

DEVELOPMENTS IN VICTORIA

Gippsland Lakes Management Plan

On 5 March 1992, the Victorian Government launched a management plan in respect of the Gippsland Lakes area.

The plan was the result of a two year study into the 400 square kilometre lakes and their 20,600 square kilometre catchment area, and identified 211 separate requirements to maintain or enhance the lakes and their environs.

The Victorian Government has stated that it was alerted to the need to plan the long term future of the lakes system after a massive algal bloom in the summer of 1987/88.

Among the key recommendations to be implemented are:

1. A review of the State Environment Protection Policy for the waters of the Latrobe catchment;
2. The establishment of monitoring and control stages for algal blooms;
3. Investigation of a proposal to build a barrage across McLennan Strait to revert Lake Wellington into a fresh water lake;
4. Action to protect and preserve colonies of little tern in the lakes area, and the koala population on Raymond Island;
5. An assessment of the wet lands around the lakes and their water allocation needs.

Litter Act Amended

Legislation amending the 1987 Litter Act was passed in parliament recently. The legislation introduces litter abatement notices which can be issued to people who create large volumes of litter in the course of their activities.

Other changes include the introduction of penalties for depositing unsolicited advertising material on vehicles.

The Act now authorises litter officers to trace people responsible for dumping rubbish from the information which can be gleaned from the dumped articles.

Junk mail provisions had also been considered, but were not passed. This would have made it an offence to put advertising material in letter boxes displaying "No Junk Mail" or similar signs.

The Government has announced that it will monitor the effectiveness of the code of practise to control the distribution of advertising material over the next six months.

Rural Chemicals Collection Scheme

The Environment Protection Authority announced that between the period February -April 1992, a collection of unwanted and prohibited rural chemicals will be made in Gippsland in south-western Victoria. The collection was originally scheduled for last year, but it was delayed, the EPA says, due to unforeseen difficulties.

Since a pilot program was run in 1989, successful collections have already been made in north central, north-east and Barwon regions of Victoria.

The EPA says that during the DDT recall of 1987 it became evident that there were other chemicals in rural Victoria that needed safe disposal to reduce potential environmental damage of inappropriate disposal. During these collections over 200 tonnes of chemicals were handed in for safe disposal and it is anticipated that about 80 tonnes will be handed in during the present round of collections.