

Upgraded Candowie

photos geoff russell

securing water for the future

Westernport Water describes how a larger reservoir is essential to optimise the use of all available local water sources and meet future demand.

Recent years have seen both drought and flood-like conditions throughout South Gippsland. Historical rainfall data and monitoring of Candowie Reservoir's regular fill-and-empty cycle was all the evidence Westernport Water needed to pursue the provision of a larger reservoir.

Candowie Reservoir – whose Indigenous name means Good Water – was built in 1963 with a capacity of 1,037 ML and officially opened by the Minister of Water Supply in April 1965. It was then raised from its original capacity to 1,761 ML in 1978 and to 2,263ML in 1982.

With the capacity of Candowie equivalent to approximately one year of demand, the supply vulnerability of the annual fill-and-empty cycle of Candowie – the sole water storage for Westernport Water – was exposed in 2006/7. During a two-year drought period the reservoir capacity fell to just 7%, and Stage 4 water restrictions were imposed. Community water-saving efforts, permanent water-

saving rules and the introduction of recycled water have helped us through the dry times and relieved pressure on drinking water supplies. However, securing a reliable long-term water supply for its fast growing community and one of Victoria's most popular tourist destinations was Westernport Water's main concern.

The Candowie Upgrade Project, a key component of Westernport Water's Water Supply Demand Strategy, was seen as the most economical and efficient way to further drought-proof the Westernport Water community. A larger reservoir wall has been constructed to include an embankment and other associated infrastructure works, raising the full supply level of Candowie Reservoir by 3 metres, along with an upgrade to the spillway and outlet tower. The Grantville-Glen Alvie Road was also raised by 1 metre to allow for the larger reservoir.

Candowie Reservoir remained fully operational during construction, and crucial construction works were completed as planned within a nine-month period when



Photo captions- bottom left to right 1/ Westernport Water Managing Director Murray Jackson and Chairman of the Board Trevor Nink assess the new dam wall and spillway. 2/ Trevor Nink, Murray Jackson and the Hon. Ken Smith unveil a plaque to commemorate the opening of the upgrade. 3/ Cooper Gildon Marco Esposito from Newhaven Primary School, planting some of the 50,000 trees to be planted on site.

the reservoir was naturally at its lowest. This has enabled maximum storage recharge from the regular winter and spring rains now arriving.

Now complete, the \$9.2 million water storage project has effectively doubled the available storage capacity of Candowie from 2263ML to 4463ML. Speaking at the official opening, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Mr Ken Smith Member for Bass MLA said: "Doubling the capacity of Candowie is essential to securing a reliable and affordable water supply for future generations. Development of sustainable infrastructure like Candowie is important for the region's growth and is fundamental in building resilience in the face of climate variability." Westernport Water now has the capacity to optimise the use of all available local water sources, including its licence to draw water from the Bass River, pump from bore fields in the Corinella groundwater management area, harness inflows from Tennent Creek and connect to the Melbourne pool supply system. A larger reservoir will reduce the chance of future water restrictions, deliver

improved environmental outcomes for Tennent Creek downstream of Candowie, and offer improved flood protection for communities in the Bass area.

An extensive revegetation program is underway to restore and increase the vegetation surrounding the reservoir, which will assist in improving water quality by filtering runoff from the surrounding area. With the late winter rain, water levels have already risen well above the old full supply level and are now reflected in the water levels communicated to the community.