

MGBIC 2004-2005

Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee
Program Reports

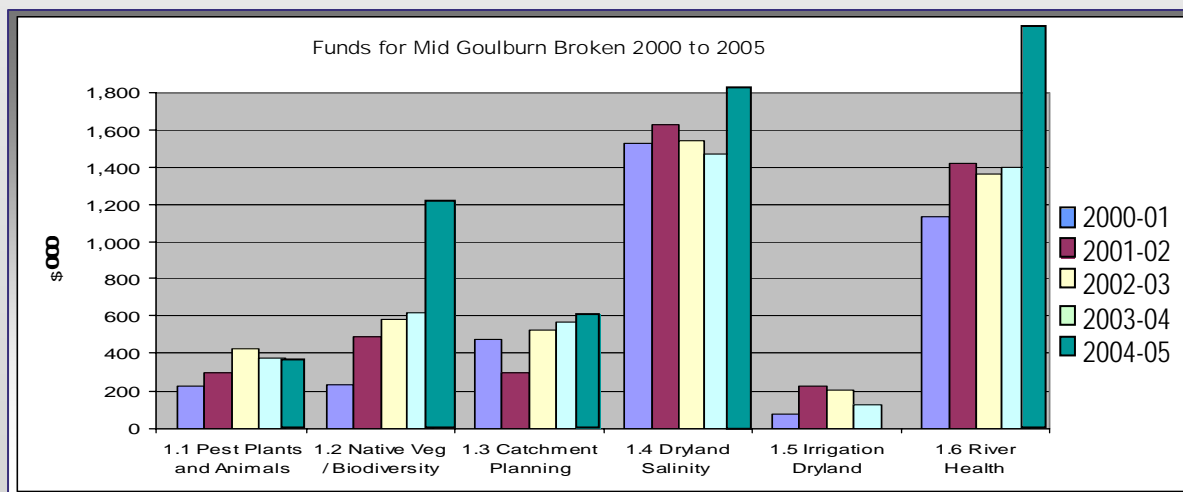


Performance - Achievement - Waterway Health - Biodiversity -
Farm Forestry Trials - Salinity Infrastructure - Landcare -
Communications

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Pd/MGBAR05



The Mid Goulburn Broken 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—The National Landcare Program—Victorian State Government—Second Generation Landcare.

Photographic acknowledgements: Waterways staff, Andrew Ashton Photography, Poppe Davis, Barry Oswald, Tony Kubeil.



Chairs Report Sally Simson

This past year the Implementation Committee (IC) has continued with its work in natural resource management, with a successful implementation program and high uptake of both Environmental Management Incentives and Waterways Grants.

Throughout the year the IC has made significant achievements which are highlighted here.

Many of the IC aims and activities cannot be realised without the work of the Landcare Groups, and working with these groups forms a major element of the IC function.

After initial issues of employment, the IC initiative of employing three Landcare facilitators has proved to be most effective in providing Landcare groups with welcome support for their activities and administration assistance.

The development of the Regional Landcare Strategy has provided a framework for the future direction of the Landcare movement, and will also be a great support for activities of groups within the Mid Goulburn Broken Catchment.

I would like to thank Heather Holder for the many hours spent in the development of this document and wish Heather well in the future.

This year has seen the MGBIC Waterways team focus on the Broken River. The near completion of the Casey's Weir fish ladder is a major achievement and ongoing structural works will help control bank erosion and provide stream stabilisation. The Mid Goulburn Broken Waterways Working Group continues to provide a valuable contribution and is an avenue for communication and advice from local landholders on the waterways works programs.

The introduction of the Bush Returns Program heralds a new direction in landscape management for the IC. With the pilot program in the Violet Town area seen as a

success, the program has now been extended across the Goulburn Broken catchment with a large number of initial expressions of interest being received.

The adoption of a compulsory Level 1 Whole Farm Plan prior to landholders being eligible to receive grants is a major step towards a better method of service provision to landholders.

This process has now commenced over the dryland to include Level 2 with a level 3WFP in development.

Over the next few years there will be a major change of focus in activities in the IC. As funding for the Heartlands program nears completion the process of decommissioning and rehabilitation of the wetlands and Lake Mokoan site will become an important role of the IC.

There are many issues the IC needs to face over the next year, and weeds continues to be a major concern of landholders.

The IC was very disappointed to be told earlier this year of the reduction in funding for pest plants and animals and will continue to work closely with the community and landholders to try to bring attention to this ongoing problem.

The development of better communication between the CMA and landholders is seen as a priority and the IC will be working towards achieving this outcome. We will also work more closely with the Upper Goulburn IC to develop combined activities and a more co-ordinated program between the IC's.

I would like to welcome Bernie Ryan as a new member of the team and finally, thank Phil Stevenson, all IC members for their support and commitment, and CMA staff and our partners for their invaluable work throughout the year.

Sally Simson

Chair

Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee





Executive Officers Report Phil Stevenson

Building on strong foundations the 2004-05 natural resource management program has remained on target to deliver the best possible outcomes for waterways, salinity, biodiversity, tackling pests and community consultation in all natural resource management programs.

Our CMA staff continue to work closely with the Department of Primary Industry, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Goulburn Murray Water and to oversee the implementation of an almost \$6.6 million natural resource management program in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment.

Most of the community consultation overseen by the Implementation Committee was directed through the very successful Waterway Working Group. The group met in various parts of the catchment and invited local landholders and landcare group members to attend. This allowed our representatives Ken Whan and Sally Simson to convey community issues and suggestions back to the Implementation Committee. Also, with the decision to decommission Lake Mokoan, our Implementation Committee has pushed for a high level of community consultation in the development of land use options for the current Lake Mokoan site. We have membership on the very important Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee where Sally Simson was elected Chair and I am a member of the Project Management team.

Changes to our Implementation Committee will bring a new perspective to natural resource management in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment. We welcome Bernie

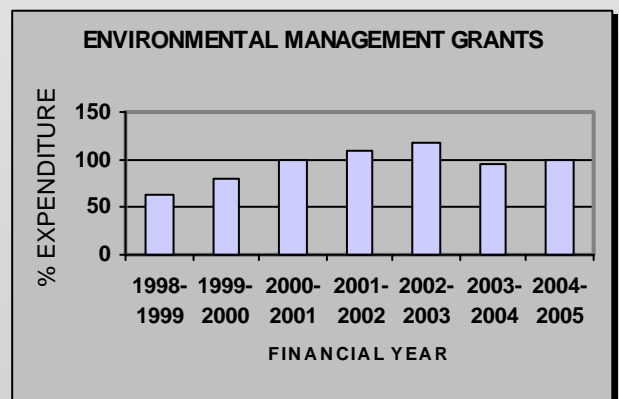
Ryan as our newly elected member to the committee. Bernie previously worked in the forestry area and also managed a large winery.

Currently, Bernie is working on the family dryland farm in the Colbinabbin area. It is excellent to have Bernie representing traditional dryland farming especially from this area where we were previously under-represented. Bernie has replaced our previous Chair, Peter Robinson, who performed a marvelous role with the Implementation Committee over 6 years.

A highlight of the year was the launch of the Goulburn Broken Landcare Support Strategy, drafted by our Regional Landcare Coordinator Heather Holder.

All Program managers are commended for the effort they have put into each of their programs this year, especially the Environmental Management Incentives and Waterway Grants which again performed extremely well in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment.

Phil Stevenson
Executive Officer





Pest Plant & Animals

Ian Walton and Stephan Kaiser

Forest Management, Parks Victoria, DSE Crownland Management, Goulburn-Murray Water and various Shire's met to discuss a collaborative approach towards priority weed control within the various sub-catchments this year. Focussed on priorities in the Goulburn-Broken Weed Action Plan discussions emphasised project areas covered by the Community Landcare Facilitator program.

Significant on ground achievements were accomplished through the Community Landcare facilitator program with funding from Weeds of National Significance, the Box/Ironbark program and the Second Generation Landcare program. Efforts were focused on contacting landholders from previous projects, with several new projects commenced where resources permitted. Programs targeting perennial weeds (blackberry, furze, sweet briar) have proven to be more successful in reducing infested areas than programs targeting annuals such as Paterson's Curse. Anecdotal reports suggest it may take 5-10 years before we see the true benefits of programs targeting annual species.

Managers of major linear reserves such as the Melbourne to Sydney rail reserve, Hume Freeway and major highways within the catchment were also contacted to develop management plans to limit the spread of priority weeds. In addition, owners of known quarry's were contacted to develop work plans to limit weed dispersal from these sites.

Two significant and successful court cases were heard regarding landholders that failed to comply with Land Management Notices in 2003. Both cases related to Paterson's curse and had been listed for court on a number of occasions without resolution. Both cases were finally settled after a contest hearing in the Magistrates court. One case in particular was undoubtedly the most serious, challenging the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. Significant resources and planning were required to

prosecute the case and the end result was encouraging considering departmental procedures were thoroughly tested.

CMO's continued to attend Network and Landcare Group meetings when requested to help facilitate weed related issues, applications for funding, distribution of biological control and whole farm planning exercises. The extensive utilisation of regional and local media to promote technical advice for priority weed species and prosecutions remain an important means of communicating our success stories. These articles have been well received by the media and community alike. The loss of 5 Pest Plant and Animal staff from Mansfield, Wangaratta and Benalla during the 2004-05 period lead to decreased service delivery from these locations and an overall reduction in outputs within the Goulburn Broken catchment.

Priority weeds project areas were at Tatong-Lima East-Swanpool, Dookie, Miepol, Chesneyvale- Boosey Ck, Killawarra's and Glenrowan areas. A total of 306 land holder properties were visited; 17 Land Management Notices issued, 1 land holder successfully prosecuted before a Magistrates court and 1 formal letter sent from the Department's Offence Management Unit.

Pest Animals

The Fox and Wild Dog Programs continued this year notwithstanding the loss of staff in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment. A training and accreditation course was undertaken for the use of 1080 with bait distribution recorded in Euroa and Benalla. The Wild Dog Action Plan was launched by the Minister for the Environment this year and the preventative program of work including trapping, poisoning, surveillance, and electric fencing support were continued.





River Health & Water Quality

Tom O'Dwyer
Waterway Health Program Leader

The Goulburn Broken Regional River Health Strategy was refined and finalised this year, recognising the importance of protecting and enhancing the condition of our river environments. We aim to identify high value rivers for protection and enhancement. Success of the river health program was measured, using the Statewide Index of Stream Condition which reflects the various aspects of river health, at a number of sites including the Broken River basin.

The River Health and Water Quality program, within the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has continued to support the advancement of knowledge through the involvement and linkages to research, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation projects. The program has co-funded the Seven Creeks Sand Slug Monitoring project as part of the Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology's project.

With the conversion of the Broken, Boosey and Major Creeks from seasonally-stable perennial streams to intermittent and seasonally variable streams, following the Tungamah Pipelining, changes will occur to the morphology and ecology of the system. This project has initiated a literature review to draw upon existing scientific literature and evaluate the likely impacts of flow regime reversal and established a monitoring program to enable an assessment of stream change.

The Broken River

Improving the health of our rivers is a key objective of the Victorian Government's *"Our Water Our Future"* action plan, an innovative strategy to enable smarter water use and management across the State. As part of this plan, the Victorian Government has committed \$940,000 to the "Improving Flow and Habitat in the Broken River" project.

The Broken River rises in the Wellington-Tolmie highlands and flows in a westerly direction to Lake Nillahcootie. The river then flows north to Benalla and west again before it discharges to the Goulburn River near Shepparton. The main tributaries of the Broken River include Holland's Creek, Ryan's Creek, and Lima East Creek (formerly Moonee Moonee Creek).

It is highly valued for irrigation, industry, urban water supply, stock and domestic water supply, recreation, habitat for threatened and vulnerable native plants and animals, biodiversity and aesthetic beauty. It also provides recreational pursuits including swimming, fishing and bushwalking.

The multi-partner project is a strategic and integrated approach that will deliver river restoration works and ultimately help "Bring Back the Broken."

Case Study—Broken River

A willow eradication and blackberry poisoning program has been underway on the Broken River, downstream of Lake Nillahcootie since 2002. Target species of willow were stem injected, including Golden Upright, Pussy Willow and Basket Willow.

Lake Nillahcootie forms a barrier against the spread of willow from upstream so the poisoning program was concentrated downstream of the wall to avoid possible reinfestation.

With support from the adjacent landowner and the Crown Lands Department a blackberry control program has been undertaken along the river, where much of the riparian area is unlicensed crown frontage. The spraying program started in 2002 will continue into 2006/07 and is funded by the Crown Lands Department.

Around 7km of the reach between the Nillahcootie wall and Yellum track has been previously fenced, which has been beneficial for river banks however has been a major contributor to the blackberry and willow infestations. To date, around 6.5km of willow, at a cost of \$36,000,



Waterways Report



and 2km of blackberry, at \$12,000, have been treated in this area, with additional poisoning planned over the next two years to eradicate re-growth

Case Study—French Drains

Rain events deliver immeasurable tonnes of soil into our rivers, impacting on water quality and aquatic life downstream. In an effort to prevent bank erosion several construction techniques have been used in recent years including rock beaching, thatching following bank battering, rock bars or sediment traps and revegetation, all of which have contributed to successful waterways management.

These techniques are costly and efforts have been made to identify more cost efficient methods to manage small or potential erosion problems before they escalate into major erosion heads, taking into account the soil type and land use; eg. Grazing, cropping, lack of vegetation.

A simple and cost efficient method of controlling land based drains that could potentially become large erosion heads, is the use of French Drains. A horizontal trench is constructed to capture incoming water upstream, channelling it into a rock filled drain, lined and covered with filter cloth encasing the fine rock fill, which does not allow the transportation of soil into the drain. This method cuts the cost of traditional erosion control methods and inspections after rain events have justified the use of the French Drain where it has been trialled.

The Waterways team plans to use this method in several applications in the coming year and anticipates great success.

Case Study— Revegetation for bank protection

A fencing and revegetation program has been carried out on the Broken River catchment, where both sides

of Stony Creek have been fenced for 1 km at a funded cost of \$6,330.00. The fence used hardwood assemblies, with concrete posts and steel pickets, plain and barbed wire for optimum protection of the new plantation. The landowner has retired 5.2ha for revegetation to protect the stream from erosion caused by stock damage. 500 indigenous seedlings have been planted to compliment 12 different native tree and shrub species already on the site, 6 of which are eucalypts. In this project remnants are protected and enhanced while creating a corridor link to other vegetation in the site. The project will not only provide protection for the stream but provide an excellent environment for improvement of biodiversity values.

Waterway Grants

Landholder grants totalled 32 this year, consisting of;

- 53.9 km of fencing to exclude stock access to waterways
- Protecting 49.6 ha of remnant vegetation
- Remaining 51.7 ha were enhanced or revegetated with

- 31,150 seedlings planted
- 38.6 ha enhanced
- 13.1 revegetated
- 22 off-stream watering points were established

In addition, there are 37 committed (approved) grants in the Mid Goulburn equating to \$197,157 to be progressed and paid in 0506. Future commitments consist of;

- 40.6 km of fencing,
- 136.6 ha protected,
- 26,450 seedlings to be planted for revegetation and enhancement works,
- establishment of 30 off-stream watering points.

A further, 16 grant offers have been made in 0405 that await approval (signing off by landowner).





Heartlands Report

Barry Oswald
Heartlands Program Manager

Landholders within the Honeysuckle Creek Catchment have continued to take up the grants that are on offer for the protection and enhancement of native vegetation, natural regeneration of areas, establishment of deep rooted perennial pastures and erosion control.

This year additional funding was obtained from Land Water & Wool to trial sustainable grazing on saline land using salt bush as the dominant species. The site was planted out during the summer months and it is hoped that this site will be used as a model for landholders to make decisions about the salt affected areas on their farms.

During the year works included 73 ha of remnant protection and enhancements, 62 ha of perennial pasture establishment, 18 ha of direct seeding and 33 kms of fencing.



Direct seeding using an inoculant to accelerate the acacia germination was carried out on some landholder properties with great success and this method of regeneration is to be used more in the future. Efficiency and cost savings far outweigh other planting techniques being used.

CSIRO have selected 4 one ha sites in the catchment to trial various hybrid tree species for long term timber production. These trials are in the low rainfall areas of the catchment ranging from 500 to 550 mm rainfall per year. It is expected that from the trials the best growing species can be recommended for other parts of the country with similar type rainfalls.

The project in the Honeysuckle Creek Catchment covering an area of 79,755, ha is now into its fifth year.



Waterway Working Group

Tony Kubeil
Broken-Boosey CMN Coordinator

The Mid Goulburn Broken Waterway working group has been successful in spreading the river health message to its members over the past year. The message has been sent further into the community by moving the meetings around the catchment and inviting additional interest groups from the local areas. This process has been very well received by the community and the sitting members alike as a way of sharing information regarding the waterways program with the community and receiving information from the local community regarding their perceptions of the program.

We have been successful in increasing the numbers of sitting members on the group, achieving a better cross section of the community. Our four meetings in the reporting period have enabled access into special interest groups in many different communities throughout the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment. In the coming year we will attempt to bring the group closer to the works program, informing members about how the Regional River Health Strategy directs

investment in various catchments and how it affects the level of on the ground works. The group is also keen to look at past grant works and receive landowners perception of the process, in particular the adequacy of the Alternative Water component. Outcomes from grant discussions will have the ability to inform the review of the waterway grant guidelines

WWG Members

Community Members

Kathy Beattie (St James) Kevin Mitchell (Devenish)
Ken Whan (Benalla) Sally Simson (Pine Lodge)
Terry Ring (Molyullah) Max Richards (Benalla)
Wally Cooper (Glenrowan) Arthur Frost (Euroa)

Agency Staff

Steve McMonigal (Fisheries) Peter Burns (DPI – CAS)

GBCMA Reps

Debra Todd (Admin) Tony Kubeil (Coordination)
Tom O'Dwyer (River Health Program Leader)



Salinity & Soils

Rick Felton

Regional Program Leader,
Sustainable Landscapes

Seasonal conditions during the 2004/05 year were quite favourable for revegetation and other environmental works compared to some recent years.

Landholder uptake of Environmental Management Incentives (EMI's) was very strong in the Mid Goulburn Broken area. Overall, Environmental Management Incentives totalling \$568,069 were paid to landholders, resulting in 381.9 ha of remnant native vegetation protection and enhancement, 316.9 ha of indigenous revegetation, 108.1 ha of private forestry plantation, and 540.6 ha of lucerne establishment.

Some \$13,454 in Off-stream Erosion Management Incentives were provided to landholders in the Mid Goulburn Broken area to assist implementation of soil conservation works. This resulted in 96.5 ha of erosion stabilisation. Considerable assistance was also provided to soil conservation projects in the Wilby-Almonds area funded through Landcare group projects.

A concerted effort was put into developing a coordinated approach to Whole Farm Planning in the GB Dryland under the banner 'My Farm Our Landscape' and Farm Planning is now occurring at 3 levels:

Level 1 - a basic introduction to Whole Farm Planning issues, delivered by extension staff as a pre-requisite to accessing incentives. This is done with lap-top computers and digital aerial photography, and covers basic soils, salinity, and biodiversity information.

Level 2 - a 4-day Whole Farm Planning course accredited through Melbourne University, generally done in groups. Participants cover a broad range of issues and develop a detailed farm plan using aerial photographs and overlays. Whole Farm Plans for 97 properties were completed during the year.

Level 3 - specialist Whole Farm Plans (eg. irrigation design or raised bed cropping layout) and advanced specialist modules (eg. soil or biodiversity management).

Discussions have commenced with local Shires on the use of Level 3 Whole Farm Plans as a requirement for approval of Planning Permit Applications.

Surveys of previous participants of Level 2 Whole Farm Planning courses has shown over 90% have committed to catchment works through take-up of Environmental Management Incentives.

Several reviews of the Program's approach to emerging issues were undertaken – the Impacts of Raised Bed Cropping, Soil Health & Land Condition, Revegetating Steep Slopes, and Discharge Management.

A Native Pastures project was commenced to deliver extension services related to native pasture management in priority areas across the Goulburn Broken Dryland, along with some incentives for land class fencing. Incentives to promote sustainable irrigation practices, funded through the Water for Growth program, were provided to a number of landholders offering incentives for Irrigation Drainage & Environmental Plans, purchase of Soil Moisture Monitoring Equipment, and to assist change of irrigation system from flood to pressure system. Several Irrigation Management Courses and Irrigation Information days were run.

Responses were provided to around 52 statutory planning referrals from local government.

The efforts of DPI Catchment Management Officers and the Community Links Officers have been instrumental in the successful delivery of these grants programs, and the myriad other natural resource management extension services provided across the catchment.





Biodiversity

Kate Brunt
Biodiversity Officer

Environmental Management Grants (EMGs) and Waterway Grants continue to be a vital tool in biodiversity management across the Upper Goulburn Catchment. 288ha revegetated and 221ha of remnant vegetation protected through EMGs and Waterways Grants this year. Works include revegetation and protection of existing vegetation. Works are targeted towards priority areas and all activities have some biodiversity benefits.

Trust for Nature

The 2004/05 year marked a significant point in Trust for Nature's organisational development within the Goulburn Broken catchment, with the employment of two additional staff through NHT funding. As a result, Trust for Nature has been able to protect significantly more land this year and implement more management plans. Trust for Nature's activities in the Mid Goulburn this year continued to concentrate on the Longwood Plains Biodiversity Project and the Broken Boosey Conservation Management Network. In addition, we took on a major role in co-ordinating management actions and habitat restoration activities for the Grey-crowned Babbler. In addition to this 461.75ha have been permanently protected through Trust for Nature covenant program and other permanent protection schemes. These activities play a significant role in improving the quality of the often rare and endangered Ecological Vegetation Communities (EVCs) in the upper catchment.

Bush Returns

Bush Returns is a landscape restoration trial of the Goulburn Broken Catchment. The objective of the project is to *develop and trial a new incentive mechanism for achieving large-scale increases of native vegetation on private land.*

The first phase of the trial began in October 2004 when Bush Returns was launched at Balmattum Conservation Reserve. This reserve was located centrally within the Phase 1 trial area, which covered the Violet Town and Longwood zones of the Mid Goulburn Broken Catchment. The expression of interest period was open for 10 weeks, followed by assessment of proposed sites. Management plans were prepared for nine sites, and five landholders submitted bids revealing how much money they were seeking to implement their plan over a five or ten year period. Bid assessment took place at the end of February resulting in success for four of the five landholders, with 168 hectares being secured for



regeneration of native vegetation.

Phase 2 of Bush Returns began in April 2005 opening up the opportunity to all private landholders within the catchment. The expression of interest period closes on the 5th August 2005. Thirty EOIs have been received for the second round from the Mid Goulburn Catchment.

Biodiversity Integration Strategy

"From the Fringe to the Mainstream: A Strategic Plan for Integrating Native Biodiversity" was published and distributed this year. As the title suggests, this strategy is about bringing biodiversity issues to the core of decision-making and program implementation. Since biodiversity is potentially effected in both positive and negative ways by pretty much everything we do, it is essential that biodiversity impacts are routinely considered in all of the CMA's, and our partners' decisions and programs.

This rationale is reflected in the Regional Catchment Strategy's Biodiversity Mission Statement:

"The community will work in partnership with Federal and State Governments and other agencies to protect and enhance ecological processes and genetic diversity to secure the future of native species of plants, animals and other organisms within the Catchment".

Underpinning the GB CMA's mission statements are strategic objectives. This document outlines strategic priorities to guide actions that enable the objectives to be achieved.

The strategic priorities include:

- Strong strategic partnerships
- Priorities for allocating resources based on rigorous methodologies
- Cost share fairly
- Efforts focused in results at large scales
- Cultural heritage issues included in decision making
- Stakeholders who clearly understand their responsibilities
- Adaptive management systems in place.

Biodiversity Action Planning

Biodiversity Action Planning (BAP) is a data collection and collation process that brings together information on flora and fauna values of all known remnant vegetation in designated areas (Landscape Zones). Priority mapping is close to completion in all of the Mid Goulburn Broken BAP Zones.

The maps and associated information will be available to extension staff, landcare groups and landholders in the

Biodiversity



near future. The BAP steering committee has focused on how the BAP information can be used and how the information is best presented to stakeholders. As a result, a trial was undertaken in the Mid Goulburn Broken Catchment.

An existing Links Officer used BAP information to target high priority BAP sites within the Chesney BAP Zone resulting in several high priority sites for the rare Carpet Python being targeted. A coordinated effort by the Department of Primary Industry (DPI), Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Parks Victoria to raise awareness is underway in the Zone and a Carpet Python Field Day will be undertaken in the near future.

Training – Greening Australia

Greening Australia Victoria held a number of successful 5 day and 1 day courses in the Goulburn Broken Catchment out of Dookie College located in the Mid Goulburn. Five accredited Diploma in Conservation and Land Management courses, and three one-day courses were held in conjunction with the University of Melbourne. More than 150 landholders, government agency and local government staff attended the courses. Topics covered include wetlands management, remnant vegetation management, seed collection, storage and propagation, and native grassland management. Experts from the University of Melbourne, GBCMA, DPI and DSE assisted in the organisation and running of field trips and presentations.

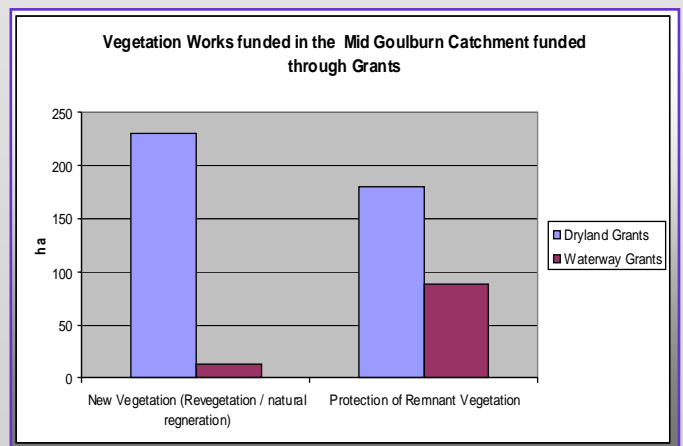
Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) Information Cards

The Biodiversity Program is committed to ensuring that the on-ground Biodiversity works across the Catchment are achieving the best biodiversity outcomes possible. To ensure this happens, a series of Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) Cards have been developed to assist landholders and Extension Officers to recognize different EVC's and develop appropriate management activities to

maintain or improve the condition of the vegetation. Cards have been produced for the 25 most commonly revegetated and protected EVC's in the Catchment. The cards consist of several photo's of the vegetation in differing condition, descriptions of the EVC, fauna species that rely on the EVC's for habitat and recommended management actions. These cards will be used in conjunction with other material such as the GB revegetation guide.

CMA Biodiversity Partner

There are a number of vital biodiversity activities being undertaken by several partner agencies including the DSE, with particular reference to their work with threatened species, Biodiversity Action Planning, liaison with local government, Land for Wildlife and Carbon Tender, as well as the Dept. of Primary Industry and its role in delivering EMG's and whole farm planning. Parks Victoria plays a vital role in conserving some of the most important biodiversity sites across the catchment. Landcare and community groups also play a huge role in implementing activities for biodiversity outcomes through field days, revegetation and general awareness raising.





Landcare Report

Trevor Verlin, Andrea Montgomery, Allison Long
Landcare Coordinators

In an exciting and profitable year groups in the South West area of the Mid Goulburn Broken (MGB) catchment have applied for over \$300,000 funding through their facilitator and administered approx \$156,680 in the past year. Funding has come from national Landcare Program (NLP), Second Generation, Envirofund, Community Salinity Grants, ParksVic Community Grants, Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants, and Small Equipment Grants.

Granite Creeks won the State Weedbuster Award 2004 for their efforts in the Weed Warrior Program – releasing leaf hoppers to control Bridal Creeper in Strathbogie Shire. The integrated rabbit buster program continues with over 450 hours of warren ripping as well as a successful rabbit control field day. Battling Burnt Creek Blues, funded by Second Generation Landcare, has continued to control Paterson's Curse this year and the Landcare Group has published a Landcare Calendar with money from Envirofund, plus conducting a weevil collection day for biological control of Paterson's Curse.

Nagambie Landcare Group members (approx 200) activities included a bi-monthly newsletter, mapping weeds along the train line, Paterson's Curse/Prairie Ground Cherry Control Project and web site establishment while Waranga Landcare Group is recently revitalized and focused on a project with ParksVictoria and the Murchison-Rushworth rail trail.

A significant highlight was funding of the 'Balanced Healthy Soils Project' through NLP. This project involves 14 Landcare Groups working together in the MGB and by all accounts is proving to be a successful community capacity building and community awareness raising project.

South Yarrowonga Landcare group, Burramine/Tungamah Land Management Group and Peechelba/Wilby/Boomahnoomoonah completed three huge Envirofund funded projects as well as a joint NHT project, to protect and enhance existing remnant vegetation and re-vegetate areas with local indigenous tree species; completing fencing of 60ha of remnants and over 50ha re-vegetated.

A Greencorps team has been active in the Warby Range area, undertaking fencing and re-vegetation, and restoration of the Thoona Reserve. Erosion control and

prevention works have begun with the Wilby/Almonds project funded by NLP, as well as a Carpet Python project funded by Threatened Species. The group is well supported by project coordinator Pat Larkin.

The Dookie Land Management Group is concentrating on its two successful roadside weed spraying projects and helping members to gain "weed-free" accreditation.

Local biodiversity of fauna and flora species have attracted great interest and the group is working with the Department of Primary Industry to undertake a Biodiversity Action Plan in the area. They plan to replant the unused rail reserve with native grass and understorey species in conjunction with another local community organisation.

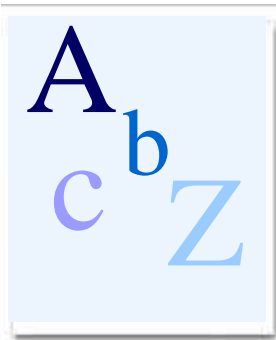
The *Landcare Café* we saw a rewarding growth in understanding and cooperation between Landcare members and authority staff with *Life on the Broken* field days, jointly organised by the GBCMA Waterways Officers and Landcare members, engaging many river focussed families. The Benalla and District Environment Group has shown leadership in stimulating and resourcing an urban movement through *Rakali Project – Urban living within a healthier waterway habitat* which will continue to enhance the cities relationship with the Broken River.

Swanpool's Lima East Creek project is supported by GBCMA Waterways and Water Watch and shows of how landscape change can impact on a productive environment.

Groups are implementing fauna and flora projects to improve habitat and environment outcomes including the Warrenbayne Boho *Squirrel Glider & Brush Tailed Phascogale* project and Sheep Pen Creek's *Grey Crowned Babbler Habitat* project.

Molyullah Tatong and Sheep Pen Creek Landcare groups have conducted several field activities on the NLP supported Balanced Productive Soils involving 25 Landcare groups and four demonstration sites will be established across the region. Sheep Pen Creek are active with fox control awareness and support. Landcare groups have a continual weed management focus with Chilean Needle Grass highlighted by several groups including Goomalibee and Sheep Pen Creek. Development of the Benalla *Roadside Management Plan* and *Sustainable Land Management Directory* has been supported by Landcare.

Digital and GIS technology will assist Goomalibee, Sheep Pen Creek and others in priority planning while Upper Broken is concentrating on community engagement to increase on ground works.



Communications Report

Poppê Davis
Dryland Community Liaison Officer

Communications in the Goulburn Broken dryland is a continuous round of press releases, launches and events plus involvement with planning the community education program. Formation of the Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee (LMFLUSC) required media support both to promote the formation of the committee and to report on its deliberations. A web site was developed to keep the community informed and allow for feedback into the committee. Ongoing support will be provided for the duration of the committee.

Awards

The Mid Goulburn Broken Landcare Award for Excellence was awarded to Russell Ellis from Chesneyvale Landcare Group, an outstanding spokesman for Landcare in his area. The award was presented by CMA Board Chair, Stephen Mills.

Launches

The launch of the Lima Stringy Bark Project, organised by Janice Mentiplay-Smith, was held at Swanpool and attracted a large crowd of interested guests with Leon Costermans as guest speaker.

Mid Goulburn Broken Biodiversity Officers were also instrumental in development of the Upper Goulburn Wildlife Booklet, launched at Mt Piper, Broadford. More than 25 press articles were generated on numerous subjects throughout the year 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 and awards. Specific articles were Bush Returns launch, vandalism of Broken River fish way, visit by Elaine Carbines-Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Landcare Award winner and Lake Mokoan.

Heather Holder, Regional Landcare Coordinator, drafted the Goulburn Broken Community Landcare Support

Strategy this year, which was launched with a luncheon at the property of Collier and Jackie McCracken at Arcadia.

Community Education

Our participation in National Water Week and Salt Week this year included a huge range of events with free movie screenings in Swanpool, Mansfield and other regional towns, twilight river and wetland walks in Avenel, and Benalla, photography and short story competitions, and the schools poster competition.

Winner of the poster competition was David Osborn from Benalla, whose effort was outstanding.

Landcare Coordinators participated in all outdoor activities for Water Week (*Water Olympics*) and Salt Week (*Salty Sports*) contributing to an enormously successful community education program across the dryland.

I attended 6 classroom presentations at Euroa and assisted at the Salty Sports and Water Olympics with press releases and photos. Salt Week presentations are thoroughly enjoyable for presenters and an excellent learning tool for the children.

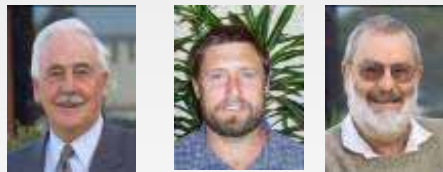
Mid Goulburn Broken applications for Community Salinity Grants were not as successful this year as in the past, which could be a reflection on the inordinately dry conditions experienced by landholders.

A new brochure has been designed explaining the charter and scope of the Implementation Committee and 2004-05 has been a highly successful year for Community Education and communications.





*Rear L to R: Stephen Feiss (G-MW), Geoffrey Campbell, Phil Stevenson (Executive Officer), David Dore.
 Front L to R: Menon Parameswaran, David Smith (DPI), Sally Simson (Chair), Ken Whan.
 Not present: Alan Sutherland, Bernie Ryan, Dougal Gilmour. (below).*



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