

Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River) Transformation Strategy

The Latrobe system is undergoing a significant shift. This has been triggered by the start of the staged coal mine closures in the Latrobe Valley as well as challenges like climate change and competing demands for water.

Whilst the challenges are significant, the West Gippsland CMA has already made considerable inroads by working with community groups and partner organisations to start rehabilitating the river through projects like:

- reinstating riparian vegetation and the natural river course,
- restoring wetlands,
- improving habitat, and
- managing water for the environment.

There is now a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to accelerate these works and restore resilience in the system for the benefit of all community members.

The West Gippsland CMA has developed a strategy to turn this 'working river' into a river that works again. The strategy comprises a package of management actions to improve the condition and health of the River system.

A copy of the full strategy 'Transformation of the Latrobe: Pathways for the Latrobe River System' is available on the WGCMA website.

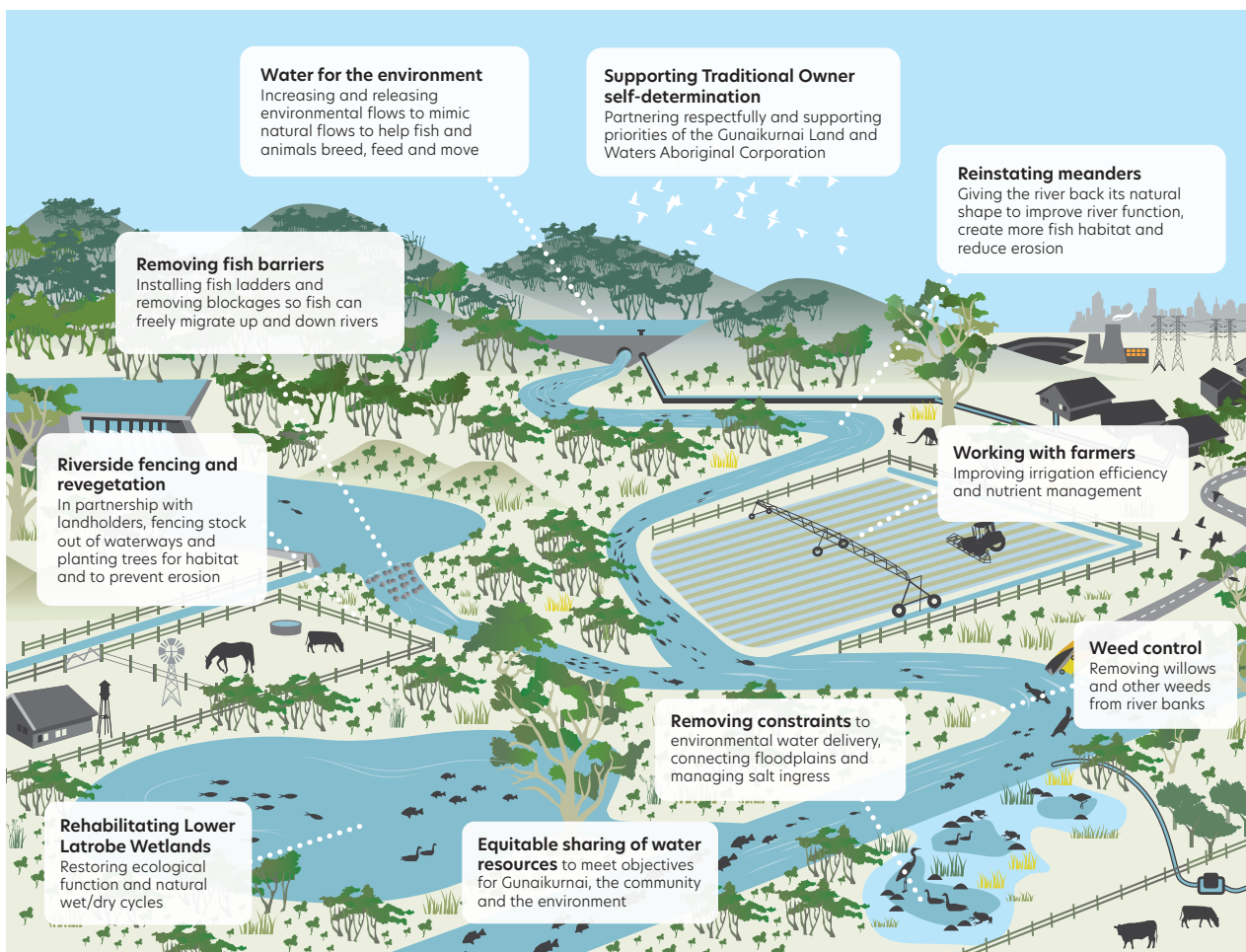


Figure 1: Proposed program of works to improve the health of the Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River)

Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River): The Life Source

Durt'Yowan

Durt'Yowan, the Gunaikurnai name for the Latrobe River, is one of Victoria's iconic rivers. Beginning near the Baw Baw plateau, running through the Latrobe Valley and into the Gippsland Lakes, Durt'Yowan has been the life source for people in Gippsland for thousands of years.

The whole River system, comprising the Latrobe River, its tributaries and the Lower Latrobe Wetlands, is more than 260 kilometres long and supports plants and animals of major conservation importance. It is also a freshwater source for towns, industry, power generation and agriculture.

Since the late 1800s the River has been coined a 'working river'. It has been heavily modified by river straightening, landuse modifications and construction of large dams. However, these changes have come at a cost and have interrupted many of the natural river and wetland processes needed by native plants and animals to survive and thrive.

Community

The West Gippsland CMA recognise the important relationship between communities and rivers. We recognise the various ways in which the community interact with the river, whether that be for agriculture, industry, culture, tourism or recreation. We believe all of these community values can be balanced with a healthy environment for the river.

Fauna

Fish species such as the Australian Bass, Dwarf Galaxias, Australian Grayling and Estuary Perch call the river system their home along with platypus, rakali, frogs, burrowing crayfish and numerous bird species such as the Azure Kingfisher, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Australasian Bittern, Caspian Tern and Nankeen Night Heron.

