

## INFORMATION STATEMENT

### OPERATION OF LODDON RIVER AT BRIDGEWATER

Loddon Shire is the waterway manager for the Loddon River between Sweeneys Lane and the Flour Mill Weir, Bridgewater.

The above length of the Loddon River is currently comprised of a number of exclusive and special purpose areas as seen within attachment 1.

- a) 3.2km general skiing area
- b) 950m special purpose area (slalom & ski jump)
- c) 90m area prohibited to boating (swimming hole)

Rules governing the use of the river are approved by Marine Safety Victoria (MSV) as the regulatory authority in consideration of Loddon Shire's recommendations as the waterway manager. Gazettal of rules governing use of the Loddon River at Bridgewater first occurred in 1988 with some minor changes occurring over the past 22 years. Current rules governing the hours of operation for the above special purpose areas are as follows:

#### General Skiing area & Slalom/Ski Jump area:

Both the general skiing and slalom/jump areas have been granted a special exemption for vessels to operate in excess of 5 knots during the following times.

- 1<sup>st</sup> December to 31<sup>st</sup> March during the hours of 8:30am to 7:30pm.
- 1<sup>st</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> April during the hours of 8:30am to 7:30pm (except Wednesdays)
- 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October during the hours of 8:30am to 5:30pm (except Wednesdays)
- 1<sup>st</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> November during the hours of 8:30am to 7:30pm (except Wednesdays)

During the above times both the general skiing and slalom/jump areas are prohibited to bathers. Fishing or other vessels may however transit through both the general use ski area and slalom/ski jump area provided that they:

- Keep as close as practicable to the western embankment
- Do not exceed a 5 knot speed limit
- Cross the river adjacent to the boat ramps in the caravan park (note: a proposal exists to allow vessels to cross at any point).

Outside of the above dates and times the general skiing and slalom/jump areas are not active unless special permission is obtained from Council & MSV (Section 15 – event application). During all other times all vessels along the length of the Loddon River between Sweeneys Lane and the Flour Mill Weir are restricted to 5 knots.

The Bridgewater slalom and ski jump area is one of three ski courses within Victoria and one of five nationally which comply with international and national standards for slalom competition. Three official competition events are conducted at Bridgewater annually specifically requiring access to the slalom and ski jump special use area.

Annual competitive events conducted at Bridgewater are as follows:

- Australian Masters (January)
- Pre MOOMBA tournament (February)
- Bridgewater Ski Club Tournament (During Summer Period)

Due to the physical characteristics of the course and in the interests of safety only one vessel is permitted to use the slalom and ski jump run at any given time.

*Prohibited Boating Zone (Swimming Hole):*

An area for swimming has been created adjacent to the Flour Mill Weir and extends approximately 90m upstream and is marked by red buoys. This area is prohibited to boats at all times.

Loddon Shire in conjunction with the Victorian State Government have invested approximately \$130,000 towards development of the Bridgewater swimming hole facility & Flour Mill walking track. Stage 1 of this project was completed in early 2009 and includes a deck & bathing platform, BBQ facilities, footpath and access improvements, public seating and shelter, basketball ring, site landscaping and signage.

Funding for Stage 2 of the swimming hole project was announced in January 2010 and will see an additional \$80,000 invested towards provision of 2 unisex toilets, installation of a shade sail and further landscaping and footpath improvement works.

A walking track has been established along the river foreshore providing a pedestrian link between the public caravan park and the swimming hole facility. This track passes underneath the Calder Hwy bridge and is comprised of approximately 500m natural surface path from the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park through to the Calder Hwy, 100m asphalt footpath between the Calder Hwy Bridge and Fishing Platform and a further 200m of gravel path to the swimming hole facility (800m in total).

The section of river between the northern end of the slalom/jump area and Flour Mill Weir remains accessible for general boating and recreational activities.

Attachment 1:



1/2/2010

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Attachment 1 - Operation of Loddon River @ Bridgewater

