



Wimmera CMA Newsletter

A quick summary of recent events.

For upcoming events please visit our website or follow us on Facebook.

Petyan Edition 2017

Season of wildflowers

Spring: September - November

The Petyan Edition of the Wimmera CMA's Newsletter summarises some of our activities over the past months.

There are six distinct weather periods recognised in the Gariwerd seasonal cycle. The Season of Petyan is depicted by bird eggs, wildflowers and great meetings. There were great meetings of Aboriginal bands of up to 1000 people for settling legal conflicts, singing and dancing corroborees, wrestling and boomerang throwing competitions, football games, trade, seeking partners for marriage. clans were summoned by smoke signals or message sticks

Trees are in flower including silver banksia, yellow box and silver wattles and swamp paperbarks are in flower. Many shrubs/grasses are in flower including parrot peas, mint bush, bauera, tetraheca, rice flowers and Christmas mint bush.

Many orchids and lily are in flower. More butterflies emerge, insects are active, and many mammals are breeding during Petyan. The bush rings with sounds of courting birds, frogs and insects. Frogs are active, Platypus lay eggs and eels migrate downstream.



WATER IN THE WIMMERA

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER



Wimmera CMA hosted its Annual Environmental Water Forum in September at Drung. Community groups and agencies were well represented, including angling clubs, skiing and boating clubs, councils and Victorian Fisheries Authority.

It provided an opportunity to launch and seek feedback on the Socio-economic Study into the Value of Environmental and Recreational Water and outline plans for environmental watering for the rest of 2017-18 (Hyperlink to the study- <http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au/docs/default-source/riversdocs/report--wsm-socio-economic-value-of-recreational-and-environmental-water-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=2>).

As part of the forum a discussion with angling groups identified potential projects as part of the State Governments Angler Riparian Partnerships Program.

The Angler Riparian Partnerships Program is a \$1 million statewide program aimed at supporting anglers to be involved in riparian improvement projects to improve the health of waterways in areas of local priority for anglers.



For all updated information related to environmental water activity, check out the Wimmera CMA website <http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au/> and follow the link:

<http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au/rivers-and-streams/river-flows>

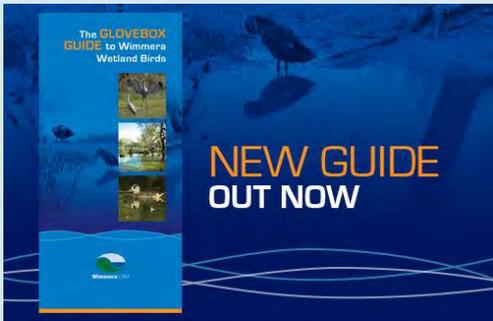
REGIONAL RIPARIAN ACTION PLAN

Targeted Expressions of Interest for waterway fencing and revegetation have been sent out to landholders along Millers Creek and a region-wide Expression of Interest has been promoted through the media via Facebook and local newspapers. These Expressions of Interest will be open until Christmas.

The re-printed Wimmera Frog Guide was launched by Costa Georgiadis at the Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar.



NEW WIMMERA BIRD GUIDE



The cameras were out when Wimmera CMA and Stawell Camera Club launched the revised edition of The Glovebox Guide to Wimmera Wetland Birds at Stawell's Cato Lake as part of National Bird Week. The launch coincides with Birdlife Australia's #AussieBirdCount which calls on all Australians to become volunteer counters and contribute to a national database of Australian birds. Last year over 61,000 people participated in the #AussieBirdCount and counted over 1.4 million birds.

Well-known Wimmera bird researcher Jonathan Starks helped update the Wimmera guide, which was first published in 2004. Jonathan

said when the guide was first printed the region was in the grips of drought and many wetlands were dry.

“When the Millennium Drought broke in 2010 we saw a lot of wetland birds return that hadn't been seen in the Wimmera for many years. We also have environmental water for wetlands and through monitoring we are seeing many different wetland birds return plus new ones.”

The guide also contains interesting notes about each wetland bird. Having local photos taken by local people makes the revised guide extra special.”



Stawell Camera Club members at the book launch

SHARED BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTAL WATER

Wimmera Development Association (WDA) have led the development of a socio-economic study of 24 waterways in the Wimmera and Southern Mallee in partnership with Wimmera CMA. This project has been supported by Local Government and GWM water. The study was released on 20 September, with the support of the Minister for Water, Lisa Neville. There has been significant interest via social and conventional media.

The study found that in 2016/17 the total regional economic contribution from these waterways was \$27.5 million. It also estimated that the total health benefit for the year generated from these waterways was \$8.6 million.

This is a significant project as it is the first time that a legitimate dollar value has been placed on the value of waterways in our region. The project will run for another three years which will provide a comparison on data over the four years.

The project steering committee met in October to discuss the study for 2017/18 and any changes that may be made. Key changes may include:

- Refining the list of waterways assessed, based on priority and available funding; and
- Increasing the period the assessments take place to include December and January.

Wimmera CMA is also having discussions with the consultants about the possibility of providing a more detailed report into the value of environmental water.

WETLANDS & WATERWAYS

Thriving Community Wetlands

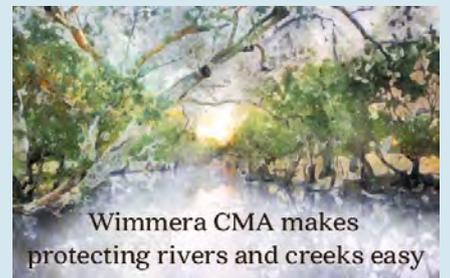
Expressions of Interest for this year's Wetland Protection Conservation Incentives project will be advertised throughout November and early December. This Expression of Interest will include delivery of the Improving Wimmera Wetlands and Threatened Vegetation Communities Protection and Enhancement projects.

Expression of Interest - Waterway Fencing and Revegetation Grants Be Paid to Protect!

If you've ever thought about fencing off or revegetating a waterway on your property but haven't had the funds to do it, we can help.

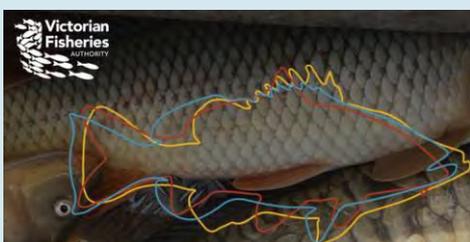
Wimmera CMA are seeking Expressions of Interest from landholders wanting to protect and enhance waterways on their properties.

For more information call Tori on 5382 995.



Wimmera CMA makes protecting rivers and creeks easy

CARP VIRUS



DELWP held a workshop and information session in Horsham on 16 October to engage with agencies and relevant community groups regarding the carp herpes virus.

Recent carp monitoring and control work undertaken for Wimmera CMA will be useful in informing the local release of the virus.

These meetings provided an opportunity to explain the process involved in the development of the NCCP. They also provided the chance for people to ask questions, raise concerns and discuss how they might be involved.

WIMMERA FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Victorian Government, through the Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy, required each Catchment Management Authority to develop a regional floodplain management strategy, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and the community.

Wimmera CMA staff have drafted a Strategy with guidance from a regional steering committee made up of local government, GWM Water, VicSES and Barengi Gadjin Land Council. The draft Strategy was released for public exhibition in late September 2017 following extensive stakeholder consultation. A four-week public exhibition period concluded on 13 October 2017.

Following exhibition, Wimmera CMA staff will develop a paper for the project steering committee, highlighting the responses received and the proposed action for each where relevant.

ABORIGINAL WATER



The Yungip Bark Canoe Project

A community gathering was held on 4-5 October, 2017 at Arura Guides Camp, Dimboola. This event was very well supported by local Traditional Owners and helped build knowledge and skills in traditional cultural practices. There is great enthusiasm for follow up activities.



INCREASING INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT



The Bakang Dyakata Earth Oven Re-creation event was held at Horseshoe Bend, Dimboola, on 20-22 October 2017 in partnership with BGLC, Goolum Goolum, and Parks Victoria. Celebrating Watjbaluk Culture through the strengthening and showcase of cultural practices in order to (re)connect communities and exchange cultural ideas for the enjoyment and benefit of Traditional Owners and their future generations. What better than to celebrate our waterways than seeing a traditional Aboriginal earth oven and other cultural activities on the banks of the beautiful Wimmera River. Activities on the day included a Dance workshop, Clap Stick making and Basket weaving.

SCRIME

The Wimmera CMA worked with Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) to conduct the analysis and reporting of the Sustainable Cropping Rotations in Mediterranean Environments (SCRIME) experiment. SCRIME is a long-term cropping trial, established at Longerenong in 1998, investigating the long-term effects of rotations (crop and pasture) and tillage practices on the soil resource, grain yields and financial performance and pest and disease management.

As part of this project DEDJTR held a crop walk at the site on 3 October. This coincided with a celebration of over a hundred years of crop trials at Longerenong. 55 people attended including agronomists, researchers (government and universities), Longerenong College students, bankers/agribusiness, industry representatives and government organisation representatives.



SCRIME crop walk participants listening to Roger Armstrong - Ag. Vic

Guest speakers included:

- David Jochinke (Victorian Farmers Federation President)
- David Brennan (Wimmera CMA)
- Dr. Grant Hollaway (Senior Plant Pathologist - Agriculture Victoria),
- Dr. Roger Armstrong (Senior Scientist - Agriculture Victoria),
- Dr. Fiona Robertson (Senior Research Scientist - Agriculture Victoria),
- Prof. Bill Malcolm (University of Melbourne)

DEDJTR are in the process of completing a final report for the project and disseminating the findings of the research to the broader agricultural community.

WIMMERA DROUGHT PROGRAM A WIN-WIN

Wimmera CMA's drought employment program was a win-win for farmers, the environment and the community.

The program, which ran from December 2015 until mid-2017, employed and trained more than 30 people impacted by drought. Employee backgrounds ranged from farmers to contractors, agriculture business owners and agriculture sector employees. Participants ranged in age from their early twenties through to their late sixties.

The flexibility of the program, which allowed people to work flexible hours so they could go back to their farms and businesses, or study, as needed.

The employment aspect of the program provided participants with a steady income during a difficult and emotional time. The social outcomes were broad and participants said it gave them an increase in motivation, a reduced sense of hopelessness, a reduction in emotional and financial stress and a sense of achievement and participation.

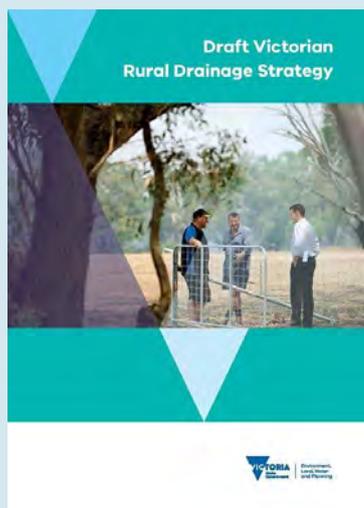
The program also provided them with the opportunity to discuss the impacts of the drought with other people in similar positions. They said working in a team environment increased their social skills and the friendships formed as part of the program would be something that would last long after the program had finished.

One participant said: "It was good to work with other people for a change, after working mostly by myself for the last 20 years."

The program was well supported by local communities with crews working with more than 15 community groups. The program formed partnerships with Landcare groups, Local Government and individuals, and supported local economies in towns where they completed work.



DRAFT VICTORIAN RURAL DRAINAGE STRATEGY



In late October, Water Minister Lisa Neville launched the draft Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy, and a series of community workshops which commenced in Edenhope on Friday November 10.

The Strategy will help landholders make choices about how they manage water-logging on agricultural land to improve agricultural productivity in dryland areas while managing the environmental and cultural impacts of drainage.

The public release of the draft provides an opportunity for the broader community to provide comments on the proposed approach and to contribute to the final Strategy. If you would like more information follow this link: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/ruraldrainage>

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