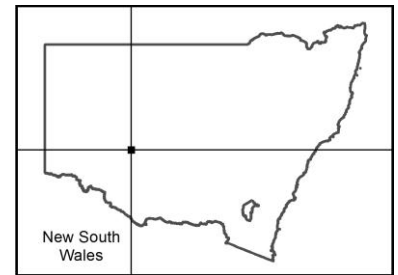


Statement of Management Intent



Morrison's Lake Nature Reserve

1. Introduction

This statement outlines the main values, issues, management directions and priorities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for managing Morrison's Lake Nature Reserve. This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the reserve until a plan of management has been prepared in accordance with the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 \(NPW Act\)](#). The NPWS [Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy](#) states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the NPW Act and the ['precautionary principle' \(see Principle 15\)](#).

2. Management principles

Nature reserves are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas containing outstanding, unique or representative ecosystems, species, communities or natural phenomena. Under the NPW Act [\(section 30J\)](#), nature reserves are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem functions, and protect geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena
- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- promote public appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of the reserve's natural and cultural values
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

The primary purpose of nature reserves is to conserve nature. Nature reserves differ from national parks in that they do not have the provision of visitor use as a management purpose or principle.

3. Context

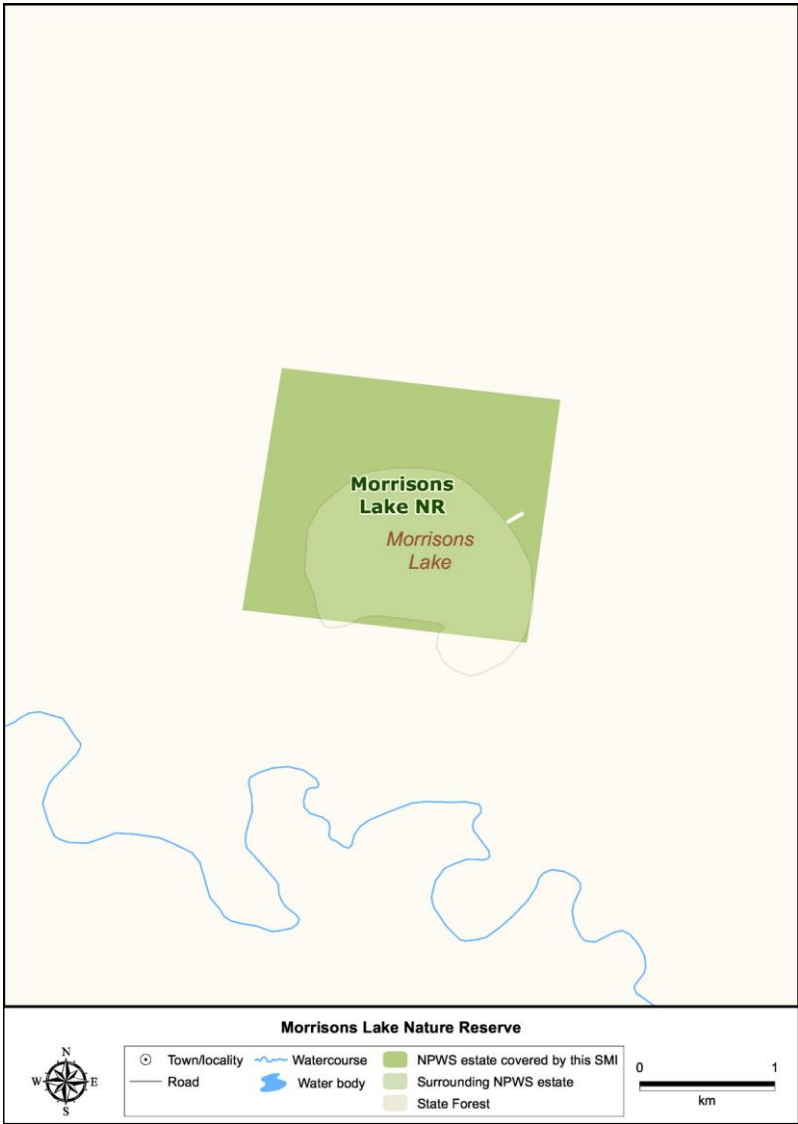
Reservation details: Morrison's Lake Nature Reserve was reserved on 11 January 1985.

Size: 312 hectares.

Morrison's Lake Nature Reserve is located approximately 27 kilometres south-east of Ivanhoe, 20 kilometres north-west of Mossgiel and 225 kilometres south-west of Cobar and is located within the traditional area of the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan People. It falls within the Riverina Bioregion, and within the administrative areas of Ivanhoe Local Aboriginal Land Council, Central Darling Shire Council and Western Local Land Services.

Morrison's Lake Nature Reserve is a small, isolated park with no visitor access or internal roads, and is surrounded by grazing properties. The reserve is named after a past landowner, Mr

Morrison, and was historically known as Cattle Camp Lake because it was on a major bullock wagon route from Darnick to Mossgiel. Prior to reservation, the reserve was vacant Crown land.



Morrison’s Lake Nature Reserve is representative of the small, shallow, ephemeral lakes of western New South Wales which provide habitat for birds and other species under wet conditions. The lake received annual spring flows from the Lachlan River between the 1890s, when a weir was constructed on the Lachlan River to divert flows down Willandra Creek, up until 1987, when Morrissions Lake ceased to be used as the storage for the Ivanhoe town water supply. During this period it provided a refuge that attracted 175 bird species, including 14 listed under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act). The reserve was established to protect the abundant animal species.

Morrissions Lake Nature Reserve encloses one of the many lakes scattered over the riverine floodplain that forms the terminal drainage basins of Willandra Creek. This plain is made up of fine-textured Quaternary alluvium deposited from ancestral rivers and streams, and is now dissected by the Lachlan River system and its dispersing creeks. The Kilfera and Oxford land systems comprise the majority of the reserve, with relict and semi-active floodplain systems in the north and south of the reserve. Willandra Creek, a Lachlan River tributary, flows directly south of the reserve and periodically fills Morrissions Lake from a constructed channel. When full, Morrissions Lake is over 2 metres deep, and drains to the west through a number of small channels. The Lachlan River catchment is highly regulated, with 10 large dams and over 300 weirs. These structures have

substantially altered the natural flow of water reaching creeks, swamps and important floodplain wetlands downstream. The natural hydrological regime prior to the construction of the numerous dams and weirs is unknown, however it is presumed that water would have reached and flooded the lake irregularly.

Flooding areas around Morrisons Lake are surrounded by small areas of black box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*), river cooba (*Acacia stenophylla*), river red gum (*E. camaldulensis*) and lignum (*Duma florulenta*). The ongoing health of these communities relies on appropriate water regimes delivered down the Willandra Creek system. The park protects a refuge area for roosting and breeding waterbirds, including species listed in international conservation treaties or listed as threatened under the TSC Act and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

4. Values

- The park protects critical habitat for species listed under the EPBC Act such as the endangered Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) and the migratory Australian painted snipe (*Rostratula australis*).
- Threatened bird species listed under the TSC Act that have been recorded within the reserve include the square-tailed kite (*Lophoictinia isura*), blue-billed duck (*Oxyura australis*), grey-crowned babbler – eastern subspecies (*Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*), hooded robin – south eastern form (*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*), freckled duck (*Stictonetta naevosa*), spotted harrier (*Circus assimilis*), little eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*), bush stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*), pink cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*), brown treecreeper – eastern subspecies (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*) and the white-fronted chat (*Epthianura albifrons*).
- When the lake is full, the reserve provides roosting and breeding habitat for a number of protected waterbird species including the white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*), glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), sharp-tailed sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*), common greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) and rainbow bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*).
- Morrisons Lake Nature Reserve contains evidence of past water management practices and has a strong community attachment. The lake was an original water source used by the Ivanhoe community until 1987.
- The reserve contains evidence of Aboriginal occupation and provides a strong connection to Country for the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan People.

5. Issues

- Consistent with the surrounding landscape, rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), feral cats (*Felis catus*), foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) and feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*) have been recorded in the reserve.
- There are occurrences of grazing cattle and sheep entering Morrisons Lake Nature Reserve from neighbouring properties due to the lack of a boundary fence on the eastern side of the reserve. This is having an adverse impact on the native plants and animals.
- The existing boundary fencing does not coincide with the reserve boundary in places due to a long established 'give and take' arrangement.
- The historic hydrological regime of the lake is unknown. Water reaching the reserve has been restricted and altered significantly since 1987. The lake has only filled intermittently, and current patterns of inundation are believed to have negatively impacted habitat values. This has led to increased erosion and possibly damage to unidentified Aboriginal sites within the reserve. Alteration to the natural flow regimes of rivers, streams, floodplains and wetlands is a key threatening process under the TSC Act.

6. Key management directions

- Fire is managed in accordance with the Morrisons Lake Nature Reserve [Fire Management Strategy](#).
- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the NPWS [Regional Pest Management Strategy](#): Western Rivers Region.
- Relevant stakeholders and authorities will be consulted to investigate the potential for environmental water allocations down Willandra Creek and into Morrisons Lake at appropriate intervals such as during prolonged periods of dry weather (drought).
- Park neighbours will be consulted to investigate options for establishing stock-proof boundary fencing on the correct boundary alignment. Where this is not possible, other options will be investigated with the adjoining landowners prior to constructing a complete stock-proof fence for the reserve. Subject to available resourcing, assistance may be provided to neighbours to install stock-proof park boundary fencing in accordance with the NPWS Boundary Fencing Policy.
- Vegetation mapping and targeted vegetation surveys will be undertaken. Changes in the health and distribution of vegetation communities will be monitored in response to water availability.
- Targeted animal surveys will be undertaken as filling of the lake occurs.
- Further research into the Aboriginal heritage values of the reserve will be encouraged with the Ivanhoe Community Working Group who represent the local Aboriginal community.
- Historic sites will be recorded and their significance assessed.
- Visitor facilities will not be provided in the reserve.
- Visitors to the reserve are required to seek approval from NPWS prior to visiting.
- All management activities will be preceded by the preparation of an environmental assessment or heritage assessment where this is a requirement of NPWS policy or legislation.
- Environmental repair and threat management programs, such as erosion mitigation measures, pest management, and activities arising from threatened species requirements may be implemented in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures.
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration, to ensure the safety of visitors, to protect wildlife or to prevent damage to park assets.
- A plan of management will be prepared to set out the ongoing management objectives for the reserve. The plan of management is a statutory document under the NPW Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the reserves by promoting and raising public awareness of its special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of this reserve or this statement, contact the NPWS Cobar Office on (02) 6836 2692 or 16–19 Barton Street, Cobar NSW 2835.

Disclaimer: This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the reserve prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Office of Environment and Heritage liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The maps in this statement are intended to show the reserve's location and basic features only, and are not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within parks.

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