The Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project aims to develop the Lake Condah / Tyrendarra area in south-western Victoria, as a major national heritage park and as hub for sustainable development development for southwest Victoria.

Restoring the water levels to Lake Condah will be a major project to revitalize the original wetlands and reactivate the traditionally constructed aquaculture system.

Gaining National Heritage listing and finally World Heritage listing will be a major stimulus to the development of tourism and sustainable development. The district and its facilities will become a major centre for sustainable farming and tourism, focusing on history, heritage, environment, ecotourism and learning.

Restoring the Lake Condah Church will provide the impetus and avenue for engagement, reconciliation and healing between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Introduction.

The Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project is an Indigenous initiative that came from the Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation. The Indigenous community recognized the need for strong partners with resources and a capacity to undertake the overall project.

The Project was launched in February 2002 and since then a leadership group and partnership forum has been working since then to prepare a Master Plan for the development of the Project.

The Project was successful in receiving grants from the Glenelg Hopkins Water Catchment Authority, the Alcoa Foundation and the Indigenous Land Corporation to establish a project office and manager position at the commencement of 2004.
Outstanding Significance of the Lake Condah area.

- The traditionally constructed system of eel & fish traps, channels, races and weirs are outstanding evidence of one of the world’s first aquaculture technology.

- The remains of the Stone Huts, dating between 200 and 4,000 years old, are of international significance to human-kind’s transition to sedentary (permanent) dwellings.

- The volcanic landforms are internationally significant.

- Lake Surprise at Mt. Eccles is globally significant as a high quality record of climate and vegetation change over the past 30,000 years.

- The 20 year Eumeralla War of Resistance during the early 1800s is of national significance.

- The Lake Condah Mission site is one of the most important examples of over 400 Aboriginal missions established in Australia.

- The Commonwealth legislation for the hand back of the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission site is of national significance.

Key Elements of the Project.

- To gain national and world heritage listing for the Lake Condah district.

- To restore the water levels of Lake Condah to revitalize the wetlands and reactivate the traditionally constructed aquaculture system.

- To restore the Lake Condah Church site.

- To develop land management plans.

- To develop an international learning centre.

- To development employment and enterprise activities focused on tourism, accommodation, aquaculture, bush tucker, etc. and supporting industries.

- To build a strong partnership of active members supporting the project.

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Benefits Flowing from the Project.

It is anticipated that National Heritage listing and the advocacy for World Heritage listing will act as a magnet and attract people into the area. Research that the World Heritage Areas in Australia generated an average annual return of $291m and 2,575 jobs per area in 1995 (Drimi & Common).

Assuming an additional 300,000 visitors per annum over a 10 – 15 year period, the Project would generate:
- Direct investment of $50m.
- Direct provision of 100 jobs.
- Generation of 1,567 indirect jobs.
- Adding $126m to the local economy.
- Attraction of 3,000 new residents.
- Adding $170m to the construction industry.

In summary, the Project would lead significantly to providing more and varied employment and career opportunities generally, and encourage young people to stay in the area.

Challenges

- Ensuring that the entire community has an understanding of the project.

- Ensure that the entire community has a stake in the project and share in the outcomes.

- Refine, in conjunction with local farmers and other important stakeholders, what is possible and desirable in terms of restoration Lake Condah’s water levels.

- Real engagement and consultation with key stakeholders such as local farmers, local businesses, community organizations, the Indigenous community and government agencies.

- Gaining wide community support and active partner participation.
Your Involvement

Strongly committed and actively engaged partners will be the key to success of the project. We are seeking partners from individuals, business, community organizations and government agencies. To date, a range of government agencies, councils, businesses, education bodies, environment and conservation groups, community organizations have agreed to support committed to the partnership including:

- Glenelg Shire.
- Local Farmers and Land Owners.
- Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation.
- Alcoa Portland AluminiumAluminium.
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA.
- Timbercorp.
- RMIT.
- Deakin University.

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