

Gippsland's natural resources support a vibrant local community and contribute to the State's prosperity through agriculture, energy generation, forestry, tourism, and alpine and coastal parks. For many, the centre piece is the Gippsland Lakes. Currently, these community assets are in reasonable to very good condition. But most are under threat.

Over the years, a number of management strategies and action plans have been developed to ensure these threats do not lead to degradation of the region's vital natural resources. But are these management actions having the desired effect? Are Gippsland's key natural resource assets being adequately managed? And will they still be in good shape when our children and their children most need them?

To help the Gippsland community answer these questions, the Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum has produced this Report Card. The purpose of this first Report Card is to provide an honest and independent appraisal of both the condition and stewardship of Gippsland's natural resources.

The condition of each key resource has been assessed against state, national (and where possible international) indicators and targets for land, water, biodiversity and air.

The stewardship has been assessed by judging completeness and quality of the care and management of Gippsland's natural resources, with particular focus on the integration of strategies, management plans, monitoring and research.

This first Report Card focuses on 12 key assets that most would agree represent the richness and diversity of the Gippsland region.

The Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum will produce a Report Card each year.

We welcome comments about this report Card and how we might do better in future years.



Professor Barry Hart
Chair - Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum



Natural Resources Report Card 2003

The Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum is committed to unifying the knowledge and efforts of natural resource managers. Together, we will achieve catchment health for the wealth and prosperity of Gippsland for generations to come.



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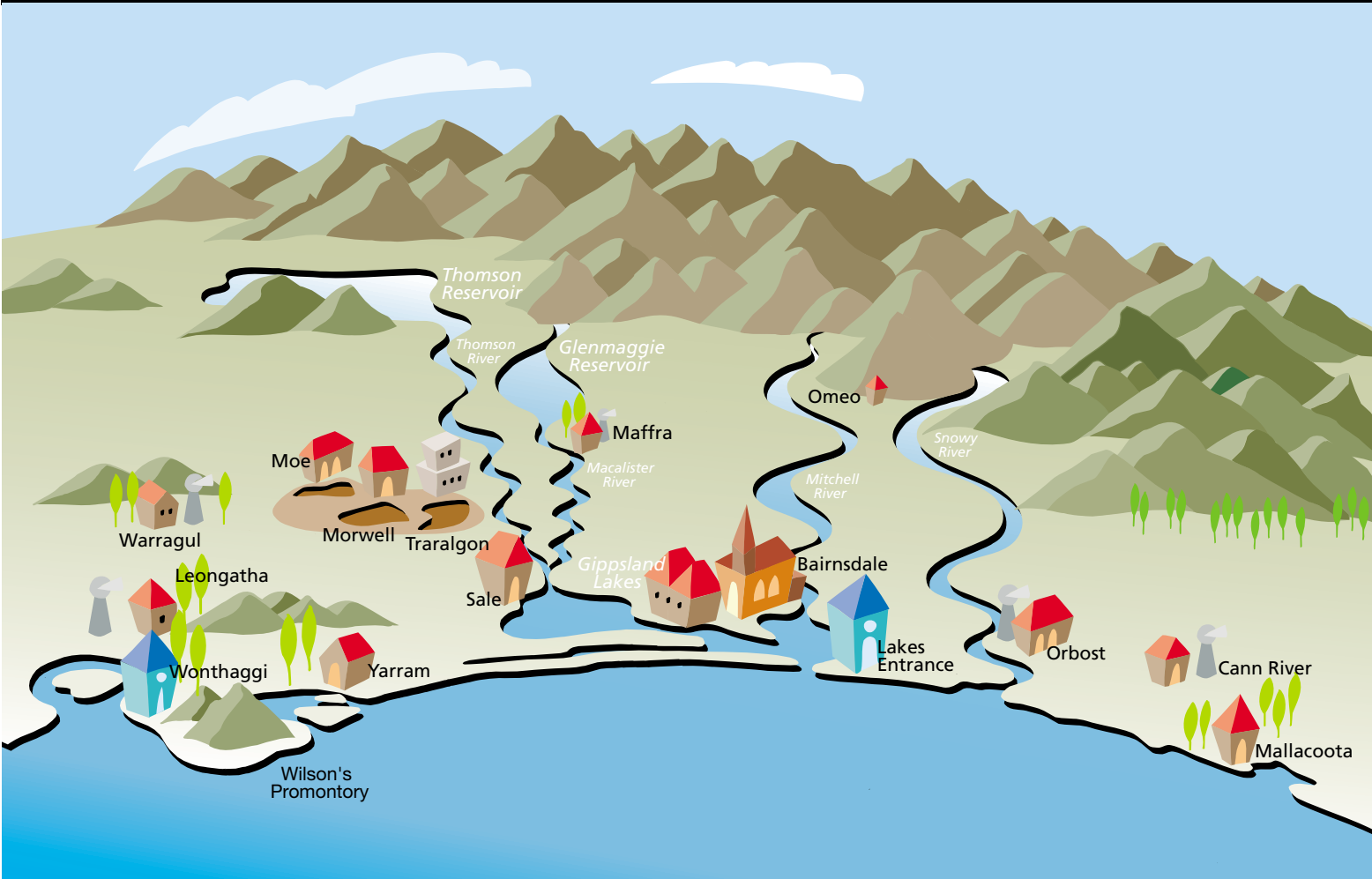
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Catchment health, Gippsland's wealth



Natural Resources Report Card

Condition Rating		Stewardship Rating
A	Excellent	★★★★★ Fully integrated - improves/protects asset condition
B	Good	★★★★ Mostly integrated - potential to improve/protect asset condition
C	Reasonable	★★★ Some integration - impact on asset condition unclear
D	Poor	★★ Little integration - danger of contributing to asset condition decline
F	Degraded	★ No integration - contributing to decline in asset condition

The Gippsland Lakes ★★	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent algal blooms High nutrient loads Gippsland Lakes Taskforce in operation East and West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategies yet to be aligned with Gippsland Lakes Future Directions and Actions Plan
Corner Inlet/Wilson's Promontory ★★★	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83 - 100% of pre-European vegetation communities remain intact Some emerging issues with Corner Inlet: sediment & pollutant inputs; sea grass decline; environmental weeds; sea walls reducing fish breeding sites, Potential to further integrate the various national park, marine/coastal park, Ramsar wetlands management plans and the Regional Catchment Strategy
Coastal Parks of Far East Gippsland ★★★	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near pristine estuarine areas Very good water quality Listed as a State Natural Catchment Area and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Links not yet clear between National Park management plans and East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy (under development)
Alpine National Park ★★★	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of high wilderness value Reduced representation of plant and animal communities due to grazing Impact of 2003 fires - potential for reduced water quality and yield, fragmentation of vegetation, increased erosion and threats to endangered species. Links not yet clear between National Park management plans and Regional Catchment Strategies
Snowy River ★★★	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flows significantly reduced Reduced ecological condition (habitat and water quality degraded) Complex management task requiring interstate coordination Water and Federal/State funds committed to rehabilitate flow.
Mitchell River ★★★	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised as very high value river system Greater than 70% stream length in excellent to good condition Stream bank erosion in lower reaches East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy and River Health Strategy at draft stage.
Thomson River ★★★	C-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flows reduced by Thomson dam and irrigation Upper reaches - good water quality, generally good habitat and high quality riparian vegetation Lower reaches - poor water quality, high nutrient loads, degraded habitat, reduced biological health, significant loss of riparian vegetation. Environmental releases from Thomson Dam are under review by Thomson Macalister Task Force.
Forests of East Gippsland ★★★★	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several ecosystems in pristine condition Protection of a range of plant and animal species in National Parks and Special Protection Zones Logging occurs under Regional Forest Agreement Forest management planning process well advanced, potential for further linking to Regional Catchment Strategy, Parks and River Health Strategy
Coastal Living - Bass Coast & Phillip Island ★★	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential development impacts such as waste water disposal, fragmentation of vegetation and dune erosion Border strategy and management issues between West Gippsland and Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authorities
Macalister Irrigation District ★★★	D-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little remnant vegetation High nutrient loads that contribute to poor water quality in lower reaches of Macalister, Thomson and Latrobe Rivers and algal blooms in Gippsland Lakes Salinity problems Management plans implemented from Gippsland Lakes Rescue Package and Gippsland Lakes Future Directions and Actions Plan Nutrient reduction targets have been established West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy (draft) features threats and targets relevant to MID
Dryland Dairy Farming of West & South Gippsland ★★★	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little remnant vegetation, degraded riparian vegetation High erosion risk in many areas Potential for more coordinated planning and management
Brown Coal based Energy Industry ★★★★	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subsidence issues High use of ground and surface water Greenhouse gas emissions All power stations have accredited licences and environmental management systems Potential to further integrate with broader catchment processes via the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy

12 key natural assets of Gippsland

