

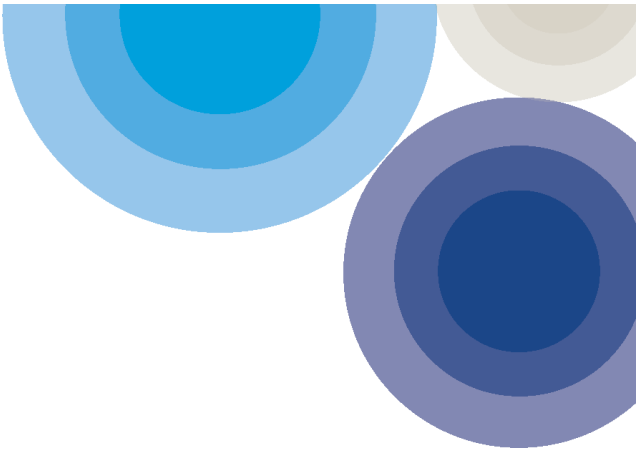


# Tarago Reservoir

## DRAFT Recreational Area Management Plan

March 2026

*For public consultation*



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## Acknowledgement to Country

Melbourne Water respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water on which we rely and operate. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect the continued cultural and spiritual connections that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and water they have cared for and protected for thousands of generations.

We acknowledge that Tarago Reservoir is located on land without a Registered Aboriginal Party, where multiple groups have an interest and connection. We demonstrate our ongoing commitment to reconciliation through our partnerships with Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as we work together to manage land and water now and into the future, while maintaining and respecting cultural and spiritual connections.

## Introduction

The purpose of the Tarago Reservoir Recreational Area Management Plan (the plan or management plan) is to provide clear guidelines for managing recreational activities at Tarago Reservoir while minimising impacts on water quality, the environment, and Melbourne Water and Gippsland Water assets and operations.

The plan provides a comprehensive and practical framework for Melbourne Water to manage on-water recreational activities at Tarago Reservoir 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:

- Water quality
- Environmental protection
- Recreational opportunities
- Aboriginal cultural heritage and other heritage values
- Economic benefits, and
- Traditional owner 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 Tarago Reservoir. It 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 Plan

The Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023 (the Regulations) apply to approximately 40 water storages across Victoria. The Minister for Water has determined these storages as recreational areas 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 specify infringement offences and penalties.

A key feature of the regulations is the requirement for Managing Authorities to develop management plans for recreational areas under their management.

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

[www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/recreational-values-of-victorias-water/recreational-area-regulations](http://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/recreational-values-of-victorias-water/recreational-area-regulations)

In addition to the regulations, Melbourne Water manages the recreational use of this storage in accordance with:

- *Water Act 1989*
- *Marine Safety Act 2010*
- *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*

The plan serves as a guiding operational document for Melbourne Water, local communities, and stakeholders in managing recreational activities at Tarago Reservoir. It provides clear guidelines and actions to enable the sustainable use of Tarago Reservoir recreational areas 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.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The plan will be reviewed every 10 years, or sooner as needed, to assess its effectiveness and make 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 including analysis of the effectiveness of risk mitigation measures, rules and regulations and incident and enforcement response.
- Regulatory Compliance: Ensuring compliance with DEECA's guidelines and other relevant regulations
- Community Feedback: Gathering input from local residents, recreational users, local government authorities, special interest groups and other key stakeholders.
- Operational review: Assessing the effectiveness of the management arrangements of the recreational area with key agencies outlined in Appendix 1.

## About Tarago Reservoir

Tarago Reservoir is situated 95 kilometres east of Melbourne, near the town of Neerim South in West Gippsland. It harvests water from the Tarago River and is a 37,500 ML capacity water supply reservoir.

Tarago Reservoir was built in 1967 to meet the drinking water needs of south-eastern Melbourne, primarily serving the areas from Mornington Peninsula and Westernport. Gippsland Water (GW) sources drinking water from Tarago Reservoir for the Gippsland region, supplying properties in Neerim South, Noojee, Warragul, Rokeby, Nilma, Darnum and Drouin. Melbourne Water delivers world-class drinking water quality, and safeguarding water quality for both consumers and the environment remains a top priority.

Although on-water recreation was originally permitted, access to the reservoir for fishing and boating was closed in 1978 to protect drinking water quality. Despite this, the reservoir has remained of interest to the community, particularly among recreational fishing groups due to the presence of wild brown trout.

The Tarago Treatment Plant was constructed in 2009 and is located approximately 8km south of the reservoir in Drouin West and treats water from the Tarago-Westernport Pipeline. The primary purpose of the Tarago Treatment Plant is to treat approximately 70 ML/d of raw water and supply 13 to 22 GL of treated water annually.

In November 2022, the Victorian Government committed to opening Tarago Reservoir to on-water recreation, in particular recreational angling and boating.

Two key elements to enable Tarago Reservoir to open to on-water recreation include:

- Upgrades to Melbourne Water and Gippsland Water treatment plants to help protect drinking water quality.
- The development of a boat ramp, car park and a toilet block at North Jindivick.

The existing Tarago Reservoir Park located in the south-east corner of the reservoir near Neerim South, provides facilities such as BBQs, picnic tables, toilets and a car park to support land-based recreation.

The approach to opening Tarago Reservoir to on-water recreation will prioritise protecting water quality, promote the safety of recreational users visiting the reservoir, and respect the interests of Traditional Owners and the broader First peoples community.

## Objectives of the plan

The objectives of this management plan for recreational areas at Tarago Reservoir are to:

- Protect and maintain reservoir drinking water quality
- Protect the land, services and facilities 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 that 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.

Delivering this management plan will also contribute to Melbourne Water meeting its obligations for considering recreational values in its operations and support the Victorian Government to deliver the election commitment to open Tarago Reservoir for on-water recreation.

Additionally, this plan will strike a balance between the needs of key stakeholders, adjacent landholders, local government and the environment. Critically, its delivery will maintain high quality and safe drinking water supply to significant parts of Melbourne and Gippsland.



## Traditional Owner rights and participation

Tarago Reservoir is located on land without a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), where multiple groups have an interest and connection. We demonstrate our ongoing commitment to reconciliation through our partnerships with Traditional Owners and the broader First Peoples community, as we work together to manage land and water now and into the future, while maintaining and respecting cultural and spiritual connections.

Water corporations are subject to agreements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* and the *Native Title Act 1993*. This includes a 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. There are currently no agreements in place on Country at Tarago Reservoir.

This plan has been developed in full recognition of Traditional Owner rights to self-determination. To minimise pressures surrounding cultural load, the regulations allow that the Registered Aboriginal Party groups can initiate a review of this plan at any time. Melbourne Water extends this invitation to any group (RAP or other) that may wish to participate.

*Section in progress - to be completed following further Traditional Owner engagement in the development of the plan.*

## Consultation

Consultation processes with Traditional Owners, community, special interest groups and partner agencies were embedded into the development of this plan. Consultation opportunities are widely promoted, including through Melbourne Water's social media posts, media, the Melbourne Water website, and targeted mailing lists, to notify stakeholders and encourage feedback on this plan.

The following consultation processes were undertaken between 2023 and 2026 to support the development of this management plan *(a full updated list of activities and stakeholders will be included at the completion of the consultation period)*:

- Project awareness with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Invitations extended to all local TO groups to be informed and involved in the Recreational Area Management Plan.
- Meetings with partner agencies including Baw Baw Shire Council, Better Boating Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Gippsland Water and Department of Health
- Let's Talk@Melbourne Water online feedback portal including questionnaire and draft recreational area management plan providing engagement with local communities, recreational users and special interest groups.
- Discussions with adjacent landholders to Tarago Reservoir planned for March 2026
- Online information sessions planned in March 2026
- Attendance at Rokeby Market planned for March 2026

*This section will be updated with more detail when the consultation period is complete and will include an overview of feedback received during the consultation.*

## Location

Tarago Reservoir is situated 95 kilometres east of Melbourne, near the town of Neerim South in West Gippsland (Figure 1).

The Reservoir is surrounded by a small buffer of Melbourne Water land and has the Tarago Reservoir Park, to the south east which is managed by Parks Victoria.



Figure 1. Location map

The Tarago Reservoir will be determined as a Recreational Area under Section 122ZA of the Water Act 1989 prior to opening for on-water recreation.

Recreation will be limited to on-water recreation for fishing, boating and canoeing. Recreation and access are prohibited in certain areas of Tarago Reservoir to protect visitor safety, operational assets, and the local environment (see the Set Aside section of this document for further details).

## Facilities available

The following facilities are available at Tarago Reservoir, with locations shown on the map in Figure 2 (p 15).



Public launching area



Toilet

For more information on recreational activities and facilities, please observe all signs and directions at Tarago Reservoir.

## Recreational activities

Melbourne Water manages public recreational areas that are popular places for visitors to connect with water and the natural environment, enjoying a range of recreational activities. Melbourne Water places the highest priority on safety at the storages we manage.

Table 1 below summarises the activities permitted at Tarago Reservoir and any conditions that apply. Any type of activity that is not listed in this section should be considered prohibited.

Table 1. Summary of permitted and prohibited activities

| Activity                                                                            | Permitted (✓)                               | Conditions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                     | Prohibited (✗)                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  | Boating (electric) ✓                        | Conditional<br>Entry and exit only from designated launch point at North Jindivick boat ramp. Vessels can be launched directly from car or trailer. Visitors can also carry or trolley their craft to water. Visitors cannot drag their craft to the water.<br>Maximum 2 people in any one vessel. Maximum speed 5 knots. |
|  | Boating (liquid fuel, combustion engines) ✗ | Prohibited<br>The engine and fuel tank(s) must be removed from the vessel to be permitted on the water. Liquid fuel engines are not permitted in the recreational area.                                                                                                                                                   |
|  | Paddle craft ✓                              | Conditional<br>Kayaks, canoes and small portable craft with electric motors. Entry and exit from designated launch point at North Jindivick boat ramp. Visitors must carry or trolley their craft to water, and they cannot be dragged.                                                                                   |

| Activity                                                                            | Permitted (✓)<br>Prohibited (✗) | Conditions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                     |                                 | <p>Paddle craft can be launched directly from car or trailer.</p> <p>Safety requirements, including capacity limits must be adhered to. Maximum speed 5 knots.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|    | Fishing ✓                       | <p>Conditional</p> <p>Fishing is permitted on-water only. Fishing from shoreline is prohibited. This activity is conditional on any other rules regarding limits on the size and number of fish that can be taken that have been established by the Victorian Fisheries Authority. For more information visit <a href="http://www.vfa.vic.gov.au">www.vfa.vic.gov.au</a></p> |
|  | Stand up paddle boards ✗        | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|  | Sailing ✗                       | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|  | Soft inflatable craft ✗         | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|  | Water skiing or jet ski's ✗     | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|  | Swimming ✗                      | <p>Prohibited</p> <p>No limbs or part of the body to be partially or fully submerged in the water, with or without a floating device.</p> <p>This includes wading in water, except when launching, or alighting</p>                                                                                                                                                          |

| Activity                                                                            | Permitted (✓)<br>Prohibited (✗) | Conditions                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                     |                                 | <p>from permitted water vessels or in the event of an on-water emergency.</p> <p>The use of soft inflatable water equipment is prohibited, including but not limited to float tubes.</p> |
|    | Remote controlled vessels       | <p>Prohibited</p> <p>This includes small model boats or submersible vessels</p>                                                                                                          |
|    | Bushwalking                     | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                                               |
|  | Dog walking                     | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                                               |
|  | Picnic and BBQ                  | <p>Conditional</p> <p>Designated areas only. Refer to signage on site</p>                                                                                                                |
|  | Toilets                         | <p>Conditional</p> <p>Only in provided facilities</p>                                                                                                                                    |
|  | Camping                         | <p>Prohibited</p> <p>There are no designated areas for camping. Camping overnight on a vessel is also prohibited.</p>                                                                    |
|  | Open fire                       | <p>Prohibited</p> <p>There are no designated areas for camp fire or open fires</p>                                                                                                       |

| Activity                                                                            | Permitted (✓)<br>Prohibited (✗)    | Conditions                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | 4WD ✗                              | Prohibited<br>Vehicles must remain on designated access tracks and in car parking                                                                                     |
|    | Horse riding ✗                     | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                            |
|    | Mountain biking ✗                  | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                            |
|   | Hunting ✗                          | Prohibited<br>The possession, carrying of, or use of a firearm, bow, crossbow, spear, spear gun, trap, snare or net (that is not designed for fishing) is prohibited. |
|  | Drones ✗                           | Prohibited (unless in accordance with r.95(1), (2), (3) or (4) of the Regulation, a person is acting in accordance with an appropriate permit).                       |
|  | Fossicking or digging ✗            | The removal of rocks, material or vegetation is prohibited.                                                                                                           |
|  | Wood collection ✗                  | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                            |
|  | Operating sound producing device ✗ | Prohibited                                                                                                                                                            |

## **Caring for the Tarago Reservoir environment**

Tarago Reservoir is a picturesque place and home to a valued natural area with significant native plants and animals. With increased access to an area that had been closed to the public for some time, care must be taken to preserve the environmental values. Following a few simple steps will ensure the reservoir can be enjoyed now and in the future, while also protecting drinking water quality. The following messaging will be used as part of educating and setting expectations around behaviour of recreational users:

- Take your rubbish with you when you leave. The dumping of rubbish, liquid, solid or gaseous waste on land or from a vessel is prohibited and penalties apply. Refer to Baw Baw Shire council's website for transfer stations and consider the environment when disposing of litter.
- Do not remove or bring in any vegetation (including the collection of firewood).
- Do not interfere with native animals or their habitats, and do not feed them.
- Keep to 5 knots on the reservoir as boat wash can cause erosion.
- Do not use cleaning agents such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, or detergent in or near the lake to keep the waterway healthy. These agents break the surface tension of the water, reducing its oxygen levels, harming fish and other forms of aquatic life.
- Clean your fish at home.

## **Water safety**

Melbourne Water places high 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.

Water safety messages will be communicated through signage on site and via a Water Safety campaign and distributed via social media, in print at the recreational areas we manage, and on the Melbourne Water website.

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

- Keep to the speed limit of 5 knots
- Lifejackets should be worn at all times when on water

- Check conditions before launching
- Be aware of hazards in the water
- Avoid the consumption of alcohol

### Swimming

Swimming is **not permitted** at Tarago Reservoir. This is because it supplies drinking water to towns in Mornington Peninsula, Westernport and Gippsland.

Entry into the water for launching and retrieving of boats is taken at the person's own risk and possible dangers include:

- the potential presence of submerged objects and vegetation, algal blooms, or pathogens (including E. Coli);
- the possible presence of cold water, which may result in hypothermia;
- the presence of operational equipment critical to protecting and supplying high-quality drinking water, but that could cause harm or fatality through unauthorised access;
- that no emergency or lifesaving services are provided by Melbourne Water.

### Boating safety

Melbourne Water is the gazetted Waterway Manager for Tarago Reservoir under the *Marine Safety Act 2010*. When using the waterway, boaters need to be aware of the vessel operating and zoning rules, including signage and buoyage that are in place. While in many instances there are state-wide rules in place, Tarago Reservoir has localised zoning rules related to the type of watercraft that can be used and speed restrictions (Figure 2).

Melbourne Water is committed to providing a safe space for recreational users and will collect any relevant information and report any issues to Safe Transport Victoria for management through their compliance team. Melbourne Water also works closely with local police and other agencies to address any immediate concerns where appropriate.

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

<https://safetransport.vic.gov.au/on-the-water/using-waterways/rules-and-exclusion-zones/> For localised zoning information look for Boating Safety

information signs located at North Jindivick boat ramp.

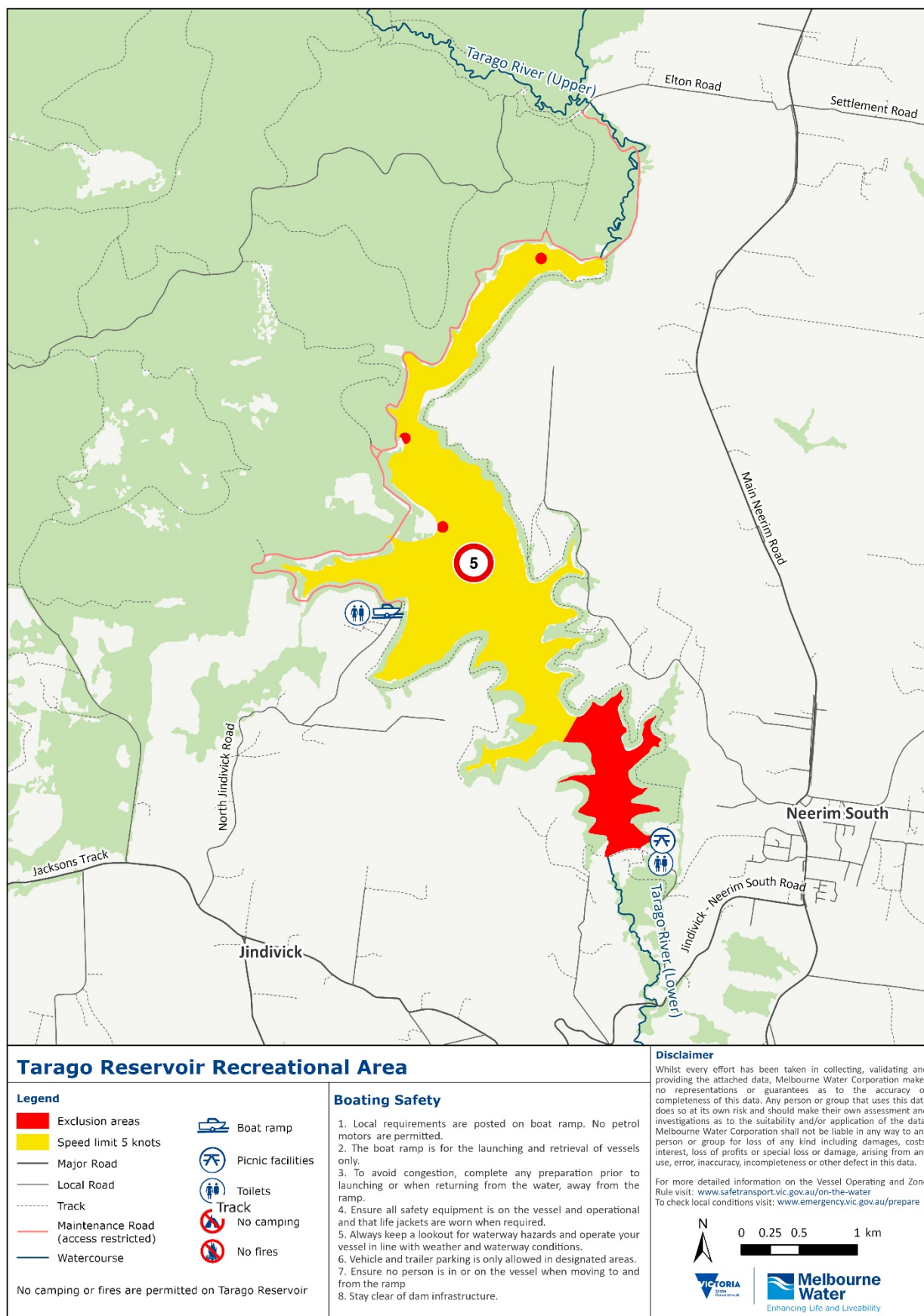


Figure 2. Waterway rules for speed limits and exclusion areas for on-water recreation.

## Set aside areas

To accommodate the range of recreational activities that occur at Tarago Reservoir, Melbourne Water may use 'set aside areas' to enable flexible and tailored management of the area under the regulations while ensuring the health, safety and enjoyment of visitors while also protecting drinking water quality.

The regulations outline that a set aside area may:

- apply to the whole of the recreational area or a specified area
- apply on specified days, times or periods
- apply to a class of person, vehicle, vessel or aircraft
- specify any conditions which must be carried out for certain activities.

Set aside areas enable the safe operation of the water storage, ensuring that water quality is maintained, on-water recreation can occur safely and that conflicting or complementary recreational activities are well managed. Set aside areas for Tarago Reservoir are summarised in Table 2.

### **Publishing a determination of a set aside area**

A determination of a set aside area will be published on the Melbourne Water website and there will also be signs and notices placed on-site.

It is an offence not to comply with the conditions of determinations in set aside areas. If Melbourne Water 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.
- Where applicable, state the activities that are prohibited, restricted or permitted by the determination and any conditions specified in the determination.

## Register of set aside areas

A record of the set aside areas at Tarago Reservoir is outlined in Table 2 and shown in Figure 3.

Table 2. Set aside areas

| Regulation |                                 | Basis     | Purpose of set aside area                   | Set aside area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Times or periods |
|------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 14 (2)(b)  | Prohibited or restricted access | (r.30(1)) | Prohibited access to preserve water quality | All land around Tarago reservoir with the exception of North Jindivick boat ramp area.                                                                                                                                                                        | Always           |
| 14 (2) (b) | Prohibited or restricted access | (r.30(1)) | Prohibited access for public safety         | Vessel prohibited areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 1300 m of spillway, dam wall and tower</li> <li>• Within 50 m of Tarago Pumping Station</li> <li>• With 30 m of Gippsland Water assets that protrude above the water line</li> </ul> | Always           |

| Regulation |                                        | Basis     | Purpose of set aside area                   | Set aside area                                                                                                                                              | Times or periods                                                               |
|------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14(2)(d)   | Areas for operating BBQs or fireplaces | (r.43(3)) | Specify an area where BBQs are permitted    | Tarago Reservoir Park area                                                                                                                                  | During hours<br>7am – 5.00 pm<br>Extended during daylight saving 7am – 8.00 pm |
| 14(2)(k)   | Fishing in recreational area           | 72(2)     | Specify an area where fishing is prohibited | All land and foreshore areas around the reservoir and all waters within 1300 m of dam wall, watertower and spillway and around assets as shown in Figure 3. | Always                                                                         |
| 14(2)(r)   | Parking of vehicles                    | 84(4)     | Specify an area where parking is permitted  | All public car parking areas as signposted                                                                                                                  | During hours<br>7am – 5.00 pm<br>Extended during daylight saving 7am – 8.00 pm |

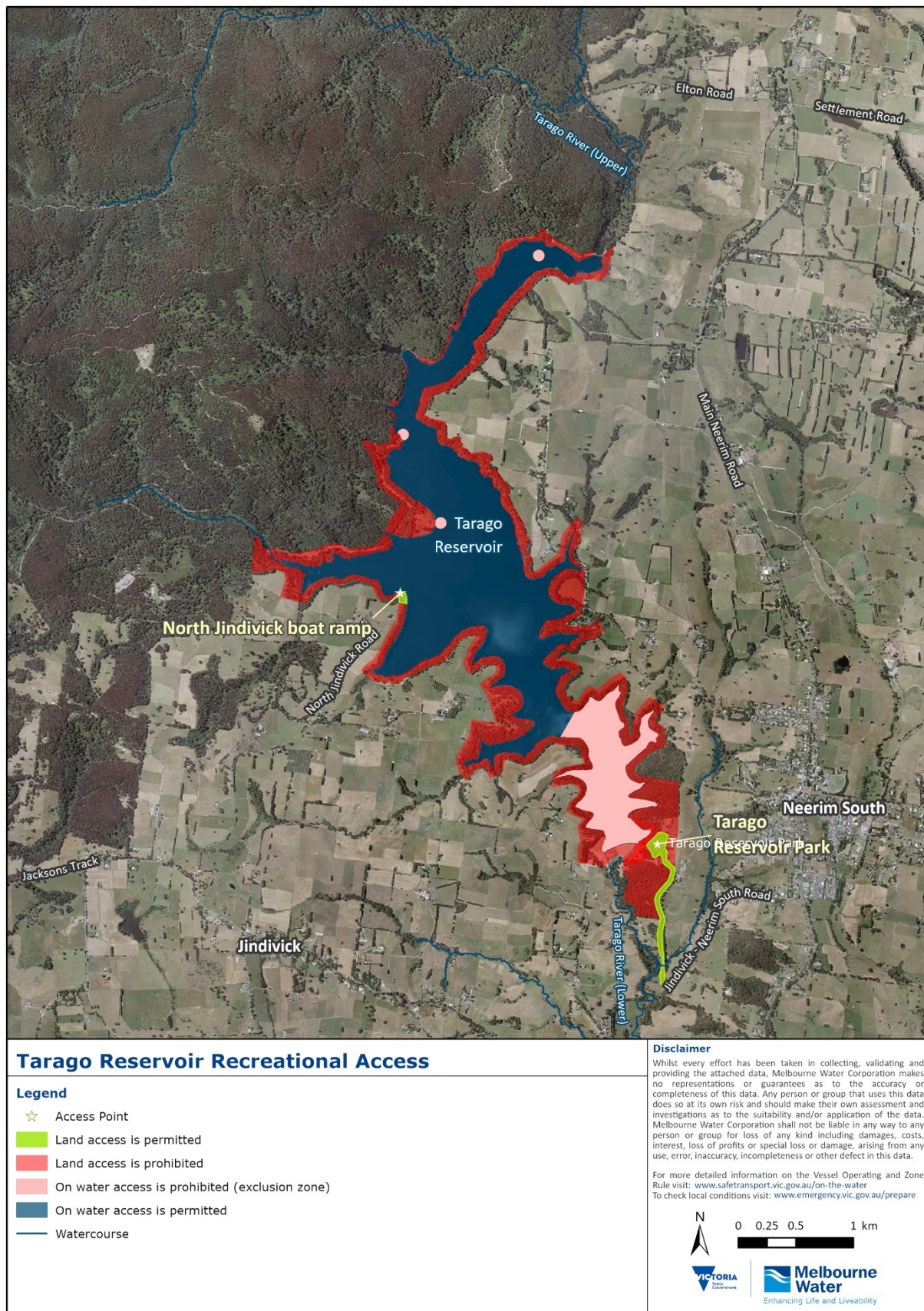


Figure 3. Set aside areas

## **Prohibited areas**

Access is prohibited at all times to the dam wall, outlet tower, Tarago pumping station and water infrastructure assets shown in Figure 3, to protect the water supply infrastructure and to minimise risks to public safety.

Access to land and foreshore areas around the reservoir (either by boat or via land), other than at North Jindivick boat ramp is prohibited at all times.

## **Temporary closures**

Temporary closures Tarago Reservoir may occur on occasion as outlined in Section 24 of the regulations.

Triggers for the closure (partially or fully) of a Reservoir or a Recreation Area may include but are not limited to:

- Support the safe management of incidents and events such as floods and fires
- Allow for operational 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
- Manage safety during water quality events such as algal blooms or other water quality incidents
- Manage safety during emergency incidents

In the event of an immediate temporary closure, Melbourne Water will:

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

All other temporary closures will be communicated with impacted parties a minimum of two weeks prior to the closure.

## **Events and permits**

Within Part 3 of the Regulations, a person may apply to Melbourne Water for a permit to enter and use the recreational area or a location within a recreational area for the following specified purpose and period:

- Operating a drone

Melbourne Water may issue the permit in writing to that person, with or without terms and conditions. The permit must be kept in the permit holder's possession while using the area for the specified purpose and if requested by Melbourne Water, the permit holder must produce the permit for inspection. The permit may be varied or cancelled on application by the permit holder or by Melbourne Water.

Melbourne Water will not issue a permit for the following activities:

- Events
- Commercial activities
- Advertising
- Erecting structures
- Horses or horse riding
- Removal of firewood

## **Compliance and enforcement**

The Regulations introduced the ability for Melbourne Water to issue Penalty Infringement Notices (PINs) for offences under the regulations.

Managing Authorities, such as Melbourne Water, can issue infringement penalties to users who undertake activities 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.

Melbourne Water partners with Fines Victoria to implement its compliance and enforcement.

Enforcement is managed by trained Authorised Water Officers (AWOs).

AWOs assist visitors to ensure their activities are satisfying, safe and sustainable. Nominated Melbourne Water employees are AWOs under the Water Act 1989.

The tasks of the AWOs are to communicate, engage with, and educate visitors during their time at a recreational area to provide a satisfying, safe and sustainable experience.

AWOs will also report on the level of activity at Tarago Reservoir, including prohibited activities and offences. They also undertake patrols, surveillance and monitoring of the recreation area both on land and on water (including weekend surveillance). AWOs can issue Penalty Infringement Notices (PINs).

North Jindivick boat ramp and car park will be monitored with 24/7 surveillance cameras.

Tarago Reservoir is an active work site on which regular operation and maintenance activities are performed. The primary role of Melbourne Water's Reservoir Officers is to manage and maintain the operation of the reservoirs. Reservoir Officers can report observed recreation behaviour that may impact on water quality, infrastructure, flora and fauna or health and safety to AWO's to investigate further.

## Operations and maintenance

### Water supply operations and infrastructure

Melbourne Water harvests and stores water entitlements for its customers in accordance with the requirements set out in the Water Act 1989.

Water at Tarago Reservoir is shared between Melbourne Water, Gippsland Water and Southern Rural Water. The outlet capacity is 1,600 ML/day and releases are made to meet customer orders and to pre-release in advance of predicted rainfall that would result in the dam spilling.

Melbourne Water also delivers water to Tarago River downstream for the Victorian Environmental Water Holders who make decisions about watering sites with the aim of maintaining healthy environments.

Further information on the operations of Tarago Reservoir can be found on the website:

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/water-and-environment/water-management/water-storage-reservoirs/Tarago> (Note this website page will be updated to contain more information about operations once RAMP is finalised)

Maintenance of water supply infrastructure at Tarago Reservoir is primarily undertaken by Melbourne Water water supply operations staff. Maintenance activities include but are not limited to:

- Regular inspection of all water supply infrastructure
- Periodic operation of key outlet works and lubrication of ropes and bearings
- Testing and servicing of ancillary equipment
- Weed control
- Access track and fence repair works

### **Recreational facilities and assets**

Recreational facilities and assets at the North Jindivick boat ramp site include but are not limited to toilet amenities and a boat ramp.

Melbourne Water develop internal procedures and manuals for recreation and land assets at each water storage. The manuals include a description of each recreation and land asset, the associated standard operating and maintenance procedures and a maintenance schedule for staff to follow. The manuals support Melbourne Water in ensuring that its recreational assets are reliable, operational, and safe for public use.

An internal review of these manuals is to be completed at least every five years to ensure their currency and effectiveness. The review enables our staff to safely and effectively perform maintenance activities, train new staff, review operational management arrangements and continuously improve our recreation and land asset standards for the public.

Land occupied under licence or lease arrangements must be maintained in accordance with the maintenance obligations detailed in the lease/licence agreement. This includes Tarago Reservoir Park, which is managed by Parks Victoria, who are responsible for maintaining recreational facilities such as toilet amenities, picnic benches and barbecues.

## Water quality management

### Water Quality Monitoring Program

Melbourne Water monitor the water quality in Melbourne Water's major water storages including Tarago Reservoir.

Specific objectives for the program are to:

- Provide an overview of the current and historic water quality in Tarago Reservoir and inform operational decisions for drinking water treatment and reservoir management
- Examine water quality and assess compliance with guideline values recommended in current state and national guidance
- Identify water quality status and trends so that future management practices have the potential to improve water quality within the reservoir
- Examine blue-green algae events and identify trends so that future management practices have the potential to limit the risk of blue-green algae.

Further details of water quality management at Tarago Reservoir can be viewed here:

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/about/what-we-do/publications/water-quality-annual-report>

### Blue green algae

Melbourne Water is responsible for the management of blue-green algal blooms within Tarago Reservoir. Melbourne Water regularly monitors and inspects water bodies within our area of operation for blue-green algae as per the Blue-green Algae Risk Management Plan and the Drinking Water Quality Monitoring program.

### Wastewater and stormwater management

Wastewater includes all septic tank effluent and sullage water. Untreated wastewater can transmit pathogens and viruses as well as nutrients, salts and heavy metals to Tarago Reservoir if not appropriately managed.

Melbourne Water operates and maintains wastewater management systems at Tarago Reservoir. The systems include a vaulted one pan toilet block with overflow underground storage for water quality for the new Jindivick Boat ramp and a plumbed residential connection at the existing toilet blocks at Tarago Reservoir Park.

Stormwater in the vicinity of Jindivick boat ramp will be treated via a swale that borders the perimeter of the car park.

### **Other documentation**

Other relevant documents for this management plan include;

- Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Algal Related Problems in Water Supply Reservoirs: Contingency Plan
- Blue-green Algae Risk Management Plan - Recreational Waters
- Tarago Catchment Management Plan
- Drinking Water Quality Strategy
- Drinking Water Quality Risk Management Plan
- Tarago Treatment Plant Hazard Analysis Critical Control Plan
- Pest Plant, Animal and Pathogen Guidelines

## Implementation Plan

A summary of the measures to be implemented to meet the objectives of this plan is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. 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 asset management plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2026 and then ongoing                      | Melbourne Water |
| Protect and maintain drinking water quality                                                                       | Apply enhanced water quality monitoring program<br>Blue-green algae monitoring and reporting of warnings<br>Signage and education on measures to minimise impact to water quality<br>Update related management plans e.g. Drinking Water Quality Risk Management Plan<br>Training of staff to be Authorised Water Officers                                                                                                 | Ongoing<br>Ongoing<br>2026<br>2026<br>2026 | Melbourne Water |
| Conserve and preserve flora, fauna and habitat in the area, including the biodiversity of flora and fauna habitat | Facilitate delivery of water for environment to support Victorian and Commonwealth Environmental Water Holders to make decisions about watering Tarago and Bunyip River with the aim of maintaining healthy environments.<br>Signage and education to ensure visitors are aware of their responsibilities to protect the environment and take their rubbish with them.<br>Apply enhanced water quality monitoring program. | Ongoing<br>2026<br>Ongoing                 | Melbourne Water |

## DRAFT Recreational Area Management Plan

| Objective                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Actions to meet objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Implementation timeframe                                                    | Responsibility                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Protect the health and safety of visitors to the area                                                                                                                                                       | Implementation of set aside areas<br>Promote water safety program<br>Public information and signage<br>Surveillance of access points<br>Reservoir may be closed in certain circumstances to promote safety                                                                                                          | 2026<br>2026 and ongoing<br>2026 and ongoing<br>2026 and ongoing<br>Ongoing | Melbourne Water                                                           |
| Promote the enjoyment and recreation of visitors to the area                                                                                                                                                | Authorised Water Officers can assist and educate visitors and recreational users<br>Public information and signage<br>Ensure a list of allowable activities is publicly available<br>Work with other government entities and recreational user groups as required to support promotion and safe use of the facility | 2026 and ongoing                                                            | Melbourne Water<br><br>Others (with Melbourne water support as requested) |
| Protect and promote Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal intangible heritage in the area                                                                                                             | To be completed following further engagement with TOs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                             |                                                                           |
| Facilitate the participation of Traditional Owner groups in the management of that area, including in accordance with any agreements under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 that apply to the area | To be completed following further engagement with TOs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                             |                                                                           |
| 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 further engagement with TOs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                             |                                                                           |

| Objective                                                   | Actions to meet objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Implementation timeframe   | Responsibility  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Protect and promote any other heritage features in the area | <p>Melbourne Water recognise and respect the importance of protecting and promoting existing post-contact heritage places within Tarago Reservoir area. Ongoing management of such sites will be undertaken in line with the relevant historic heritage legislation and data sets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• World Heritage List</li><li>• National Heritage List</li><li>• Commonwealth Heritage List</li><li>• Register of the National Estate (non-statutory)</li><li>• National Trust</li><li>• Victorian Heritage Register</li><li>• Victorian Heritage List</li></ul> <p>Revise asset management plan of Tarago pumping station to acknowledge it as a heritage feature.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2026</p> | Melbourne Water |

## Appendix 1 – Roles and responsibilities

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of different agencies at Tarago Reservoir

Table 4. Key agencies with responsibilities

| Agency                                                       | Role                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Melbourne Water (MW)                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land owner and Managing Authority</li> <li>• Statutory agency of the Victorian Government</li> <li>• Manage Crown land and public land for purpose of service provision (e.g. bulkwater supply, sewerage or drainage)</li> <li>• Manage Waterways under the Water Act 1989 and the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters),</li> <li>• Protect the water storages and the reliability and quality of water supply under the <i>Water Act 1989</i>.</li> <li>• Manage risks to drinking water quality through development and implementation of a risk management plan under the <i>Safe Drinking Water Act 2003</i>.</li> <li>• Waterway Manager for Tarago Reservoir under the <i>Marine Safety Act 2010</i>.</li> <li>• Responsible for implementing the Recreational Area Management Plan</li> </ul> |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage Crown land and public land (reserved for various reasons)</li> <li>• Author of Water Recreational Area Regulations 2023</li> <li>• Manage the Public Safety on Public Land initiative (PSoPL) program</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Better Boating Victoria (BBV)                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for determining the location of the boat ramp</li> <li>• Lead the design of Jindivick boat ramp, carpark and toilets</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA)                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine fishing rules for Tarago Reservoir</li> <li>• Manage fishing licences</li> <li>• Fisheries officers to enforce laws pertaining to fishing and boating safety</li> <li>• Provider of fish stock</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Baw Baw Shire Council                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government</li> <li>• Crown and public land manager of Council open space, parks and artificial water bodies</li> <li>• Responsible for North Jindivick Road</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| <b>Agency</b>             | <b>Role</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parks Victoria (PV)       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manager of state and national parks (Crown land reserved for these purposes)</li><li>• Manager of existing Tarago Reservoir Park area through a lease agreement with Melbourne Water</li><li>• Statutory agency of the Victorian Government</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Gippsland Water           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supplies drinking water sourced from Tarago Reservoir to nearby towns such as Neerim South, Warrigul and Drouin.</li><li>• Responsible for some infrastructure assets at Tarago Reservoir</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Safety Transport Victoria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administer and enforce maritime safety legislation.</li><li>• Approval of Waterway Rules for Tarago Reservoir</li><li>• License, register and accredit operators.</li><li>• Promote awareness and educate the community about water safety.</li><li>• Monitoring maritime safety industries' and participants' systems for managing safety risks at the reservoirs.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Victoria Police           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authorised officers for Victorian legislation including nuisance, vandalism and theft.</li><li>• Public Safety on Public Land - Every year the Victorian Government, via the Public Safety on Public Land initiative (PSoPL), provides support to DEECA's public land managers responsible for identifying, assessing, controlling and monitoring risks associated with the use of public land.</li><li>• Public Safety on Public Land initiative objectives:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To minimise the likelihood of the public being injured or killed on public land managed by DELWP, Committees of Management and lessees</li><li>2. To encourage appropriate visitor behaviour with respect to hazards posed by recreational activities, natural causes and land management practices on public land</li></ol></li></ul> |