2025-2026	
Protect and maintain water quality in waterways in the area	Public access is prohibited within the Cowwarr Weir Dam and other areas defined by fencing or signage onsite. This allows the public to enjoy the beauty of Cowwarr Weir whilst minimising risks to the water quality of Cowwarr Weir Lake, the Thompson River and Rainbow Creek.	Ongoing	SRW
	Visitors must be respectful of the Cowwarr Weir Lake and other local waterways health, including compliance with permitted/prohibited activities summarised in Table 1 of this plan.		
	Visitors to take rubbish and clean after dogs, as per Table 1 (Permitted and Prohibited Activities).		
Conserve and preserve flora, fauna and habitat in the area, including the biodiversity of that flora, fauna and habitat	Visitors are made aware of their responsibility to protect the environment and this is supported / reinforced via public information signage.	Ongoing	SRW
	Visitors respect and adhere to the permitted/prohibited activities as summarised in Table 1 of this plan.		

Protect the health and safety of visitors to the area	- Water activities are permitted except for power boating and provided visitors are aware of the vessel operating and zoning rules, including supportive signage and buoyage in place. While in many instances there are state-wide rules in place, there are also localised zoning rules that can vary across the waterway. For more information on the vessel operating and zoning rules, signage and buoyage types visit: https://safetransport.vic.gov.au/on-the-water/using-waterways/rules-and-exclusion-zones/ - Public access is prohibited to the Cowwarr Weir Dam and any other area that is defined by fencing or signage onsite. This allows the public to enjoy the beauty of Cowwarr Weir and surrounds whilst minimising health and public safety risks. - Visitors are aware of potential risks associated with accessing certain areas or undertaking certain activities via public information signage. - Swimming is permitted. However, SRW storages are not patrolled by lifeguards nor contain rescue equipment. Therefore, visitors are encouraged to wear life jackets, not swim alone and should make themselves aware of the local dangers (associated with alcohol consumption, diving, etc.) and other risks such as submerged objects, varying water depths and water temperature before entering the water. Children must be supervised at all times.	Ongoing	SRW
Promote the enjoyment and recreation of visitors to the area	Inform visitors of what area (Figure 2), facilities (Figure 3) and activities (Table 1) are available/permitted, encouraging their use and enjoyment of the recreational area via clearly visible public information signage.	Ongoing	SRW
Protect and promote Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal intangible heritage in the area	*To be completed following TO engagement*		

Protect and promote any other heritage features in the area	*To be completed following TO engagement*		
Facilitate the participation of Traditional Owner groups in the management of that area, including in accordance with any agreements under the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> that apply to the area	*To be completed following TO engagement*		
Ensure that the area is managed and used in a way that respects and upholds the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owner groups who have a connection to the area	*To be completed following TO engagement*		

Appendix A – Event Application Guideline (December 2024)

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Appendix B - Future Development Aspirations

Below is an assessment of existing assets and improvement timeframes as well as development aspirations associated with this recreational area.

Table 3: Quality Assessment of Existing Assets & Maintenance Timeframes

Covwarr Weir Recreational Reserve							
Element	Presence	Current Condition			Urgency of Improvement		
		Poor	Adequate	Good	0 – 1 year	1 – 5 years	5 – 10 years
Amenities block / facilities	✓		✓				✓
Sealed car parking	✓			✓			✓
Table/s	✓			✓			✓
Boat ramp (Public)	X						
Trailer parking spaces	X						
Play equipment	X						
Vehicular gate / barrier	X						
Barbecue/s	X						

Development Aspirations

- **(High Priority) Life Saving Equipment** – To be made available to the public including the provision of floatation devices and CPR instructions.
- **Improved Signage and Entry Statement** – Enhance visitor orientation and site visibility by installing clearly branded entry statements and strategically placed directional signage. This will improve wayfinding, raise awareness of site features, and create a more welcoming first impression for all visitors.
- **Play Equipment Installation** – Develop a well-designed, inclusive play area with nature-based or aquatic-themed play equipment to better cater to families and encourage recreational use by children. This addition will enhance the overall user experience and increase dwell time for young families.

- **Lighting Installation on Key Areas** – Install energy-efficient lighting throughout essential public spaces such as picnic grounds, pedestrian routes, car parks, and potential access paths. This will improve public safety and accessibility during darker periods of the year, particularly in winter evenings or early mornings.
- **Solar Panel Expansion** – Augment the site's existing renewable energy capacity by installing additional solar panels to support upgraded lighting and future low-impact amenities. This aligns with sustainability targets and reduces reliance on grid electricity.
- **Fishing Platforms** – At key locations where fishing does not interfere with other activities present onsite.
- **Water drinking Facilities Installation** - To encourage hikers and cyclists to visit and use this Recreational Area.
- **CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) Enhancements** – Improve the safety, security, and attractiveness of the site through a range of design-based interventions, including:
 - Reconfiguring landscaping to enhance open sightlines and visibility across the site.
 - Installing open or transparent shelter structures to reduce hidden areas and promote passive surveillance.
 - Repositioning picnic tables, bins, and shelters to areas with greater visibility and natural surveillance.
 - Installing perimeter fencing or protective barriers in sensitive or high-risk areas to guide access and protect natural assets.
 - Upgrading signage to include safety, environmental, and interpretive content that fosters responsible use.
 - Encouraging community engagement through the installation of public art, murals, or interpretive panels that celebrate local culture and promote civic pride, helping deter vandalism and anti-social behaviour.



SMEC Melbourne

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