



Our offices will close at 4.30pm Thursday, 2 April and re-open at 9am on Tuesday, 7 April.

Wishing everyone a safe Easter break



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Glenelg Hopkins



CMA

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Enjoy the catchment these Easter holidays

The last month in the catchment has not brought much rain to help farmers or our river systems, however, Easter brings with it the opportunity to still enjoy the waterways and amazing places in our catchment safely.

The Hopkins River in Warrnambool and Glenelg River at Nelson have both had artificial openings this week to try and alleviate some of the pressure on the assets around Warrnambool and Nelson. This means that launching a boat or a kayak to fish or paddle in those rivers should be much easier over the Easter period.

In project news, the CMA has several projects we would like the community to be aware of and get involved in.

This coming month the Victorian Landcare Grants and EOIs for swamp stewardships in our Northern Grampians Plains region close, so if you have been thinking about putting in for them, please do so.

The national Green Sheep Project is also seeking farmers who would like to be involved. Information about the project is available on our website and in this newsletter.

If you are in the area, the CMA will be at the Cavendish Red Gum Festival on April 18 with one of our team leading a walk along the Wannon River, and others on hand with information about the CMA and our projects. We'd love to have you drop by.

Adam Bester
CEO

Glenelg Hopkins CMA

CMA NEWS:

What we find when we're surveying for fish - Platypus!



While surveying for Southwest Victorian Blackfish recently these two platypus made an appearance! The team from Austral Research and Consulting, Dr Patrick Pickett (LEFT) and Dion Iversi (below) were there to take these very healthy females out of the nets, weigh and measure them and return them to their waterway homes.



Supporting a special blackfish in our waterways

What we were surveying for: Southwest Victorian Blackfish.

This species is EPBC listed as endangered and only found in the waterways of south west Victoria.

The team have been out with Austral Research and Consulting undertaking fish surveys in Brucknell Creek to find these fish as part of a Victorian Fisheries Authority-funded project to support their recovery.

The baseline surveys being conducted now will be repeated during the project period and will be complemented by habitat being placed in the waterway to encourage breeding.

You can see more videos and photos of what we found as part of the surveying [here](#)



CMA NEWS:

Just plant the tree: What a difference 10 years can make

If you're looking at a patch in your paddock and wondering if it's worth tree planting this winter, this might give you some encouragement.

This is a project site from the Upper Wannon Water Action Plan project completed in 2016. The Arthur Rylah Institute have been monitoring it for 10 years - popping back to check on it, and a control site nearby that wasn't revegetated, as part of the Riparian Intervention Monitoring Program - a long term study into the impact revegetation and weed control works, and fencing stock off waterways, has on those riparian areas. The marked difference should inspire everyone to plant the trees and grasses and fence off that waterway.

If you're wondering what species to plant in your local area, if there is funding available or how you can be part of these sorts of activities, get in touch with us at the CMA - phone (03) 5571 2526 or ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au



Keep up to date with what we're up to at the CMA!



Glenelg Hopkins CMA



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CMA NEWS:

How do you value our waterways?

HAVE YOUR SAY:

Click here



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How do you use and value our waterways in south-west Victoria?

Glenelg Hopkins CMA is calling on community members to share their thoughts, ideas and hopes for the region's rivers, wetlands and estuaries as work begins on a new Glenelg Hopkins Regional Waterway Strategy.

The strategy will guide how waterways are cared for over the next decade, and community voices are essential in getting it right.

"It's important that this strategy reflects community aspirations and what's achievable," Glenelg Hopkins CMA Executive Manager Waterways, Simone Wilkie, said.

"In ten years, we want to look back and see that we've delivered most of what we set out to do. That will mean in some cases we need to be selective and smart about what we include in the strategy."

The strategy would build on past work and projects already happening in the region, leverage on the efforts

of partner organisations including Traditional Owners, community groups, and landholders, and be considerate of the changing nature of the region.

Ms Wilkie said waterway values can mean many different things to many different people.

It might be the native plants and animals that rely on healthy rivers and wetlands, or it could be a favourite fishing spot, a peaceful place to walk the dog, or somewhere that simply helps them feel calm and connected to nature, she said.

Traditional Owners have cared for the waterways in the region for thousands of years and continue to practice culture and share knowledge to care for living waterways.

Waterways also support farming, tourism and local businesses, and they play a vital role in the environment by supporting biodiversity and helping to keep landscapes healthy.

"The waterway strategy aims to balance all of these uses and values of waterways," Ms Wilkie said.



CMA NEWS:

Green Sheep Project: Turning sustainability into strength

The national Green Sheep Project supports sheep producers to better understand, measure and communicate on farm sustainability and natural capital.

Led by Sheep Producers Australia, natural resource management and industry bodies, including the Glenelg Hopkins CMA, the project focuses on practical tools, real-world demonstrations, and clearer market recognition for environmental stewardship.

How can you get involved?

Glenelg Hopkins CMA is working with local farmers to trial and demonstrate, real-world natural-capital reporting solutions for sheep farmers in south-west Victoria.

The project aims to simplify natural capital, build confidence, and help landholders understand emerging opportunities, and ensure the sustainability work farmers already do is recognised and valued.

Farm EOs now open

We are inviting expressions of interest from sheep, mixed farming, wool or lamb enterprises in or neighboring the Glenelg Hopkins CMA region to participate in the project.

Expressions of interest are welcome now.

Please complete the [Expression of Interest - Green Sheep 2026](#)

or scan the QR code.

For further information

Contact Glenelg Hopkins CMA's
GSP project team

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Green Sheep Project (GSP) is supported by the Australian Government through the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program under the Natural Heritage Trust.

LANDCARE NEWS:

Best of the West facilitators gather in Port Fairy

Recently the Landcare facilitators in the state's west got together for the annual Best of the West gathering - an event for Landcare facilitators in the Glenelg Hopkins, Wimmera and Mallee CMA regions.

It was another great meeting of the minds for the people who do a lot of the on-ground work around our catchments with landholders and communities.

The event provides not only cross-CMA colleague support, but also provided for facilitators to gain new skills in engagement, project and landscape mapping, event planning, and messaging.

Keynote speaker was Ben Zeeman from Glenelg Hopkins CMA talking about the projects on the Victorian Volcanic Plains grasslands and South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo recovery, with other presentations from DEECA and Landcare Victoria



FUNDING NOW AVAILABLE: 2026 Victorian Landcare Grants closing on April 23

The Victorian Government Landcare Grants are now open until 23 April 2026 with \$3.55 million

available to support volunteers in caring for the state's landscapes and biodiversity.

Project Grants of up to \$20,000 are available for on-ground works, community education and engagement, and group/network development activities that protect or improve natural assets such as native vegetation, native fauna, waterways, wetlands and soils.

Support Grants of up to \$500 are available to assist with costs such as insurance, incorporation and operational needs.



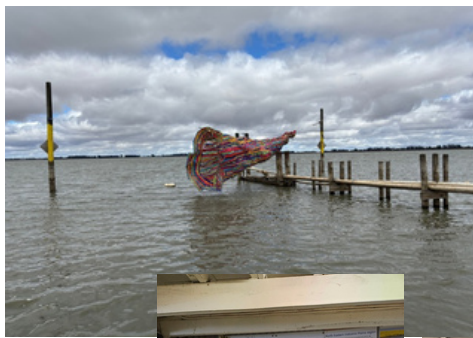
[Visit www.ghcma.vic.gov.au for more information](http://www.ghcma.vic.gov.au)

Did we see you at the Lake Bolac Eel Festival?

The CMA was part of Lake Bolac's annual celebration of music, art, the environment and indigenous culture at the town's Eel Festival on Saturday March 28.

We were proud to be a part of the event and talk all things wetlands, sustainable agriculture, frogs, birds, and more!

If you saw something and you'd like more info, get in touch with the CMA team.



Swamp stewardships for NE Volcanic Plains close April 10

Do you live in the North Eastern Volcanic Plains area?

Do you have swamps or wetlands on your farm? Want to know more about them? How to manage them? You could get paid to do that.

The Glenelg Hopkins CMA's Our Catchments Our Communities (OCOC) project can help with that through partnerships to support stewardship of temporary or seasonal swamps.

The North Eastern Volcanic Plains is a productive farming area in a landscape of swamps. Swamps are the sumps of the farm, providing drainage, summer green pick and habitat for broilgas, frogs and other animals as well as beneficial insects. Healthy swamps can be part of a productive farm, and with the right support this can be easily achieved.

Funding is available to farmers who own property in the North Eastern Volcanic Plains area (see website for map area) to manage their temporary swamps. The support is for assessing and better understanding the swamps on your farm and through to financial incentives for swamp management and/or restoration.

EOIs are now open and close on Friday, April 10, 2026. For more information visit www.ghcma.vic.gov.au



Fish monitoring in the Glenelg River show upsides of enviro flows

The positive effects of environmental water have been demonstrated by Arthur Rylah Institute's (ARI) most recent fish monitoring survey along the Glenelg River in March. This fish survey is undertaken annually to paint a picture the health of our native fish species over time.

During the recent survey, 284 Blackfish were either observed or captured, including many juvenile fish, aged 0+ and 1+ years of age.

This indicates continued positive recruitment for a species dependant on good water quality. During these dry years, we can attribute much of the success of this species to environmental water releases from Rocklands Reservoir.

Meanwhile, the length of Tupong was similar to last year with many of the fish being adults. This indicates continued high survival of the 2023 year-class but no recruitment in that last 2 years. The lack of juveniles is to be expected during these dry years, as Tupong spawning is triggered by largescale natural rainfall events in Autumn or Winter, which we have not seen since 2022.

Without this trigger, Tupong do not migrate to saltwater to breed so there is no positive recruitment. Nonetheless, environmental water plays a part in maintaining conditions for the survival of adult species through maintaining connectivity throughout the system.

The following fish species were also recorded:

- Flatheaded Gudgeon
- Southern Pygmy Perch
- Variegated Pygmy Perch
- Australian Smelt
- Common Galaxias
- Obscure Galaxias
- Estuary Perch
- Black Bream
- Smallmouth Hardyhead
- Common Yabby, and
- Glenelg Spiny Crayfish.

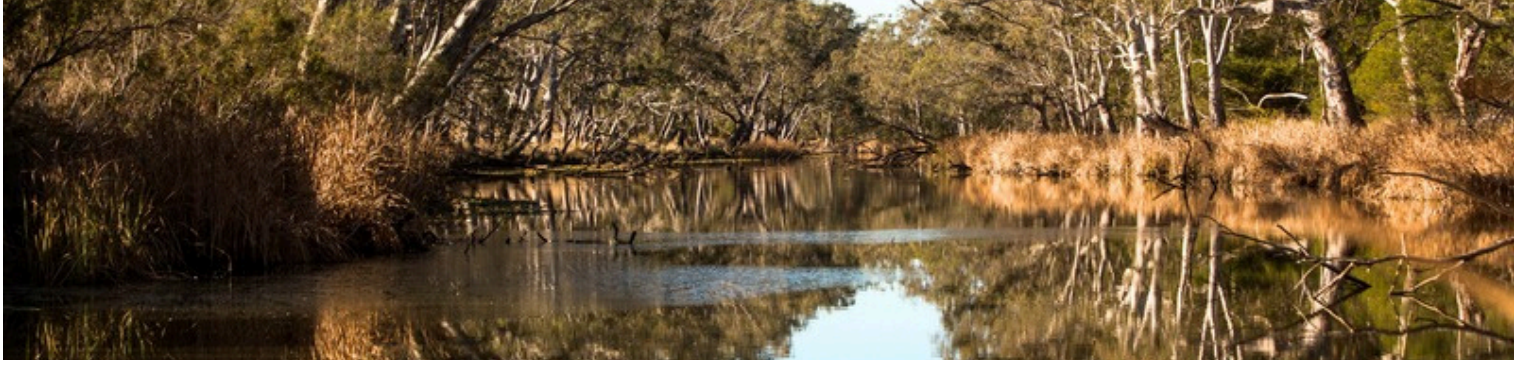
Five non-native species were also captured or observed, including:

- Gambusia
- Carp
- Redfin Perch
- Rainbow Trout
- Goldfish

Freshwater Catfish, that occurs naturally within the Murray- Darling Basin was also captured.



Frank and Lauren from Arthur Rylah Institute surveying a section of the Glenelg River using electrofishing techniques. This survey is repeated annually, providing an overview of changes over time for native and exotic species abundance and distribution.



Short-lived reprieve for waterways as dry continues

Despite some areas of the catchment receiving average rainfall over the last month, the relief has been unfortunately short-lived and with minimal influence on streamflow in the Glenelg River.

Throughout February, we were still heavily reliant on releases of environmental water to the Glenelg River. Consistent baseflows and fresh releases over Summer have sustained water quality and connectivity, with a final fresh for the season released on February 10, peaking at 250ML/day on February 18, before dropping back down to baseflows by February 26. Baseflow releases will continue into the Glenelg River for the remainder of the season.

Flows at Weavers

The February fresh event released from Rocklands Wall peaked at 61ML/day on February 11, resulting in a streamflow at Weavers Gauge of around 50ML/day on February 19. As with other fresh events in Reach 1a, the summer/autumn fresh target was slightly undershot to manage flooding risks associated with Frasers Swamp, while maintaining water quality and connectivity in this section of the river (below).

Flows at Harrow

Both the summer/autumn baseflow and fresh targets were met in Harrow, with streamflow at Reach 1b peaking at 145ML/d on February 24, just in time for the Johnny Mullagh Long Weekend event on March 8 (Figure 2). The river level rose by approximately 50cm during this time, making ideal conditions for recreational users to enjoy water activities on the Glenelg. The water level gradually reduced as the fresh event moved downstream and releases began returning to baseflows again. The gauge at Harrow is currently malfunctioning and undergoing maintenance.

Flows at Dergholm

Similarly to Harrow, both summer/autumn baseflow and fresh targets were met in Dergholm, with the fresh nudging the target at 152ML/day on February 28, 11 days after the peak release of 246ML/d on February 18. As we've seen, these conditions are perfect for blackfish recruitment and other native aquatic species in the Glenelg.

Flows at Dartmoor

Summer/autumn baseflow and fresh targets in Dartmoor followed a similar pattern to previous months, with baseflows tracking shy of targets during February, noting the CMA does not target Dartmoor with a baseflow release. The Fresh event in the Glenelg River is not evident in the graph below but will likely fall short of its target. Flows to Dartmoor (reach 3) are usually met via natural runoff or groundwater as tributaries downstream increase the volume of water arriving at this section of the river.

Planning for large scale woody weed control around Heywood

Large scale woody weed control works along Killara/Darlot Creek and the Palawarra/Fitzroy River are planned for 2026 as part of the Budj Bim Connections Flagship Project.

The complex and difficult to access willow infestations at Tyrendarra and Homerton on Darlot Creek/Killara have been identified in a willow feasibility study as key areas for control to improve waterway health.

Willows spread their roots through the bed of waterways, absorbing and slowing water flow and raising the bed level. Dense thickets cause water to often break bank and flood adjacent areas which can cause erosion. Being non-native and deciduous, the leaves create a rise in organic matter when they drop in Autumn, reducing water quality and oxygen levels in the water which threatens the survival of native aquatic plants and animals.

Some willows can spread via seed, however most spread by fragments of stems or branches breaking and growing new root systems in wet areas. Removal will prevent further spread of the willow infestations and protect waterway health across the significant Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Site rehabilitation will take place following willow removal and will include monitoring of the stumps, further weed control of any other species present, as well as revegetation with native species when feasible.

The site on the Fitzroy River/Palawarra at Heywood includes stage 2 and 3 of weed control works that began in 2024 through the township area. Originating in response to community request for support, this includes control of a range of weeds such as willows, ash, poplars, gorse, hawthorn and blackberry.

For more information, contact Tania Parker on 5571 2526 or t.parker@ghcma.vic.gov.au

