

The Upper Goulburn 2006—2007 A Snapshot of the Year



Community engagement

Disaster Recovery

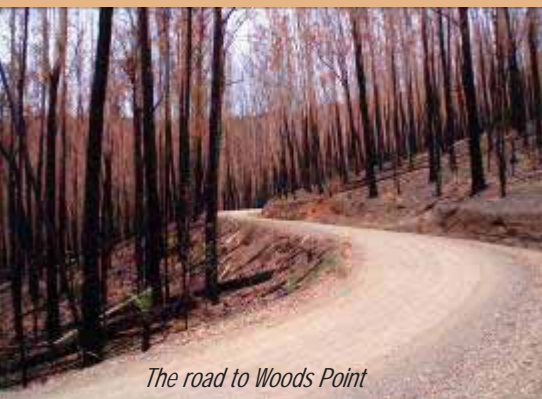
The 2006-07 north-east bushfires destroyed significant parts of the Goulburn Broken Dryland. Mt Buller, Merrijig, Tolmie, Jamieson, Kevington, Burns Bridge, and Woods Point were under threat for several weeks and assets were lost at Gaffney's Creek and A1 Mine.

The fires impacted on water quality in Eildon Dam and also on the communities drawing water from the affected catchments including Jamieson, Merrijig and Mansfield.

The 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 includes repairs to firebreaks and access tracks to prevent erosion, bank repairs and infrastructure restoration.



The road to Woods Point

The Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee (IC) is responsible for oversight of the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) Regional Catchment Strategy, the blueprint for the future environment of the Goulburn Broken catchment, in the Shires of Mansfield, Murrindindi, and Mitchell.

The 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 upper Goulburn catchment.

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

Successful whole Farm Planning (WFP) courses have been run in Seymour and Kilmore involving large and small landholders, lifestyle farmers, conventional traditional farmers and landholders exploring alternative farming opportunities.

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.

The South West Goulburn continues to host successful planting days during winter months, involving important partnerships between Landcare, Rotary and Department of Primary Industries, with financial assistance from the GB CMA's environmental management incentives. Planting sites target salinity, water quality and biodiversity to help meet Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy targets.

In the spring of 2006 Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative and Scouts Australia planted 39,000 trees and shrubs with the assistance of Greenfleet and GB CMA in support of the Murray Challenge.

Education and Recognition

The dryland ICs sponsored many education programs during the year including Salt Week and Water Week. The UG IC targeted school children and teachers through EnviroEd, a school trip to Coastal Conference at Geelong, ASISTM biodiversity project with Murrindindi Cluster schools, Alexandra cluster schools threatened species field trip and Arbour Week tree planting at Puckapunyal Primary School.

Twilight river and wetland walks were conducted in Mansfield, Yea and Seymour and a field trip to Mt Buller was attended by 60 people.

Primary schools from around the catchment participated in Water Week and a Salty Sports day was held in Seymour to celebrate Salt Week.



Landcare Coordinator Francis Jeon-Ellis shows students "The Edible Aquifer".



Part of the group that participated on Mt Buller

Excellence rewarded

Landcare has been proven to engage communities in environmental solutions while supporting existing networks with common goals. Doug Lade from Highlands received the UGIC Award for Excellence in 2006 for his dedication to the Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative.

Ann Jelinek from Taggerty was awarded the Hubert Miller Trophy in 2006 for her exceptional commitment to encouraging and teaching others to carry out environmental practices on private property.



One Dryland IC Support team assists the two Dryland Implementation Committees (Upper Goulburn & Mid Goulburn Broken) 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 the 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 Committees include weed roadshows, biological farming courses and field days, dung beetle field days, wine grape grower NRM workshop, horse land management, Landcare ladies lunch and workshop, local area planning, history project for the 20 years of Landcare, EnviroEducation day, review of land management directories for new landholders, newsletters and regular reports on CMA activities, Mansfield Plant Book and Birds of the King Parrot Creek. The "Mansfield Local Plants" handbook was officially launched on the 8th of December 2006, after twelve months of preparation. Copies of the book have been distributed free to schools and libraries throughout the Mansfield Shire.

Groundwater Exploration and Development Incentives (GEDI)

GEDI, managed by Goulburn-Murray Water, explores and develops groundwater bores where there is 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, 4 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 event was attended by community members from the 14 countries.

The Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee



L to R: Greg Smith (G-MW), John Thompson, Heather Ingpen, Sue Ablitt, Lillian Parker (Dryland Executive Officer), Mike Dalmau, Sally Abbot-Smith, Chris Doyle (Chair), Rita Seethaler, Alan Dobson (DSE) Margaret Hatton.

Case Study

Gobur resident Mervyn Shaw runs sheep and cattle on his 2830 hectare family property. When he discovered that the regrowth in one of his paddocks was protected under the *Native Vegetation Retention Act*, he thought twice about initial plans to bulldoze the area. Instead, the 36 hectare paddock has been donated as a public reserve which will be managed by Trust for Nature.

An agreement to manage the reserve was made between GB CMA, DPI, Trust for Nature, and Mr Shaw and his family, which will involve controlling pest plants and animals, maintaining the valuable grassland diversity with strategic grazing and carefully thinning a regenerating woodland.



About 120 people attended the Trust for Nature Open Day was held at the reserve on October 1, 2006 celebrating 18 months work with Mr Shaw.

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 focusing on weed management- "Tackling Weeds on Private Land Initiative".

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

- Showcasing weed management projects and recognising achievements.
- How TWoPL has engaged its partners and how this approach can benefit other organisations.
- 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 complete.
- 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".

UG IC held a sub catchment meeting with each local government Mitchell, Murrindindi and Mansfield during the reporting year and arranged for the CMA Board to meet with Mansfield Shire over water and development issues during its tour of the Upper catchment in March 2007. The Board also travelled to sites around the Broken Boosey catchment to view conservation works to protect the Bush Stone-Curlew. UG IC is represented on shire environmental committees (Mitchell, Murrindindi) and on drought/fire recovery committees in Murrindindi Shire, which supported drought events such as 6 fish circuses around the Murrindindi Shire, and 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 Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires that included weed mapping and hygiene courses, ongoing maintenance of the Wallaby Creek site near Kinglake, the UT Creek Enhancement Plan in Alexandra, the Ford Creek rehabilitation project in Mansfield, and Yea Wetlands development near Yea.



Integrated programs, municipal and agency partnerships, community.