



## Goulburn Broken Landcare Snapshot 2004/05



**Landcare Group Name:** Benalla & District Environment Group

**Group Contact Person:** Christine Holmes

**Contact Phone Number/s:**

**Length of Group Operation:**

### Your Story of Success

**Project Name:** Rakali Project

**Project Location:** Benalla

**Project Partners (if any):** Landcare

**Project Funding Source/s & Amounts:** Grant through GBCMA \$7,350.00. The funding is from the State Government through the "Protecting and Repairing Our Water Resources" initiative.

**Project Description:** (300-500 words)

We had an idea that we would like to embark on a community program. Because Benalla has a lot of waterways and water environs we thought that would be the focus of our project. We decided to use the water-rat as the iconic species, it lives in our waterways and as a species to illustrate what a healthy habitat and a good water environs should be like. By using the water-rat, we raise its profile.

We wanted to raise water quality awareness issues and the need for recognition of healthy habitat required for our flora and fauna species.

The project forms part of the larger project to improve the flow and habitat in the Broken River. The group was given 6 months to complete the first stage of the project. The group did not have a lot of time to implement their ideas.

The key message was about urban living in a healthier waterway habitat and, through education, what that really meant and bringing in the community to responsibility for that.

The water-rat or *Hydromys chrysogaster* means water mouse, yellow belly. It is a native and iconic inhabitant of Lake Benalla and Australian waterways.

The aims of the group are education, awareness, opportunity & positive changes. It aims to involve the community, including existing groups, schools and individuals.

Activities were designed to raise awareness through educational, practical & fun experiences in addressing negative impacts such as water contamination, bank erosion, and introduced weeds that may lead to decline in water quality, biodiversity and unsustainable water use.

Long term goal is to establish an ongoing working group and to develop positive changes in attitude and practices towards a healthier waterway habitat in the Benalla environs.

The group planned a number of activities to meet the aims and officially opened the Rikali project in March 2004 at the Benalla Art Gallery. There were a number of guest speakers including:

- Amy Weir (Environmental Research Officer) from Bayside City Council. Bayside have undertaken a lot of surveys on the water-rat. These surveys looked at the estuarine Water-rat where as we have the riverine water-rat. There has not been a lot of surveys or work done on the water-rat
- Wayne Tennant (Regional Strategies Manager) from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Dr Jenny Wilson from the Department of Sustainability and Environment

Future activities will be assisting in aquatic weed control & removal (Cabumba and the yellow water lilly).