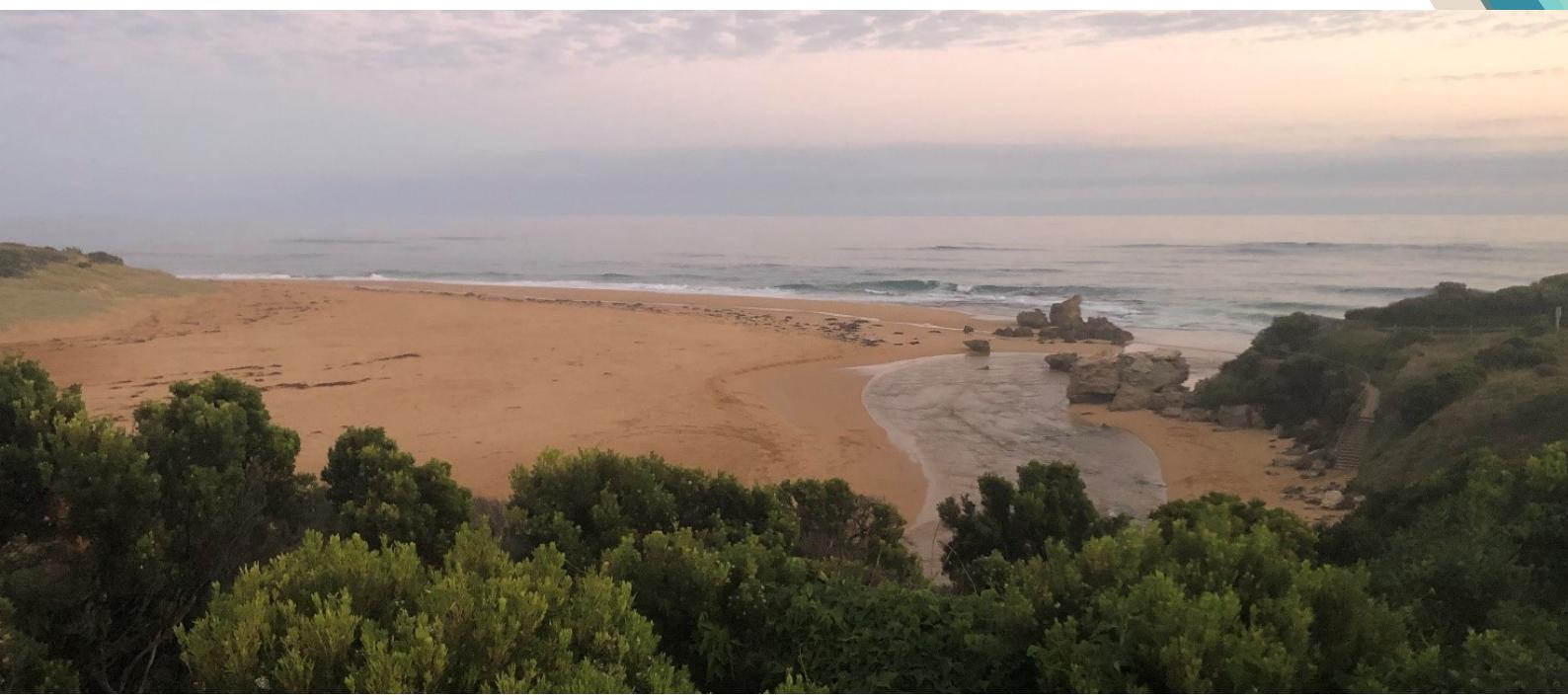




CMA



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Glenelg Hopkins CMA

www.ghcma.vic.gov.au

Telephone: (03) 5571 2526

Email: ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au

Postal: PO Box 502

Hamilton Victoria 3300

Projects continue within restrictions and new funding welcomed

Despite recent COVID-19 restrictions we have still been able to deliver some great outcomes with our partners in the region, whilst some projects have been delayed or events rescheduled.

This month's newsletter has some stories of those partnerships, projects and achievements over the last month. There have been some great outcomes for our threatened species such as the Australasian Bittern, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Button Wrinklewort and Spiny Riceflower, whilst the region continues to play a lead role with digital innovation in agriculture through hosting the second DISA Festival in Hamilton.

We were very pleased to hear that additional funding has been made available for RAMSAR, Flagship Waterways and Landcare in the recent State budget. This will be very welcome news for our partners, community groups and Landcarers.

From July 10 the public will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Regional Catchment Strategy. We welcome the feedback on the plan for land, water and biodiversity management in our region through until 2027.

**Adam Bester, CEO
Glenelg Hopkins CMA**

RCS public consultation period begins July 10

The period for public comment on the Glenelg Hopkins CMA Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-2027 will begin on July 10, for four weeks.

The Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) is the overarching plan for integrated catchment management – how land, water and biodiversity is managed by the Glenelg Hopkins community.

The RCS outlines the vision for the region, details priority directions, challenges and opportunities, and establishes a framework for investment and partnership implementation.

This includes how we, as a region, incorporate the values and priorities of local communities and Traditional Owners and help put Government policies into action and achieve statewide targets.

The strategy is housed entirely online with the capacity to print pages/sections. Public responses will also be submitted online.

**The website to view and comment on the Regional Catchment Strategy will open on July 10
glenelghopkins.rcs.vic.gov.au**

Public consultation closes: 5pm Wednesday 11 August 2021

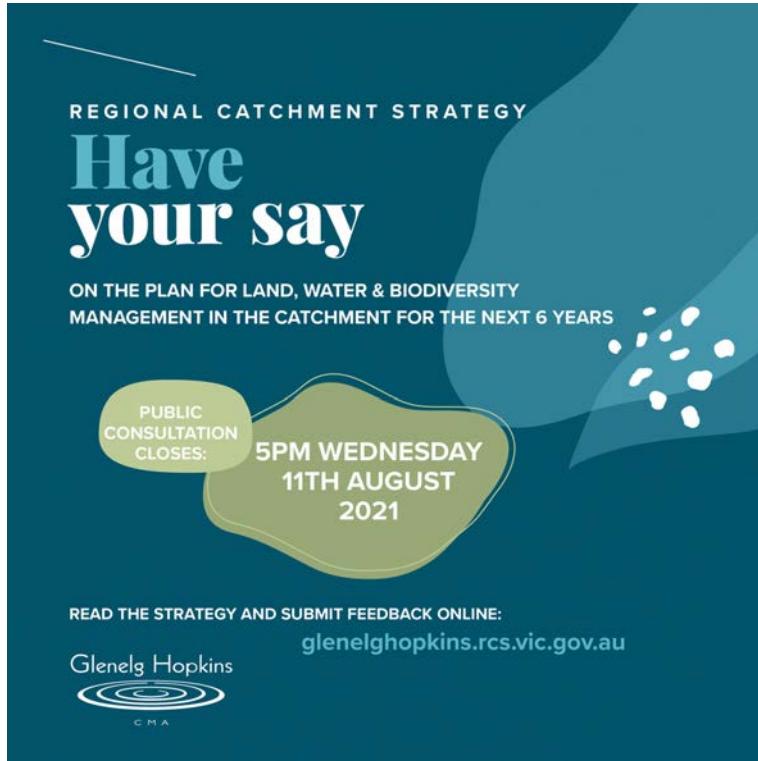
Moyne River receives habitat and weeding in new project

A new project delivering fish habitat outcomes for the Moyne River has begun recently with weed control and fish habitat installation completed.

These small brush piles (*right*) will help provide important habitat for juvenile fish species and water bugs.

The habitat was to be installed in partnership with volunteers from the Port Fairy Angling Club, but a COVID lockdown interrupted plans. Instead, CMA staff and a local contractor completed the first lot, with plans to involve volunteers installing more habitat later in the year when restrictions allow.

This project is supported by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA with funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program



CMA NEWS:

Bittern project conserves over 200ha of habitat

The Australasian Bittern recovery aspect of the Coastal Connections project has 10 new habitat sites which will receive funding for restoration and protection works.

These new sites total an area of 132ha.

In addition to the 79ha already approved in round one of incentive funding, this brings the yearly total to 211ha of Bittern habitat now being protected.

Of particularly high value is the approved Stewardship agreement over 76 ha of known Bittern habitat where evidence of breeding was discovered this year.

Funded works through the incentive program include fencing, weed and pest animal control.

RIGHT: Remnants of a Bittern nest found at stewardship site.

IMAGE: B. Clarke-Wood, BirdLife Australia



Baby Buttonwrinkleworts thriving in the outdoors

The survival rates of a Button Wrinklewort population established at a secure woodland site in Dunkeld were recently assessed and it seems the baby buttons are thriving in the outdoors.

Through a project with Wannon Water, 150 seedlings were planted at the site last spring with seed grown from the Wickliffe population.

Survival rates following their first summer in the field have been very high. The population has also experienced its first burn (an important process for the species to control grass competition) and are re-sprouting strongly (see right). Many plants appeared to have flowered and seeded in their first year.

This is an experimental site, as plants are being grown in an area of higher rainfall than is usually expected for the species. This may become an important climate refuge in the future, as remnant populations grow in relatively drier and fragmented sites.



These projects are supported by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA with funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program

Pimelea planting day promotes genetic diversity

Coronavirus restrictions in Victoria were changed enough on the long weekend in June to allow researchers and volunteers to come together under covid-safe conditions and plant some very special plants at Skipton.

The Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens* ssp. *spinescens*) is a critically endangered small shrub endemic to Victorian grassland communities.

Its recovery is part of the Glenelg Hopkins CMA's 5-year Victorian Volcanic Plains Recovery Project, which is protecting threatened ecological communities and threatened species across the VVP.

To assist with this, researchers at Victoria University had collected seed from a number of remnant populations in Western Victoria, and grew them on petri dishes in incubators to seedlings.

The Skipton Common now has 32 of these new plants on it after being carefully unpotted, planted, tagged and protected by a little team of volunteers and researchers.



The passionate people behind the project - (left) Debbie Reynolds and Megan O'Shae (right), Victoria University, with Emily Noble, Ballarat Environment Network.



ABOVE LEFT: The tiny Pimelea plants grown from seed.

ABOVE RIGHT: A mature Pimelea plant.



LEFT: Volunteers at the planting day receive instructions on planting and recording.

This project is supported by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA with funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. The project and planting day also has support from: Victoria University; Ballarat Environment Network; Pimelea Conservation Trust; Skipton Primary School; Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation ; Field Naturalists' Club Ballarat and the Snake Valley CFA Brigade.

DISA success for technology and smart farming

The second DISA Festival was held in Hamilton 25 and 26 May, with Glenelg Hopkins CMA a major partner through the Southern Farming System's Smart Farming Partnership Project.

With the theme, Smart Regions, the two-day event had a dedicated Agriculture Stream which focused on giving attendees the ability to view and learn the latest in on-farm commercial agritechology.

Day one consisted of 12 short workshops across three themes - precision land management, animal management and on-farm connectivity, monitoring and safety.

The CMA was actively involved in the design of the day and, in conjunction with members of the Western District Grasslands Society Branch, played a key role in hosting the workshop presentations.



Jonathan Jenkin (GHCMA) (CENTRE) Bindi Hunter (AgVic) and Andy Phelan (Thomas Elder Institute) discussing the Smart Farm demonstration trials..

Vegetation monitoring and data collection training

Knowing how and what to measure to ensure tangible data is recorded in the field for vegetation management was the focus of a recent field day at the Kentbruck Heath Bushland Reserve.

Working with DELWP, Glenelg Hopkins CMA staff provided training to Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners and staff from Parks Victoria on measuring vegetation responses to burning.

The Kentbruck Heath reserve will be a focus area for Gunditj Mirring cultural burning over the coming years, with over 5000ha of high-quality Red-tailed Black Cockatoo habitat identified for cool burns.

In addition to being cockatoo habitat, the reserve is also considered important for the Heath Mouse, Southern Brown Bandicoot and Powerful Owl.

Attendees of the field day were provided with training in plant identification and survey methods. This information will assist Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners as they develop their own ecological monitoring methods.



Riverbank science lesson for kinder kids on the Merri

When our team were out doing some monitoring on waterways around Warrnambool recently they were happened upon by a bunch of busy little people who wanted to know all about what was going on.

Not one to pass up an opportunity to help kids understand more about our waterways and what's in them, our team member Stephen Ryan (right) was more than happy to bring some fish up to show the students of the South Warrnambool Kinder and give them an impromtu science lesson on the banks of the Merri River.



Fish surveys mark beginning of estuary projects

Two projects focused on restoring fish habitat in our estuaries has begun in the the coastal areas of our catchment.

Estuaries - where rivers meet the sea - are important parts of our river systems. The saltwater and freshwater interaction creates a unique habitat which is important for both marine and freshwater fish.

These projects will work with local angling groups to protect and improve fish habitat throughout the region in these unique ecosystems.

Works are being delivered on the Hopkins River, Merri River, Moyne River, Eumeralla River (Yambuk Lake), Fitzroy River, Surry River, and Fawthrop Lagoon.

Fish surveys have now been completed along most of the estuaries. Surveying before works begin is an important tool to measuring the success of the project. Surveys use electrofishing and netting with fish weighed and measured before being released back into the river.



The Hopkins River (ABOVE) provided a spectacular workplace for fish surveying. The fish survey recorded size and weight of native species like the Tupong (LEFT) and black Bream (below)



This project is supported by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA with funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Industry partnerships help deliver on-ground outcomes

Pine tree seedlings naturally germinating around the landscape might sound like a good thing, but when it comes to protecting Red-tail black cockatoo habitat they are considered a weed.

An eradication project in South West Victoria has received a boost thanks to an industry partnership between natural resource managers and a timber company, Timberlands Pacific.

The stringybark forests are a key habitat area for the endangered Red-tail black cockatoo as they rely almost exclusively on the fruit of stringy bark eucalypts for food.

Pine wildlings are the major focus of the on-ground works under this program as they have the ability to alter the way that native stringy bark woodlands grow and the volume of RTBC food that they can produce. Lack of food availability is thought to be one of the major factors in the species population decline.

With the assistance of employees from Timberlands Pacific more than 400 hectares of stringybark forest has been treated. Timberlands Pacific donate staff time to assist the Glenelg Hopkins CMA staff to complete areas of eradication in a cross-industry partnership that has significant environmental benefit.

Industry partnerships in these projects enable further habitat enhancement work that would not otherwise be possible.

RIGHT: Timberlands Pacific staff undertake pine wildling eradication to encourage better growth of trees which providing food for red-tail black cockatoos.



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2021 VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS

**NOMINATIONS
CLOSING 11 JULY**



National
Landcare
Program



2021 Landcare Awards - Nominations EXTENDED!

The closing date for nominations for the Victorian Landcare Awards has been extended until July 11.

The awards are an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of Victorians from urban and rural communities excelling in environmental volunteering, sustainable agricultural practices, environmental protection, conservation of land and waterways, coastlines, and biodiversity.

Nominees can be from groups, networks, organisations, and individuals involved in protecting and improving their local environment. Anyone can nominate, so if you know an individual or group that you think should be recognised, please nominate them for an award.

There are 15 categories open to Victorians this year. Seven of these are Victorian-only and eight are national categories.

For more information go to www.landcarevic.org.au.

New scholarship for youth-focused Landcare project

The Environmental Youth Action Scholarship is a new award for the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards.

The award will support a youth or school group to design and deliver a youth-focussed and youth-driven project that will help improve Victoria's natural environment. The \$2,000 award is open to school, TAFE, and university groups between the age of 12 to 25.

Mentors will be available to support the award recipient to prepare and design the project. Projects may include educational sessions that allow the next generation to develop skills to adapt to climate change or protect local environments, or on-ground works that protect, enhance or restore an area of environmental significance, or a combination of both.

