



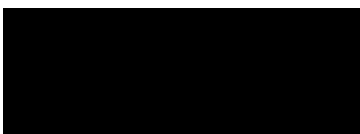
It should be noted that the 2011 deepening of the Entrance and continued dredging to maintain that depth by Gippsland Ports has occurred without an Environmental Impact Assessment of the effect on the entire Gippsland Lakes System and surrounding wetlands. We along with other groups in Gippsland have pointed out the potential adverse impact of the deepening of the Entrance most recently to the Auditor General in the review of the Victorian Governments compliance with the Ramsar Convention pertaining to the Gippsland Lakes and fringing wetlands.

Following are our recommendations on short and long term solutions to mitigate the impact of the saltwater intrusion into Dowd Morass. Some of the recommendations if implemented will also have a positive impact of reducing the overall salinity levels in other wetlands fringing the Gippsland Lakes and particularly those adjacent to Lake Wellington and the shoreline habitat of Lake Wellington itself.

- 1) The water control structure at Dowd Morass be immediately opened and left open to allow potential flushing by fresh water from the Latrobe River. We understand that Parks Victoria and the West Gippsland CMA are currently evaluating this option.
- 2) That watering regimes for Dowd Morass be re-evaluated so that future levels of fresh water be maintained at the maximum levels to mitigate the potential intrusion of salt water from Lake Wellington from high tides and back flows from reverse floods in rivers at the eastern end of the Gippsland Lakes.
- 3) That the dredging at Lakes Entrance reverts to the lowest acceptable levels for the Lakes Entrance fishing fleet until a full Environmental Impact Assessment is undertaken on the effect of the current depth on the salinity of entire Gippsland Lakes and fringing wetlands.
- 4) The timing and magnitude of environmental flows down the Thomson and Latrobe Rivers be reassessed to minimize the impact of salinity on the Lower Latrobe wetlands and Lake Wellington and fringing wetlands. Consideration should be given to increasing the river head to improve the flushing effect.
- 5) A more comprehensive and independent evaluation of a low cost salt reduction barrier in McLennan Strait to reduce salt water intrusions into Lake Wellington. Our branch understands the Gippsland Environment Group Inc. currently has a grant application before the Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee for funding to investigate and design a low cost submerged salinity barrier in McLennan Strait. Sale Field & Game Association strongly supports the Gippsland Environment Group's proposal as being an economically and environmentally sound approach.

Dowd Morass was once the 'jewel in the crown' of wetlands in Gippsland and the State of Victoria. Unless both short and long term actions are undertaken to halt the degradation, Dowd Morass will revert to a less viable and less productive saline wetland.

Regards,



John Byers  
Secretary