

EPPALOCK WATER SUPPLY CATCHMENT

A REVIEW OF THE LAND USE DETERMINATION FOR THE ENVIRONS OF LAKE EPPALOCK

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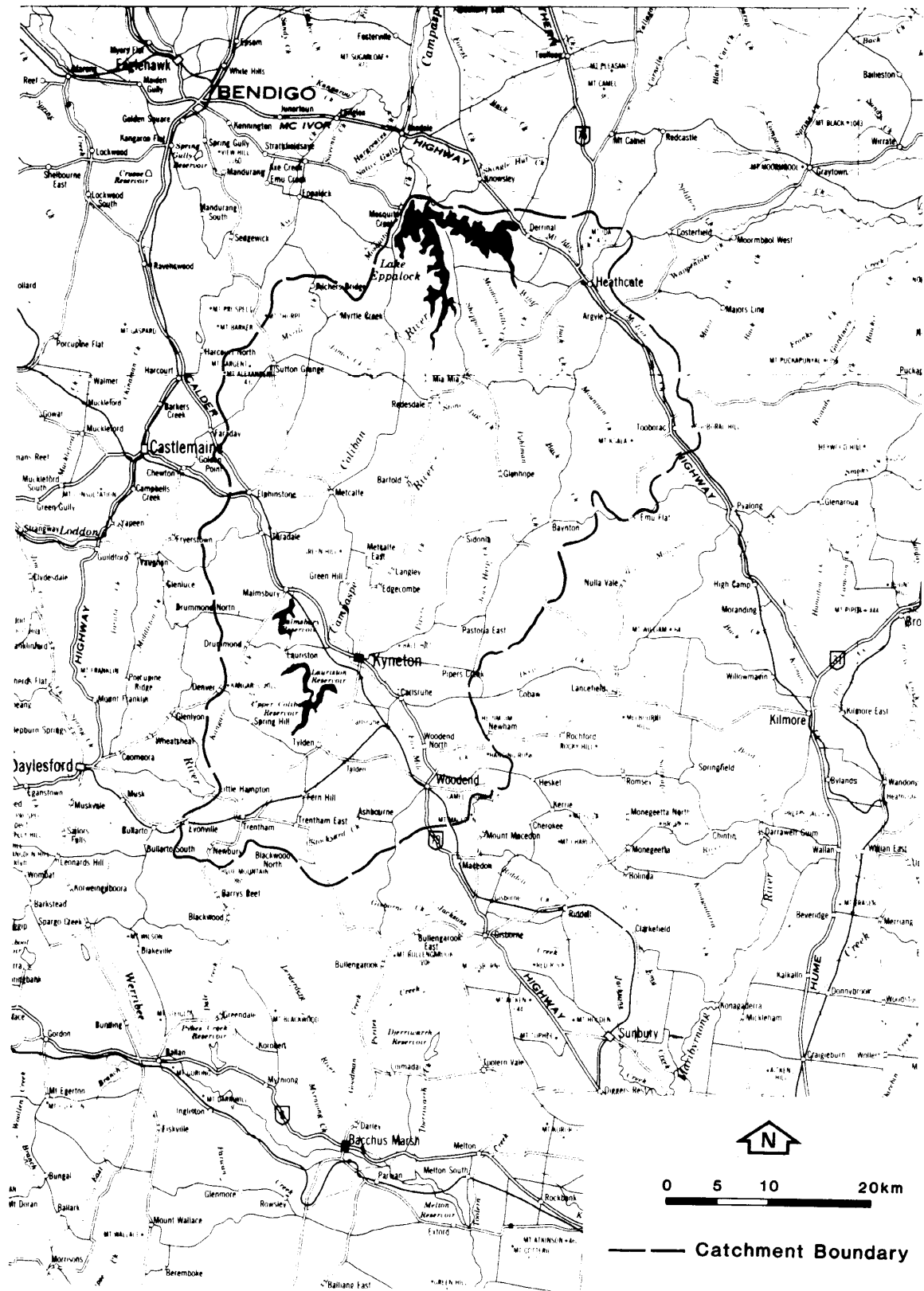
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PART 1
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Figure 1 Catchment Locality Plan



1 INTRODUCTION

Lake Eppalock was formed by the construction in 1962 of an earth and rockfill dam near the confluence of the Campaspe and Coliban Rivers. It provides irrigation, stock and domestic water to downstream users as well as domestic water to Heathcote. The Lake also provides a supplementary source for Bendigo domestic supply.

The catchment (see Figure 1) extends south from the Lake to Mount Macedon and Trentham on the Great Dividing Range, and has an area of 2124km². It was proclaimed as a water supply catchment in 1960 and a Land Use Determination (LUD) was made for 258 km² of land in the environs of the Lake in 1966.

The Eppalock catchment includes a number of townships, (e.g., Woodend, Kyneton, Malmsbury, Trentham, Heathcote, Mia Mia and Redesdale) and recreational developments around the Lake, but the most widespread land uses are agriculture (mainly grazing, to a lesser extent cropping) and forestry. The water supply authority, the Rural Water Commission (RWC) is concerned that water quality be maintained at current levels which are acceptable for domestic use after chlorination. The Lake itself is a large body of water (312700 ML, with a surface area of 3200 ha when full) and monitoring has shown that several indicators of water quality are improved in the period of detention.

Following a report in 1976 of the 'Coulthard Inquiry' (a committee of inquiry established by the Government to investigate the potential for tourism associated with the Lake) an Interdepartmental Committee was established to obtain information and report on water quality requirements and desirable development levels for Lake Eppalock. This Committee reported in 1981 and recommended, among other things, that the Planning Scheme and the Land Use Determination for land around the Lake be reviewed.

Consultants have been appointed to prepare a revised Planning Scheme, which is expected to go on exhibition early in 1985.

This report proposes a revised Land Use Determination (LUD) for Lake Eppalock and its environs (see Figure 2) based on the results of studies undertaken within the catchment. The area covered by the revised LUD is the same as the present LUD area of 258 km². It comprises that portion of the Eppalock Planning Scheme area within the Eppalock Water Supply Catchment.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVISED LUD

1. To prevent deterioration in the quality of water in Lake Eppalock.
2. To encourage the uses and management of land in the LUD area which will minimise both erosion and the accession of sediment to the streams and storage.
3. To provide land use controls complementary to those contained in the Planning Scheme (in preparation).

The revised LUD is not expected to deal with all the forms of land use or development which might eventuate. The revised Planning Scheme will cover almost the same land and will include development controls made under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act. Mining, some other extractive activities and effluent disposal are dealt with by existing legislation.

A principal objective in revising the LUD has been to minimise the overlap in the regulation of land use with respect to the revised Planning Scheme. The main LUD provisions therefore relate to earthworks and soil disturbance near streams and the Lake or on land which has a high erosion risk. In other matters, the aim of the LUD is to complement the provisions of the Planning Scheme and other relevant controls.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Lake Eppalock included, in its report, guidelines for desirable development. After some amendment, these guidelines have been adopted by the Government. The relevant guidelines have been incorporated in the LUD.

3 DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT PLANNING SCHEME

Three Shires (Responsible Planning Authorities) namely McIvor, Strathfieldsaye and Metcalfe have land in the Planning Scheme area. The following aspects of the Planning Scheme are relevant to the LUD:

(a) Duration of the Scheme

It is proposed that three years after its introduction, the Scheme will be reviewed.

Initially, the Lake Eppalock Planning Scheme will be administered separately from the land in the remainder of the respective shires. However, it seems likely that when the Scheme is reviewed, the Shires will seek amendment to have each segment incorporated into the relevant Shire's Planning Scheme.

(b) Residential development

Within the total area of the LUD there will be a limit on the total number of houses that may be built. Density controls will limit houses to one for every 40 ha on average, even though lots as small as 0.4 ha may be produced by subdivision for the construction of a house (provided the land is suitable). To achieve a prescribed number of houses, a system of development rights will apply that will limit the number of houses any landholder will be entitled to place on the property.

No further subdivision will be permitted unless there is a development right available for each new lot. Existing Crown Allotments may be sold, but will again require a development right before a house can be built on them. Development rights will be transferable.

(c) Special Control Areas

These areas will be indicated on the Planning Scheme Map, and are:

- (i) Land subject to moderate, high or severe erosion risk ie. class 3, 4 or 5 erosion risk identified on plans provided by the Soil Conservation Authority (SCA). Planning or building permits will probably not be issued nor will small lot subdivisions be approved for class 5 land. Applications involving erosion risk class 3 or 4 will probably be referred to SCA for comment.

- (ii) Land of visual landscape significance.
- (iii) **Land adjacent to the lake and watercourses.** Buildings will be set back at least 200 m from the Lake full supply level (FSL) and at least 100 m from watercourses. Where this is not possible, the specific approval of SCA and RWC will be required to build within a lesser distance. (The SCA has assisted in mapping the significant watercourses for the purposes of identifying these areas).
- (iv) **Area adjacent to main roads.**

(d) Forest and Public Reserves

Improvements and other developments proposed do not require a permit provided they accord with the guidelines adopted by the Government.

(e) Uses permitted without a planning permit

'Farming' and 'Agriculture' do not require a permit except where they are proposed within 100 m of a stream or 200 m of FSL of Lake Eppalock. However the following specific types of development do require a permit:

Stable, shed for housing animals, stock yard, waste disposal system.

(f) Uses not permitted in the Planning Scheme Area.

Abattoir, poultry farm, piggery and industries (other than Home Industries or Extractive Industry) are prohibited.

(g) Matters to be considered in determining applications.

This section of the ordinance includes matters which are relevant to the SCA such as, likely erosion hazard, standard of roadworks, proposed water supply, effluent disposal and the proximity streams.

4 LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL (LCC) RECOMMENDATIONS

The distribution of public land throughout the LUD area is shown in Figure 3. The LCC published Final Recommendations (1981) for the North Central Area, which includes all public land in the LUD area. The relevant recommendations are shown in Figure 3 and detailed in Appendix 1. The most significant are briefly discussed below.

All land surrounding Lake Eppalock for varying distances above FSL is, with several minor exceptions, controlled by the RWC. See area designated D1 in Figure 3. While in many locations this land is no more than 20 m wide, it is frequently much wider as for example the extensive areas that accommodate recreational developments, campsites and associated facilities or that provide for public access, or that are leased for grazing. In accordance with the LCC recommendation D1, Category 1 land proposed in this report will include all of the above land in the catchment area.

An area which is essentially comprised of reserved forest, and which is adjacent to a substantial number of the above campsites and recreational developments, has been recommended as an education area M2. The recommendations E37 and E39 for hardwood production include the bulk of the remaining reserved forest.

Figure 3 - L.C.C. (1981) Final Recommendations - North Central Area

