



**Monitoring Information**  
148 groups, 148 participants, 270 sites  
**Education Participation** 10 986 participants  
**Coordinator FTE** 6.2  
**Program Budget** \$560 000

### Waterwatch Coordinators



David Hodgkins



Glenda Woods



Jacinta Burke



Melanie Giovanetti



Kirsten Hogan



Jim Galea



Michaela Bicknell



Tamara Bruce



Phil Clancy



Danielle Beischer



Renata Cummings



Andrea Montgomery

What makes a river 'healthy'? Can you show me? Thirty-six participating schools demonstrated they were up to the challenge using nothing more than plywood, glue, tape, paint and recycled materials as part of the Goulburn Broken Catchment Mural Project!



The assembled mural was a captivating sight at the Goulburn Broken Water Week Awards Night.

## Piecing river health together



**Healthy River:** Thornton PS is a rural school of 30 children, our group made a healthy river scene using paints, glue and recyclable materials, natural and manmade. In the healthy river we had clean flowing water and native animals and healthy plant life.



**Unhealthy River:** At Warrenbayne PS we don't want our creek looking like this! If we act now it won't end up like this picture. Can we let this pollution wreck our life as well as our water? With all this pollution it is wrecking the air that we breathe and the animals that live everywhere.

Over 3 months, self-directed primary school students and teachers worked on two 3-dimensional mural pieces – one depicting a healthy river and the other an unhealthy river. "It was really interesting to see what ideas and values students associated with the river landscapes," reflected local Waterwatch Coordinator, Michaela Bicknell. "The healthy river flowed through a healthy catchment supporting lots of animals, plants, picnics, camping and fishing. Unhealthy river murals depicted bare earth, turbid water, dead animals, salt scalds and pollution".

The mural masterpiece was assembled for its public launch at the Goulburn Broken Water Week Awards Night in Shepparton. The cumulative effort resulted in an awe-inspiring 72-piece mural, 25 metres long and 2 metres high!

Due to the enormity of the student's efforts and the beauty of the finished product, the Goulburn Broken Waterwatch program has created a drag-and-drop computer game using

the mural images. The game is supported by environmental quizzes and a lesson plan for teachers, providing resource longevity and an ongoing educational value through the region's Catchment Capers schools program.

"The students enjoyed the project because the support material showed them that they had an active role in the education of others and could express their feelings on important environmental issues" said teacher Shane Harricks, of Tongala Primary School. "Thanks again for giving us the chance to be a part of such a rewarding project. The educational and social outcomes attributed to this sort of work are very worthwhile".

### Waterwatch Objective 5:

Provide school learning opportunities and be an integral part of the curriculum





Waterwatch Coordinator David Hodgkins discusses salinity management with the Strathbogie Landcare group.

The drought has provided an ideal time to locate the soak and spring sources of salty water while they are not masked or diluted by rainwater. The opportunity to identify and map surface water salinity in the upper Goulburn catchment has been enthusiastically embraced by extra monitors from Rotary, community groups and other concerned citizens. Community Stream Sampling Workshops such as the one held with the Strathbogie Landcare group have provided local communities a forum to hear more about salinity issues and ways to get involved.

#### Waterwatch Objective 1:

Increase community awareness, understanding and ownership of water issues and their relationship to catchment health



Erected billboards allow students to share their collected data and information with the Kilmore community.

Waterwatch monitoring partnership between the Howqua Valley Landcare Group and Parks Victoria staff is keeping an eye on recreational impacts on the Howqua River. Since 2001, the group has monitored e.coli and turbidity levels monthly, to determine what impact 80 000 annual visitors have on their local water supply. Data is helping Parks Victoria to identify any trends that might be used to better manage upstream camping areas and recreational activities.

#### Waterwatch Objective 2:

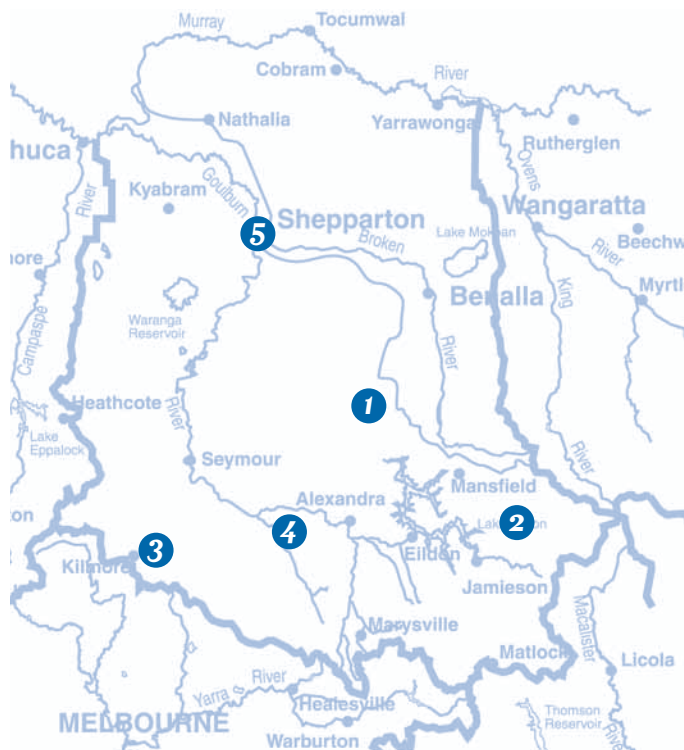
Involve communities monitoring their local waterways to collect and provide data which is credible, accepted and used



Waterwatchers monitor the impact of recreational activities on the Howqua River.



Jack Donohue, an active community member, checks on the health of the Howqua River.



The Connies performance troupe got the young involved in the fun at the Yea Freshwater Circus.

There were no clowns or big top tents at Yea's Freshwater Circus, but more than enough entertainment to keep families happy and boost morale! Supported by local shire councils, Goulburn Broken CMA, Landcare, DSE and Waterwatch, the circus entertained residents of several small towns doing it tough in the drought. Electrofishing demonstrations, macro invertebrate sampling, games like 'fish heads', Catch a Carp Competitions, wetland walks and a free supper were opportunities for the local community and catchment managers to socialise, relax and discuss local issues.



The swing bridge provided a great vantage point to watch an electrofishing demonstration.

#### Waterwatch Objective 4:

Establish and maintain effective partnerships between the community and catchment managers

Four schools in Kilmore have each adopted a section of the Kilmore Creek, undertaking regular water quality monitoring, litter collection, weed control, habitat creation and plantings. The project has seen school educational sessions lead to real and collaborative environmental action. Grants graciously received from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal have enabled permanent billboards to be erected along each creek section, allowing students to share their current data and information with the broader community.

Kilmore teacher Derek Vogel aims to "provide a practical means for students to accept environmental responsibilities and act as custodians in a project that links their learning to the real world".

#### Waterwatch Objective 3:

Increase community involvement in water management decisions and gain community commitment to action in addressing waterway and catchment issues

#### Other outstanding highlights and achievements

Waterwatchers Jack Donoughue, Peter Mitchell, Marion Bruere and Max Richards awarded Goulburn Broken Waterwatch's 'Most Dedicated to the Cause' Awards.

**Partners/Sponsors** Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn-Murray Water, Greater Shepparton City Council, Moira Shire, Mitchell Shire, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Resource GV, Bureau of Rural Sciences (Community Stream Sampling Project).

Photos courtesy of Goulburn Broken Waterwatch.