

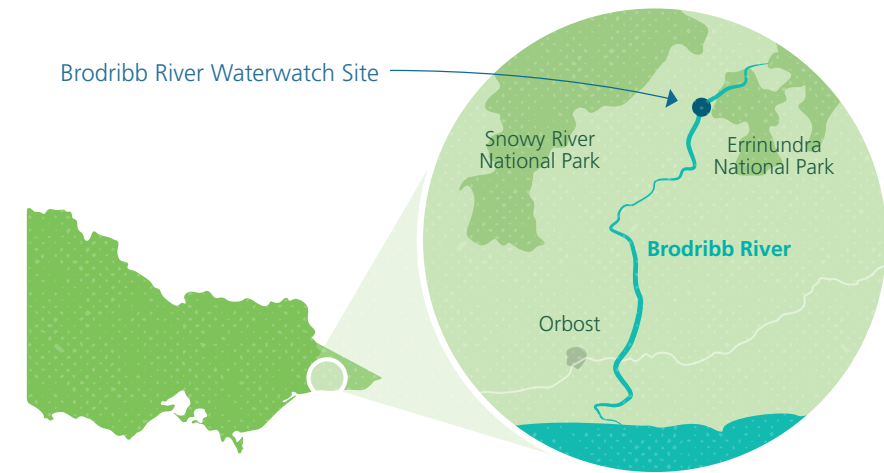
# UPPER BRODRIBB RIVER CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY



Photo: Tom Crook



Photo: Tom Crook



Locals from a small town in far east Victoria say the local river is helping communities make environmental connections.

Shelly McLaren from Goongerah, a small and isolated community near Orbest, said the river connected the people.

"It's a beautiful place to live and the river which flows through our valley really does connect our community."

Shelly has been a Waterwatch volunteer since 2008, joining through her local Landcare group which continues to help maintain the high environmental quality of the nearby riparian (streamside) area. She currently undertakes regular monitoring of the upper Brodrribb River in the Snowy River catchment. Waterwatch volunteers monitor the river's condition as it flows from the Errinundra National Park through the local camp ground.

"The river water is clean enough to drink," Shelly said.

"Collecting real time water quality information using the Waterwatch equipment and monitoring the river's

long term health is important to our community, as many people use it to supplement drinking water supplies."

Water quality data collected regularly by Shelly helps the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority monitor trends in the health of the river. Where results are unexpected, perhaps indicating a change in the quality of the water, further testing can be done.

Alongside monthly data collected at approximately 1066 sites across Victoria, Shelly's Waterwatch data is made publically available online through the Waterwatch Victoria Data Management System.

"Environmental health is a high priority for our community and with increasing eco-tourism our local environment's condition is important to the local economy. River health is a key component of this and Waterwatch helps us to be sure that the water is actually as clean and healthy as it looks."

Active Sites: 98 | Active Monitors: 23  
[www.egcma.com.au](http://www.egcma.com.au)



## Interesting Facts

With an average of 5 parameters tested at each site visit, over 45,000 water quality measurements have been taken by the Waterwatch program in East Gippsland.

The East Gippsland Waterwatch Program has volunteer monitors more than 200km apart (measured in a straight line).

## WATERWATCH VICTORIA REGIONS



# WATERWATCH CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



## WATERWATCH SUPPORTERS



**Waterwatch Victoria has successfully engaged people with their local rivers for 20 years, raising awareness about river health and waterway management.**

Waterwatch aims to give the community better knowledge about water issues and to encourage constructive action. Volunteers with a passion for the environment provide water quality data from waterways across Victoria. The data is used to monitor waterways to establish their condition and to assess whether change (positive or negative) is occurring.

In 2013, Waterwatch Victoria celebrated its 20-year anniversary and the significant contribution of all volunteer monitors who have taken part in the program since its inception. Captured in this report are the faces and stories of some of these volunteers. The Waterwatch Victoria program thanks the many energetic, talented and committed people from rural and urban communities, who together have offered their assistance to this program.

Waterwatch Victoria engages with volunteers and connects Victorians with their local waterways. This important relationship is made possible through the support and investment of sponsors across Victoria. Their backing goes towards providing capable regional coordinators who maintain the volunteer program through training, material support and local Waterwatch events.

Since 1993, Waterwatch Victoria has seen 3,314 volunteers visit 6,564 sites. This is an astounding total of 116,913 site visits, providing valuable long-term data about the health of our waterways.

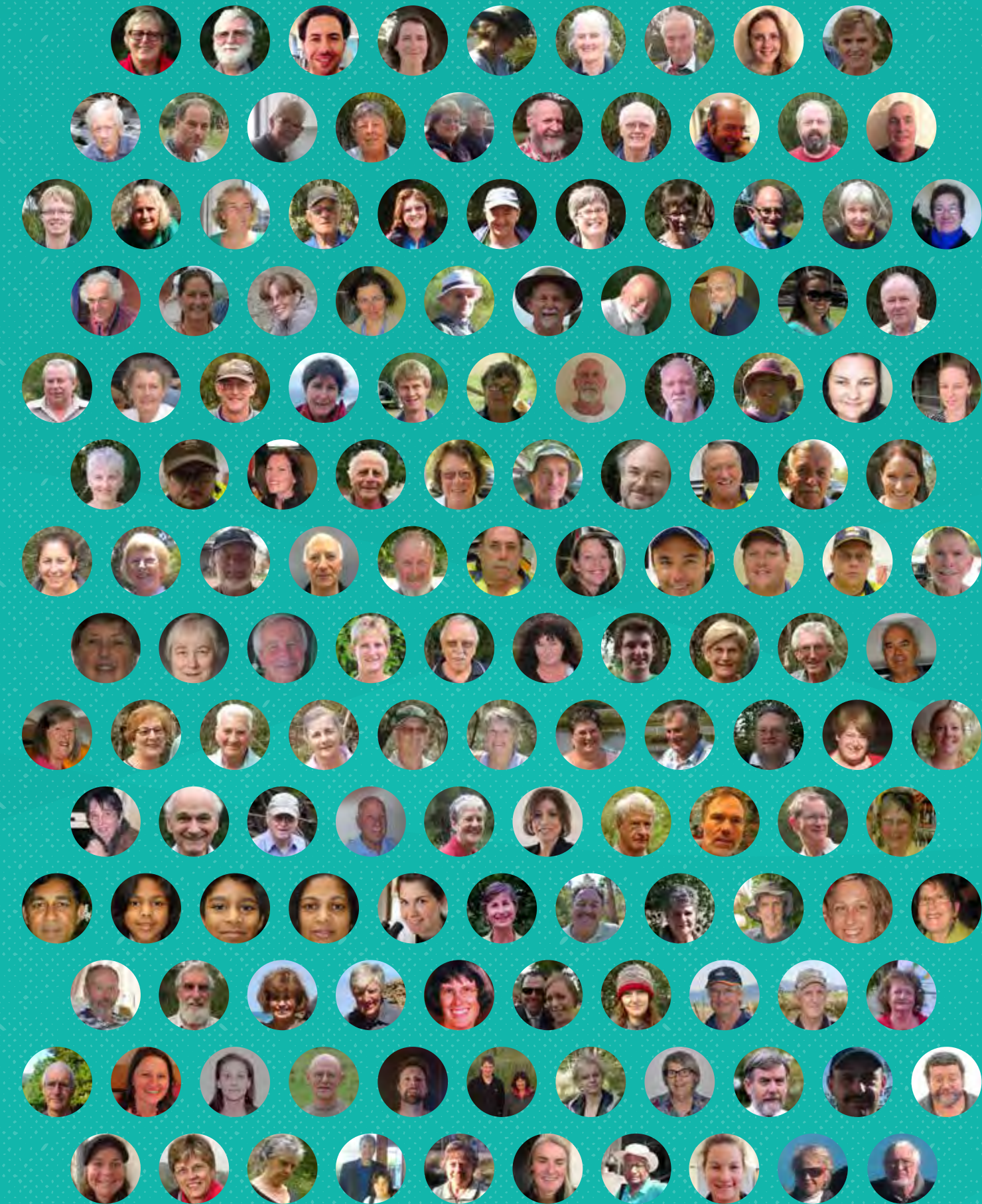
In 2014, Waterwatch Victoria has 606 volunteer monitors collecting water quality data at 1066 sites. Waterwatch Victoria data is available to the public via the online Waterwatch Victoria Data Management System, on the Waterwatch website [vic.waterwatch.org.au](http://vic.waterwatch.org.au).

To read more about the achievements of Waterwatch in Victoria, visit [www.vic.waterwatch.org.au](http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au) or contact the Waterwatch Victoria coordinator at Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, 64 Dennis Street, Colac, 3250, T: 03 5232 9100, E: [info@ccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@ccma.vic.gov.au).

Photographs and text sourced with permission from participating Waterwatch programs and their host organisations.

[www.vic.waterwatch.org.au](http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au)

## SOME OF THE GREAT VOLUNTEERS WHO MAKE UP THE WATERWATCH VICTORIA NETWORK



## MONITORING IN THE GELLIBRAND CATCHMENT



Otway-district Waterwatch monitors are keen to help local environment agencies.

The volunteers monitor along the Gellibrand River in the Otways in south-west Victoria, a waterway that stretches from Beech Forest, 120km to the ocean at Princetown.

Two community volunteers and pupils from the Carlisle River Primary School monitor the water quality of the Carlisle River which flows into the Gellibrand River.

One of those community members, David Skipworth, said he hoped his work helped the catchment management authority in their records and research for the future of the river and adjacent areas.

Nearby, ten community volunteers, most from the Princetown Landcare group, monitor the health of the Gellibrand River, contributing data to both the Waterwatch and EstuaryWatch programs.

Group member and waterway monitor Judy Spafford said the Gellibrand River data provided valuable information.

"The information was no longer subjective and river managers could base their decision on scientific evidence."

Active Sites: 114 | Active Monitors: 70  
[www.cma.vic.gov.au/What-we-do/Community/Waterwatch.aspx](http://www.cma.vic.gov.au/What-we-do/Community/Waterwatch.aspx)



## DEDICATED WATERWATCH CHAMPIONS



Creightons Creek Waterwatch Group is setting the standard in Waterwatch monitoring.

The group, made up of members of the Creightons Creek Landcare Group, began monitoring in 2003 after a chat with their local Landcare Facilitator prompted members to get involved in Waterwatch.

Now around 10 passionate, well organised and dedicated volunteers make up the water monitoring group, setting a fantastic example for others.

The group monitors sixteen sites and leader, John Nielsen, coordinates monthly group sample collections and performs field tests on the samples, forwarding the results to Waterwatch coordinators and driving more than an hour each way to deliver phosphorus samples to the lab for analysis.

This commitment by multiple individuals over the last 11 years reflects their desire to care for local land and waterways.

The group discuss the issues in their catchment at their regular Landcare meetings and Waterwatch coordinators report annually with the results. The group see their involvement with Waterwatch as a relaxing and enjoyable community contribution, while providing data and knowledge that is thorough and reliable.

Active Sites: 234 | Active Monitors: 54  
[www.gbwaterwatch.org.au](http://www.gbwaterwatch.org.au)



## MORE THAN JUST MALLEE MONITORS



Reliability and adaptability are the characteristics that have helped ensure the continuity of the Mallee's Waterwatch program.

Mallee Waterwatch's Bernie Chaplin, Roger and Rosemary Drewitt, Rae and Len Jeffers, Russell Cox and Peter and Rae

Knyvett and many others are enthusiastic volunteers, dedicated to making a difference to their local environment.

The reliability of monitors such as Bernie, who has collected data since 2003, as well as the group's ability to adapt to new and evolving programs, are key strengths of the volunteer program.

Monitoring has increased the supporting data available for current and future waterway management projects such as: Environmental watering of wetlands, development and installation of wetland and waterway structures and fish surveys.

The long-term support from Waterwatch volunteers underpins the Mallee Waterwatch program and these volunteers are a vital resource and valuable part of the broader riparian and waterway programs in the region.

Active Sites: 44 | Active Monitors: 20  
[www.malleecma.vic.gov.au/about-us/programs/riparian-and-wetlands/waterwatch.html](http://www.malleecma.vic.gov.au/about-us/programs/riparian-and-wetlands/waterwatch.html)



## A DEDICATED VOLUNTEER INSPIRES THE COMMUNITY



A volunteer's enthusiasm is motivating community members to care for their local waterway.

John Forrester, a Waterwatch volunteer since 1999, has been a driving force in promoting the values of the Werribee River. As part of the Werribee River

Association (WRiVA), John has monitored water quality at Bungies Hole, Werribee, since 2008. The strength of his commitment is demonstrated by his official title as Werribee Riverkeeper, taking on the role of advocate for protection of the river.

"WRiVA has taken a leading role in on-ground activities, but has been strategic too, with work on flora and fauna, environmental flows, bio-links, education and advocacy," John said.

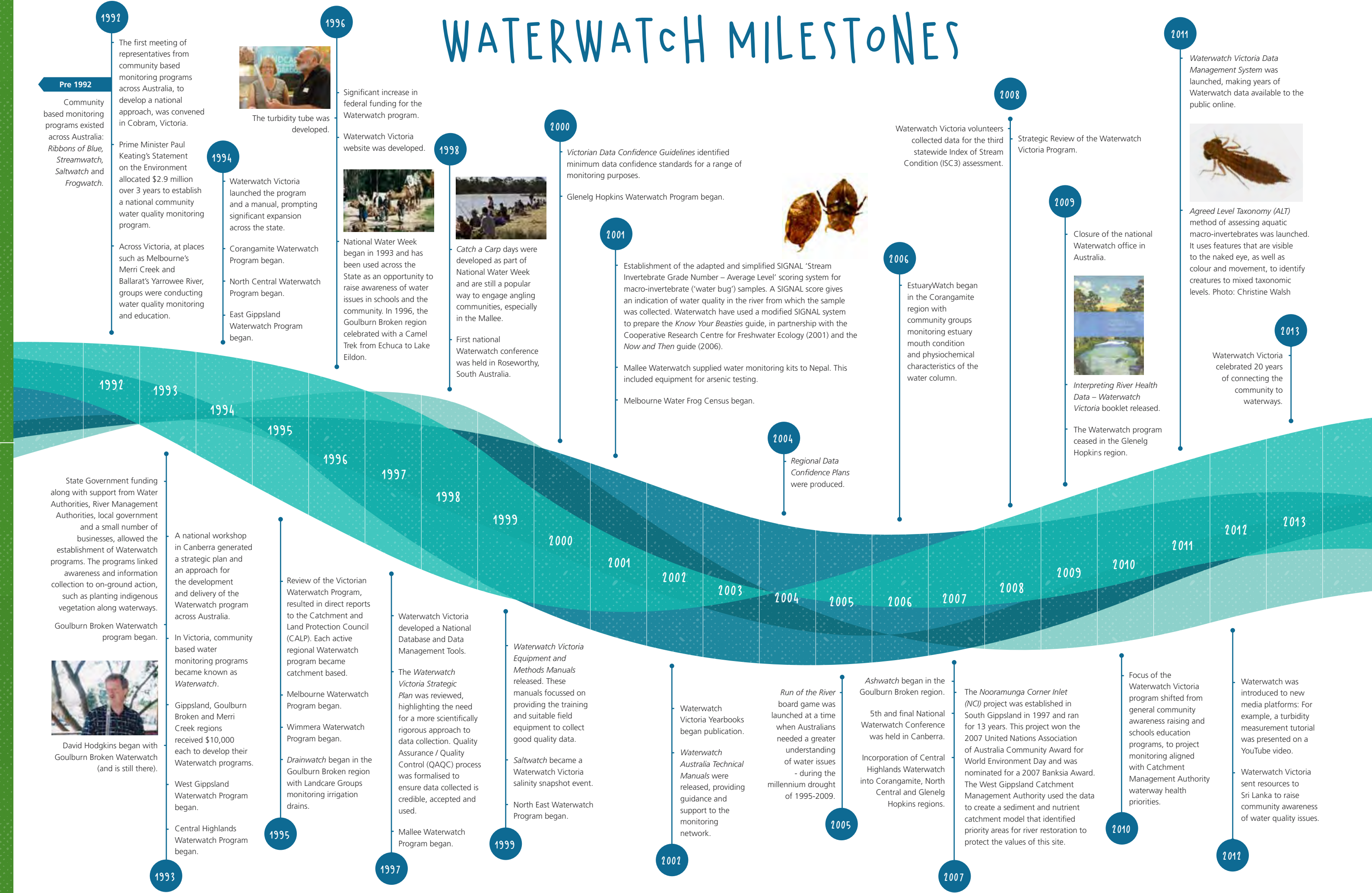
John shares his passion for waterways by working with students participating in the Frog Census and improving nearby frog habitat at Carranballac College.

John and the WRiVA are committed to educating the community about their local environment. They helped to develop a Litterwatch Program, engaging over 2500 people to take action in reducing the amount of litter entering the river. Through Waterwatch, John continues to test water quality along the Werribee River, collecting data to inform management of its environmental flows.

Active Sites: 258 | Active Monitors: 252  
[www.melbournwater.com.au/waterwatch](http://www.melbournwater.com.au/waterwatch)



# WATERWATCH MILESTONES



## WATERWATCH VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



A North Central Victoria Waterwatch group enjoy participating and discovering new ways to care for their local waterway.

Anne from Castlemaine said regular testing of water quality in the creek was one way for them to monitor the impact of the restoration work of the local Landcare groups.

With her fellow Landcare group members, Anne enjoys participating in the Waterwatch program to learn more about water quality, managing local waterways and discovering ways to take action to improve waterway health. Through her involvement with Waterwatch, Anne has a sense of belonging to her local community.

Cathy from Baringhup also likes feeling connected to her community and local environment through being a Waterwatch volunteer.

"Personally, through my involvement with the Waterwatch program, I now have a commitment to the Loddon River and all rivers."

Cathy said her knowledge about water in the environment had largely been formed through being a Waterwatch volunteer and has driven her to "become an advocate and writer for rivers everywhere."

Active Sites: 110 | Active Monitors: 59  
[www.nccma.vic.gov.au/Water/Waterwatch](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/Water/Waterwatch)



## RAISING COMMUNITY AWARENESS



Wangaratta district volunteers in the North East Waterwatch network are dedicated to raising awareness of waterway health.

Volunteer Diane Farmer participates in the Waterwatch program to help understand and promote waterway health issues.

"Water is our most precious resource and it is up to all of us to appreciate it, recycle it, not waste it and to do our bit to take care of it," she said.

Leading by example, Diane and other volunteers have used the data collected through the Waterwatch program to educate the community about local water quality issues.

The network hosts events such as the Wangaratta carp muster known as "Let's Go Fishin'" and Waterwatch monitoring sessions to raise awareness and promote the program. The group distributes more than 2000 copies of the monthly newsletter, *The Croaker*.

The enthusiasm of these Waterwatch volunteers has contributed to positive changes in the value many community members now give to the health of their local waterway.

Active Sites: 90 | Active Monitors: 60  
[www.nccma.vic.gov.au/OurPrograms/Waterwatch](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/OurPrograms/Waterwatch)



## 21 YEARS WATERWATCHING



Sale's Greg Gilbert attributes Waterwatch's success to the contribution of its many volunteers.

He should know, he's seen their effort first hand through his 21-year involvement in the program, first as a volunteer and then leading the program monitoring the health of West Gippsland's waterways.

Greg first got involved with Waterwatch in 1993 and then joined as a volunteer in 1994 monitoring water quality at sites on the Latrobe and Thomson rivers and the McLennan Straits.

Greg took on the role as the region's Waterwatch coordinator from 1996 to 2007 and during that time expanded the schools' program and coordinated Waterwatch activities with generations of school children.

He expanded the number of Waterwatch volunteer monitoring sites to include around 50 groups, some with 30-40 people. He was also regular at field days and local shows. He said the carp culling events and canoe trips were popular activities.

"The program ran regular canoe events across West Gippsland and carp fishing days brought out many youngsters to cull carp in the rivers. Locally the stormwater projects were a major success."

"Great credit must go to the many wonderful volunteers."

Greg still maintains his involvement in Waterwatch monitoring at two sites.

Active Sites: 65 | Active Monitors: 40  
[www.wgma.vic.gov.au](http://www.wgma.vic.gov.au)



## VOLUNTEERS COLLECTING VALUABLE DATA



Concern for the local environment sparks interest in Jeparit's waterway monitoring program.

The community's environmental interests and concern for local water quality are the main drivers for waterway monitoring in the area.

The Wimmera community Waterwatch volunteers, who have been meeting monthly since 1995, test water samples and collect valuable water quality data to add to their hundreds of data records.

Group members contribute a terrific amount of expertise and local knowledge and provide valuable information on the impact of upstream activities in a diverse and fascinating catchment.

Since 1995, Jeparit Waterwatch has had a role in monitoring the health of the region's major waterway, the Wimmera River, as Jeparit is the last town along the river before it enters one of the system's terminal lakes, Lake Hindmarsh.

The data collected has assisted local farmers, other land managers and the wider community to make informed land management and recreational decisions through extended dry periods, unprecedented floods, major fire events and the implementation of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

Active Sites: 53 | Active Monitors: 28  
[www.wcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au)

