

MGBIC 2005-2006

Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee

Program Reports Summary



Performance - Achievement - River Health and Water Quality -
Farm Forestry Trials - Biodiversity- Pest Plants & Animals -
Landcare

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Pd/MGBAR06

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 (Our Water Our Future Initiative, Victorian Water Trust and Healthy Waterways Initiative) —Second Generation Landcare.

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





Chairs Report Sally Simson

It is with pleasure that I present this report for the year 2006.

The year has proved to be a busy and eventful year, with a large proportion of time devoted to major projects:

1. A change to the method of service delivery to landholders to a "Client Focused" approach, resulting from work initiated by our EO Phil Stevenson, and the recommendations of the Glenlyon Study,
2. The Broken River Improving Flow and Habitat project, funded by the Victorian Water Trust and the Healthy Waterways Initiative and the Broken River Vision funded through the State Government's Our Water Our Future Initiative,
3. Over seeing of Community engagement of the Lake Mokoan Future Land Use project.
4. Community Engagement.

The Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee (MGBIC) has agreed to trial the new Service Delivery program in 2007, initially in one area of the Mid sub catchment. At the present time a steering committee has been formed to look at commencing a pilot program mid 2007 to trial a single delivery of Environmental Management Incentives, Waterway grants and landcare support in the central part of the MGBIC. If this program is successful it is envisaged this method will be extended to the whole of the MGBIC region.

Another large portion of the Implementation Committee's time and budget has been the delivery of the project, with the goal to improve the environmental state of the Broken River and the Broken Creek. The \$2m project is well underway, improving flows, reducing erosion, undertaking a re vegetation program along the river corridor and installing a fishway at Casey Weir. Further work is to be continued in the coming year.

The MGBIC has played an important role in the development of a future landuse strategy for the Lake Mokoan wetlands after decommissioning of the site, with Committee involvement both in the Future Land Use Steering Committee, and communication of the process to the local stakeholders and community. The decommissioning is part of the State Government's policy on environment and water savings as stated in the White Paper. The final draft of the landuse strategy was released for public comment in September, with recommendations presented to the Minister for Environment and Water in October.

Community Engagement has again been a focus for the MGBIC, and this has taken place through several avenues. The MGBIC Community program's Co-Ordinator, Allison Long worked together with the Committee and the Landcare

Facilitators to engage the wider community. Allison was instrumental in producing the quarterly newsletter, Woodlands and Wildlife as well as the twice yearly Heartlands newsletter, and assisted in the production of Land Management Directories for the Benalla Rural City and the Strathbogie Shire. I would like to thank Allison who, after her short time in the position, has accepted a position in the North Central catchment.

Much work has also been undertaken by Landcare Groups within the Implementation Committee, with the valued support of the 3 Landcare Facilitators, in co-ordinating the natural Resource Management Workshops and forums throughout the year as well as working tirelessly to support Landcare groups and guiding them in Community Education Grants and funding applications. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

During the year the MGBIC Management team was relocated to the Shepparton office. This move did not suit all staff and we were sad to say good bye to Debra Todd and Lisa Lister in Administration. While the Strategic staff are located in Shepparton, the works team still maintain a presence at Benalla.

It is with deep regret from the MGBIC that the GBCMA Board accepted the resignation of Phil Stevenson, the Executive Officer of the Implementation Committee for the past 8 years. Phil has been a long time supporter of natural resource management and has provided strong leadership and support to the IC over that time. His input, contribution and character will be greatly missed by Committee members.

We also say goodbye to two valued members of the Implementation Committee, Ken Whan and Geoff Campbell. Geoff has been part of the Mid IC since it began, and was its first Chairman, while Ken was an active member in the community. Ken and Geoff's knowledge have been great assets to the Implementation Committee and we thank them sincerely for their important contributions over the past years.

Thank you to all my fellow members for their support and contribution throughout the year, and thanks also to the support staff for all your hard work in making the year a success. We hope that next year will prove a more stable time for the MGBIC, and I look forward to working closely with the Upper Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee to deliver better outcomes and a more united program over all the dryland.

Sally Simson

Chair
Mid Goulburn Broken
Implementation
Committee





Acting Executive Officers Report

Tony Kubeil

In the past 12 months the Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee has completed a comprehensive review of the way various grants are delivered to landholders and the way we service Landcare. The review found the present system of grant delivery was complicated for landholders and could be simplified by amalgamating services.

We have proposed an approach that will be simpler and easier for landholders to access grants. By dividing the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment into sub-catchments, Catchment Management Officers will deliver both the waterways grants and Environmental Management Incentives, as well as supporting Landcare.

The Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee has been working closely with various agencies and the community to establish a trial of this concept in one area of the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment. A comprehensive monitoring process will also be developed. The Implementation Committee has been actively seeking ways to significantly improve service delivery in consultation with our partners and the community.

Funding from the State Government's White Paper under the "Healthy Rivers" initiative has resulted in a highly focussed works program for the Broken River. Waterway Vegetation Officers have contracted with landholders living on the Broken River to fence river frontages and plant indigenous native vegetation. Installation of 'off stream' watering points will remove the need for stock to access the river banks and enable improvements to water quality and biodiversity in riparian areas.

A Landscape Strategy for the whole Goulburn Broken Dryland has been investigated incorporating Biodiversity, Dryland Salinity, Pest Plants and Animals, River Health & Water Quality, Climate Change and Soil Health protocols.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority Board, two dryland Implementation Committees and staff of the Goulburn Broken CMA and partner organisations have been identifying opportunities to capture synergies between programs to investigate trade-offs such as impacts of revegetation on water yield.

Salinity has been a major driver for the way we tackle natural resource management in the dryland. However we are readdressing our strategic approach to reflect possible future changes to Dryland Salinity funding, long term targets and resources.

In making decisions about the landscape and the health of the environment in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment, the Implementation Committee has conducted broad community consultation over the past year.

Over 60 participants attended a Soil Health workshop in December 2005 from which an action plan for the Goulburn Broken Soil Health Strategy was initiated. Many issues were discussed regarding how this action plan might progress. A Goulburn Broken Soil Health Steering Committee has been formed to prepare set of actions for presentation to the Catchment Management Authority Board and the community later in 2006.

The decommissioning of Lake Mokoan has been an enormous issue in our catchment. Implementation Committee Chair, Sally Simson, accepted the Chair of the Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee. This committee with community and agency representation was convened by the Minister for the Environment. Its purpose is to develop a community endorsed option for future use of the 8000 hectare site of the present lake. The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee has convened 15 committee meetings and conducted 6 community information sessions with over 350 attendees. The final future use option will be presented to the Minister in late 2006.

Allison Long, Community Programs Coordinator for the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment, was appointed in January 2006. Allison assisted in the development of Land Management Directories for the Benalla Rural City and Strathbogie Shires. These directories help landholders access the many varied environmental resources in their area.

The Community Programs Coordinator role included compilation of a quarterly newsletter for community groups and the Heartlands newsletter, distributed twice a year to report on progress of the Heartlands Program. Other community input was sought through Community Education Grants which provide small grants for educational activities, and through the development of the Priorities Document. Each year the Implementation Committee rewards an exceptional Landcarer with the Landcare Award for Excellence. We congratulate this year's winner Debbie Hill from Warrenbayne-Boho Landcare Group.

Tony Kubeil
Acting Executive Officer



Heartlands Report

Barry Oswald
Heartlands Program Manager

The Heartlands project, encompassing the Honeysuckle Creek catchment, an area of 79,755ha, came to its conclusion this year.

The project integrated research with on ground works to develop sustainable land use systems use to arrest land degradation. The focus was very much on creating systems that would be commercially viable and environmentally sound.

CSIRO selected sites in the Catchment to trial various hybrid tree species for long term timber production concentrating on low rainfall areas ranging from 500 to 550 mm rainfall per annum. The most successful species will be recommended for other parts of the country with similar type rainfalls.

During the 6 years of this project landholders were offered grants for a variety of environmental uses including wood lots for firewood, the protection and enhancement of native vegetation, natural regeneration, establishment of deep rooted perennial pastures and erosion control. A total of 1,248 hectares was committed to grants and 195 kms of protective fencing completed.

The Heartlands project developed economical and viable commercial agro forestry plantations along with native vegetation modules that achieved good hydrological and biodiversity outcomes.

Additional funding was obtained from Land Water & Wool to trial sustainable grazing on saline land using salt bush as the dominant species and the Commonwealth Games Tree planting Program was utilized to carry out additional direct seeding in the area.

Inoculants were used to accelerate the acacia germination on some properties with great success. This method of regeneration will be used more in the future as efficiency and cost savings far outweigh other planting techniques being used.

We were very fortunate to receive funding from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to assist with interpretation of the aerial geophysics data.

The support received for the Heartlands Program from organisations and agencies has been appreciated and special acknowledgement must go to the Goulburn Broken CMA Board, the Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee, and Dhurringile Correctional Services Tatura for their assistance with tree planting and fencing





River Health & Water Quality

Wayne Tennant

Manager Riverine Health
& Waterways Staff

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 where 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.

Waterway Management Plans for the Hollands Creek catchment

Building on the successful completion of related Implementation and Assessment reports two plans were prepared to guide investments in on-ground works including Ryans Creek Crown Water Frontages; and Hollands Creek.

Evaluation of Public Riparian Lands on Broken River (Caseys Weir to Lake Nillahcootie).

Building on the success of Crown Water Frontages reviews along the lower Broken River and the Howqua and Jamieson rivers this project was initiated in 2005/2006. Focussing on the Broken River between Caseys Weir and Lake Nillahcootie the report provides an evaluation of the condition of public land and presents a range of actions which will lead to the protection of lands through improved management actions.

Social studies: Attitudes to the Broken River – A social survey conducted in Benalla, Shepparton and Environs

A key to implementing river health initiatives is community understanding, support and involvement. To improve our understanding of the community's attitudes this project was initiated to analyse how people in the local region feel about matters relating to the Broken River Basin and reveal how the community behave with respect to the river. Some key finding will be integrated into the implementation program and in the preparation of communications strategies in future years.

Monitoring

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

Examples include:

- Monitoring the movement of native fish communities following the construction of Fishways on the Broken River;
- Monitoring the recruitment and movement of native fish communities in the lower Broken Creek;
- Establishment of benchmarks surveys to assess changes to flora, fauna, water quality and channel morphology following changes to flow regimes in the Broken and Boosey Creeks; and
- Application of the Index of Stream Condition

Sentinel Sites and Extension to the ISC

The overall program consisted of two separate programs of ISC sites:

- *15 'sentinel' sites within the GBCMA region.* These sites were initially assessed during 2004. The purpose of carrying out the reassessment of these sites is to detect any potential annual variations in condition scores
- *46 'new' sites within the GBCMA region.*

Many of these sites are located on tributaries of waterways that were assessed in the 2004 round of ISC assessments. The information collected from these assessments will be used to benchmark the condition of additional reaches of stream not previously assessed within the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Management of Stream Flow

An Environmental Flow Determination study was initiated for the upper Broken Creek to assist future planning for provision and delivery of key flow requirements for river health outcomes. Flow components together with a range of complimentary actions (improving riparian improvement, instream diversity and water quality) will lead to protection and enhancement of priority river reaches.

River health knowledge - workshop and forum providing information to agencies and community.

A range of workshops were held within the catchment as part of the CMA's knowledge exchange and capacity building program. Highlights included: Current research in the GBCMA region; Fish communities in the Goulburn River; Sub-regional CMA/MDFRC workshop - current research projects involving MDFRC / Share knowledge of CMA frameworks and policies

Other highlights were GBCMA - River Health and Water Quality Program Workshop (covering OH&S, history of river health, impacts of willow sawfly, indigenous culture and future planning); Ecological Monitoring of the Broken Creek; Impacts of managed flows on fish spawning and recruitment.

River Health & Water Quality



Water Quality Action Plan

The 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 development of a Water Quality Plan is on-going with the GBCMA continuing to work with neighbouring Catchment Management Authorities to develop a plan that is consistent across the catchment and aligns with the Regional River Health Strategy.

Wetlands

Planning for the protection of wetlands was given more focus in 2005/2006 with the development of a method of ranking identified wetlands across the Goulburn Broken catchment.

Detailed implementation plans and mapping projects were initiated including "Wetland System Implementation Plan" - Broken, Boosey and Nine Mile creeks, and "Identification and Mapping of Peatlands and Spring Soak Wetland Systems".

Heritage Values - Field Assessments

A number of sites have been assessed for indigenous heritage as part of the waterway program. This process has provided team members with a 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 Weeds

Cabomba is a Weed of National Significance and is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia due to its invasiveness, potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts. Local populations of the plant have been identified along the Broken River

A monitoring program and management plan for the control of cabomba was initiated for Lake Benalla and the Broken River. This invasive weed has potential to impact on the quality of habitat in both the stream and associated wetlands

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.

Ecological Impacts of Flow Reversal (Broken Creek)

The aim of the project was to benchmark the current environmental condition of the Broken and Boosey creeks as part of the assessment of the environmental impacts associated with commissioning of the Tungamah Pipeline. Benchmark data also provides a basis from which to predict the ecological impacts associated with the pipeline, and inform decisions regarding the various options available for mitigating any potential negative effects associated with the pipeline. This work is being undertaken by Monash University.

Casey's Weir – a valuable stepping stone for native fish

In 1998, Casey's Weir was identified as a priority "problem" site for fish resulting in installation of a fishway: an open concrete chute with slots arranged at regular intervals to resemble a series of broken pools like those often found in rivers. These provide resting areas or fish using the passage. Recent research, has given a strong indication that the installation is assisting with the upstream movement of native fish species. A fish trap was installed to assess whether fish are utilising the fishway and showed that a number of important native fish, including Murray cod and Golden Perch, are utilising the structure.

This is the strongest indication that fish are capable of ascending the fishway en route to upstream reaches of the system.

Bringing Back the Broken

Underpinned by the Victorian River Health Strategy, Our Water Our Future Initiative and the Goulburn Broken River Health Strategy, this multi-partner project will deliver river restoration works along the Broken River.

"Restoring the Broken River Basin" provides an ecologically sustainable future for the Broken River Valley and could provide the single greatest volume of water savings in Victoria for the benefit of all waterways throughout the southern Murray Darling Basin.

Targeting a number of threats to the health of the river, and its associated floodplain, initiatives include improved environmental flows, improvement of storm water quality, protection and enhancement of public and private frontages and improve instream habitat.

The support of partner organisations and the local community are acknowledged in the development of this project.

For more information see

www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/thebrokenriver



Pest Plants & Animals

Greg Wood
Landcare Coordinators

The Department of Primary Industries Mid Goulburn Pest Plants and Animals program experienced significant change during 2005/06. While much of the 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.

A review of priorities in 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. This was largely due to the results of the noxious weed review, which has highlighted that the highest return for government investment in weed management is derived when the focus is on new and emerging weed species.

Weed Alert Project

The Weed Alert project is a new project that aims to prevent the introduction and establishment of new weeds to the catchment. As part of this project, all known infestations of State Prohibited species in the Mid Goulburn catchment were treated during 2005/06 with the aim of eradication in the next few years. This project also 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, with many of these located in the Mid Goulburn. A number of training courses for Weed Spotters are planned for 2006/07.

Another component of 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 Mid Goulburn were inspected and thankfully, very few resellers were found to be trading in species with potential weed status.

Linear Reserves

DPI staff continued to work with managers of major linear reserves 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

During 2005/06, a number of significant changes were introduced relating to the supply of commercially prepared 1080 poison bait products. These changes have affected the types of 1080 bait products which are available and the way in which farmers can access these baits.

A new commercially manufactured 1080 oat bait was introduced to the market, replacing the traditional carrot baits, which for many years have been prepared by DPI staff. Although requiring a slightly different baiting technique, oat baits have been available from DPI for many years and have proven very effective if used correctly.

In the fox control arena, another commercial fox bait has also entered the market. The new bait, sold as "Defox" provided an alternative to the highly successful Foxoff baits, which have been available since the mid 1990's. "Defox" is manufactured using a composition of dried meat and liver, and many farmers in the Mid Goulburn took the opportunity to trial the product during the autumn lambing season.

To simplify bait purchases, farmers can now call the 1300 10 1080 hotline number to order their poison baits, rather than trying to catch up with the local officer. The new system has worked quite smoothly and during autumn and early winter 2006, a record number of fox baits were sold in the Mid Goulburn catchment.





Biodiversity

Tim Barlow

Biodiversity Program manager

Threatened Species area key component of the Biodiversity Program in the Mid-Goulburn Broken catchment. During 2005 – 06, eleven Recovery Plans for threatened fauna were part-implemented by biologists from the Dept of Sustainability and Environment. This has included continued population monitoring for Macquarie Perch, Trout Cod, Swift Parrot and a number of threatened plant species such as the Nagambie Leek-orchid. Funding was provided for the development of a Woodland Birds Recovery Program Officer, and the production of a CD / DVD package highlighting the values and management of grassy ecosystems in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Natural Regeneration ('Bush Returns') has continued, extended this year to cover the entire Goulburn Broken Catchment. Interest from Mid-Goulburn Broken landholders was significant, with over half the expressions of interest coming from this part of the Catchment. Across the entire GB catchment, 53 management plans were prepared, with 32 bids, and just over half of these landholders were successful (based on the available funding). Sixty percent of contracts signed between the GBCMA and landholders were within the Mid-Goulburn Broken, covering 353ha of the 502ha secured under the program.

Bush Returns sites are managed to achieve large-scale natural regeneration of native vegetation. Participating landholders receive annual payments for up to ten years in return for active management, the details of which are secured to the land title. 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. The GB CMA is keen to get this approach to managing land for natural regeneration incorporated into our current range of environmental incentives.

Permanent Protection of Remnant Vegetation (Trust for Nature) is a key component of the GB CMA's Regional Conservation Strategy. Trust for Nature's

voluntary covenanting scheme has resulted in an additional 758ha of remnant vegetation permanently protected with on-going management arrangements, of which 695ha is located in the Mid GB. TfN also played a instrumental role, along with the Goomalibee Landcare Group, in getting a 180ha Plains Woodland remnant at Goomalibee to be purchased by the State Government under the National Reserve System Program.

Additional activity has included conducting a number of stewardship visits to assist landholders with management plans and activities, and participation in a number of field days and working bees focussing particularly on grassy woodlands and threatened fauna.

Revegetation for the Regent Honeyeater continues in the Greta – Lurg area, with a 28ha revegetated this year. An additional 15ha of plantings done in previous years were treated with additional enrichment plantings to increase density in the understorey and replace plants that had died. The Regent Honeyeater project has clearly demonstrated the value of denser understoreys in promoting habitat for increased bird diversity by limiting access of Noisy Miners. It has also been instrumental in engaging an army of volunteers ranging from local school groups to Melbourne-based service clubs.

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



Biodiversity



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 a handy source of extra income to landholders, as well as a reliable and secure seed source.

Best Practice in Vegetation Management is a project being run by DPI, but closely allied with the objectives of the above projects. Incorporating a range of activities, this project has resulted in the development of a set of EVC Information Sheets that can be used by extension officers and landholders to identify the types of vegetation present in an area, their distinctive plant species and management requirements. Extension officers were also provided with training in the assessment of vegetation quality against agreed standards.

Biodiversity Action Planning (BAP) is a long-running project that is close to completion. As a result of this process landholders will have access to mapping highlighting biodiversity priority sites across all tenures at the landscape scale. Conservation Plans have also been developed to support the mapping. 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 Warby Ranges and Longwood Plains Landscape Zones, 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. The Warby Ranges component has been particularly successful in raising community awareness of one of the Zone's focal species, the endangered Carpet

Python, with over 120 people in attendance at one field day. A successful community-based fox-control program covering 43,000 has been implemented as a result.

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 (<http://www.conservationbroker.net.au>) .





Landcare Report

Trevor Verlin, Rosie Sheather, Sarah Challis
Landcare Coordinators

This year has seen some changes in Landcare personnel in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment. We have seen two Coordinators resign to attend to new families and wish Andrea and Amanda well for the future.

Balanced Healthy Soils Project

Soil Health awareness has been addressed in the Western part of the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment, with a project called the *Balanced Productive Soils*. Now in its second year the project investigated 'the best bang for buck' in terms of fertilizer usage and a poster displayed at the International Landcare Conference, held in Melbourne, received positive feedback during the week.

Rabbit program

Two successful rabbit field days were held this year to provide information on the changeover from 1080 carrot bait to 1080 oats, in accordance with a change of policy from the Department of Primary Industry. The Granite Creeks Landcare groups have conducted substantial rabbit baiting programs in past years, which will continue using the new bait regime.

Weeds Roadshow at Euroa

A Weeds Roadshow was conducted this year to provide landholders with information on weed management. The format included information on how weeds spread, weed control, the effects of weeds on animal health, the relationship between weeds and pest animals and weed identification. Creating awareness of new and emerging weeds such as Chilean Needle Grass and Serrated Tussock may assist in weed proliferation prevention. Providing this information can increase the community's capacity to manage weeds and therefore decrease their detrimental environmental effects.

Central Landcare sector

At a time when Landcare Groups in the central part of the catchment are healthy and active, emphasis is being

placed on engagement in the community rather than the traditional revegetation activities; although a planning and revegetation program has been instigated on the Gonzaga and Neil Stevenson Reserves.

Groups have participated in presentations on threatened species and are involved in water quality monitoring. Other activities include weed and fox controls in the Sheep Pen Creek catchment, the Goomalibee grasslands project, a Dung Beetle presentation in Molyullah Tatong area, water quality monitoring on the Lima East Creek and completion of stage 1 of the Phascogale & Glider project at Warrenbayne Boho.

Life on the Broken project

Swanpool Landcare group has been active in engaging landholders on the Broken River to help them gain a better understanding of riparian ecology.

The Rakali Project, run by the Benalla & District Environment Group, is progressing well with a high level of engagement in the local community. And there was excellent response to the *Platypus in the Gallery* evening which focussed attention on water quality.





*Rear L to R: Stephen Feiss (G-MW), David Smith (DSE), Alan Sutherland, Phil Stevenson (Executive Officer), David Dore, Menon Parameswaran, Dougal Gilmore.
Front L to R: Bernie Ryan, Sally Simson (Chair),*

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