



Issue 05/08
July 2008

Gippsland Natural Connection Newsletter of Gippsland

integrated natural
resources forum

From the Office ...

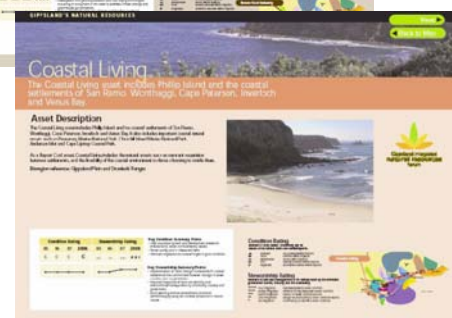
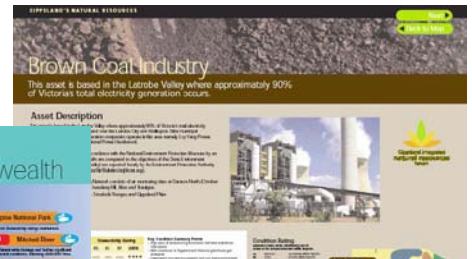
Welcome to the July edition of the Gippsland Natural Connection. Earlier this month GINRF released the Natural Resource Asset Cards for 2008. This interactive document accompanies the 2008 Report Card and is available for download on the [GINRF website](http://www.ginrf.org.au) now.

While we're on the topic, the submission GINRF prepared for the Land and Biodiversity Green Paper is also available on the website. Back in June, representatives from organisations from all over Gippsland attended a workshop held in Traralgon to put together a regional response to the State Government Green Paper. Prepared with the assistance of Gillian Hayman, the submission outlines GINRF's opinions on the Green Paper. Check it out [here](#).

In other news, the Victorian Government recently released new Climate Change Profiles for Victoria. Electronic copies of the East and West Gippsland regional profiles are available from the [GINRF Website](http://www.ginrf.org.au), and the complete set, including the State Summary are available from www.climatechange.vic.gov.au.

Until next month...

Adam Miller



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Catchment health, Gippsland's wealth

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The Gippsland Coastal Board has released a report on 'Climate Change, Sea Level Rise and Coastal Subsidence along the Gippsland Coast'.

Gippsland Coastal Board Reports on Climate Change

Chair of the Gippsland Coastal Board, Duncan Malcolm said the report details how the threats from climate change and coastal subsidence are real and are significant.

"The best scientific predictions are indicating that within 50 years, parts of the Gippsland coast will be inundated to an extent requiring protection or relocation of assets, including dwellings and commercial buildings," Mr Malcolm said.

"Decisions need to be made now about how to deal with this situation."



"This report reveals that the impacts of climate change are complex and difficult to predict, yet too far-reaching to ignore."

Possible coastal subsidence between Corner Inlet and Lakes Entrance in the same time frame could also have adverse consequences.

The report describes how parts of the Gippsland coast are facing dual threats from climate change and coastal subsidence.

"Clearly, this is a unique and unprecedented set of circumstances," Mr Malcolm said.

"Controls are needed on new developments in areas likely to be affected, and plans need to be made for dealing with the threats, especially vulnerable existing towns and infrastructure."

Mr Malcolm said the critical prerequisite for making informed and consistent decisions is for Government to take a clear lead role in dealing with anticipated climate change, sea level rise and subsidence effects.

"Regional collaboration will be a key driver for change in Gippsland. The Gippsland Coastal Board considers councils and community organisations to be central to this collaborative effort in the future."

The report is available for download from: <http://www.gcb.vic.gov.au/sealevelrise.htm>

Managing Australian Landscapes in a Changing Climate

The Department of Climate Change has recently published a report on climate change for regional NRM bodies.

The document features information on climate change impacts on specific NRM issues including fire, vegetation & water and how to incorporate climate change considerations in to NRM bodies core business functions.

To view or download a copy of 'Managing Australian landscapes in a changing climate - a climate change primer for regional natural resource management bodies 2008' go to:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/impacts/publications/nrm.html>



A Climate of Opportunity

The Victorian Government is developing a Green/White Paper on Climate Change in parallel to the development of the Land and Biodiversity Green/White Paper. The Victorian Government is aiming to release a White Paper on Climate Change in 2009 that will contain concrete measures for the next phase of climate action. The initial step in the Climate Change Green/White Paper process was to hold a Victorian Climate Change Summit on Friday 4 April 2008 at Parliament House. 100 Summit delegates were chosen from a broad cross-section of the Victorian community to share their views on this crucial issue. Delegates came from industry, non government organisations, peak bodies, local government, community groups and regional Victoria.



A Summit Paper has been released, which represents the starting point for a conversation with the Victorian community about the future direction of climate change policy and action. “A *Climate of Opportunity Summit Paper*” can be found at: <http://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/summit/Resources/SummitPaper.pdf>

All Victorians will have a chance to voice their opinion on how Victoria should tackle climate change. The first step is by provision of a response to the Summit paper. You can submit a response to the Summit discussion paper via the ‘Have your say’ section of the website www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/summit. The closing date for submissions has been extended to **Monday 4th August 2008**.

Search for Head of Clean Coal Victoria

The search is underway for the head of Clean Coal Victoria (CCV), a new Government organisation which will lead the sustainable development of Victoria’s vast brown coal resources.

Energy and Resources Minister Peter Batchelor said \$12.2 million over four years was allocated in this year’s State Budget to establish CCV and applications were now open for the position of director.

“CCV will plan for the long-term extraction, development, use and rehabilitation of the State’s coal resources,” Mr Batchelor said.

“CCV will be an important contributor to the complex task of developing the State’s coal resources in a way that substantially reduces greenhouse gas emissions and meets community expectations.

Mr Batchelor said additional work to be carried out by Clean Coal Victoria will include undertaking test drilling to determine the quality and quantity of brown coal resources in under explored areas.

“Providing advanced information about Victoria’s coal resources will help attract investment and ensure the continued economic growth of Gippsland,” Mr Batchelor said.

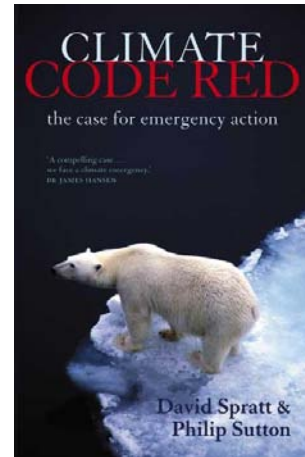


“Further positions with Clean Coal Victoria, which will be based in the Latrobe Valley, are expected to be advertised once a director is appointed, with between five and 10 additional employees or contractors expected to report to the new director.”

Climate Code Red

Earlier this month, *Climate Code Red: The Case for Emergency Action* was released. The book, written by David Spratt and Phillip Sutton outlines extensive scientific research that argues that the Global Warming crisis is far worse than official reports have indicated - and that we're almost at the point of no return. Key topics and themes in the book include:

- Our goal is a safe climate future - we have no right to bargain away species or human lives
- We are facing rapid warming impacts: the danger is immediate, not just in the future
- For a safe climate future, we must take action now to stop emissions & cool the Earth
- Plan a large scale transition to a post-carbon economy and society
- Recognise a climate and sustainability emergency, because we need to move at a pace far beyond business and politics as usual



More information on this book is available from: www.climatecodered.net/

Gippsland Water Factory Update

The Gippsland Water Factory is on target for completion by the end of this year and will have many benefits for the local community and environment when operational early 2009.

According to Gippsland Water Factory (GWF) project manager Jeff Schwisow, the vast array of benefits the project will have for Gippsland is often overlooked.

“While GWF will have benefits for local industry, it is important to remember that first and foremost we are building new wastewater treatment infrastructure for the people of the Latrobe Valley and central Gippsland. This project is not just targeted at immediate needs, but was specifically developed to create foundation infrastructure on which future generations can build,” Mr Schwisow said.



Gippsland Water Factory Construction site -
June 12, 2008

When operational, GWF's main treatment plant at Maryvale will use innovative technology to treat up to 35 million litres of Gippsland's domestic and industrial wastewater each day. This wastewater will come from more than 15,000 households and businesses in Traralgon, Morwell, Yallourn North, Boolarra, Toongabbie, Glengarry, Rosedale, Yinnar and Churchill, and Australian Paper's Maryvale mill.

Eight million litres a day will be treated to an extra high standard and recycled to Australian Paper, which is contracted to purchase the water. The remaining highly treated wastewater will be sent down the ROS, free of organics and odour.



The entire GWF system will service a population base of 48,000 and the technology used to treat Australian Paper's pulp and paper wastewater is believed to be a world first that will set a new standard for treatment of this type of waste. [Full story available here...](#)

The necessity of dealing with the aftermath of fires and floods in Gippsland has proved to be the mother of invention where weed control is concerned.

Some areas along rivers and streams and in riparian zones along the banks of those waterways are difficult to access for effective weed control, so Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) officers had to come up with a different method of attack.

DSE Tenures and Reserves Project Officer, Rick Lawson said that the extra weed growth encouraged by last year's floods and the presence of weeds in hard to access places posed the question about the best way to tackle them.

"One practice in the past was to use a bulldozer to create tracks for crews to hand spray the weeds."

"This operation had its limitations and was costly, so the natural progression was to combine both operations and the result is a multi-tasking excavator that does the lot!"

The machine was modified so it could mulch a pathway in to the weed-infested area and then spray the weeds.

"Since the trialling of this method began we have identified that the machine can treat up to 90 per cent of the infestation in these conditions, compared to a hand spraying team that could treat 40 to 60 per cent. It is also more cost effective, giving us a saving of around 30 per cent." [Full story available here...](#)



Innovation in Weed Control

Management Plan for Loch Sport's Crown Reserves

Loch Sport's Crown Reserves have recently been the subject of a comprehensive study, leading to the preparation of a plan to improve their management.

The reserves covered in the study include the Foreshore Reserve along Lake Victoria, the Charles Street Recreation Reserve and Crown reserves between the township and Lake Reeve.

DSE's Senior Coastal Planner, Angie Gutowski said the proposed plan identifies natural, recreational and cultural values of the reserves and makes recommendations on the most appropriate way to manage them.

"The plan acknowledges the wide range of recreational activities on Lake Victoria, Charles Street Reserve and the adjoining foreshore area," Ms Gutowski said.

"The existing foreshore walking track is recommended for improvement to a pedestrian and cycle path for the majority of its extent along the foreshore."

"We had a very constructive public meeting in Loch Sport on June 15 and we're now looking for further input from the community to help finalise the plan's development and ensure that everyone's views are taken into account."



'Rocky' Numbers on the Rise

The future of the critically endangered Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies of East Gippsland is looking brighter, with the recent trapping of additional animals in the Snowy River National Park colony.

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Biodiversity Officer, Lucy Clausen said the autumn Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby trapping was completed last month with positive results at the three sites that are monitored twice a year.



"On one site where there were known to be just two males, we've now recorded three males and a breeding female there and the team also saw another untagged Rock-wallaby," Ms Clausen said.

"We now have two sites where breeding is occurring, giving the animals a much better chance of long-term survival."

The second trapping site that has been the most successful in recent times saw the capture of three known females and a known male.

The captive breeding program has been operating since 2001 and will be looking at the first reintroduction of Rock-wallabies into the Grampians National Park later this year.

The Recovery Program is also supported by a number of generous corporate sponsors such as Genetic Technologies, the Sidney Myer and Potter Foundations and comprises partners from DSE, Parks Victoria, Adelaide Zoo, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and private contractors.

Future Food & Fibre Project Update

The future of agriculture in

Gippsland looks bright, following the success of the Future Food and Fibre Project that ran across the region between September 2007 and June 2008. The Project's focus was to increase the uptake of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and sustainable management practices in the region, both on-farm, and at sea. Achieving this required a multifaceted approach that targeted farmers, fishermen and service providers, as well as key industry players, in each of Gippsland's three catchment management authority regions. A Project goal was the development of a long term strategy for increasing the uptake of sustainable agricultural management practices across the three CMA regions.

As a starting point, the reports and case studies from the Project will be available at the WGCMA website (www.wgcma.vic.gov.au) and news about sustainable agriculture projects will be provided via email updates. Email joannec@wgcma.vic.gov.au if you would like to be added to the email list, or have information to share in the updates.



For the full article including a list of the features of the long term strategy, please visit

www.ginrf.org.au

Events

Benchmarking Best Practice

In Local Government

The 2008 Benchmarking Best Practice in Local Government national conference, being held in Sydney from **July 28-29**, will provide local government managers with detailed insights into advanced and innovative management tools being used by leading councils to cut costs, drive productivity, and deliver high levels of service to their local community. Presentations by CEOs and directors from leading councils will focus on 'best of breed' solutions within areas such as:

- Financial management,
- Asset management,
- Customer service,
- Information technology,
- Communications and
- Organisational development.

Delegates will be provided with detailed insights that they can immediately use to help drive continuous improvement and achieve a culture of excellence within their own local government administrations.

For further information about the conference, visit www.halledit.com.au/conferences, phone (03) 8534 5000 or email denise.mcqueen@halledit.com.au

Info Day on Sustainability

You are invited to a Sustainability Forum 2008 with Sustainability & Environmental staff from Local Government, State Government and other NRM organisations.

Theme: A Sustainable Way of Sharing and Working Together

Venue: DSE Office – Conference Rooms 1 & 2, 71 Hotham Street, Traralgon

Date: Wednesday 30th July 2008 | **Time:** 10:00am – 3.00pm Lunch included

RSVP by Thursday 24th July 2008 to danielle.clavarino@dse.vic.gov.au or phone on (03) 5172 2503

The focus is:

- To provide a meaningful exchange of information between DSE and Local Government Environmental & Sustainability officers

We plan to achieve this by:

- Building a better understanding of the strategic context for Local Government officers;
- Sharing information on what people are already doing in Gippsland;
- Learning from various case studies;
- Being informed in what Local Government staff are up to in their work across the State