

The Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum presents 18 Natural Assets that symbolise the richness and diversity of Gippsland.

I am pleased to present this fourth annual Report Card on the environmental condition and stewardship of some of Gippsland's key natural assets. These assets are central to some of our major industries, support vibrant communities and many have environmental values of national and international note.

The Forum aims to provide an honest and credible assessment, across all land tenures, for different land uses, across the whole of Gippsland. This year, we have separated Wilsons Promontory from Corner Inlet to better reflect the attributes of these assets. The Latrobe Group Aquifer has been added this year to bring focus to one of our important underground natural assets that is under severe threat.

There are different pressures on our natural assets, including climatic conditions, our land use choices and direct damage caused by humans that has occurred over a period of 200 years. We expect the rate of improvement in environmental condition to be slow, and in many cases the results of our investment and restoration work will not be evident for some decades.

We are making good progress on the stewardship of most assets with the release of the first environmental flows for the Thomson, removal of alpine grazing in Alpine National Park and the continued excellent work to reduce offsite impacts of the Macalister Irrigation District on the Gippsland Lakes. We are confident that all of these efforts will result in improved environmental condition in the coming years.

We have more work to do. Corner Inlet, Latrobe Group Aquifer and Coastal Living assets are under threat and require some urgent attention to improve stewardship in the coming years.

Major challenges for the year ahead include the finalisation of the Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy (and its implications for Gippsland), development of the Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy, preparing ourselves for climate change impacts, facing the energy challenge and continuing to plan for population increases, particularly in our coastal and metropolitan fringe areas.

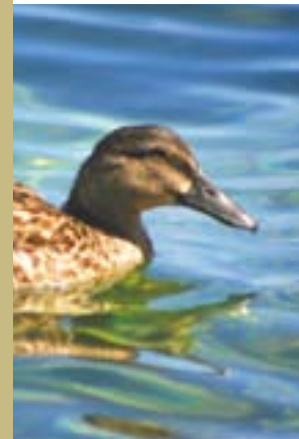
I acknowledge the support of a range of organisations in the preparation of this Report Card and welcome feedback on its content and usefulness.



Keith Hamilton  
Chair - Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum



# Natural Resources Report Card 2006



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# Catchment health, Gippsland's wealth

## Macalister Irrigation **D+ ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Thomson River **C- ★★★★★**

First environmental flows released. Benchmark of environmental condition taken and ongoing monitoring planned to assess impact of flows.



## Latrobe River **D ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Brown Coal Energy **D ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Non-irrigated Dairy Farming **C ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Strzelecki Ranges **C ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Coastal Living **C ★★★★★**

High population growth and development pressures threaten land water and biodiversity values. Requires integrated land use planning and environmental management by community, industry and government.

## Corner Inlet **C ★★★★★**

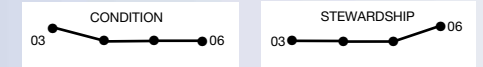
Serious concerns about nutrients and sediments entering Corner Inlet and the presence of environmental weeds (Spartina). Urgent need for co-ordinated monitoring planning and implementation effort to protect values and manage threats.

## Wilson's Promontory **A ★★★★★**

Good post-fire recovery of environmental assets. Centre of Excellence for park management.

## Alpine National Park **B- ★★★★★**

Cattle grazing removed. Largest fire recovery program planned and implemented in Australia.



## Mitchell River **B ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Snowy River **C ★★★★★**

Integrated rehabilitation effort continues.

## Forests of East Gippsland **B ★★★★★**

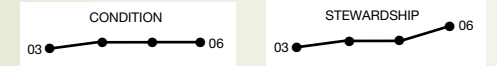
Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Bataluk Cultural Trail **B ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Gippsland Lakes **C+ ★★★★★**

Good progress towards understanding nutrient impacts on Lakes, dynamics of the Lakes themselves; and in raising community awareness. More work to be done on the monitoring program, on-ground works and maintaining partnerships through the Gippsland Lakes & Catchment Taskforce.



## Coastal Parks of Far East Gippsland **A ★★★★★**

Excellent environmental condition maintained.

## Ninety Mile Beach **B ★★★★★**

Condition and Stewardship ratings maintained.

## Latrobe Group Aquifer **F ★★★★★ NEW**

Over the past 30 years, groundwater levels have declined by an average of 1.1 metres per year due to the extraction rate exceeding the rate of recharge to the aquifer. There is no known formal management plan to address the off-shore contribution to the observed on-shore decline in groundwater levels.

## Condition Rating

### Vital signs of Gippsland's Catchment Health

Measure of land, water, biodiversity and air values of the natural asset and offsite impacts.

<b>A</b>	Excellent	No adverse offsite impacts.
<b>B</b>	Good	Minimal offsite impacts.
<b>C</b>	Reasonable	Some offsite impacts.
<b>D</b>	Poor	Several adverse offsite impacts.
<b>F</b>	Degraded	Extensive adverse offsite impacts.

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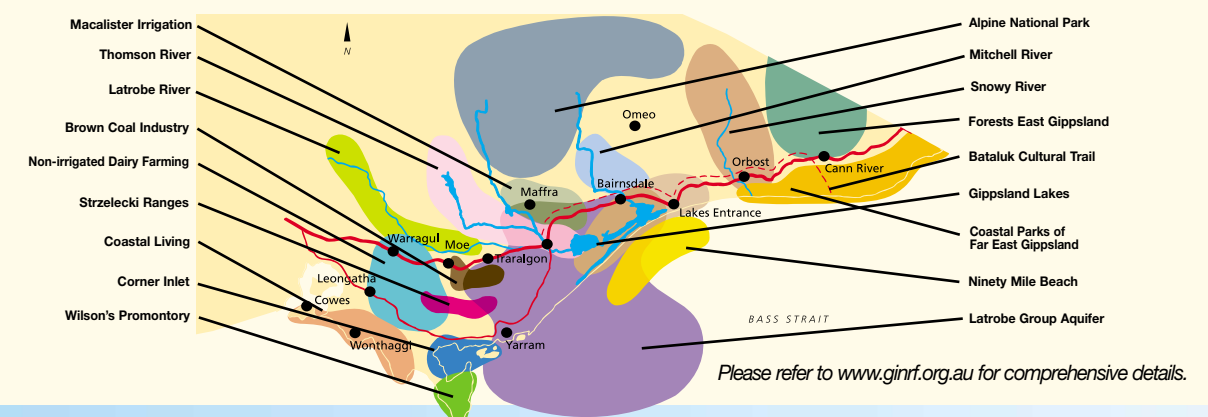
## Stewardship Rating

### Are we making a difference?

Measure of care and management of the natural asset by the entrusted government bodies, industry and the community.

<b>*****</b>	Fully integrated	Improves/protects asset condition.
<b>****</b>	Mostly integrated	Potential to improve/protect asset condition.
<b>***</b>	Some integration	Impact on asset condition unclear.
<b>**</b>	Little integration	Danger of contributing to asset condition decline.
<b>*</b>	No integration	Contributing to decline in asset condition.

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