

Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project Community Reference Group

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Background

Seqwater's Dam Improvement Program

Dams are long-life assets which require continual assessment, monitoring and maintenance. While Seqwater dams were built to high standards, many were built some decades ago. Methodologies and data used to estimate extreme rainfall events have significantly improved and industry engineering standards and risks have progressed since dams were originally built.

Across Queensland and Australia, there are multiple dam upgrades occurring to meet modern engineering standards and comply with the safety requirements outlined in the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

Through Seqwater's Dam Improvement Program, we're investing in our region's dams to ensure ongoing safety and water security for years to come.

This program is required to be completed by 1 October 2035 and planning is well underway.

Since 2008, Seqwater has delivered 13 upgrades, including Leslie Harrison Dam at Capalaba, Sideling Creek Dam north of Brisbane and Ewen Maddock Dam on the Sunshine Coast.

The next tranche now underway includes Somerset, Wivenhoe, North Pine and Lake Macdonald Dams.

Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project

Lake Macdonald (Six Mile Creek Dam) was originally constructed in 1965. The planned dam upgrade will be the first major upgrade of the dam since the dam wall was raised in 1980.

Seqwater progressed a project design in 2018/19, and a Community Reference Group of seven community members was formed and met several times. In 2020, the project was put on hold and reassessed. Throughout 2021 and 2022, Seqwater worked with a Technical Review Panel to evaluate and shortlist options for the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project.

In 2023, Seqwater worked through the preferred design option, completed the environmental and economic studies, and commenced important project approvals.

In 2024, Seqwater confirmed the design option includes a new split-level concrete spillway (set at the original lake level), with an upper labyrinth spillway (zigzag in shape) to accommodate higher floods.

The optimal construction approach is being worked through, including finalising the engineering. While this is an important project to ensure the ongoing safety of the structure during extreme weather events, Seqwater is committed to reducing the impacts of construction wherever possible.

Areas of impact being assessed includes, but is not limited to, water security and the lake level, traffic, noise, dust, water quality, recreation, cultural heritage, environment and ecology. Extensive project planning has led to a modification of the construction plan, and there will now be:

- More water in Lake Macdonald during construction through the use of a temporary cofferdam
- The Noosa Water Treatment Plant will continue to operate for ongoing water security
- Reduced impact/risk to aquatic life, plants and animals in and around the lake due to higher lake levels
- Environmental flows will be maintained to ensure water supply to support the habitat downstream
- Some recreation areas and activities at Lake Macdonald Park will remain open during construction:

- The boat ramp at Lake Macdonald Park, next to the Noosa Botanic Gardens
- Fishing, stand up paddle boarding and canoeing
- Benefits to local community and visitors by keeping the lake open
- The project will employ local contractors and procure local businesses as much as possible.

Construction is expected to take five years, subject to weather and construction conditions.

Community Reference Group

Purpose

The purpose of the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project Community Reference Group (CRG) is to provide a formal channel for community input on issues of relevance and concern to the project and to assist in the dissemination of information.

The CRG will:

- Build community understanding of the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project by members sharing information with their local networks.
- Provide a forum for members to discuss and share issues of community interest related to the project.
- Draw on local knowledge about Lake Macdonald and its uses from the community.
- Offer feedback on proposed project plans and activities, ensuring that community concerns are considered in Seqwater decision-making processes.
- Facilitate two-way communication between the project team and the CRG, helping to address questions and concerns.

Objectives

The objectives of the CRG are to:

- Identify the positive and negative impacts of the project on community interests.
- Provide Seqwater with relevant and timely community feedback to assist in addressing issues and opportunities resulting from the project.
- Provide Seqwater with an indicator of community perceptions and understanding of the project.
- Convey project information to the broader community through members' networks.

Scope

The scope of the CRG is restricted to the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project works. The CRG is to consider issues and impacts arising from project works related to:

- Community amenity.
- Recreational facilities.
- The natural environment.
- Social values and impacts.
- Water supply.
- History and cultural heritage.
- Business and economic impacts.

CRG membership

Participation in the CRG is voluntary and membership does not attract any form of remuneration.

The CRG requires six to 10 members to achieve a diverse representation of the local community.

If insufficient nominations meeting the selection criteria are received, Seqwater may consider issuing invitations to identified stakeholder groups which demonstrate an ability to meet the selection criteria to enable the CRG to proceed.

Upon appointment, each CRG member may nominate one alternative representative to act for them if they are absent from a meeting. The alternate shall be deemed a representative of the CRG with the full responsibilities of a group member, including completion of an application form and adherence to the selection criteria.

Members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings. Repeated non-attendance, specifically missing three consecutive meetings without prior notice, will result in dismissal from the CRG.

The CRG will comprise members representing the following interest groups:

- Community.
- Environment.
- Catchment.
- Fish management.
- Education.
- Recreation.
- Business community.

A member may represent one or more of these interest groups.

Operational principles

Roles and responsibilities

The CRG is an advisory body. It does not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of Seqwater.

Seqwater

Seqwater commits to keeping CRG members informed, listening to and acknowledging concerns and aspirations, and providing feedback on how CRG input was considered in decisions.

Project team members will attend CRG meetings to represent the project and participate in the meeting but are not members of the CRG.

Seqwater may also invite representatives from local, state or federal government agencies, contractors or subject matter experts to attend meetings if deemed relevant to a particular project stage or if requested by the group. These invited representatives may be required to observe the meeting, present at the meeting, or participate in the discussion.

Seqwater's Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project team representatives agree to:

- Provide sufficient information for members to meaningfully participate in discussion.
- Review feedback from the community and members of the CRG in relation to the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project.
- Provide members with feedback on how their recommendations have been considered.
- Report on Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project activities and project progress, and seek feedback from the CRG members.
- Provide an independent facilitator to ensure workshops are run in a transparent and equitable manner.
- Make sure all members have an opportunity to make comments, ask questions and raise issues.
- Publish the workshop presentations and high-level meeting notes on the project webpages.
- Genuinely consider and respond to all feedback and suggestions raised in the group.

CRG independent facilitator

The CRG will be facilitated by an independent facilitator appointed by Seqwater. The independent facilitator will meet the following criteria:

- No conflict of interest involving Seqwater, the project, local government or community organisations from the Noosa and surrounding areas.
- No active political affiliations.
- At least three to five years' experience in facilitation.
- Availability to attend each CRG meeting.

The independent facilitator will be appointed for two years, with a review by Seqwater of their tenure every 12 months. Should the independent facilitator be deemed by Seqwater to be unsuitable for the role at any stage, the independent facilitator will be removed and Seqwater will appoint a new independent facilitator.

The independent facilitator will also chair the group. As chair, the independent facilitator will:

- Lead but not direct discussions of the CRG.
- Ensure there is fair and productive discussion.
- Instigate constructive debate amongst CRG members.
- Encourage all members of the CRG to share their views.
- Summarise discussions and points of view expressed.

CRG members

The function of the CRG members is to identify and communicate community ideas, issues and concerns relating to the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project to the CRG and Seqwater.

CRG members also act as a conduit to the community for the information raised at the CRG and are required to disseminate this information through their networks, except where this information is deemed confidential. CRG members should only express their own views or the views of the organisation they represent when speaking to others and must not attempt to represent the views of the broader CRG.

CRG members agree to:

- Adhere to the Terms of Reference.
- Adhere to the responsibilities of their role as outlined below.
- Allow all CRG members to present their views.
- Respect other members' opinions.
- Attend meetings and participate in discussions.
- Provide feedback from the meetings to the wider community.
- Suggest agenda items.
- Report their views and those of the wider community to the CRG.
- Only express their own views or the views of the organisation they represent to the public and media.
- Ensure all media enquiries related to the CRG are directed to Seqwater.

Operational procedures

Selection process

The selection process will be undertaken to ensure a broad cross-section of the community is represented on the CRG.

Advertisements calling for nominations of membership will be placed in local media. People seeking CRG membership are required to complete an application form giving information about themselves to demonstrate their capacity to effectively represent their nominated community or interest group/s.

Applications will be assessed against the selection criteria by a panel of Seqwater representatives. The selection criteria is available at <https://www.seqwater.com.au/project/lake-macdonald-dam-improvement-project>

Nominations will open for a two week period.

Meetings

The Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project CRG will meet quarterly throughout the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project. Meeting times will be set in advance in consultation with CRG members and will be no more than two hours in duration.

To ensure relevant, timely feedback and information sharing, Seqwater reserves the right to alter the frequency of CRG meetings to coincide with construction timeframes which may change during the course of the project.

Advanced notice of changes to meeting scheduling will be provided to CRG members will be managed by the secretary.

Meetings will be held at a suitable venue convenient for members of the CRG and proximate to Lake Macdonald. The meeting location will also be managed by the secretariat and any changes to venue will be communicated with advance notice.

Observers

A maximum of two observers may attend each CRG meeting. Observers are not permitted to participate in discussions unless specifically invited to do so by the Chair. Their role is to listen and gain insight into the group's activities. Observers must register their interest with the CRG Secretariat at least 14 days prior to the meeting, and attendance will be confirmed based on availability. Attendance by observers is at the sole discretion of Seqwater, who reserves the right to approve or deny attendance requests based on the maximum number of allowed observers or other considerations.

CRG secretariat

Administrative services and report compilation will be provided by the Facilitator who will function as the CRG secretary.

The secretary's role includes:

- Keeping and distributing meeting minutes.
- Managing meeting scheduling.
- Managing meeting locations.
- Managing reporting and distributing reports.

CRG governance and conflict of interest

Members of the CRG are required to declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest during the application process.

Once appointed to the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project CRG, should a CRG member believe they have a conflict of interest in relation to a particular issue or item of discussion, the member is required to make this known to the Chairperson and other CRG members.

The CRG will determine if the member raising their conflict of interest is permitted to contribute to the discussion on the issue or item in question.

Review

The role, membership and operation of the CRG will be reviewed annually to evaluate the CRG process. Seqwater reserves the right to activate a review at any time.

Agenda items

All CRG agenda items must be forwarded to the secretariat 10 working days before the next scheduled meeting.

The CRG agenda, with attached meeting papers, will be distributed at least five working days before the next scheduled meeting.

Meeting and minutes

The minutes of each CRG meeting will be prepared by the secretariat. Copies of the minutes (including items noted and resolved), will be provided to all CRG members no later than 14 working days following each meeting.

Minutes are to be endorsed by the CRG at the subsequent meeting. Minutes are to be provided to Seqwater, and published on the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project web page

<https://www.seqwater.com.au/project/lake-macdonald-dam-improvement-project>.

Dispute resolution

Should a dispute arise which cannot be resolved, the matter may be referred to the independent facilitator and the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project team. The final decision on action will lie with Seqwater.

Dismissal

Should any member not abide by the terms set out in these Terms of Reference, the member will be removed from the CRG.

Non-attendance at three (3) meetings without prior notice will result in the member being removed from the CRG.

Information confidentiality

CRG members may be granted access to project information that is not yet available to the public (e.g. before the information becomes public). It is also possible that some of the information made available to the CRG may be classified as confidential by Seqwater.

It is the responsibility of the member disclosing confidential information to make its confidential nature known to the CRG.

Decision-making process

The CRG is not a decision-making group. The aim of the CRG is to represent a diversity of community viewpoints.

Matters requiring decisions from the CRG, such as allowing a member to contribute to a discussion after declaring a perceived or real conflict of interest, will be undertaken by majority vote of CRG member.

Media

Members must not speak to the media on behalf the group without authorisation from Seqwater. No member of the group will discuss views or opinions expressed by another member of the group without their prior consent. All media enquiries should be directed to Seqwater at media@seqwater.com.au to ensure consistent and accurate communication.

Privacy

Seqwater will use the personal information of CRG members for the purpose of managing meetings and activities, sharing information and for any other purpose specifically related to the CRG.

It will only be used for another purpose when permission has been requested and provided. Seqwater will not provide your contact information to any other party without consent. Group members are free to discuss the outcomes of meetings with other people.

The views and opinions expressed by other members of the group are confidential and must not be shared outside the group.

Acknowledgement

By signing here, you agree to the Lake Macdonald Dam Improvement Project CRG Terms of Reference:

Name: _____ **Sign:** _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____

Contact details

- **Seqwater email:** ProjectInfo@seqwater.com.au
- **Seqwater phone number:** 07 3432 7000