

Key Program Reports 2005-2006



Executive overview
Biodiversity
Salinity Management
Waterways Management
River Health & Water Quality
Regional and Local Landcare
Pest Plant & Animal
Community Education and Communication

Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee

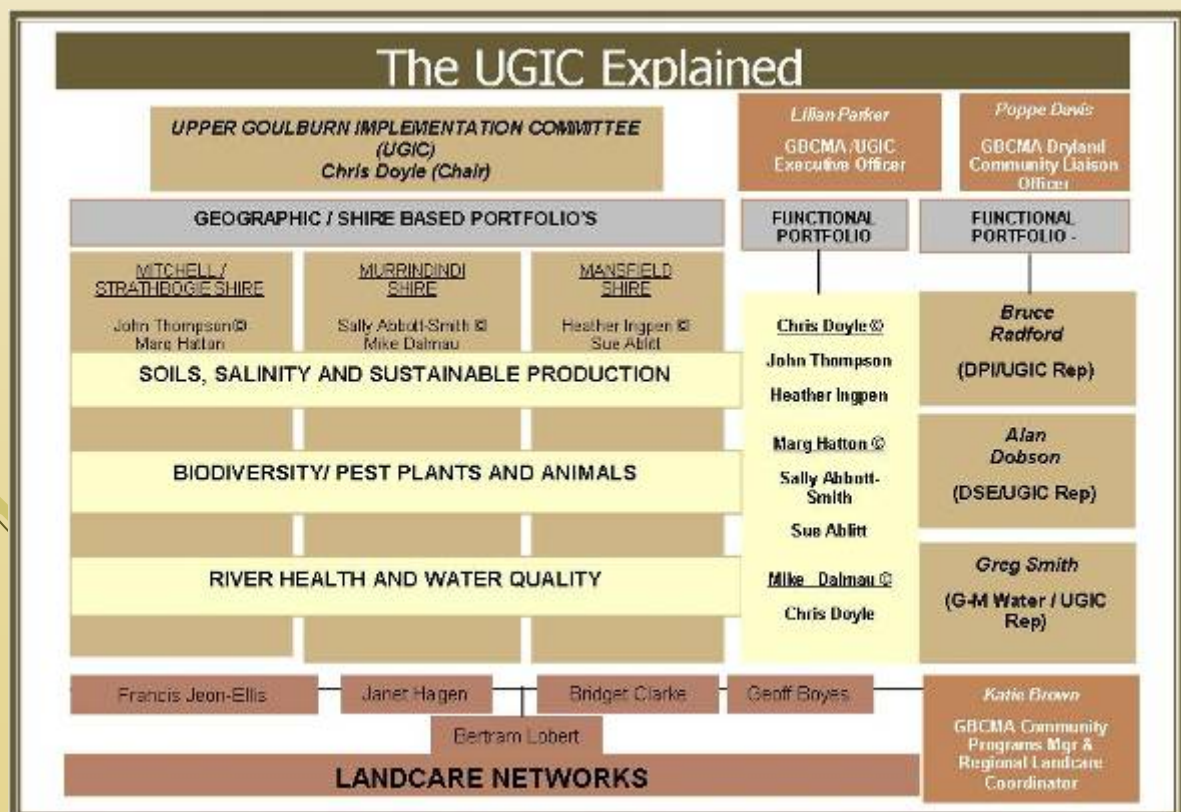
3. Chairmans Report
4. Executive Officers Report
6. Biodiversity
8. Salinity & Soils
9. Salinity Infrastructure
10. Waterways and Riverine Health
12. Pest Plant & Animal Program
13. Community Programs/Regional Landcare
14. Landcare coordinators
16. Communication and Community Education
18. Implementation Committee Details

Pd/AR2006

The Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee recognises the valuable input from our community and funding partners and thanks the following investors for their support.

The Australian Federal Government—The Natural Heritage Trust—The National Action Plan for Salinity & Water Quality— The National Landcare Program—Victorian State Government—Second Generation Landcare.

Photographic acknowledgement : Steve Smith (DSE), DSE Photo Library, Waterways staff, Boss Photography, Poppe Davis, Tony Kubeil, Ann Jelinek, Rob Gardiner, Fern Hames.





Chairmans Report

Neville Barwick

For some years the members of the Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee have been examining governance and service delivery options, which would enable it to translate the *Regional Catchment Strategy* into locally meaningful programs and to implement these with the full support of the community.

To do this in a way that achieves multiple benefits and more outcomes for scarce resources requires the integration of the hitherto separate strategies dealing with salinity, water quality and river health, bio-diversity and sustainable production.

It also requires the close involvement and dedication of Local Government, our partner agencies Department of Sustainability and Environment and Department of Primary Industries, Landcare and landholders, schools, Victorian Farmers Federation etc.

As I retire after some years on Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee, to work with the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority Board, I am delighted that in 2005/2006 we confirmed the key structural and administrative arrangements and have begun to roll out a program of sub-catchment strategy formulation in conjunction with all of our partners.

The new governance structure places a significant responsibility on Implementation Committee members and on Key Program Leaders in the Departments of Sustainability and Environment and Primary Industries. Their commitment to the primary goals of the *Corporate Plan of the GBCMA* will ultimately translate as *Land Use Guidelines*, which will influence the future social well being, environmental quality and sustainable productive capacity of the Upper Goulburn.

It is a complex and demanding task and will require the engagement of all levels in the community from the

individual to local groups and schools and of the media our Shires and Associations.

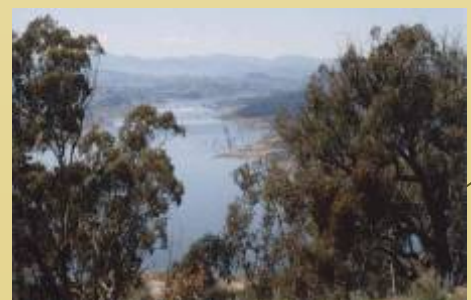
Details are available in the report.

In this the twentieth year of Landcare – congratulations to all involved – it has become a model worldwide for community concern for the environment. In this regard we concluded the year with presentations at Stonelea Resort to Ann Jelinek, winner of the Hubert Miller Perpetual Trophy, and to Doug Lade from the Highlands and Hughes Creek Catchment Cooperative recipient of the Landcare Award for Excellence.

I offer congratulations and recognition on behalf of the Upper Goulburn community to Chris Doyle who has been re-elected to the chair of the Implementation Committee after a years break and to John Thompson who will be his Deputy.

My personal and very warm thanks to my Implementation Committee colleagues and to Lilian Parker, Executive Officer, who has given exceptional support to the Implementation Committee, and to staff and agency partners in the Departments of Sustainability and Environment and Primary Industries.

Our working partnership will continue at the Board.





Executive Officers Report

Lilian Parker

To facilitate an efficient mechanism for dealing with the wide range of issues involved and to take into account member interests, the Upper Goulburn catchment has been divided into three geographic areas (sub-catchments) and three natural resources functional issues. Portfolios have been established to deal with each.

Successful operation of the Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee (UGIC) depends on these structural arrangements and member portfolio responsibilities. Portfolios will be allocated and revised annually in conjunction with the review of the UGIC Charter and Committee performance. Portfolio operations are also seen as a key component of UGIC member development.

The structure involves six portfolios:

- Three geographic/sub-catchment areas to facilitate the integration of natural resource management with statutory land use planning, by closely relating to the Shires of Mitchell, Murrindindi, and Mansfield
- Three functional streams, on the basis of biodiversity and pest plants and animals, river health and water issues land health [soils & salinity] with sustainable production.

The primary focus of the sub-catchment portfolio is to engage the community in the work of UGIC and to act as a conduit between Local Government / Community and UGIC. This will involve regular liaison and attendance on behalf of UGIC at public occasions. The primary focus of the functional portfolio is to liaise with technical expertise in partner agencies and the wider community to ensure that issues and data of relevance to sub-catchment portfolios and to UGIC are presented in a timely and meaningful manner.

UGIC has been translating the Regional Catchment Strategy into locally meaningful strategies which will reflect community priorities, will describe the investment activities in terms of integrated multiple benefits in salinity, water quality, biodiversity and sustainable land use, and will engage the community in their delivery.

Our primary objective, and our first step towards integrated multiple outcome sub-catchment strategies and works programs, has been detailed understanding of the issues and thinking which led to the current prioritising, scaling, and allocation of resources in each key program. This has allowed assessment of current levels of integration between programs, and thus the level of multiple outcomes.

Chairman

Chris Doyle announced his decision to retire at the 2005 Annual Landcare Awards event, hosted by UGIC at Trawool. Chairman of the CMA Board, Stephen Mills AO, and Chief Executive Officer Bill O'Kane, paid tribute to the outstanding commitment and contribution to the management of natural resources in this extremely important catchment, given by Chris during his seven years in the position. In doing so, they also welcomed Neville Barwick to the Chair and Mike Dalmau as Deputy.

Links with Local Government

During the past year meetings between the Implementation Committee and local government have created an opportunity to raise issues of common interest and to educate the representative community of the CMA role and responsibilities. UGIC has supported municipal projects with regard to roadside management and wetland planning, environmental committees and new landholder kits on natural resource management information. In particular with Murrindindi Shire, the CMA has supported CSIRO research into natural resource management offsets for development. In Mitchell Shire the SWG community has undertaken a sub catchment risk assessment and is also grappling with the issue of offsets. In this case high levels of revegetation through farm forestry or other means could have a positive effect on salinity discharges from the area but may also have a negative impact on the water yield of the catchment for urban and rural water use.



Executive Officers Report



UGIC has provided ongoing support to local governments for Wallaby Creek management near Kinglake, the UT Creek Enhancement Plan in Alexandra, Ford Creek rehabilitation in Mansfield, and Yea Wetlands development near Yea.

The Implementation Committee has also supported community weed actions through rural extension programs at Bonnie Doon (Patterson's curse), South West Goulburn (gorse) and along Straths Creek and King Parrot Creek (blackberry and gorse) involving a number of partners such as the Good Neighbour program, WaterWays and Landcare. The Yea River Land Management Group has successfully been running a FOXOFF project supported by the IC pest animal priority program and will link into the Yea Fire Recovery program baiting projects over autumn.

Macquarie Perch survey and results 2006

A survey of Macquarie Perch was conducted in the upper Goulburn catchment over April by Dr Janet Pritchard from the Dept of Sustainability and Environment using fyke nets, bait-traps and backpack electro-fishing to determine fish numbers. Streams surveyed include King Parrot Creek and Yea River, Hughes Creek and Sugarloaf Creek in the Upper Goulburn catchment. Sightings of Macquarie Perch in Hughes Creek are a good indicator of stream health and water quality with good prospects for other native fish in the area. Macquarie perch populations were also found in King Parrot Creek and Yea River with perch up to 1.2kg recorded. Water rats, platypus, and other native fish were also recorded. The healthy populations were attributed to willow removal and revegetation works undertaken by the CMA and landholders that protect and enhance the aquatic habitat.

Upper Goulburn - Restoring Riparian Corridors - 2005-6

A concentrated program of woody weed management on upper Goulburn waterways in recent months has resulted in the successful revegetation of banks where introduced species have been removed. Willow management is a priority program for maintenance of water health on all upper Goulburn rivers and streams and contributes to habitat improvement for native animals and fish. The weed management and revegetation program has been in progress throughout the catchment on upper Goulburn tributaries including the Jamieson, Howqua and Delatite Rivers and the King Parrot Creek. This has been an opportunity to link

sites with landholders support and restore native vegetation corridors has so many benefits. By restoring native species of trees, grasses and groundcovers will improve wildlife corridors and return the rivers back to life.

Exceptional works have been carried out to remove weeds and revegetate the stream banks along the King Parrot Creek through the restoring Riparian Corridors project. The King Parrot Creek has been subject to a Stream Flow Management Plan in the last two years as well as a program of weed management from Hazeldene to Strath Creek. Work has been complemented by a high level of support from local landowners and the Strath Creek Landcare group, who have run weed control and revegetation project for several years.

Lilian Parker
Executive Officer
Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee





Biodiversity

Tim Barlow

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

Biodiversity Action Planning (BAP) is a long-running project that is close to completion in the Upper Goulburn Catchment. As a result of this process people in the Upper Goulburn will have access to maps highlighting biodiversity priority sites across all tenures at the landscape scale. Conservation Plans have also been developed to support the maps. These plans can be used as local biodiversity action plans, documenting biodiversity assets, threats to the assets and management requirements. Community groups, local government, and government agencies are encouraged to use these plans as a resource for planning any land, water or biodiversity projects they may have in mind.

BAP has been integrated to the Soils & Salinity Program in the Eildon and South West Goulburn Landscapes, where the extension officers have used the BAP information in planning and have adopted a proactive approach to their extension activities. As a result good on-ground activities that incorporate both land management and biodiversity outcomes have been achieved.

Bush Returns continued throughout this year across the entire Goulburn Broken Catchment. Interest from the Upper Goulburn landholders was significant, with almost half the expressions of interest coming from this region. Across the entire Goulburn Broken catchment, 53 management plans were prepared, with 32 bids, and just over half of these landholders were successful (based on the available funding). Forty percent of contracts signed between the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and landholders were within the Upper Goulburn covering 149ha of the 502ha secured under the program. Bush Returns sites are managed to achieve large-scale natural regeneration of native vegetation with participating landholders receiving annual payments for up to ten years



in return for active management. Key activities may include grazing management, weed and biomass control, and scarification or burning to assist regeneration. Annual reporting on outcomes and compliance with management plans is required of all participants.

Threatened Species are a key component of UGIC's Biodiversity Program. During 2005 – 06, six Recovery Plans for threatened fauna were implemented in various areas including the development of a strategic grazing program at Mt Piper to maintain grassland habitat for the Golden Sun Moth. An additional population of Golden Sun Moth was also identified on a property at Taggerty.

The Mt Buller Mountain Pygmy Possum population has deteriorated alarmingly over the last 10 years (estimated to be down from c. 300 in 1996, to c. 100 in 2006), which is attributed to the habitat loss and predation by cats and foxes. An on-going predator control program has been initiated in partnership with Mount Buller Alpine Resort Board.

Surveys for the Striped Legless Lizard have helped to clarify the distribution of this reptile, which persists in unploughed agricultural grassy woodland between Seymour and Yea. A number of community information days have been held to highlight the existence of this threatened species, and appropriate management of its habitat.

Predation by young trout is posing a major threat to the continued survival of the Spotted Tree Frog in the Upper Goulburn, where it occurs in a handful of locations. Work is continuing to identify a way to save this species, now found only in high mountain streams in the Goulburn Broken and North East Catchments.



Photograph by Dean Heinze

Biodiversity



The Barred Galaxias is another highly restricted species being eliminated by trout, now found nowhere else but in the Upper Goulburn reaches. Populations persist in some streams where natural barriers such as waterfalls prevent trout from accessing these areas. On-going monitoring is done each year to ensure these areas remain trout free.

Trust for Nature has covenanted 40 ha through its covenant program, and a substantial area of covenants (400+ha) are expected to be finalised soon. Other activities include conducting a number of stewardship visits to assist landholders with management of remnant vegetation, and participation in a number of field days and working bees focussing particularly on grassy woodlands and threatened fauna.

Conservation Broker is a project designed to inform real estate agents of the marketing potential and issues associated with land supporting conservation values. After consulting with over twenty real estate agencies in the Upper and Mid Goulburn Broken catchment, a tool kit for agents has been developed, which comprises an Agents Manual and associated Land Assessment Sheet.

To support these products a website was also developed to provide a listing service for properties with conservation values and links to a variety of environmental information. www.conservationbroker.net.au

Roadside Management Planning has been carried out in Mitchell, Mansfield and Murrindindi Shires by their respective environmental planning officers. This information raises awareness of the value and location of biodiversity assets on roadsides and will assist to avoid inadvertent damage.

As a follow up, a risk mitigation project is being conducted across all local governments in the Goulburn Broken catchment to identify levels of risk posed by operational procedures, and to develop proactive mitigative measures,

including access to training for field and planning staff as appropriate.

Euroa Arboretum and GB Seedbank provide community groups and landholders with access to revegetation information, indigenous seed and tube-stock to enable vegetation restoration activities to proceed. The Seedbank buys seed from local landholders and community groups on order according to environmentally sound guidelines (eg to avoid over-collecting from small stands), and to anticipated needs (plus some) for the following year. Seed is then cleaned, tested, catalogued and stored for resale. This means that indigenous seed is available (as far as possible) to all individuals and groups wishing to carry out revegetation works. Plants can be grown to requirements by the Arboretum. Planning is essential, as seed production is highly variable from year to year.

In order to avoid pressure on rare plant populations and small remnants, the Arboretum and Seedbank have embarked on a long-term plan to establish seed production areas on private land. These seed 'orchards' can provide handy extra income to landholders, as well as a reliable and secure seed source.





Salinity & Soils

Rick Felton

DPI Regional Program Leader, Sustainable Landscapes

NE/GB

Whole Farm Planning (WFP) courses have proven a success in the upper Goulburn catchment with positive feedback arising from participants attending courses in Kilmore & Yea. Both courses have involved large and small landholders, lifestyle farmers, conventional traditional farmers and landholders looking to explore alternative farming opportunities.

The Kilmore and Yea courses had 12 and 14 participants respectively with two thirds of each group completing their accreditation. Topics delivered at the course include land classing, soils management, fire awareness & prevention, drought management, farm water supply, biodiversity and native vegetation management, pest plants and animals, pasture and grazing management.

Paddock Trees

The Paddock Tree Project held two field days hosted by Strath Creek and Warrenbayne Landcare Groups with over 50 landholders attending. Landholders had an opportunity to learn about the productive and ecological benefits of paddock trees within our landscape.

The field days covered topics on the importance of paddock trees to farm productivity (by Tony Parker, DPI Rutherglen), from invertebrates (by Allan Yen Entomologist for DPI Knoxfield) to bats (Lance Williams, Trust for Nature).

The paddock tree package was launched consisting of informational material on the benefits of paddock trees in both productive and ecological landscapes, and practical information on methods for their protection and restoration

Case studies

The South West Goulburn hosted two successful planting days over winter 2005, involving important partnerships between Landcare, Rotary and Department of Primary Industries (DPI), with financial assistance through Environmental Management Incentives by GBCMA and the Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee.

Planting was held in the Glenaroua and Dabyminga sub-catchments, where both areas contribute high salt loads into the Goulburn River. Planting sites target salinity to help meet outputs set by the Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy and components of the Dryland Salinity Management Plan. Planting sites also target biodiversity and water quality priorities within the area.

Glenaroua Planting Day 2005

Over 6,000 indigenous trees and shrubs were planted by Rotary volunteers and Glenaroua Land Management Group members in July 2005 achieving a total of 12ha revegetated.

The trees were grown by the Rotary Club of Northcote and Mr Bob Denholm, a former club member who has been growing trees for the project for many years. The day involved 160 volunteers from various Rotary Clubs including Northcote, Manningham, Cheltenham, Nunawading, Brighton Beach, Wyndam, Keilor East, Brighton, Preston, Seymour and Craigieburn plus members from the Land Rover and Pajero 4WD clubs.

Dabyminga Planting Day 2005

25 Rotarians joined the Dabyminga Catchment Cooperative in July 2005 to plant indigenous trees and shrubs. A total of 1,000 trees and shrubs were planted on two properties by Rotary members from Prahran, Chadstone/Malvern East, Malvern and Toorak. Dabyminga Catchment Cooperative and the Rotary Clubs are planning to expand the program to include more groups.





Salinity Infrastructure

Stephen Feiss
Goulburn-Murray Water

Engineering options program is part of the Goulburn Broken Dryland Salinity Management Plan (GBDSMP). The program aims to provide salinity management through appropriately targeted engineering type controls.

Groundwater Exploration and Development Incentives

The program manages an incentive scheme to assist landholders explore and develop a groundwater bore where there is a perceived salinity benefit. The scheme is funded by the Australian government's National Action Plan and is available for landholders wishing to develop irrigation enterprises that can be shown to be environmentally sustainable.



A number of in-progress investigations were followed up and 1 new investigation incentive paid. One application remains in progress for installation of pumping bore in the Broadford area.

The program will continue to be targeted in the southwest Goulburn area next year (2006/07) but with a greater degree of focus in specific areas.

Landholders surveyed as part of the review have responded positively to improvements.

Salinity Monitoring and Evaluation

The program continues to monitor groundwater in the Plains and assesses stream salinity and salt exported from the Goulburn Broken Dryland, assisting the GBCMA to measure the progress of salinity implementation work and impacts of climate on stream flow and salinity.

The stream salinity and flow data has shown the continued impact of lower than average rainfall and

therefore lower average stream flows. This fact inevitably leads to higher than average stream salinities but lower overall salt loads to our main river system, the Goulburn River.

The southwest Goulburn which includes the sub-catchments of Whiteheads Ck, Sunday Ck and Sugarloaf Ck, exports the greatest salt loads from the Goulburn Broken catchment via its streams, with Whiteheads Creek maintaining the highest salt load and highest flow-weighted salinity at 35 tonnes per square kilometre in 2005.

Investigations

The Whiteheads Creek remains a priority area for salinity work. A trial site was established in the sub-catchment to investigate how groundwater is contributing to salinity and how engineering options can assist in these types of groundwater flow systems.

Part of the investigation work used G-MW's expertise in geology and groundwater to make better use of existing groundwater bore data. This work will allow us to better define where our salinity risk areas are and indicate where there are options for beneficial use of groundwater that is currently a salinity threat or a potential threat in the near future.

The investigations in 2005/06 have provided valuable knowledge about the groundwater processes and will enable us to target sub-surface drainage work such as groundwater pumping or surface drainage to manage groundwater in a more sustainable way.





Waterways and Riverine Health

Wayne Tennant

River Health Strategic Manager

Strategic Achievements

Finalisation and Ministerial endorsement of the Goulburn Broken Regional River Health Strategy.

This year saw the completion and endorsement of the Goulburn Broken Regional River Health Strategy. The strategy was a major achievement, involving partner agencies and the community. It will guide river health priorities over the next decade. A mid term review of this strategy will be undertaken in 2010 when a detailed evaluation of the progress towards the stated goals and objectives will be undertaken. This review will reflect on achievements made, whether progress is adequate, and consider whether there is new science and knowledge that needs to be taken into account and incorporated.

Monitoring

The Authority participated and initiated a number of Monitoring Programs during the year. These range from snapshot monitoring through to detailed river assessments.

Examples include:

Application of the Index of Stream Condition

A number of sites (representative stream reaches) were assessed in the upper Goulburn region by applying components of the Channel Form and Riparian Zone sub-indices from the Index of Stream Condition. The project enables an assessment of the success of protection and enhancement initiatives.

Assessment of riparian projects in the upper Goulburn Region

The objective of the project is to assess the current condition of riparian project sites and enable an assessment of the success of protection and enhancement initiatives. Overall 30 riparian protection sites were assessed, in 2005, by applying components from the Index of Stream Condition, Vegetation Quality Assessment and Habitat Hectares methods. These sites can be re-evaluated to quantify progress toward Resource Condition Targets,

Sentinel Sites and Extension to the Index of Stream Condition (ISC)

The overall program consisted of two separate programs of ISC sites: 'Sentinel' sites within the upper part of the Goulburn Broken CMA region were reassessed this year to detect any potential annual variations in condition scores.

Management of Stream Flow (SFMP's)

Planning for the King Parrot Creek "Stream Flow Management Plan" is well underway. The Minister has approved a Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) for King Parrot Creek catchment which commences the planning process.

The planning process and method for the Yea River was developed with the decision made to follow the Stream Flow Management Plan process early next year.

The Resource Allocation Model (REALM) for both catchments was updated which will provide important information for the "Stream Flow Management Plans".

Water Quality Action Plan

A review of the water quality strategy commenced in 2005/2006. The review aims to provide an overview of the progress of programs with respect to their water quality objectives. The strategy review will be aligned with the five year Catchment Strategies review currently being undertaken in the Shepparton Irrigation Region. The development of a Water Quality Plan is on-going with the Authority continuing to work with neighbouring Catchment Management Authorities to develop a plan that is consistent across catchments and aligns with the Regional River Health Strategy.

Heritage Values - Field Assessments

A number of sites have been assessed for indigenous heritage as part of the waterway program. This process





Waterways and Riverine Health Waterways Staff

has provided team members with greater insight into heritage sites and indigenous values. Formal and informal presentation on this component of our activity has been promoted through the River Health team, Implementation Committees and the Board.

Riparian and Instream - Weed Booklet

A Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (aquatic and riparian) weeds booklet was prepared to assist landowners and agencies identify weeds which impact on the quality of riparian lands and instream habitats.

CASE STUDIES

Restoring Rivers in the upper Goulburn catchment

The Victorian Governments "Our Water Our Future" program has made funding available for river restoration works throughout Victoria including tributaries of the Goulburn River.

The Howqua and Goulburn Rivers are Heritage Rivers of great significance. A Crown Land Water Frontage Review was completed in 2005 highlighting specific sites where management is required. Combined with the Upper Goulburn River Health Strategy, priority works were identified between Jamieson and Woods Point and on the Howqua River, where willow control measures have been undertaken.

Weed removal has been completed on stretches of the Jamieson and Goulburn Rivers, removing willow and other introduced species as far as Woods Point. Collaboration between the local community, Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Mansfield Shire has enabled extensive progress in the Woods Point streamside beautification project.

King Parrot Creek

A weed control program on the King Parrot Creek is underway with collaboration between the Landcare group, local landholders and the Rural Extension Program (REP). The Authority is two years into a spray program targeting blackberries on public sites along the creek from Hazeldene to Strath Creek. With cooperation from adjacent landholders and the Strath Creek Landcare Group weed management grants have assisted with clearing and revegetation of the public reserve sites.

Habitat works on the Rubicon River

In stream habitat was given a much needed boost on the Rubicon River this year, with the construction and installation of 109 Lunkers. These structures provide protection for fish by creating a false under-bank environment where they can retreat in times of stress and when resting.

Removal of woody weeds and introduced vegetation species has created improved access for fishermen and other recreational river users. Funding for the project was provided with income from Recreational Fishing Licences .





Pest Plant & Animal Program

Greg Wood

Department of Primary Industry

The Goulburn Broken Pest Plants and Animals program has experienced significant change during 2005/06. While much of this change related to staffing in the program, changes also occurred in relation to the management and provision of 1080 bait products, the priorities for weed management and the focus areas for integrated rabbit management.

Largely due to the results of the noxious weed review, the pest plant project has seen an increased emphasis placed on high threat or new and emerging weeds such as serrated tussock and gorse, with a reduced focus on well established species such as Paterson's curse and St. John's Wort.

Key Weed Management Projects

Serrated tussock is starting to move into the southern areas of the Goulburn Broken catchment. It is evident through the Noxious Weed Review that this weed has huge potential, so a concerted effort is underway to ensure that it does not establish in the region. At present, only fifteen small infestations exist in the catchment, mainly around Kilmore, Seymour and Avenel with all known sites treated during 2005/06.

During the past year, a highly successful gorse and blackberry control project was implemented along the King Parrot Creek with support from the Community Landcare Facilitator Program (CLF) and the Goulburn Broken CMA Waterways Program. The CLF program is funded through the State Government's Second Generation Landcare Program and provides additional extension support to high priority weed management projects. Over 70 land managers were involved in the King Parrot Creek project and high levels of compliance were achieved.

Other blackberry control projects were implemented in the Ruffy, Tarcombe, Dropmore and Highlands

areas, while early in the year, Paterson's curse projects occurred at Graytown, Northwood, Mangalore and Seymour.

The Weed Alert Project

The Weed Alert project aims to prevent the introduction and establishment of new weeds to the catchment, and all known infestations of State Prohibited species in the Upper Goulburn catchment were treated during 2005/06 with the aim of eradication in the next few years. This project registers "Weed Spotters" across the catchment and provides training in weed identification skills, with particular emphasis on high threat species. By June 2006, over 50 Weed Spotters were registered in the Goulburn Broken catchment. The Weed Alert project involves the inspection of retail and wholesale nurseries to ensure prohibited or high threat species are not being offered for sale. During 2005/06, a high proportion of the retail plant nurseries and markets in the Upper catchment were checked with very few resellers found to be trading in species with potential weed status.

Linear Reserves

DPI staff continued to work with managers of major linear reserves in the Upper Goulburn during 2005/06 to develop a more collaborative approach to weed management. A three year plan has been developed with rail managers to ensure that priority species are treated along rail reserves in areas where coordinated community weed programs are occurring.

1080 Bait supply project

A number of significant changes relating to the supply of commercially prepared 1080 poison bait products have been made affecting the types of 1080 baits available and the way in which farmers can access them. New commercial 1080 baits have been introduced to the market, for rabbits and foxes, replacing the previous methods of baiting.

Many farmers have taken the opportunity to trial the new methods of pest animal control with record numbers of fox baits being sold in Autumn and early Winter 2006.

A new hotline number, 1300 10 1080 has been installed to simplify the bait ordering process for farmers.





Regional Landcare Network

Katie Brown

Community Programs and
Regional Landcare Manager

The year 2005/06 has been an exciting and productive year for community and Landcare groups in the Upper Goulburn region. Both new projects and new frontiers have been taken on with great success, as Landcare and community environmental management efforts continue to grow and prosper.

New landholder projects have included a community Dung Beetle project which was successfully funded by the National Landcare Program for 3 years, plus a very successful Master Tree Growers Course held at Acheron, helping train, engage and skill 35 local landholders. The Murrindindi "New Landholder Welcome Pack" was also revitalised and sent out to all new property owners in the Shire, and directly resulted in 30 new enquiries to Landcare alone.

At the group level, much excitement was created when the Yea Wetland Committee of Management won a National Environment Day Award for their community efforts to address the global issues of wetland loss and degradation. Plus school groups have been a big focus, with 2 very successful and acclaimed new school projects commencing in the region this year.

"Working Towards a Sustainable Future" involved students and staff from Highlands to Kinglake participating in training, field trip and classroom activities to better understand and appreciate the local threatened species and habitats. While "Mission Phascogale", also with a threatened species focus was the brain child of DSE Senior Flora and Fauna Planning Officer, Steve Smith and a cluster of schools from the Alexandra district. This project involved 24 selected students participating in an 8-day expedition to discover new populations of the Brush-tailed Phascogale and other threatened flora and fauna species within Eildon National Park. The camp saw students rotated and undertaking different monitoring, surveying, recording and camp activities; exposed to local Taungurung culture; and discover new

populations of the Leafy Greenhood Orchid. Mission Phascogale featured in the DSE state-wide newsletter and, like the WTSF project, is planned to run again next year.

Other threatened species projects that successfully ran this year in the Upper Goulburn included on-going implementation of the Striped Legless Lizard community monitoring and education program, Macquarie Perch and native fish surveys and public presentations for the Yea River, Hughes and Strath Creek catchments, plus a fully booked bus tour of threatened species of the Marysville area. This included species such as Buxton Gum, Barred Galaxias, Golden Sun Moth and the Leadbeaters Possum, and was run as part of Threatened Species Week in September.

Master Tree Growers inset Photography by Ann Jelínek



Photography by Rob Gardiner



Photography by Fern Hames



Upper Goulburn Landcare Bridget Clark, Geoff Boyse. Landcare Coordinators

The 2005/06 year has been a very successful period for Murrindindi Shire Landcare groups. During the period over \$200,000 of in-kind Landcare time was generated through a total of 2400 volunteers and 22 guest speakers contributing to 34 meetings, 23 community field days, and 25 on-ground projects. This has resulted in over 450 community hours being donated by the Shire community to the local environment.

Once again Yea River Catchment Landcare Group addressed local fox and rabbit management through a hard-working coordinated landholder program. This year one rabbit and two fox baiting runs were held, and were celebrated through a Ferals Dinner for all participants showcasing feral animals on the menu! Yellow Creek Dairy Creek Landcare assisted the Yea group through loaning their own spay unit to control blackberries, as part of harbour control for the ferals project. The YCDC group did not need the unit this year after a strong and successful focus on trees, running 2 tree identification field days, and a year long Big Tree Competition, which has received much interest from across the state for its concept.

Strath Creek Landcare continued to showcase their innovative approaches to community Landcare running a Farm Safety Field Day that was attended by Landcare and non-Landcare community members, and featured on the front cover of the Australian Landcare magazine in December 2005. The group also participated in a collaborative project with the CMA waterways unit, actively supporting a coordinated weed management and revegetation project along their local creek system. Creeks also remained the focus for Kinglake Landcare group who continued their dedicated work to restore and enhance No 1 and No 2 creeks in the area, and ran several community planting, weed control and general education days.

Finally, Home Creek Spring Creek Landcare was successful in receiving in Australian Government Envirofund funds to revegetate and rehabilitate the railway junction at Cathkin. The project has been important focus for the group, who also held some very successful field days on sustainable farming practices, bats and local history.

Bridget Clarke,
Murrindindi Shire Landcare Coordinator

Group support and revitalisation has been the focus for Mansfield Landcare groups in 2005/06. Highlights from the year included a very successful series of public threatened species talks, plus community field days run by Merton and Ancona Landcare groups covering property planning, conservation covenants, native seed collection, pastures and growing grass frogs.

Other items to note from the area include funding for a Shire based Native Flora Guide (due out late 2006), the start of a new Geelong Grammar, Timbertop project where students collect and propagate local natives to supply seedlings for revegetation projects, and Landcare Australia funding for the quietly achieving Howqua Valley Landcare.

In total Mansfield Shire Landcare groups held 11 meetings, 4 field days, and 2 on-ground activities in 2005/06, involving 15 guest speakers, 232 volunteers and 70 hrs in-kind time. This equates to almost \$15,000 of in-kind labour, in a year where drought affected group activity, and some local groups were questioning whether to continue.

Therefore the greatest outcome for the region came at the end of the year with the revitalisation and renewed enthusiasm of the Ancona and Delatite Landcare groups. This was a direct result of support through the local Landcare Coordinator, and both groups have commenced planning with the Coordinator for a more active and renewed future.

Geoff Boyes,
Mansfield Shire Landcare Coordinator





Upper Goulburn Landcare

Peter Mitchell,

Francis Jeon-Ellis, Janet Hayes

Landcare Coordinators

In the Mitchell Shire 2005/06 began with the annual Glenaroua Land Management Group Planting Day. Once again participants included many Metropolitan Rotary, Pajero and Landrover club members, plus assistance from local Landcare members and DPI staff. In total 5,000 seedlings were planted across 2 local saline recharge sites, involving 180 volunteers. A further 4000 trees were planted by Dabyminga Catchment Cooperative (DCC) who commenced a new Rotary partnership planting project this year, in their own area.

The project compliments the DCC's other project, an arboretum at Tallarook was which also launched this year. Despite heavy downpours the event was attended by over 50 people, including representatives from neighbouring Landcare groups, the Murrindindi Shire, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority CMA, and the local township.

Another big highlight was the inaugural Good Neighbour Forum organised with Sunday Creek Dry Creek Landcare, at the Kilmore Show. More than 50 people attended the Forum, which involved a series of landholder information workshops and displays, ranging from stock handling, to fire control and weeds. Following its success this will now be an annual event.

Other well attended events for the year included a Pasture Productivity Farm Field Day, featuring properties and landholders from across the Shire, and a geology bus tour of the surrounding area.

In total Mitchell Shire Landcare groups individually contributed to 37 meetings, 16 guest speakers, 7 field days, 16 on-ground projects, 1257 volunteers, 243 volunteer hrs, and \$157,000 of in-kind time in 2005/06. It was also a year when Peter Mitchell left the role to pursue a biodiversity support role with the Department of Primary Industries. His dedication and effort is highly recognised throughout the Mitchell Shire..

**Peter Mitchell / Francis Jeon-Ellis,
Mitchell Shire Landcare Coordinator**

Hughes Creek Catchment region 2005/06 experienced a year of challenges and achievements for Landcare. While they faced the unexpected challenge of local fires in January, the group also took on new challenges in running the Landcare Farm of the Year Award, and planning for the 2006 Murray Darling Rescue Planting Program with Scouts Australia, to be held in August.

The Seymour Show Landcare Farm of the Year Award, was the idea of Whiteheads Creek Landcare group. The aim was to recognise landholders who have implemented land management practices under the principle of "land caring", without ongoing assistance from DPI or CMA staff or programs. Over 22 landholders participated, providing a fascinating insight into how much positive land management activities are occurring in the area without fuss, fanfare or record.

Whiteheads Creek Landcare also ran a "Bringing Back the Birds" planting day on a member's property, to coincide with National Tree Day. Highlands Landcare Group held a National Tree Day planting too, plus other plantings and roadside weed working bees throughout the year.

At a regional scale, a further 6000 trees and 9000 understorey plants were planted during the year, and planning commenced to involve hundreds of scouts in planting 50,000 trees in the catchment, as part of the annual Scouts Murray Darling Basin Rescue. All on top of the annual rabbit ripping and baiting programs held across the region for many years, and some successful Macquarie Perch surveys and talks.

In total Landcare groups, members and the broader community of Hughes Creek Catchment contributed to 31 meetings, 6 guest speakers, 8 field days, 69 on-ground activities, 875 participants, 1301 hours, resulting in over \$300,000 in in-kind contributions.

**Janet Hagen,
Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative Landcare
Coordinator**





Communications & Community Education

Poppe Davis
Dryland Community Liaison Officer

Communications in the upper Goulburn continues to challenge as we grow our community programs and education activities. Approximately 40 press articles were generated this year to celebrate our successes and inform communities of our programs, with a high level of support from the media. Stories ranged from reports on community involvement with waterways revegetation projects, through funding successes and advertising campaigns to launches of new projects, Awards and UGIC announcements.

Annual Seminar & Awards

The Implementation Committee held its annual community event at Trawool Resort in August 2005, titled *"Funding—Seeking the way to successfully funded projects"*.

Presenters attended from DPI, DSE, the Waterways Program, Mitchell Shire and the National Landcare Program. Delegates were treated to a comprehensive explanation of funds available throughout the Goulburn Broken catchment for natural resource management and associated projects.

A special dinner was held to present and celebrate the Award winners of 2005 with the Landcare Award for Excellence going to Roger Cook from Kinglake Landcare and presented by Sophie Mirabella (formerly Panopoulous) Federal Member for Indi. The Hubert Miller Perpetual Trophy was awarded to Leslie Dalziel from Seymour and presented by Ben Hardman, Member for Seymour.

The well attended dinner set the standard for future events of this kind.

Wallaby Creek

The Wallaby Creek project has been a success with users of the area commenting on the change in visitor behaviour since the rubbish bins were installed. Multi lingual signage

to encourage responsible usage of the area and bins to discourage littering have made a difference to the amenity of the site. We have funding to manage the rubbish collection until the end of 2006.

It is pleasing to note that the vegetation planted last year is thriving.

Arts Sponsorship

The Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee sponsored the Tallarook Arts Society Exhibition again this year, in conjunction with the Shires of Mansfield Murrindindi and Mitchell. A further four paintings were acquired for the upper Goulburn community, each depicting an element of the environment and life in the upper Goulburn under the brief *"Spirit of Place"*. We now have eight artworks on display as a travelling exhibition throughout the upper Goulburn catchment. A brochure was designed to highlight the artworks and copies are available at each of the sites where the works are on display. Each work is displayed with an accompanying poster, explaining the collection and crediting the artist.

This year works acquired include:

War and Peace—a sculpture by Steve Wolfe

Mr & Mrs King Parrot—painting by Sarah Boehme

Goulburn River—painting by Jayne Henderson

Cooee—painting by Ian McGill



Communications & Community Education



Community Education

National Water Week and Salt Week continue to include a huge range of events with free movie screenings in Mansfield, Swanpool and Euroa and more schools participating in specialised classroom activities. Twilight river and wetland walks were conducted during Water Week plus photography and short story competitions, and the schools poster competition.

The upper Goulburn entries to the poster competition continue to be exceptional and we are particularly happy with the effort that our participating schools put into Water Week activities.

A Water Week Awards night was held in Shepparton to acknowledge all participants in the 2005 Water Week competitions. 490 students and approximately 645 community members participated in Water Week events across the 2005 program.

Rather than trying to visit a large number of schools in the catchment, 'A Matter of Salt' events were held in 2 locations where students from local schools are invited to come together to learn about salt in the environment.

Taste of Salt and Edible Aquifer activities were presented followed by teams competing against each other in **Saltwatch Sports**, concluding the day a BBQ lunch.

This year Salt Week was celebrated in Alexandra (220 students from 7 schools), and Mansfield (250 students from 7 schools). Secondary students from Alexandra SC, Mansfield SC, Geelong Grammar Timbertop campus & Lauriston Girls School Howqua campus, helped run some of the activities.

In addition 130 students from St Patricks PS Kilmore participated in the classroom presentation of 'A Story of a River' and water sample testing.

Thank all Landcare Coordinators, Agency staff and school helpers who participated in outdoor activities for

Water Week and Salt Week (*Salty Sports*) and contributed to an enormously successful community education program.

International River Health Conference

This year we sponsored students from nine schools to attend the River Health Conference in Mildura, travelling by coach for the four day trip. Our students participated in the conference by preparing presentations.

St Patricks Primary School Kilmore ran an interactive presentation on their project of water testing on Kilmore Creek, which encouraged other students to question the team and have hands-on experience with the experiments. Their efforts were appreciated by all who viewed the presentation and the students benefited from the presentation experience.

Jamieson and Merrijig students joined together to create a main stage presentation using giant puppets to highlight the need to protect our rivers, trees and native animals. Their production was sensational and included music with special drums.

Our catchment-wide sponsorship of students to the River Health Conference is an exceptional program, giving many children from Primary and Secondary schools the opportunity to participate in a world class environmental event.

Special Projects

This years' special projects included development of a brochure for Goulburn-Murray Water to promote the GEDI program for groundwater investigations in the dryland.

A special advertorial promotion was prepared for the upper Goulburn newspapers at Easter 2006 to highlight the waterways revegetation program on rivers above Eildon. The insert ran in newspapers in the Mansfield district to reach holiday makers and absentee landholders.





Rear: Bruce Radford, Alan Dobson, Mike Dalmau (Deputy Chair), John Thompson, Sally Abbot-Smith.
Front: Lillian Parker (Executive Officer), Heather Ingpen, Neville Barwick (Chair) Margaret Hatton, David Ritchie.
Absent: Chris Doyle, Greg Smith (G-MW),

Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee

Shop 5, 10 High Street, Yea. 3717
Ph: 5736 0100. Fax. 5797 3199
Email. chrisb@gbcma.vic.gov.au

