



RiverConnect

Half Year Report 2013 – 2014

For the
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
And
Greater Shepparton City Council



In partnership with: Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Central Sub Region, Yorta Yorta Joint Body, Yorta Yorta Nations, Rumbalara Cooperative, Word and Mouth and Goulburn Murray Landcare Network.

1. GENERAL

Mission

The mission of RiverConnect is to create a vibrant, more cohesive Greater Shepparton community through developing a strong sense of belonging and connection to our rivers.

This will be achieved by understanding and enhancing the environmental, cultural, recreational and economic value of the rivers.

Vision

Shepparton and Mooroopna will be widely recognised as river towns where features of living here include:

- *a thriving natural environment*
- *a connection with that environment*
- *a culture that is enriched by the traditional owners' connection with the area*

People value and respect our rivers and floodplains, whilst using them as part of their daily lives for recreation, relaxation and education. The community, government and land managers, together with the traditional owners, work in partnership to protect and enhance the value of our rivers.

Meetings

- RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee
 - Terms of Reference Review Oct 2013
 - New Community Representative – Geoffrey Maynard
 - Second Councillor Representative – Dennis Patterson
 - Goulburn Valley Environment Group – Terry Court
- Education Working Group
 - Terms of Reference reviewed
- Land Managers Working Group
 - Gemmills Wetland Working Group – Michelle Banfield
- Aboriginal Action Group
 - Met for the first time in over 12 months
 - Yorta Yorta Chair – Neil Morris, with many new members.
- Communications Working Group
 - New Council Rep – Daniel Bovalino

Meetings held every 8 weeks with most groups meeting 6 times per calendar year.

Terms of Reference for each group was reviewed in June 2013

Council internal processes

PES (Personal Evaluation System) Training

Finance Basic Power budget

Customer Service training

Personal development

Develop your personal resilience (3h)

Professional development

Community Engagement with Jim Diers (2 hrs)

Report Writing (3h)

2. RIVERCONNECT FINANCIAL REPORT

2013/2014 FINANCIAL YEAR

HALF YEAR REPORT

RiverConnect Operating Costs Breakdown

Description	Greater Shepparton City Council	
	Budget	Actual
Employment / Project Management / Facilitation	\$141,535	\$72,632
Total employment Costs (GST exclusive)	\$141,535	\$72,632
Projects, events and activities	\$17,110	\$4,950
Total Operating Costs (GST exclusive)	\$17,110	\$4,950
Total Income Received	(\$80,000)	(\$80,750)
Total Budget 2013-2014	\$78,645	-\$3,168

Other Funding:

Regional Development Victoria – Putting Locals First Program – Successful
(RiverConnect Paths Project funding)

Applied for Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal – Unsuccessful
(Flood Marker funding)

3. RIVERCONNECT STRATEGIC PLAN

Actions in the Strategic Plan are listed under five key strategic themes in order to create change and achieve the vision for RiverConnect. Detailed objectives have been developed for each of these five strategic program areas to define what represents successful outcomes. Achievements under each section of the strategic programs are listed below.

Connecting Community (Events: 07/189/0026)

To provide access and facilities, together with activities and information to enable the community to value the river and its environment and visit and enjoy this area as an integral part of their lifestyle.

Table 1: Activities undertaken by RiverConnect in the 2013-2014 Financial Year

Date	Activity	Location	Participant numbers
6 Oct 2013	Brunch with the Birds - Cussen Park 20 yr celebration	Cussen Park, Tatura	50
18 Oct 2013	Art Classes along the River – Seniors Festival	Victoria Park Lake	13
9 Nov 2013	Traditional Song and Dance Workshop	Victoria Park Lake	25
30 Nov 2013	Brunch with the Birds	Victoria Park Lake	28



Image 1: Art Classes along the River at Victoria Park Lake in October

- **Spotlight Walks** – 5 walks with a total of 57 participants from July to Nov 2013 at Jordans Bend and Tom Collins Drive - Confluence.
- **RiverConnect Paths Project** – RiverConnect received \$30,000 from Regional Development Victoria, Putting Locals First Program to undertake project planning as part of the RiverConnect Paths Project. Project Planning will commence Jan 2014.
- **Other events RiverConnect has participated in:**
 - **National Tree Day** Sun 28 July

Connecting Environment

To protect, repair, enhance and sustain important river, wetland and forest environments, so that current

and future generations can understand and enjoy natural river and red gum forest environments.

- **Boulevard Bush Reserve** – Draft Environmental Management Plan was developed. This will be put forward to Councillors in Feb 2014 to then go out for community consultation.
- **Shepparton Weir Upgrades** – RiverConnect Adopt-a-Reach students participated in Bollarding works as part of the Weir redevelopment.



Image 2: Shepparton High VCAL students with Parks Vic crew at Shepparton Weir

Connecting Aboriginal People

To provide programs, activities and facilities so that the whole community can understand and better appreciate the important historical and cultural significance this area holds for its traditional owners.

- **The Flats Walk** – 30 ASHE students and 15 Aboriginal community representatives attended a Flats Walk, Guided by Leon Saunders. November 2013
- **Traditional Song and Dance Workshop** – As part of the Activities in the Park program and RiverConnect, a local dance group from Mooroopna Secondary College and Shepparton High met at Victoria Park Lake, Shepparton. Led by Shane Clarke, they performed a number of traditional dances depicting Aboriginal life before European settlement to locals, visitors and many on-lookers.



Image 3: Traditional Dance students from Shepparton High and Mooroopna SC on the grassy knoll at Victoria Park Lake.

Connecting Education (Numbers: M12/40872; Works: M13/69638)

To provide opportunities for the education sector and the broader community to understand the environment, culture and importance of the area as a valuable asset to appreciate, enjoy and protect.

- **Student attendance:** 508 students from 9 RiverConnect schools spent time at their reach amounting to 844.5 student hours at the river and revegetation works of 0.5ha.

- **VCAL:** 40 VCAL students from Notre Dame College and Shepparton High school visited the river on a weekly basis. Students undertook the following works
 - Weed Management – 0.6ha
 - Revegetation – 140 Plants over 0.5ha
 - Fencing - 135m Shepparton Weir

- **Other:**
 - **Berry Street** students participated in a tree hollow survey at the Boulevard Bush Reserve with LandCare representatives.
 - **Poetry Pathway** - in October a celebration morning tea was held out front of Eastbank for the students who participated in the Pest vs Rest in May and created poems inspired by the environment. 48 students, their teachers and approx. 6 parents attended.
 - **Wetlands Tour and Canoe event at VPL** – on the 23 Oct 140 students from 3 local secondary schools paddled on the lake followed by a wetlands tour.
 - **Adopt-a-reach blog page-** schools have the opportunity to post articles about their experiences at the river on the individual [school blog pages](#).

Communication and Consultation (Website: M12/70405; Articles/media:M12/46751)

To provide appropriate, timely information to the community to support the achievement of the overall RiverConnect objectives and to provide well planned consultation processes that will allow the community to effectively influence the development and implementation of the RiverConnect strategic plan.

- Murray River Guardian for 2013-14

<http://campaign.bordermail.com.au/murrayriverguardian2013>

➤ **Website Statistics**

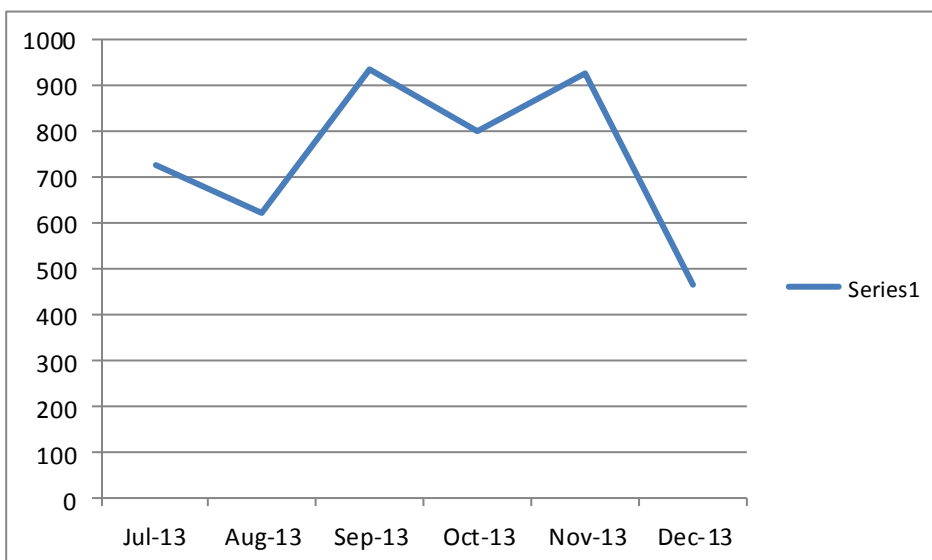


Figure 2: RiverConnect Website Page Views from July 2013 to December 2013

- **Newsletter** – [September 2013](#) and [December 2013](#) editions.
- **Marketing Campaign** – Presentations to Kiwanis of Mooroopna – 11/9, Rotary of Mooroopna - 30/9 and University of the Third Age – 4/10.