



# Gippsland Natural Connection

## Newsletter of Gippsland

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October  
2007

integrated natural  
resources forum

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## From the Office ...

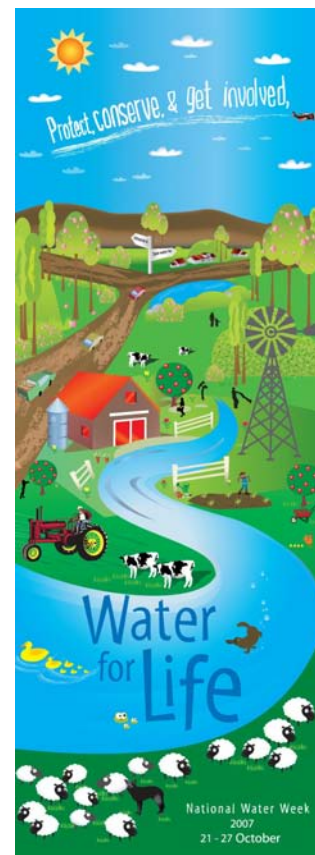
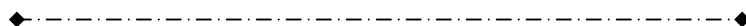
Happy Water Week Gippsland!

Its great to see all the events that are happening across Gippsland to celebrate National Water Week 2007. This year, GINRF was involved in the 'Footprints on the Foreshore' event involving over 600 Primary School held at Inverloch this week. The 2 day event, featuring special guest Tammy van Wisse, was a huge success and was enjoyed by students, teachers and organisers alike. There's a short write up of the event on page 2 and next month we will feature a complete wrap up & photos from the day.

There's lots of other great news coming in from around Gippsland including the innovative NRM Toolbar which will be a great asset to everyone working in NRM (Page 3) and the beginning of the Gippsland Lakes - Freshwater Inflows Project (Page 5).

Until next month, enjoy the read...

**Adam Miller**



## News From the Executive

The latest GINRF Executive Meeting was held on the 11th October 2007. The minutes from this meeting will be up ASAP. Please visit the minutes section of the GINRF website soon to see what was discussed.

Latest GINRF  
Executive  
Minutes

## Coming Up...

### Events:

November 1 - Corner Inlet Social Mapping Forum - see page 3

November 28 - 2006 Census Regional Forums - see page 2

November & December - Food and Fibre Field Days - See page 2

### GINRF Dates:

November 29 - GINRF Executive



**Catchment health, Gippsland's wealth**

[www.ginrf.org.au](http://www.ginrf.org.au)

Gippsland integrated  
natural resources  
forum

### 2006 Census Regional Forums

The Spatial Analysis and Research Branch of DPCD will be holding a forum in Traralgon to present and discuss the highlights of the 2006 Census. The event offers the opportunity to better understand the Gippsland Region - the trends and their drivers. The Forum is free to attend and includes lunch. **Sessions Begin at 9.30am and end by 1 - 1.30pm.**

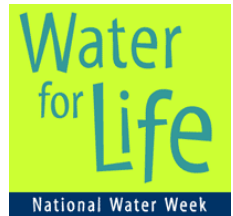
**When:** 28th November 2007

**Where:** Century Inn, Princess Hwy Traralgon

To register your attendance online, please visit [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/urbanandregionalforums](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/urbanandregionalforums); for email registrations contact [spatialanalysis.research@dpcd.vic.gov.au](mailto:spatialanalysis.research@dpcd.vic.gov.au) to request a registration form & for further info contact Lea Fisk on (03) 9637 9541.

### Footprint on the Foreshore

To help celebrate National Water Week, the 2 day 'Footprints on the Foreshore' was held on Tuesday and Wednesday on the Inverloch foreshore this week. The event, spearheaded by South Gippsland Water in conjunction with Southern Rural Water, Westernport Water, West Gippsland CMA, the Conservation Society and GINRF was a huge success with over 600 Primary school children participating over the 2 days.



Tammy van Wisse was a special guest on Wednesday, taking part in the activities with the kids and giving a short presentation to introduce the morning and afternoon sessions.

Activities throughout the days included a 'know your water' quiz game and the 'every drop counts' relay race in Rainbow Park, an environmental survey down on the foreshore, and a hilarious performance by Vox Bandicoot.

Next month we will feature a full write up and many photos from this hugely successful 2 day event.



### Future Food and Fibre Project

The objective of this project is to build the capacity of farmers and service providers in Gippsland, to enable them to plan the way forward to increase the adoption of profitable and sustainable farming and fishing practices.

The project will work across all of Gippsland from the outer eastern fringe of Melbourne to Mallacoota, and from Omeo to Wilsons Promontory.

As part of this project, 3 field days on 'Profitable and Sustainable Farming' are being held during November and December.

- Friday November 2 - 10am - 3pm: [More details here](#)
- Date TBA - 10am - 2.30pm: [More details here](#)
- Friday December 7 - 10am - 2.30pm: [More details here](#)



### Corner Inlet Social Mapping Workshop

[A summary of this project is available here.](#)

This is a social mapping project. A map is being created of the Corner Inlet and Nooramunga catchment community to show us three very important aspects of the community:

- Who influences who
- What influences individuals
- Where does the community want to be going into the future

**When:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007

**What time:** 12.30pm for lunch followed by a workshop, ending at 4.30pm

**Where:** Ship Inn, Yarram

Goodbourn & Associates will facilitate a half-day forum attended by a representative sample of stakeholders identified during the interview process for Components B and C of the project.

First, the forum will be used to identify community priorities for the protection and enhancement of Corner Inlet and its catchment. This process will make use of the stories collected for Component B; these will be employed in a mini-MSA (most significant change) process aimed at identifying events and changes valued by the stakeholders concerned. In addition to identifying discrepancies between the priorities of different groups and NRM agencies, the experience will also offer stakeholders the opportunity to appreciate the perspective of other groups with an interest in the management of Corner Inlet.

Second, the forum will examine the findings from the Social Network Analysis (Component C) conducted for the Corner Inlet community. Discussion will focus on existing networks and their dimensions, strengths and limitations. The group will be guided through activities designed to identify opportunities for improvement and capacity-building, as well as the resources required, in order to encourage community ownership of natural resource management issues.

Please RSVP to Tammy Dawson ASAP on [tammyd@wgcm.vic.gov.au](mailto:tammyd@wgcm.vic.gov.au)

### NRM Toolbar

Feel like you're trying to find a needle in a haystack? Want better internet search results? The NRM Toolbar is an Australian first featuring an NRM-specific search engine. You can also access NRM-specific databases of professional bodies, events, e-networks and more...

The NRM Toolbar is now available to download at [www.nrmtoolbar.net.au](http://www.nrmtoolbar.net.au)

The NRM Toolbar is a set of online tools and databases making it easier for NRM professionals to find and share information including:

- A downloadable NRM Toolbar interface allowing you to easily navigate to tools and databases of the NRM Toolbar
- the NRM Search Engine that searches selected Australian NRM websites
- specialised NRM databases

More features will be added to the NRM Toolbar in the coming months. Further details about the toolbar can be found on

[www.ginrf.org.au](http://www.ginrf.org.au) or on [www.nrmtoolbar.net.au](http://www.nrmtoolbar.net.au)



## Nominate our Coastal Champions

What do scuba diver John Ariens, Fishcare East Gippsland and the Friends of Wonthaggi Heathlands have in common?

All three were winners in the 2007 Coastal Awards for Excellence. Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) Chair Libby Mears this week announced entries are now open for the 2008 awards.

“The 2008 Coastal Awards for Excellence once again will recognise and reward the outstanding efforts of so many Victorian individuals and organisations to protect our much-loved coastal and marine environments for future generations,” Ms Mears said.

Awards for the 2008 Coastal Awards for Excellence will be presented in 11 categories:

Lifetime Achievement	Cultural Achievement	Innovation	Education
Outstanding Individual Achievement	Coastal Conservation & Protection by a Community Group	Coastal Conservation & Management by an Appointed Manager	Coastal Planning (new category for 2008)
Media	Species	Building & Design	

Now in their ninth year, the awards are an initiative of Coast Action/Coastcare and the VCC.

Online nomination is available at [www.vcc.vic.gov.au/coastalawards](http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au/coastalawards) until Friday, 16 November, 2007. For further information, phone (03) 9637 9236

## Gippsland Tourism Set to Benefit from Australian Alps Push

A bid to have the Australian Alps included in an international tourism campaign has received a significant boost with the announcement by Tourism Australia that it will fund an ‘audit’ of the range of experiences the Alps region has to offer.

Tourism Australia has also announced it will fund a ‘brand coach’ to help the bid team identify their marketing strengths and add impetus to the push for status in the Federal Government’s National Landscapes Program.

Spokesman Peter Jacobs said: “We have just finalised our submission to the National Landscapes Program highlighting why the Australian Alps region should be included in the associated international marketing campaign. This program specifically promotes a partnership between tourism and conservation and the Alps are well placed to present that partnership.”



Mr Chris Buckingham General Manager Gippsland Tourism said: ‘This is some of the best news tourism operators in Gippsland’s High Country has had in years. As long as our High country communities get behind this initiative it will deliver benefits for many years to

come’

## Cowes Plant has it in the Bag

They're big, black and bulging ... and the most cost-effective of waste storage now at the Cowes wastewater treatment plant.

Staff at the plant last week commissioned the latest biosolids bags – porous sealed bags each capable of retaining 600 cubic metres of treated waste.

Last Friday's roll-out brings the total number of bags to seven. They are placed side by side in a bundled lagoon and their job is to consolidate the excess biomass.

Plant operator Chris West explained: "It works a bit like the leaky hose that some people use to water their gardens. We pump the treated waste water into the bags – at that stage it's about 3% solids and 97% liquids. Over time the filtered liquids drain out through the porous bag, into the underground drainage and back into the treatment tanks.

"The biosolids remain in the bag, becoming drier and more concentrated until, at last, they're quite dry and friable. That process takes about two years."

Westernport Water Managing Director David Mawer explained: "The alternative was a centrifuge system to separate solids from liquids but that was going to cost \$600,000 to \$700,000 plus high ongoing power costs. These bags cost \$10,000 each and there's no power cost.

"The bags are used in rotation and the latest roll out means that the plant has capacity to handle as much waste as Westernport Water can process, even during the peak months."



Cowes Wastewater Treatment Plant operator Chris West with the latest biosolid bag commissioned at the plant.

## Gippsland Lakes - Freshwater Inflows

A study has been initiated to describe the role of freshwater inflows in the health of the Gippsland Lakes, their fringing wetlands and the estuarine reaches of their inflowing rivers. Such work is vital if the State and the region are to make informed decisions about the future of the Lakes system.

An important component of the study is to identify which valued aspects of the Lakes system could be affected by potential changes to freshwater inflows.

The study will provide direction for future scientific investigations by synthesising existing information, identifying key gaps and assessing the feasibility of filling those gaps.

Decisions about the future allocation or management of water from the catchments of the Gippsland Lakes are not part of the study. The study will however contribute knowledge that will help inform such decisions. The key challenge is to provide information that will enable future water resource management decisions to effectively consider the water needs of the ecosystems of the Gippsland Lakes. This includes the environmental, economic and social interests that are reliant on their condition.



## Free Water Efficient Showerheads for GW Customers

Gippsland Water customers are encouraged to register for a free water saving showerhead in the third round of Gippsland Water's showerhead exchange program.

More than 1,000 water efficient showerheads have been given away to customers across the Gippsland Water service area during the first two rounds of the exchange program since its implementation in November 2006.

For a chance to receive a water saving showerhead, customers should contact Gippsland Water on FREECALL 1800 066 401. Gippsland Water will also be hosting a number of events throughout National Water Week in October, where customers can also register for the program. Registrations for the program close on 31 October 2007.

[Full details are available here.](#)

## Council Opens Environmental Grants Program

Wellington Shire Council is calling for Expressions of Interest from landholders wanting to take advantage of the subsidies.

"Council's Native Vegetation Protection Program is designed to assist landholders in protecting and improving our environment," said Steven Dickson, Director Community and Development Wellington Shire Council.

Projects that may be funded include fencing to protect natural areas from stock, pest and weeds control and some revegetation projects where they enhance natural areas.

Applications will be considered on a case by case basis, generally up to \$5000, depending on the scale of the project and the benefits it will provide. Expressions of Interest are open until November 30, 2007.

[Full details available here.](#)

## Cheyne's Bridge a Step Closer

The permanent bridge to replace Cheynes Bridge which washed away in the Gippsland floods, is a step closer today following the awarding of a \$522,000 contract for concrete beams, Minister for Roads and Ports Tim Pallas announced today.

The new bridge is a major component of the Government's \$60 million flood recovery package, half of which is for roads and bridges," Mr Pallas said.

"The new Cheynes Bridge is to replace a temporary bridge erected in the wake of the June floods to restore access to Licola.

Mr Pallas said that the new bridge is one of many initiatives to get Gippsland on the road to recovery post the floods.

"Other initiatives included new flood warning systems for the Macalister, Avon and Thomson rivers, low interest loans for flood-affected farmers and businesses, and funding for regional tourism promotion," Mr Pallas said.

[Full details available here.](#)

## Birds of Prey a Popular Display

Over one hundred people braved the blustery conditions on Saturday, October 13 to receive a very unique experience.

The Land for Wildlife Open Property Day hosted a Bird of Prey demonstration at the Drummond's property in Lindenow South.

Luke from FullFlight brought along various raptors including "Molly" the talkative Brown Falcon, "Zorro" the affectionate Wedge-tailed Eagle, "Pepper" the intriguing Masked Owl and young "Zoe" the Peregrine Falcon.

DSE's Land for Wildlife Extension Officer, Lucy Clausen said she was very pleased at the response to the event and received plenty of positive feedback.

"Luke is a terrific presenter, giving people the chance to see the birds up close, in flight attacking lures and to learn about their habitat requirements," Ms Clausen said.

"At one point "Zoe" the Peregrine Falcon flew a bit too far away, but fortunately Luke had attached a transmitter to her so he was able to go and find her in the next paddock."



Luke & 'Zorro' the Brown Falcon

The Land for Wildlife program runs an annual Open Property Day and provides participants with newsletters, property visits and a sign of acknowledgment for their participation in the program.

If you would like to know more about the program contact Lucy Clausen at the Bairnsdale DSE office on 5152 0400.

Many volunteers and groups in the

## Helping out with Fire Recovery

community have come forward to help out in the recovery effort after our recent devastating fire season.

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Forest Manager, Peter West said that students from the Traralgon Special Development School were keen to become involved and do their bit for the recovery effort.

"There are many different ways that people can help us to help the bush and wildlife recover from fire," Mr West said.

"The students have been working hard over the past three months constructing nest boxes for native fauna. These boxes are to be used to assist Wildlife shelters in the care of fire injured animals and in the management of their transition back into forest areas."

On Friday October 12, the students visited the local wildlife shelter to hand over the boxes and to receive Certificates of Appreciation from DSE staff for their efforts.



This is one example of the many ways the community is working with DSE in the Fire Recovery effort.

## Bruthen & Nowa Nowa Walking to Good Health

It doesn't take much to reap the benefits of being more active. As little as 30 minutes a day can improve bones and muscles and reduce the risk of illnesses.

The Victorian Government's Go for your life! campaign is encouraging communities to be more active and get together to improve everyone's health and wellbeing through a number of projects across the state.

DSE is leading the East Gippsland Community Partnership project, working with 10 small communities in East Gippsland to deliver Go for your life! projects on public land and offer positive health-related outcomes to local community groups.

DSE's Manager Community Partnerships, Jacqui Bramwell said DSE is working with various communities to plan for and add even more opportunities for cycling and walking.

"A good example is the work underway on upgrading the existing beautiful Bruthen and Nowa Nowa Walking Tracks. Here the emphasis is on developing some sections of the walks with surfaces and rest areas that make it easier for seniors, families and people with disabilities to get out and Go for their lives!," Ms Bramwell said.

"Gippsland has a great range of forests, parks, reserves and open spaces. They are perfect places to be active and healthy and many are right on our town boundaries and in our own backyards."

So come on East Gippsland, lets reduce the 47 per cent obesity rates and 43 per cent under- exercising and find out more about Go for your life! in your area and get healthy and active whilst enjoying the natural environment.

For lots of exciting events, activities and healthy and active tips at [www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au)



Upgrading the Bruthen Walking Track

## Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program

The Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program is the first of its type in Australia. The Program is designed to help develop people with vision, passion and drive to provide ongoing leadership for the industry in the region. 24 tourism operators from across Gippsland participated in the 2007 program.

This program is auspiced by Baw Baw Shire Council on behalf of Gippsland Tourism and the Gippsland Local Government Network. It has received considerable support from the State Government's Provincial Victoria Growth Fund Regional Leaders Initiative Program, Telstra and the industry.

If you are a member of the Tourism Industry and have an interest in the future of the tourism sector in Gippsland we encourage you to contact Janiene Ayre, Manager Business & Community Connect at Baw Baw Shire on 5624 2538 or Chris Buckingham, Manager Gippsland Tourism on 0429 869 638 for more information or email your expression of interest to [jenny.brown@wellington.vic.gov.au](mailto:jenny.brown@wellington.vic.gov.au)

Applications close Friday 30 November 2007 [www.destinationgippsland.com.au](http://www.destinationgippsland.com.au)

