



# Our achievements *2023*



We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the region, the Gunaikurnai, the Bunurong, the Boonwurrung and the Wurundjeri Peoples, their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country. We also acknowledge Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People's responsibility to care for Country and pay respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.



## Reflections from the Chair

This was a fulfilling year. We remained dedicated to supporting regional communities in achieving long-term positive action to protect the special, diverse region we share.

We focused our efforts on continued flood recovery works and delivering initiatives supported by both the state and Australian Governments in Corner Inlet, on the flagship Agnes and Carran Carran (Thomson) rivers, partnering for Alpine Peatlands and delivering sustainable irrigation programs. We are proud to have eliminated willows along the entire length of the Agnes flagship river.

Other key highlights included funding announcements for a fishway at Maffra and watering infrastructure for the Lower Latrobe Wetlands.

We delivered 96% of actions identified in the CMA's annual Action Plan that sets strategic directions for the organisation.

Focus was also on implementing West Gippsland's fourth Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) and progressing delivery of the Regional Waterway Strategy.

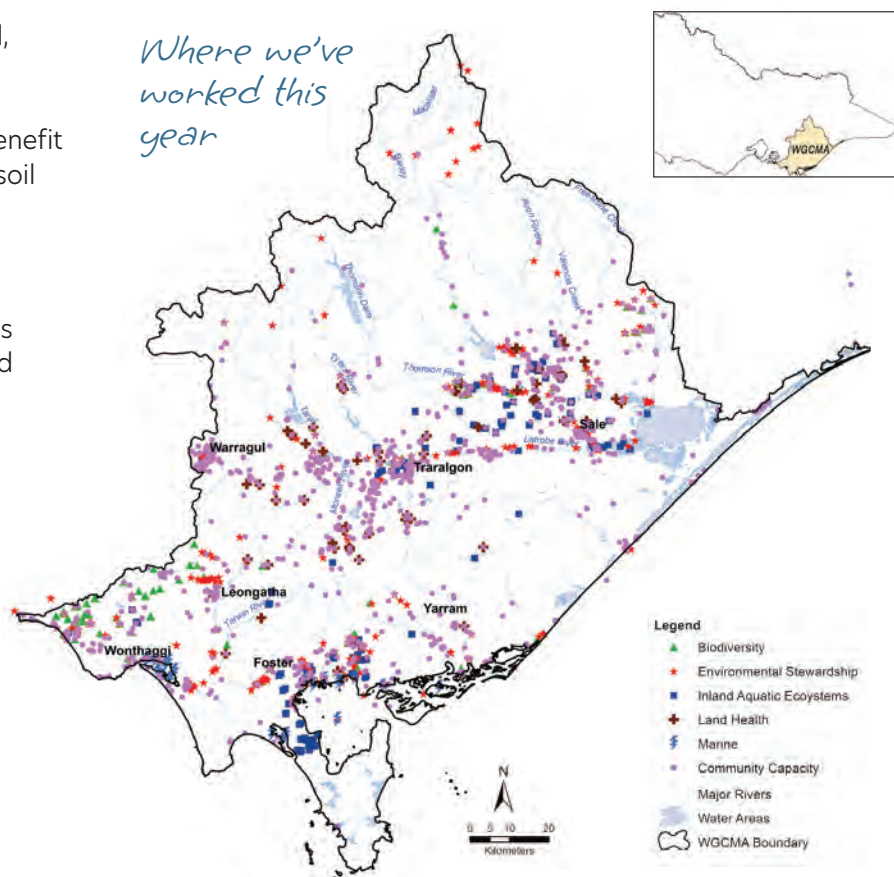
Together with our partners, we achieved 178 ha of weed control, 194 ha of revegetation and vegetation enhancement and 9,744 ha of farm land is set to benefit from whole farm, irrigation and soil erosion management plans.

We're extremely proud of this snapshot of achievements that reflects the breadth of programs and initiatives we deliver funded by the Victorian and Australian governments.

You can also follow our story at [www.wgcmavic.gov.au](http://www.wgcmavic.gov.au)

**Mikaela Power**  
Board Chair

*Where we've worked this year*



Cover image: Agnes River headwaters

# 2023 - a year of catchment health

Together with Traditional Owners, partners, volunteers and community we are working towards our shared vision of Catchment Health Gippsland's Wealth...

## Major achievements

Notable outputs delivered throughout the year include:



**634**  
megalitres of on-farm water saving measures to improve farm productivity and the environment



**Over 194 ha**  
of vegetation enhancement and protection to support biodiversity and river health outcomes.



**Over 178,339 ha**  
of weeds inspected and treated to protect environmental assets



Delivery of the annual Spartina control program in Corner and Anderson inlets, where **over 174 ha** of spartina were treated and 174,234 ha of surveillance work was completed.



**More than 9,744 ha** of land set to benefit from the completion of whole farm plans, irrigation farm plans and soil erosion management plans.

## Ongoing flood and storm recovery


In June 2021, a major event caused storm damage across Gippsland and flooding in a number of catchments. Over the last two years, we have assessed damage and undertaken repair works across the catchment via a comprehensive flood recovery program including:



**35**  
management agreements



**6.78 ha**  
vegetation  
**14,250**  
trees planted



**3**  
waterway structures  
(2 chutes,  
1 pile field)



**19**  
advice



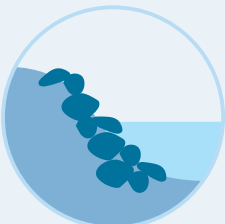
**4.13 km**  
fencing



**16.4 km**  
of earthworks or two levees  
(0.3 km)



**7.31 km**  
(8 sites)  
battering



**3.98 km**  
(14 sites)  
armouring



**214**  
hectares weed treated over  
264 hectares control area



**29**  
cultural assessments

**4.8 km**  
(12 sites)  
flood debris removal

## Protecting waterways

Working with private and public land managers to protect waterways is our key role. By fencing, revegetating, and controlling weeds we can reduce sediment and nutrients in waterways, increase resilience, improve bed and bank stability and help prevent flood damage. In turn, this contributes to improving overall waterway health.

We continued to focus funds and efforts onto our highest priority waterways including the flagship Agnes and Carran Carran (Thomson) rivers. Our successful headwater willow control program continued in the far upper reaches of the Carran Carran (Thomson), Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) Aberfeldy, Albert and Agnes rivers and Middle, Valencia and Freestone Creeks.

Water for the environment is an important part of improving the health of rivers and wetlands in Gippsland. This year, due to the higher-than-average rainfall and high flows, 29.19 gigalitres of water for the environment was released into the Carran Carran (Thomson), Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) and Durt'Yowan (Latrobe) Rivers. This water is critical for native plants, fish, and other animals.

We are thrilled to continue connecting waterways in the region with the fishway at Maffra Weir under construction and establishment of environmental watering infrastructure at the lower Latrobe Wetlands as well as seeing the iconic Thomson Fishway at Horseshoe Bend now fully functional.

### Waterway achievements

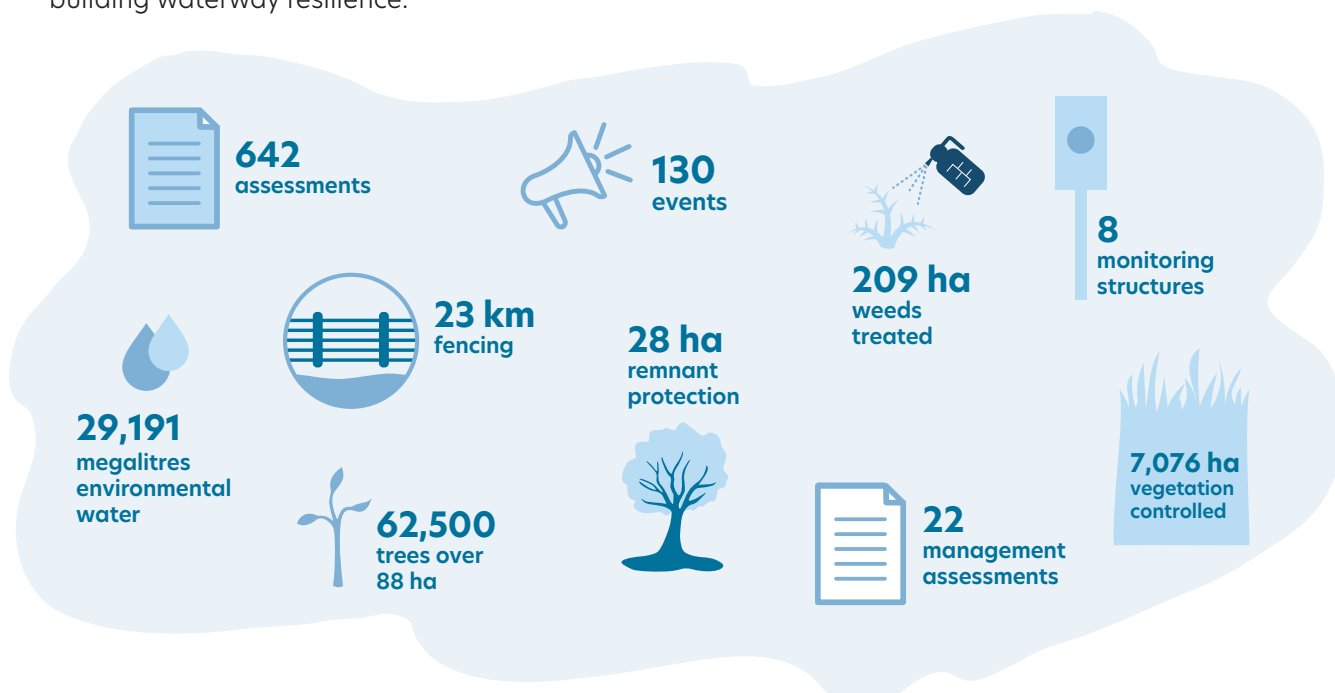
Works focussed on creating valuable wildlife habitat and building waterway resilience.

### Project partners

Australian Government, Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action (DEECA), Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee (GLCC), landholders and Landcare networks, Parks Victoria, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), GippsDairy, Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), local Angling Clubs

### Funding

Victorian Government - Victorian Water Program Investment Framework, GLCC, Australian Government National Landcare Program, Victorian Landcare Grants





## CASE STUDY

*Last willow gone from Agnes River*

West Gippsland CMA is proud to have removed the last remaining stand of willow trees from the entire length of the Agnes River – a first for the organisation and a win for the environment.

“Willows are a problem for rivers and removing them from 100% of the Agnes is a special milestone for the CMA,” said CEO Martin Fuller.

The CMA has been chipping away at removing willows across the catchment since it was established in 1997. Someone who has been on the ground since this project began is Project Delivery Officer, Richard (Richie) Allen who has worked with the CMA for over 20 years. He forms partnerships with landholders to map out the works required and then creates an agreement to implement them.

“In the early days there was a different mindset, so we chipped in and just did what we could. As a few landholders came on board, the success spread like wildfire. Now people are queuing up to have works done because they see the benefits like how it’s much easier to manage their stock,” said Richie.

“Willows are an introduced species, impacting on waterways by diverting the water flow, changing the channel, making the river wider and have a massive leaf drop in one hit – which changes nutrients in the water.”

The next step after removing willows and weeds is planting the riverbanks with native vegetation. The team will put thousands of indigenous species in the ground using a mix of 30% eucalypts and the remaining understorey plants. This links habitat which benefits the river health and wildlife.

“So far, we have fenced and revegetated over 90% of the river. By the end of 2023-24, this will be 100% and I can see how the river is ‘reclaiming’ itself and wildlife is starting to return,” Richie said.

To date, works along this flagship river include fencing 75.5 km of river frontage at 70 sites, planting 266,338 trees and shrubs to restore 237.63 ha and 422.51 ha of weed control at 224 sites.

All these positive works upstream create a buffer that improves conditions for seagrass to flourish by reducing nutrient and sediment flowing into the inlet – ultimately flowing down to benefit fish, birds and seagrass in Corner Inlet.

*“The Agnes is a flagship river for our region because it runs into Corner Inlet and what happens along its length has a flow on effect for the world renowned wetland.”*

Martin Fuller, West Gippsland CMA CEO



## Caring for coasts

Where the rivers run into the sea, West Gippsland's marine and coastal environment extends from San Remo in the west to opposite Lakes Entrance in the east. The area features the precious Ramsar-listed wetlands of Corner Inlet, Nooramunga and the Gippsland Lakes, several marine protected areas including the newly established Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park and over 20 estuaries.

Much of the region's 623 km of coastline is protected by coastal reserve, marine reserves and Wilsons Promontory National Park.

However, there are significant stretches where agriculture and urban development exist close to the coast and important lakes and estuaries.

### Coastal achievements

Works focussed on increasing critical breeding habitat, improving biodiversity and protecting, enhancing and improving the management and understanding of estuaries.

### Project partners

Australian Government, Victorian Government, Landcare networks, Parks Victoria, Local Government, GLaWAC, BLCAC, Trust for Nature, Birdlife Australia, volunteers, local fishers and farmers

### Funding

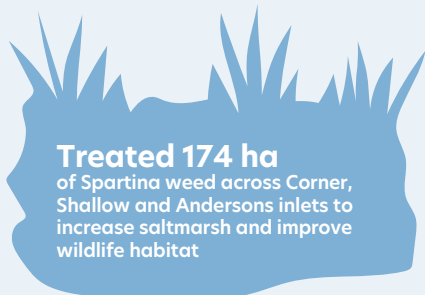
Australian Government National Landcare Program, Australian Government Fisheries Habitat Restoration Program, Victorian Landcare Grants



**1,060 ha**  
pest animal  
control in  
Corner Inlet



Collaborated with stakeholders to identify a Powlett Estuary Alternative Land Management opportunity, including potential to expand the newly created Yallock Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park



**Treated 174 ha**  
of Spartina weed across Corner, Shallow and Andersons inlets to increase saltmarsh and improve wildlife habitat



Worked with stakeholders around the long-term management of the Merriman Creek estuary



**11 ha**  
revegetation



## CASE STUDY

*Protecting Corner Inlet coastlines*

Over more than two decades, an extraordinary amount has been achieved through partnerships to protect the world renowned wetland of Corner Inlet.

The precious ecosystem is a recognised haven for migratory birds and made up of extensive seagrass meadows, and unique intertidal mudflats and forests of white mangrove (*Avicennia marina*) – the world's most southerly distribution of this species.

West Gippsland CMA and partners are overseeing a program of works to protect the inlet.

This was the last of the current five-year Corner Inlet Connections project, funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and also complemented by state EC5 funds.

Across 2022-23, important protection works included 1,812 hectares of weed control – largely aerial and ground spraying of *Spartina*, putting over 40,500 plants in the ground, fencing 12 kilometres of waterways along with 1,059 hectares of fox control and monitoring and protection of nesting shorebirds.

Project partner Trust for Nature is also helping to build on this legacy helping local landholders fence, control high threat weeds and legally protect more than 200 hectares of saltmarsh and nearby coastal habitats.

Coastal saltmarsh provides habitat for threatened species and migratory birds, buffers the coastline from erosion and stores large amounts of carbon. Historic loss of saltmarsh, mangroves and estuarine wetlands in Corner Inlet has been significant, with approximately 45 per cent lost since 1750.

Climate change driven sea-level rise and coastal erosion will also impact these intertidal ecosystems.

John Hick, Trust for Nature Regional Manager said: "A strong sign of local interest in protecting these marvellous natural areas and the wildlife they support is that several landholders have committed to legally protect their saltmarsh sites in perpetuity by placing a Trust for Nature covenant on their land ensuring they are protected forever."

*"A strong sign of local interest is that several landholders have committed to legally protect their saltmarsh sites by placing a Trust for Nature covenant on their land."*

John Hick, Trust for Nature Regional Manager



## Enhancing biodiversity

West Gippsland is a wonderland of large and diverse areas of high biodiversity value featuring many national and marine national parks, Ramsar sites and endangered and threatened ecological communities. The region also faces a range of biodiversity challenges including fragmentation of remnant vegetation, reduced extent and condition of biodiversity, threats from invasive plants and animals and urban development.

This was the final year of a five-year National Landcare Program Regional Land Partnerships project to protect the EPBC listed Alpine Peatlands community from high priority threats.

It was also the final year of the Corner Inlet Connections project, funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program focussing on protecting the Ramsar values by treating spartina, controlling foxes, improving water quality, and protecting saltmarsh.

We also supported Biodiversity 2037 and initiatives undertaken by partners including Landcare, local government, Parks Victoria and DEECA.

### Project partners

Australian Government, Victorian Government, Greening Australia, Trust for Nature, Landcare networks, local government, Parks Victoria, DEECA, GLaWAC, BLCAC, Gippsland Water, BirdLife Australia

### Funding

Australian Government National Landcare Program, Victorian Landcare Grants

### Biodiversity achievements

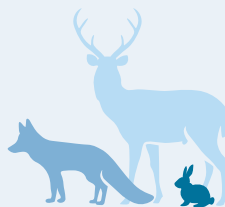
Key biodiversity projects tackled key threats and worked with partners and community to protect the region's significant value through improving water quality and improving habitat.



**11 ha**  
revegetation



**Treated**  
**169,235 ha**  
of weeds



**1,060 km**  
pest animal control



Protected Alpine Peatlands through 1,746 ha of willow and weed removal, and deer control trials



**10**  
management agreements in Corner Inlet



## CASE STUDY

*Protecting pristine headwaters*

Alpine peatlands are precious. High up in the headwaters of the catchment, these endangered ecological communities provide a river's first filtering systems and are easily disturbed and damaged.

Traditional Owners view Alpine areas as highly significant – where the rivers start their journey to the sea. Snow plains and peatlands perform the important function of purifying rainwater through the delicate sphagnum moss.

Alpine peatlands are highly valued for their intact native riparian zones, water quality and diverse ecological communities that have national conservation status.

West Gippsland CMA is proud to be a part of the Cross Regional Alpine Committee that holds a shared goal to protect and improve the condition of peatlands and make them more resilient to the effects of climate change.

"This is a partnership between Parks Victoria, North East, West Gippsland and East Gippsland CMAs, the Australian Government and DEECA," said Shayne Haywood Manager – Land and Biodiversity for West Gippsland CMA.

This year marked the partnership's final year of a five-year National Landcare Program Regional Land Partnerships project and continued ten years of investment that delivered results on a statewide scale.

"Alpine areas are the headwaters of drinking water for Victorian towns and Melbourne water supplies and also for the rivers that run into iconic places like the Gippsland Lakes."

"The project concentrates efforts across Victoria and there are a lot of value and efficiencies that come with that - we can proudly say we're achieving a fantastic outcome for the longer term," said Shayne.

Peatlands are protected by reducing threats such as hard hoofed animals like deer and pigs, vehicle tracks and roads and weeds like willows, soft rush and lotus. The successful partnership model aims to ensure the systems are functioning as naturally as possible and to build resilience to the effects of climate change such as bushfire and altered water regimes. Fire protocols developed were put into use during the Black Summer bushfires to protect the peatlands.

A crucial aspect is working with Traditional Owners to understand and reconnect with Country. In 2022-23, West Gippsland CMA continued its important partnership with GLaWAC in working On Country in the Alpine areas.

*"For us it's about connecting our young people back to this Country – looking at peatlands and the animals that live there and the water quality. The more we get engaged, the more we can understand and influence the management."*

Gunaikurnai Elder, Uncle Russell Mullett.



# Supporting sustainable agriculture

Working with and supporting farmers is fundamental for productive and sustainable farming systems, achieving healthy waterways and increasing and connecting native vegetation cover. We continued to undertake activities to address threats to land health, with a focus on the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) and Corner Inlet.

Working with partners we helped to develop soil management plans, demonstration sites, management programs, whole farm plans and on-ground activities designed to retain nutrients on farm and encourage efficient water use.

These activities are complemented by the waterway health program, environmental stewardship, and community capacity to support natural resource management outcomes and tackle the effects of a changing climate together.

The renewal of the Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan was finalised in 2019-20 and provides a ten-year vision for sustainable irrigation and water management in the Lake Wellington catchment.

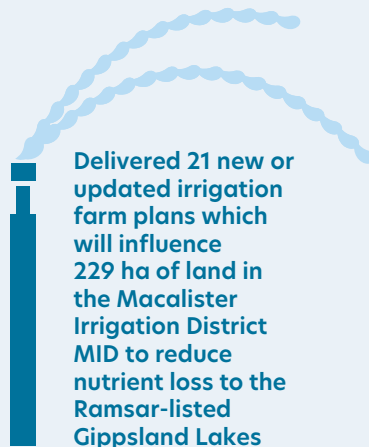
In the final year of the Corner Inlet the Sustainable Agriculture Program - part of the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - dairy farmers in the Corner Inlet catchment were targeted to retain nutrient on farm, contribute to productivity and reduce run-off to our waterways.

## Achievements in agriculture

Sustainable farming practice and innovations mean healthier waterways:



**In the Corner Inlet catchment**  
38 dairy farmers were directly engaged and had a farm nutrient plan developed, 30 farmers committed to on-ground works to implement these plans and improved management practices were implemented over 1,079 ha



Delivered 21 new or updated irrigation farm plans which will influence 229 ha of land in the Macalister Irrigation District MID to reduce nutrient loss to the Ramsar-listed Gippsland Lakes



Sustainable irrigation program implemented four on-farm irrigation efficiency projects over 48 ha with savings of 107 ML per year and seven re-use systems saving a further 527 ML annually

## Project partners

Australian Government, Landholders, Landcare networks, Southern Rural Water, DEECA, Agriculture Victoria, Dairy Australia, GippsDairy

## Funding

Australian Government National Landcare Program, State Government Victorian Water Programs Investment Framework - Sustainable Irrigation Program



## CASE STUDY

*Smart Farmers reducing effluent entering Corner Inlet*

West Gippsland CMA, partners and South Gippsland farmers are working towards best practice for managing dairy effluent with the bigger picture of reducing nutrients entering Corner Inlet.

Over many years, a series of projects carried out across all catchments west of the Agnes River through to the Yanakie Isthmus has been making a positive difference to the health of Corner Inlet and also making farms more efficient and profitable.

"The project has involved 30 farms, covering a milking area of 5,808 ha," said Shayne Haywood, Manager - Land and Biodiversity for West Gippsland CMA.

"All farms had an Effluent Management Plan developed which guided the key recommendations for the effluent system upgrades. The project resulted in effectively doubling the effluent irrigation areas across these farms, from 1,042 ha at the beginning of the project to 2,122 ha available for irrigation at the end of the project."

This increase in effluent irrigation area resulted in a reduction of fertiliser required, as dairy effluent is a highly valuable source of nutrients particularly nitrogen and potassium.

Other results were a combined total reduction of 2,594 t of fertiliser (Urea, SSP, MoP & SoA) meaning a total saving for the district of \$1,956,163 - an average saving of \$65,205 per farm. The works will also stop 162 t nitrogen, 104 t phosphorus, 166 t potassium and 146 t sulphur from entering the waterways and larger Corner Inlet catchment.

Hayden Need runs Hazel Park farm in the rolling green hills above Corner Inlet where he and his family milk 320 cows. "The system is simple and the setup is a lot more efficient," said Hayden.

"Everyone in the area is involved - it's a pretty simple process. We have also fenced and planted the gullies."

Overall, the project presents a real win:win, providing the farmers savings through a reduction of fertiliser required, improving the management of effluent and infrastructure available through funding, while ultimately protecting the waterways and Corner Inlet Ramsar listed wetlands.

*"I use it with the seasons - in late Spring and Autumn and it's also guaranteed to grow crops in summer. It can turn a paddock that would have nothing into a ten tonne turnip crop."*

Hayden Need, Dairy farmer

## Our partners

Woven through everything we do is partnerships and engagement – with Traditional Owners, community, individuals, other organisations and government. These are integral to the success of our projects and vital to the delivery of the RCS and ongoing environmental health of the region.

West Gippsland has a long and proud history of a committed and motivated grassroots community that has delivered best practice natural resource management for over 30 years. Five Landcare networks support 60 Landcare groups along with over 55 community groups such as 'friends of' or foreshore committees of management.

All these groups and networks drive projects that address local and landscape-scale issues through on ground works such as revegetation, pest plant and animal management, soil health and riparian management. They also build skills and social connections in the community through training and events. Their current important role is in enhancing the West Gippsland environment and its ability to adapt to meet emerging challenges.

Landcare has affirmed itself as a major Natural Resource Management service deliverer through five robust, sophisticated, and well-run Landcare networks that operate at a landscape scale. They remain vital drivers for the environment, working directly with private landholders and government agencies to address a wide range of issues.

Celebrating 30 years of WaterWatch and EstuaryWatch was a highlight with volunteers providing a vital role in collecting ongoing data about the health of West Gippsland waterways and one volunteer and one Friends Group presented with Outstanding Service Awards.

### Partnership achievements

Together with our partners we can achieve great outcomes for the environment.



Facilitated the Community Engagement Network meeting three times and having briefings on the Sustainable Water and Regional Catchment strategies



Established and renewed Environmental Water Advisory Groups for the Carran Carran (Thomson), Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) and Durt'Yowan (Lalor) Rivers to help inform the Seasonal Watering Plans and Management Plans



Held a range of Landcare and community events and field days



Recruited new Irrigator Advisory Group members who have an advisory role on Sustainable Irrigation and Macalister Irrigation District Incentives programs

Worked with:

- ✓ 325 farm businesses
- ✓ 52 Agency/Research Organisations
- ✓ 91 Community Groups
- ✓ 17 Industry/Corporate Organisations
- ✓ 5 Traditional Owner Groups

### Project partners

Australian Government, State Government, Landcare networks and other community groups, GLaWAC, BLCAC

### Funding

Australian Government National Landcare Program, State Government Victorian Water Programs Investment Framework, Victorian Landcare Grants



## CASE STUDY

*A river united by community*

Powlett River/Kugerungmome Partnerships project is a patchwork of partnerships that is making a difference across the entire catchment of this much loved river.

Led by West Gippsland CMA, partners include Bunurong Land Council, Bass Coast Landcare Network, BirdLife Australia, Friends of Hooded Plover Bass Coast, Trust for Nature, and Parks Victoria.

Enthusiastic local school students, the Kugerungmome Kids, are also lending a hand. "This project is built on a strong history of collaboration and we plan to build on this wonderful legacy," said Paula Camenzuli, Natural Resource Management Strategic Planner for West Gippsland CMA.

"Working together in true partnership and involving community and school students is where the power lies - we can achieve and learn so much more when we do it together and support each other. The community, wildlife and environment are the winners."

In the upper reaches, Trust for Nature and Bass Coast Landcare are working with landholders to conserve the endangered Giant Gippsland earthworm through research and enhancing habitat.

Along the river and tributaries, Bass Coast Landcare and the CMA are partnering with landholders, community and local schools to fence and replant the waterway. In 2022-23 they worked with seven landholders to revegetate 31 hectares and install 6.73 metres of fencing to connect eight kilometres across the catchment.

Trust for Nature is proud to be protecting 32 hectares of remnant vegetation on two adjoining properties near Archies Creek.

At the coast, the Landcare Network and CMA are partnering with BirdLife Australia and Bass Coast Friends of the Hooded Plover volunteers to protect and promote awareness of beach nesting shorebirds - especially the threatened Hooded Plover. Bass Coast Landcare delivered fox control with six trapping and baiting 'pulses' resulting in eight chicks fledging compared with five last season.

And the future is looking bright for the next generation. Kugerungmome Kids from Powlett River Primary School are tackling marine pollution and learning about the river from its significant cultural heritage to the tiny water insects beneath the surface. Black Swans have also been observed nesting in the estuary for the first time in over 20 years - a positive sign and great reward for partners and community working together.

*"In my 18 years, this breeding season has been the best."*

Steve Johnson - Friends of the Hooded Plover - Bass Coast



## Partnerships with Traditional Land-owning groups

Our Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer has developed partnerships with Aboriginal Communities and assisted employees to extend their understanding of Native Title and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in Gippsland.

We acknowledge and recognise Close the Gap Campaign, National Sorry Day/Day of Healing, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. We have worked on projects and sought advice and resources from many organisations, including the Close the Gap: Indigenous Health Campaign and the Human Rights Commission, Reconciliation Victoria and NAIDOC.

### **Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)**

We continue to work under the guidance of our MoU with GLaWAC.

Further opportunities for involvement have been encouraged from the beginning of all projects undertaken during this time. Partnership meetings take place regularly, many of which have been conducted online in the new environment we find ourselves in, maximising the use of time efficiently. All communications occur through protocols put in place by the two organisations, which are reviewed regularly.

The Corner Inlet Connections project has seen monthly On Country work continue. Another highlight for this year was supporting GLaWAC to Protect Cultural Heritage from the impacts of climate change in Corner Inlet.

Our delivery team also contract GLaWAC for projects in other areas of the catchment.

### **Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC)**

Partnership meetings are currently the main source of knowledge sharing between the two organisations.

We are excited to be partnering with the Land Council to deliver the Powlett River/ Kugerungmome Cultural Heritage Management Project. The highlight for this project so far was the hosting of a partnership session for West Gippsland CMA, Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, BCLN and South Gippsland Landcare Network to learn from BLCAC's On Country team. They presented to 40 staff across the agencies including about the cultural heritage at the Mouth of the Powlett/Kugerungmome River. The day allowed project partners to have time to get to know one another and to discuss future work opportunities for the On Country team.



## CASE STUDY

*Yarns on Farms*

It was a special day when Gunaikurnai Project Officers, West Gippsland CMA, farmers, landholders, land managers and Landcarers met to share stories and knowledge about land use and management across the Gunaikurnai Landscape.

The gathering was all about getting people together to meet, yarn, share and learn. Over 30 members of West Gippsland CMA's Irrigator Reference Group along with CMA staff participated in the session presented by Gunaikurnai Lands and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.

Held on Brayakaulung Country at the Knob Reserve in Stratford, topics included understanding of landscapes, land manager's experience, an introduction to GLaWAC, respecting and protecting Gunaikurnai Cultural Heritage and identifying and protecting plants and animals.

Mandy introduced the day explaining the history behind the 'Yarns on Farms' farms concept, having been developed in 2010-11 by the Gunditj Mirring Corporation and the Glenelg Hopkins CMA in western Victoria.

Grattan Mullett Snr from GLaWAC gave an inspiring introduction of the battle to achieve Gunaikurnai Native Title. He also explained the importance to Gunaikurnai people of finding Cultural Heritage sites and stories in rebuilding their connection to Country.

Uncle Lloyd Hood shared a moving account of his personal experiences growing up on an Aboriginal Mission and then being forced to move off the Mission and experiencing the assimilation policies of the time.

Each participant was supplied a Cultural Heritage Information Pack developed by West Gippsland CMA, GLaWAC and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation to assist landholders in meeting their cultural heritage requirements and to be used when planning a new project or works to make sure landholders are adhering to the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act (1996)*.

This first event will guide the next phase of the Yarns on Farms project - one where friendships are made and learnings are shared.

*"The day was an opportunity for Traditional Owners and landholders to come together on Country and get to know each other a bit better,"*

Mandy Leggett, West Gippsland CMA's  
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer





Image: Manns Beach  
saltmarsh, Corner Inlet

*As a leader in Natural  
Resource Management we  
will inspire and facilitate  
partnerships and action  
to achieve improved  
catchment health*

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