

The Mid Goulburn Broken catchment 2006—2007 A Snapshot of the Year



Community engagement

Disaster Recovery

The 2006-07 north-east bushfires destroyed significant parts of the Goulburn Broken Dryland. Mollyulla, Tatong, and Tolmie were under threat for several weeks and assets were lost at Gaffney's Creek and A1 Mine.

The fires impacted on water quality in Eildon Dam and also on the communities drawing water from the affected catchments including the Broken River at Benalla.



Tatong-Tolmie Road

The GB CMA worked with relevant agencies on the Public Lands Working Group, a sub-committee of the Hume Regional Bushfire Recovery Committee, to identify priorities for rehabilitation and recovery. Priority water bodies included urban water supplies, non-drinking water storages and delivery streams, high value river reaches and other waterways. Priority works identified included:

- Rehabilitation of fire control activities such as containment lines;
- Monitoring water quality and quantity;
- Biological monitoring of fish populations;
- Sediment and erosion control works;
- Replacement of assets e.g. riparian fencing; and
- Opportunistic river health works e.g. weed control.

Other issues monitored include stream health impacts from ash, sediments and potentially heavy metals, and regrowth of weed species after the fires. The recovery phase will include repairs to firebreaks and access tracks to prevent erosion, bank repairs and infrastructure restoration.

The Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee (MGB IC) is responsible for oversight of the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority's Regional Catchment Strategy, the blueprint for the future environment of the Goulburn Broken catchment, in the Shires of Benalla, Strathbogie, Moira and part of Campaspe.

The MGB IC presents this snapshot of the year to inform and encourage landholders to take part in the many natural resource management programs active in the dryland catchments.

Despite drought conditions throughout the reporting year, programs in the dryland have progressed with significant outcomes.

Works contributing to catchment improvement through revegetation programs include erosion stabilisation and plantations for reduction of greenhouse emissions. One hundred and twenty-eight landholders across the dryland installed stock containment areas for feeding livestock, protecting vast areas of grazing country from exposure and erosion.

Education and Recognition

The dryland ICs sponsored many education programs during the year including Salt Week and Water Week. The programs targeted school children and teachers through a variety of sponsored events including a field trip to Mt Buller which was attended by 60 people. Primary schools from around the catchment participated in an environmental show by performing arts group Vox Bandicoot during Water Week and Salty Sports days were held in Seymour and Euroa to celebrate Salt Week involving around 3000 students.



Landcare Coordinator Francis Jeon-Ellis uses "The Edible Aquifer" to show students the layers of soil and water table.

Mokoan Project

The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee (LMFLUSC) has liaised with the community to develop a vision, strategy and plan for the future land use of the reclaimed site following the proposed decommissioning of Lake Mokoan. The main element of the FLUSC is the 'world-scale' restoration of the 'Winton Wetlands'.

Other planned activities include a primary industry precinct, cycle/walking paths and boardwalks, tourism, recreation, education and scientific research facilities, a Wetland Discovery Centre and eco tourism accommodation to complement these activities.

"The restoration of the Winton Wetlands will be a project of national scientific, cultural, and environmental significance with a focus on education, research, tourism recreation and community development. The project will be known for its wide local, regional, national and international support."

The project will be monitored and a restoration plan developed to establish habitat for native fauna and pest plants and animal controls.

The protected migratory water bird species (Latham's Snipe) has been identified at Lake Mokoan.

Excellence rewarded

Landcare has been proven to engage communities in environmental solutions while supporting existing networks with common goals.

The Landcare Award for Excellence was first John McGregor from Burnt Creek Landcare Group received his award for long service and establishment of the Granite Creeks Project, from CMA Board Chair Steve Mills and Bill Sykes, Member for Benalla.



One Dryland IC Support team assists the two Dryland Implementation Committees (Mid Goulburn Broken & Upper Goulburn) in their program delivery and community engagement roles. The team also supports three functional portfolios; biodiversity, water and land, that deal with Investment Plan issues, project budgets, priorities development, draft investment plan reviews and analysis of quarterly reports. A Dryland Technical Group provides input to these portfolios. The structure allows for direct relationships between the two dryland ICs, Departments of Sustainability and Environment & Primary Industries, Goulburn Murray Water and the community.



The dryland ICs have made it a priority to support Landcare and other natural resource management groups in the catchment through funding facilitators and projects, and providing ongoing support to the National Landcare Program coordinator and Regional Landcare Coordinator. The first Landcare report card was prepared in 2006 to demonstrate the number and extent of Landcare and other natural resource management groups in the catchment.



Land, Water, our Future.

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Community activities supported by the Implementation Committee includes weed roadshows, biological farming field days, dung beetle field days, wine grape grower natural resource management workshop, horse land management, local area planning, farmer discussion groups and a history project for the 20 years of Landcare. Land management directories for new landholders were reviewed, newsletters and regular reports on CMA activities have been distributed throughout community groups and agencies.

The "Mansfield Local Plants" handbook was launched in December 2006 after twelve months preparation. Copies have been distributed free to local schools and libraries.

Groundwater Exploration and Development Incentives (GEDI)

GEDI, managed by Goulburn-Murray Water, explored and developed groundwater bores where there was a possibility of reducing salinity as well as developing sustainable irrigation enterprises using the reclaimed water. The programs stream monitoring report has been completed with groundwater mapping well under way. Two years into this program substantial salinity reductions have been made on participating properties plus economic savings through utilising a shandy of bore and fresh irrigation water.

International Landcare Conference

A total of 7 landholders from the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment, Implementation Committee members and 7 Landcare staff (including the Regional Landcare Coordinator) attended the very successful International Landcare Conference in Melbourne in October 2006.

The conference provides an opportunity for Landcare members from all over the world to learn and compare programs with other groups and was attended by community members from fourteen countries.

The Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee



L to R: Sally Simson (Outgoing Chair), Tony Kubeil (CMA), David Dore, Dave Smith (DPI), Menon Parmaswaren, Steve Feiss (G-MW), Dougal Gilmore, Heather Bradbury, Doug James.

Case Study

Strathbogrie Tablelands Landcare Group, in conjunction with the GB CMA Waterways Team, has initiated a project to clear weed infestations on the upper Seven Creeks and restore the area with native vegetation. The project called "Bridge to Bridge", was funded by the Federal Government Envirofund and has been completed with the help of local volunteers and Strathbogrie Primary School students.

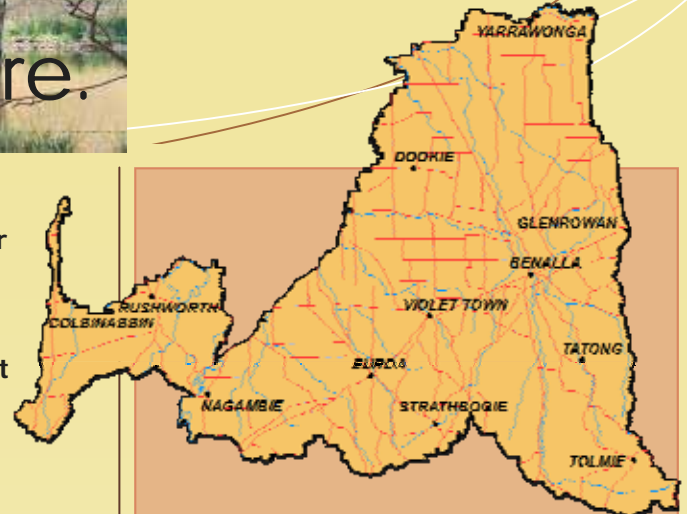
After clearing, native trees, shrubs and grasses were reintroduced to the site.

Before and after the Bridge to Bridge project



THIS YEAR

The 72 people employed through the Victorian Government's injection of \$3.0 million in the Drought Employment Program during 2006-07 resulted in exceptional levels of works along waterways: 338 stock containment facilities, 725 ha of fencing (up 630% from 2006-07) and 9,640 ha of weed control. Community groundwater pumping was also up 223% to 4,009 ML.



Tackling Weeds on Private Land Forum

The Department of Primary Industries together with other agencies held a series of Regional Forums across Victoria focusing on weed management — "Tackling Weeds on Private Land Initiative".

The forums provided information and ideas from successful and leading land managers by showcasing current weed management projects. Topics at the Benalla forum included:

- Showcasing weed management projects and recognising the achievements of.
- Benefits of the TWoPL program.
- Capitalising on future project and funding opportunities.
- Pest management in Victoria.
- The state wide noxious weed review.
- Launch of a new weed management case study resource book.
- Opportunities to network & share information and ideas

Monitoring pest plants and animals has continued across the dryland region. The GB CMA is involved with a number of programs underway:

- A pilot pest animal plan for 2007 to 2012 with a focus on rabbit and fox control.
- Phase one and two of a review of noxious weeds in the Catchment completed.
- A series of forums coordinated by the GB CMA and agency partners on weed management were held across the dryland catchments.
- DSE has undertaken a review of the "Good Neighbour Program".

Integrated programs, municipal and agency partnerships, community.

MGB IC held joint meetings with the Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee during the reporting year and arranged for the GB CMA Board to tour sites around the Broken Boosey catchment to view conservation works to protect the Bush Stone-Curlew. MGB IC is represented on shire environmental committees (Strathbogrie) and on the drought/fire recovery committee in Benalla Rural City which supported drought events such landholder meetings at BBQs, breakfasts and farm walks across the dryland.

Other activities with local government have included: contributions to roadside management planning projects, TWoPL initiatives at Strathbogrie that included weed mapping and hygiene courses, assistance with the Bridge to Bridge project in Strathbogrie, rehabilitation of the Tungamah weir pool with Moira Shire (walking trails (fishing platform and habitat construction), and aquatic vegetation management in Seven Creeks Euroa.



Australian Government



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