2.2 Glenelg Hopkins

The Glenelg Hopkins region encompasses the Hopkins, Glenelg and Portland river basins and includes a small section of the Millicent Coast Basin. The region contains a number of natural waterway features that are of state, national and international significance.

The Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape is culturally significant for the Gunditjmara people and is going through the process for world heritage listing. The Glenelg River estuary is one of 18 heritage rivers in Victoria. The river is considered the ‘spine’ of the Habitat 141 national wildlife corridor as it enables connectivity throughout the landscape. It is one of many priority waterways described in the Glenelg Hopkins Waterway Strategy that underpin key social, economic, environmental and cultural values within south-west Victoria.
Community engagement and partnerships in the Glenelg Hopkins region

Waterways in the Glenelg Hopkins region have benefited from strong community involvement in waterway management. Community members from a variety of industry, recreational, Traditional Owner and environment groups make a valuable contribution to waterway management in the region by volunteering their time, local knowledge and expertise.

Since 2002, the Gunditjmara community and the Glenelg Hopkins CMA have collaborated on more than 15 natural and cultural resource management projects. In 2015, the Gunditjmara Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and the CMA developed a formal partnership, which articulates each organisation’s role, describes how they will work together and identifies goals of the partnership and measures of success. It includes collaborating on the planning of riparian projects through the Glenelg Hopkins Advisory Group, particularly when waterway action plans are developed.

The Fiery Creek Project is an example of a coordinated cross-tenure delivery approach which involves landholders, DELWP (Good Neighbour Program) and local government (Pyrenees Shire) in riparian fencing and weed management on private land, Crown land and roadsides. The project supports priorities of the Beyond Bolac Community Action Group and Upper Hopkins Landcare Group.

The CMA develops a waterway action plan when it begins work in a particular catchment or river reach. It is an effective engagement and delivery approach to target all landholders within a priority waterway area. In 2013, the CMA won the Australian Riverprize for excellence for its long-term Glenelg River Restoration Project that uses this approach. The project has engaged more than 650 landholders and fenced over 1600 km of the Glenelg River and its tributaries.

“Waterways in the Glenelg Hopkins region have benefited from strong community involvement in waterway management.”
Budj Bim Restoration project

The Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape is a section of volcanic plain that encompasses the area from Mt Eccles to the sea. The basalt lava flow created a series of wetlands and rivers including Lake Condah, Darlots Creek and Fitzroy River and estuary. In 2010, Lake Condah was restored and the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners are now focussing on protecting and restoring other waterways in the landscape.

The landscape is rich in Gunditjmara cultural heritage places, including stone huts and engineered wetlands and channels used to hold and harvest eels. This site contains the oldest known record of aquaculture in the world. The area also supports many rare and threatened aquatic fauna including grayling, Yarra pygmy perch, dwarf galaxias, Australasian bitterns, growling grass frogs and Glenelg spiny crays.

The Glenelg Hopkins CMA is supporting the Gunditjmara community to improve the health of Country. Projects have included developing a land management toolkit based on Indigenous ecological knowledge, running ‘Yarns on Farms’ and providing training opportunities and grants for onground works. This partnership has enabled the Gunditjmara people to share traditional land management practices with landholders in the region.

The project implements priorities of the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Windamara Aboriginal Corporation by working with Budj Bim rangers in restoration works along Darlots Creek and the Fitzroy River and estuary. The rangers are working to incorporate Indigenous ecological knowledge into land management on Gunditjmara owned and managed properties. In recent years, the CMA has been working with the rangers to share knowledge and support the development of the rangers’ skills in fire management, pest plant control, revegetation, fencing and wildlife monitoring. This project will build on these skills to restore waterways in the Budj Bim Landscape, strengthen the partnership with the CMA and provide employment opportunities for the Budj Bim rangers.
Glenelg Hopkins riparian priorities and outcomes

The priority waterways for riparian management are shown in the map below. They are based on priorities contained in the Glenelg Hopkins Waterway Strategy and provide guidance about the location of riparian management activities planned for the five-year period 2015-16 to 2019-20. The riparian outcome measures and their aspirational targets are provided in the table below.

Figure 4 Glenelg Hopkins priority waterways for riparian management

Note: due to space limitations on the map, typically only large priority wetlands or wetland complexes are named and have been assigned value icons.

Table 3 Riparian outcome measures and aspirational targets 2015-16 to 2019-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Riparian outcome measure</th>
<th>Aspirational target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Length of riparian land where works have been undertaken to protect or improve its condition</td>
<td>760 km</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Area of waterway vegetation works undertaken to improve the health and resilience of waterways</td>
<td>1260 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of landholders who have worked with the CMA to undertake riparian works</td>
<td>320</td>
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</tbody>
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