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Good winter inflows benefit the Glenelg River

The Glenelg Hopkins CMA's regulated entitlement of 5,300 ML was delivered down the Glenelg River between November 2009 and May 2010. According to the Annual Watering Plan developed by the Glenelg Hopkins and Wimmera CMAs, implementation of summer baseflows into the Glenelg River between Rocklands Reservoir and Harrow was a priority. The aims of these summer baseflow releases were to maintain water quality and connection between key habitats in a high value section of the Glenelg River most affected by flow regulation. Water quality responded positively to these summer baseflows, although monitoring showed summer base flows were consistently below flow recommendations because a lot more water than was available would be needed to have a greater improvement in river health.

The targeted section of the river, along with the rest of the Glenelg River, is still under significant ecological stress and will require future support through environmental water deliveries.

Due to recent inflows Glenelg Hopkins CMA has obtained passing flow allocations in June and July 2010. The amount released per day will be varied between 10-70 ML/day and will be released from both the wall outlet and 5-mile outlet. Total allocation to date has been 872 ML of passing flows. First releases were held off until 22 July due to Wannon Water's construction of the Hamilton Pipeline at the reservoir wall.



Environmental flow release from 5-mile outlet.

Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS) and Wimmera Glenelg Bulk Entitlement amendment update

The deadline for submissions to the Draft Western Sustainable Water Strategy closed on 21 June 2010. Submissions are being collated and will be considered in preparation of the Western Sustainable Water Strategy. The draft strategy and updates on progress can be viewed on the DSE website www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/programs/sws/western

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline working group is discussing final amendments to the Wimmera Glenelg Bulk Entitlement to distribute Wimmera Mallee Pipeline water savings amongst the environment and other users. Modelling is still underway to confirm business case savings of 83 GL average annual return to the environment and to ensure the impacts of climate change are shared between all entitlement holders.

Chetwynd community mobilising for river health

Many members of the Chetwynd community are in the process of accessing fencing grants to protect some of the region's most important waterways. The grants are being offered by Glenelg Hopkins CMA as part of implementation of the recently completed Waterway Action Plan for the Glenelg River between Chetwynd River and Salt Creek.

Approximately \$350,000 of funding will be available for activities such as fencing, revegetation and off-stream watering. The CMA is offering higher than standard rates in an attempt to ensure the high priority actions from the plan are carried out. Landholders will have a year to complete the fencing works and 18 months to carry out revegetation.

The works program follows on from a presentation to the community in early June. The presentation, which was attended by approximately 30 landholders, provided the community with an overview of the important features of waterways in the Chetwynd region as well as the key threats to river health which included weeds and erosion. This information is the result of several weeks of field work by the CMA.

At the Chetwynd meeting, botanist Neil Marriott revealed the important find of a potentially new and significant species of Callistemon (Bottlebrush tree) on the Glenelg River.

The Plan and the grants for works are part of a four year program aimed at restoring health to the upper Glenelg River. The program is funded by the Victorian Government. For more information, please contact the CMA on 5571 2526 or visit the CMA's website www.ghcma.vic.gov.au



Glenelg Hopkins CMA Landscape Project Co-ordinator Rob Addinsall and botanist Neil Marriot present to members of the Chetwynd community.

A new alliance to protect a special environment in the south west...

Nestled in the south west corner of our region is a little-known water environment of great significance to the nation. The site contains the waterways and wetlands of the Discovery Bay Coastal Park, the Lower Glenelg National Park, the Crawford River Regional Park and nearby private land. Together with a selected number of other sites across Australia the area was identified in 2009 as a critical aquatic ecosystem. This means it is one of Australia's significant environmental assets, containing internationally important sites for plants, animals and cultural heritage. Following this recognition, funding was successfully sought through the Australian Government's 'Caring for our Country' initiative and the Glenelg Alliance program was established!

The initial year of the Glenelg Alliance program has just been completed, with huge successes. Managers of both public and private land have been brought together to deal with threats to this critical aquatic ecosystem. Together they have successfully attacked pest plants and animals that threaten the integrity of this special place. These actions have included:

- Weeds treated on 427ha of public land throughout the Lower Glenelg National Park (LGNP) and Discovery Bay Coastal Park (DBCP) by Parks Victoria. This includes 140ha of south west bridal creeper and 61ha of blackberry.
- Feral pigs addressed on 300ha of land within the Discovery Bay Park by Parks Victoria.
- Weeds, cats and fox threats addressed on 5467ha of Crown land by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. This includes 37ha of blackberry infestations treated along the Glenelg River at Dartmoor; 10ha of bridal creeper infestations treated within the LGNP & DBCP; cat and fox trapping across

120ha of the LGNP & DBCP and 5300ha of the DBCP addressed through fox baiting. Fox control programs on public land are part of the DSE Glenelg Ark project. Encouraging community fox control programs on private land is supported through the State Government's Future Farming Strategy – Improving fox control on private land project.

- Facilitation, extension and best practice management advice from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) towards blackberry, gorse, rabbits and foxes; along with RPW (Regionally Prohibited Weeds) species across 180 properties covering 16,100ha of private land. The work on RPW supports the State Government's Future Farming Strategy "Improving biosecurity at a regional scale by managing regionally prohibited weeds project". The area has also been mapped to represent baseline pest infestation extent, finding a total of 104.35ha of blackberry (4.23ha), gorse (0.11ha), rabbits (0.01ha) and foxes (100ha).
- Assessment of 443ha and 29 licensed Crown frontages along the Glenelg and Crawford Rivers and the rolling out landholder weed incentives with licence holders by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA. To date, 117.5ha (11.66kms of Glenelg River) has been committed to weed treatment, which is due to commence in November.

A range of pest plant and animal projects will continue over the next 12 months, along with future opportunities to protect and rehabilitate our waterways through stock exclusion fencing and indigenous revegetation works.

Any landholders in the target area that are interested in weed incentives are encouraged to contact Jarred Obst at the Glenelg Hopkins CMA

River Tender project a popular choice

River Tender was met with a great response when launched in June, with over 70 land managers registering by the close of the expression of interest period. Glenelg Hopkins CMA invited expressions of interest from specific landowners with waterway frontage in key areas. As highlighted in a previous RAVE, the River Tender project aims to build and enhance environmental connections in the landscape and improve river health by providing financial incentives to land managers to manage land along waterways or in floodplain areas with conservation values in mind.

Each land manager who has registered interest in the project will receive an information pack in the coming weeks explaining the River Tender process and the next steps to take. A River Tender field officer will contact each land manager to arrange a site visit and assessment of their potential project area and development of a management plan.

The information collected during the site visit will assist in determining the current conservation value of the nominated riparian and floodplain area. It will also help determine the conservation benefit the activities nominated in the management plan will have on the site, in terms of the expected improvements in river health, landscape connectivity and biodiversity.

The management plan will include works to protect and manage existing native vegetation in riparian and floodplain areas and link and widen existing native vegetation patches. These works might include fencing, pest and weed control, revegetation and stock exclusion.

River Tender is a commercial process and participating land managers will bid competitively to have their site funded. Successful land managers may enter into financial contracts with Glenelg Hopkins CMA for five years, during which time they will receive funding annually to carry out conservation works.



The Glenelg River.

STORAGE WATCH as at 28/07/2010

GWM Water System Storage Watch		
RESERVOIR	CURRENT CONTENTS (ML)	PERCENT FULL
Rocklands	6,930	2%
Moora Moora	3,700	59%
Bellfield	23,870	30%
Wartook	18,590	63%
Taylors	23,050	68%
Lonsdale	3,280	5%
Fyans	6,320	34%
Others	0	0%
TOTAL	85,740	11.5%

A megalitre (ML) is one million litres, about half the volume of water held in an Olympic size swimming pool