

The Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum presents 18 Natural Assets that define Gippsland's valuable and varied environmental wealth

Gippsland is fortunate to have a rich variety of natural features. The Gippsland Natural Resources Report Card in this, its fifth year, presents an assessment of the environmental condition and stewardship of 18 key natural assets that symbolise the region's diversity.

The majority of these natural assets are in good condition, not only being significant from an environmental perspective, but also providing the basis for economic stability and social wellbeing.

Recent natural events have, however, demonstrated the sensitive nature of our region's natural resources and the linkages that exist between them. A prolonged period of below average rainfall, the extensive Alpine bush fires in 2003, the Moondarra fires and the recent Great Divide fires have together impacted on river flows, water storage levels, biodiversity values, catchment condition and water quality. These impacts are reflected in this year's reduced condition ratings for the Alpine National Park, Thomson River, and Mitchell River. The Gippsland Lakes on the other hand continue to benefit from reduced nutrient input due to low river flows.

We continue to make good progress with strong stewardship of most assets. Co-operative efforts between different government agencies and with the community are highlighted by increased ratings for the Mitchell River (relating to post-fire rehabilitation and recovery) and for Coastal Living (where the development of Urban Design Frameworks will provide important strategic tools to manage increasing coastal population pressures). Environmental flows, although reduced in volume, have again been released in the Thomson River and continued work

to reduce off-site impacts from the Macalister Irrigation District will have downstream benefits, particularly for the Gippsland Lakes. We remain confident that strong stewardship will result in improved environmental conditions, however the outcome of our investment and restoration work will in some cases not be evident for many years to come.

There is more work to do in managing a number of assets such as Corner Inlet and Latrobe Group Aquifer. We also face significant future challenges in meeting the demands of ongoing fire recovery, the impacts of climate change, potential long term reduced river flows from the effects of broad scale fires, meeting our energy needs and in securing the region's water supplies for industry, agriculture and human consumption.

Gippslanders have demonstrated enormous co-operation and resilience during recent times of adversity brought on by drought and bush fires. The challenge is now to harness this spirit of mutual benefit, strengthen teamwork and work together innovatively across government, industry and the community to improve the condition of natural resources throughout the region.

Preparation of the Gippsland Natural Resources Report Card involves the support of many organisations - their efforts are gratefully appreciated. I welcome feedback on the Card's role and content leading into a review prior to preparation of next year's edition.

Keith Hamilton

Keith Hamilton
Chair - Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum

The Gippsland Region



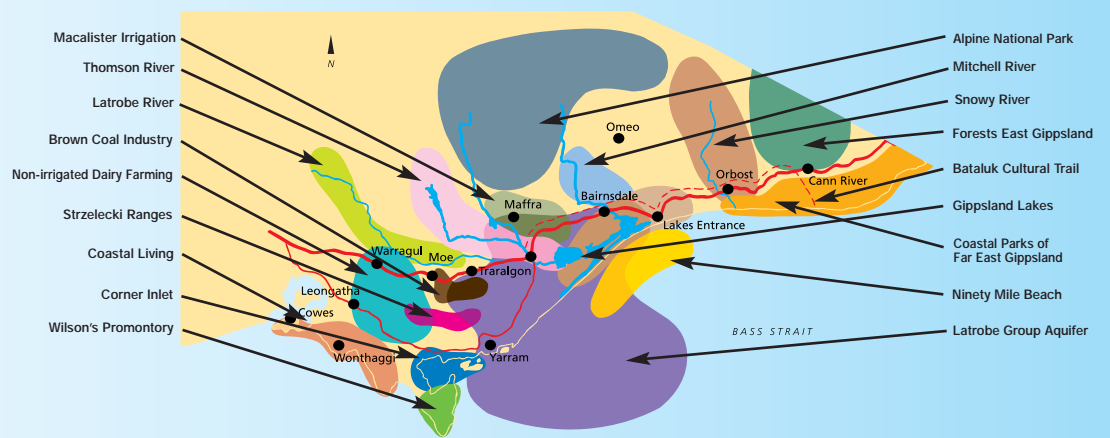
Natural Resources Report Card 2007



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2007 Catchment health, Gippsland's wealth



Condition Rating

Vital signs of Gippsland's Catchment Health
 Measure of land, water, biodiversity and air values of the natural asset and offsite impacts.

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

Please refer to www.gjnr.org.au for comprehensive details.

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.

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

Please refer to www.gjnr.org.au for comprehensive details.

Legend

- RED ★★ ★ Altered rating of assets
- ★★★★ ↑ Direction of altered rating
- (Swan icon) Gippsland Lakes catchment
- (Fish icon) Corner Inlet catchment