



Welcome to the Chunnup Edition of the Wimmera CMAs Newsletter which summarises some of our activities over the past months.

There are six distinct weather periods recognised in the Gariwerd seasonal cycle..

The Season of Chunnup is depicted by cockatoos, fungi as well as clothes and totems. Fungi along with the First of the winter orchids appear and many early wattles are flowering. Possums have young in pouch during Chunnup, Sugar gliders give birth and Echidnas are searching for mates. Several bird species are nesting, including brown Thornbills and Scrub Wrens. It is also the time for dive bombing Magpies.

Frogs are actively calling and ponds are full of little water creatures during chunnup.



WATER IN THE WIMMERA

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER

Planning with the VEWH and Glenelg Hopkins CMA is underway for water sharing with the Glenelg River for 2017-18. The aim of this is to have the VEWH commissioners authorise the use of a meaningful volume of water for winter/spring and evaluate the watering objectives in spring, given the need to understand the prevailing climatic conditions at the time.



WATER RESOURCE PLAN

The Victorian Government has released a draft Water Resource Plan for the Wimmera-Mallee as part of the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Wimmera CMA has been providing input into this process through a Technical Reference Group. The draft Water Resource Plan documents how Victoria is meeting Basin Plan requirements for the region, including an explanation of the region's water resources, and the existing water management framework. The Victorian Government sought community input and feedback to inform the final Wimmera-Mallee Water Resource Plan.

MEASURING THE SOCIAL & ECONOMIC VALUE OF RECREATIONAL WATER IN THE WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE



Wimmera Development Association (WDA) in conjunction with project partners, Wimmera CMA, West Wimmera Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Yarriambiack Shire, Horsham Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire, Buloke Shire, and GWMWater, the WSM Councils and funded by the Victorian Government as part of *Water for Victoria*, is about to undertake a Socio-economic Study into the value of recreational and environmental water to the Wimmera Southern Mallee.

The project will undertake surveys and collect data from across the region at locations where individuals and groups enjoy our lakes, rivers and weir-pools for recreational activity.

Street Ryan Pty Ltd has been appointed as project consultant and work has commenced to develop a series of questionnaires that will be shared with local Committees of Management, sporting clubs and others likely to have an involvement in recreational water activity. The majority of the funding for the project has been made available by the Victorian Government via the Wimmera CMA.



BIODIVERSITY

WATERBIRD WONDERLAND...

Horsham residents and visitors have been treated to an abundance of waterbirds enjoying the habitat provided by the low water levels in Horsham weir pool. Herons, spoonbills and ducks galore are enjoying wading in the shallows. Aquatic plants such as eelgrasses and water ribbons are highly abundant thanks to recent environmental flows and removal of large numbers of carp by anglers and Austral Research and Consulting on behalf of Wimmera CMA. These waterplants provide fantastic habitat for fish and waterbirds and reduce the likelihood of blue-green algal blooms.



WIMMERA RIVER ABORIGINAL WATER PROJECT



The need to create more cultural and natural resource career opportunities for young people was one of the strong messages from a new water initiative documenting Wimmera Aboriginal history.

The Wimmera River Aboriginal Water Project is funded through the Victorian Government's Water for Victoria program, which aims to increase the involvement of Aboriginal communities in water resource decision making.

The Department has confirmed it will fund a continuation of this project in 2017-18 2016-17.

RIVER YARNS

The River Yarns Project is part of the Wimmera River Aboriginal Water Project which is bringing together local groups and individuals to officially document cultural information in the region using an Aboriginal Waterway Assessment tool.

The joint project with Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council coordinated *River Yarns* in partnership with the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations to support local Aboriginal communities in gathering this knowledge and sharing these stories.



The project aims to help ensure local Aboriginal values and customary uses are better linked in with water planning and river management in Victoria. Stories are being shared in lots of different ways – through gatherings and performances, through films and now through an interactive online story map.

The Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk people have stories handed down through their generations about the importance and value of the Wimmera River.

The event started in Horsham then followed the Wimmera River to Dimboola, Antwerp and Jeparit before continuing to Lake Hindmarsh, Outlet Creek and Lake Albacutya. The group visited historical sites and recorded cultural use of plants and bush medicine

.Local Aboriginal communities share their stories @

<https://wcma.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=985571476ee047c9ba55efa76ad72d66>



NYPUN PROJECT

The Nyupun program, established in 2016 and now in the planning stages for 2017 will commence its first session for students from years 3-6 on July 26. The program is a partnership between Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, DELWP, Horsham Primary School and the Department of Education and Training Victoria.

Nyupun is the Wotjobaluk word for 'spiritual being'. The Nyupun Project is an exciting Aboriginal cultural and environmental project which aims to connect students with local culture, local plants and local animals, by sharing Aboriginal and Western culture knowledge with the students.

The Nyupun Project also aims to ignite a connection to country in the students, while achieving education standards appropriate to the each class level.



Nyupun group 2016

PROJECT HINDMARSH UPDATE:

In 2017 the Hindmarsh Landcare Network is celebrating 20 years of Project Hindmarsh. On Friday 7 July 2017 the Landcare network will host an evening of guest speakers and presentations at the Little Desert Lodge south of Nhill. Many people who have played a key role in Project Hindmarsh over the years will be returning to the area to participate in the evening. Dinner will be followed by a presentation by Rob Gell.

Saturday is planting day, and around 200 volunteers will plant 12,000 trees and shrubs across four sites – two at Jeparit and two near Dimboola. Both Jeparit sites are near the Wimmera River and are linked to areas of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage.



ITEMS OF INTEREST

Regional Landcare Awards:

Regional Landcare Award winners from Volunteering Recognition Awards held in May were nominated as part of the 2017 Victorian State Landcare Awards. The State Awards ceremony will be hosted by the Hon. Linda Dessau AM at Government House, Melbourne on 1 September 2017.

For further information please see: <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/landcare-awards/>

Sustainable Agriculture:

The Vic No-Till annual conference will be held on 13-14 July 2017 at Moama. This year's keynote speaker is Paul Jasa from Nebraska. Paul will be presenting on using a 'systems approach' to boost no-till yields. For further information please see: <https://www.vicnotill.com.au/events/event/15th-annual-conference-2017/>

Perennial Pasture Systems Conference & AGM:

This year's Perennial Pasture Systems annual conference and AGM will be held on 20 September 2017 in Ararat. Wayne Burton will conclude a successful 3 year term as president of the group which has seen PPS grow to over 120 farm businesses.

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