Over the past 20 years, catchment management authorities (CMAs) and government have worked with landholders to manage riparian land. Typical management activities have included fencing, revegetation, provision of off-stream stock watering infrastructure and weed and pest animal management.

Riparian land with native vegetation in good condition is important for waterway health. It provides habitat for plants and animals, improves water quality, stabilises stream banks, supplies food for fish and other in-stream organisms and provides a corridor for the movement of native plants and animals.

What is riparian land?
Land that adjoins rivers, creeks, estuaries, lakes and wetlands is known as riparian land (often called ‘frontage’). Riparian land is often the only remaining area of remnant vegetation in the landscape.

What are the benefits of riparian works to landholders?
On a personal and property scale, managing riparian land has a number of direct benefits to landholders that are supported by sound evidence. A summary of these landholder benefits is outlined below.

### Summary of evidence: landholder benefits from selected riparian management activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Benefit by production type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>Reduced time mustering stock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revegetation</td>
<td>Riparian shelter belt → improved stock health and increased crop productivity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-stream watering</td>
<td>Access to higher quality water → increased water and forage intake → increased milk production (dairy) or weight gain (beef and sheep)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>Keeps stock out of waterways → reduced risk factors for diseases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revegetation</td>
<td>Riparian vegetation in good condition → increased land value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revegetation and weed control</td>
<td>Healthy riparian land → enhanced aesthetics and landholder wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dairy</th>
<th>Beef</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Crop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Dairy" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Beef" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sheep" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Crop" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Managing riparian land: an overview of benefits to landholders

Production benefits

Reduced time mustering
A number of independent Australian studies have shown that fencing riparian land can make it easier to muster stock, which in turn can reduce farm costs.
For example, a Victorian study of Crown frontage licence holders revealed that 50% of survey respondents considered fencing their waterway to be an important to very important productivity benefit in managing livestock.

Increased production
Off-stream stock watering can provide a cleaner and more reliable source of drinking water. Studies have shown that greater access to higher quality water means that livestock will drink more, and the more water stock consume, the more they eat and hence the more milk they produce (dairy) or weight they gain (meat production).

Reduced risks to animal health
As well as increased productivity, fencing off the waterway and providing a clean alternative water source reduces the risk factors known to cause mastitis and other cattle diseases.
For example, interviews with cattle producers in the USA noted that most producers who fenced waterways and provided an alternative source of water for their livestock saw a decrease in incidence of disease, including mastitis.

Improved property prices
Evidence from several Australian studies based on farm sales suggests that well managed riparian frontages can improve the market value of a rural property.
For example, one study of the effect of native vegetation on properties showed that with the optimum amount of vegetation, property values rose between 5% and 16% depending upon the size of the property.

Improved aesthetics and landholder wellbeing
Many landholders are motivated to carry out riparian works for aesthetic and environmental reasons, including the peace and beauty of having native vegetation and wildlife on the farm.
For example, landholder surveys undertaken as part of a Victorian evaluation of riparian management showed that improving the aesthetic value of the riparian land was one of the top three responses given by landholders in response to why they undertook riparian works.
This and other studies also showed that regardless of a landholder’s initial motivation for managing riparian land, a key outcome is often a more aesthetically pleasing farm which is highly valued by the landholder.
Wannon River, SW Victoria. Fifteen years after riparian works. Photo: Glenelg Hopkins CMA

Want to manage your riparian land?

More information about riparian management programs in your region can be obtained from your CMA.

East Gippsland CMA  5152 0600
West Gippsland CMA  1300 094 262
Corangamite CMA  5232 9100
Glenelg Hopkins CMA  5571 2526
Wimmera CMA  5382 1544
Mallee CMA  5051 4377
North Central CMA  5448 7124
Goulburn Broken CMA  5822 7700
North East CMA  1300 216 513
Melbourne Water*  131 722

* Melbourne Water is the waterway manager for the Port Phillip region

Further information

Fact sheet series

This is one in a series of fact sheets on the benefits for landholders in managing riparian land.

Other fact sheets cover specific benefits to:
- dairy farmers
- sheep graziers
- beef cattle farmers
- croppers.

The fact sheet series has been developed from a longer report investigating the benefits to landholders of undertaking riparian work. The fact sheets and full report can be found in the riparian land section on the DELWP website.

Riparian land

More information about managing riparian land can be found on the DELWP website at: Riparian land and Crown land leases, licences and permits.

Managing riparian land:
an overview of benefits to landholders

Accessibility

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