



A plan to capitalise on the Goulburn - Broken River system in the heart of our city

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Some new faces to RiverConnect

During the last few months, the RiverConnect Project has been steadily ticking along through the great work of many volunteers and various part time staff. During April of this year, Greater Shepparton City Council employed a new RiverConnect Project Officer, Renee Warren to help increase the pace of RiverConnect.

Denis Flett and Garry Smith of DG Consulting were contracted by Council, to assist with the strategic development for RiverConnect.

Renee joins the RiverConnect team with a background in Environmental and Natural Resource Management, knowledge in Cultural Heritage, and experience living in remote Aboriginal areas. Having grown up in Kyabram, Renee is a local of the Shepparton area and is very passionate about the region. In the role as RiverConnect Project Officer, Renee is excited and driven to help achieve the best possible outcomes for the RiverConnect Project, now and for the future.



The Goulburn River from
"the Flat"

Master Plan Development

The development of the RiverConnect Master Plan is now in full swing. Previous workshop material, strategic documents, experience and ideas past and present will all combine to help form the much anticipated RiverConnect higher strategic direction.

DG consulting have been contracted to help develop the master plan that will see an extensive consultation process with the RiverConnect Community Advisory Committee (RCCAC) and the greater Shepparton and Mooroopna communities.

Aboriginal Oral History Report

On the banks of the Goulburn River, amongst the old red gums, *RiverConnect – An Aboriginal Oral History* report was launched. The event took place on Monday 3 June, in a marquee on the area referred to as 'the flat', between Shepparton and Mooroopna.

The Report records the oral histories of many local Aborigines who moved to the Shepparton - Mooroopna flats area after the historic Cummeragunja Walk Off. The report outlines their life on the river, attachment to its rhythms and the surrounding environment. It also addresses the struggles, achievements and contributions made by the Aboriginal community to the Greater Shepparton region.



Deborah Cheetham, Lois Peeler (author), Renee Warren and Peter Bourke are pictured above.

Local Yorta Yorta woman, Lois Peeler worked tirelessly on the report and was strongly supported by contributors to the report, who generously donated time, thoughts and personal accounts to create this historical document. The Sir Andrew and Lady Fairley Foundation contributed to the funding of the research and along with Greater Shepparton City Council, committing funds towards the documents' completion.

Dr Wayne Atkinson, School of Social and Political Sciences at Melbourne University, officially launched the report, with Indigenous soprano, actor, author and Yorta Yorta woman, Deborah Cheetham, performing a beautiful ballad across the river area.



Mayor Geoff Dobson and Andrew Fairley both expressed their excitement at what a wonderful report will mean for not only the greater community of Shepparton and Mooroopna but also the wider community into the future.

Mayor Geoff Dobson is pictured with Lisa McKenzie and Deborah Cheetham

McGuire's Punt Art Work Launch

RiverConnect along with Riverlinks, recently launched a wonderful piece of silk art work by local artists Wendy Cook and Barb Lorains, named McGuire's Punt. RiverConnect Project Officer, Renee Warren was also officially welcomed to the RiverConnect team at the event.

The launch took place on the evening of Wednesday 10 June in the upstairs foyer of Eastbank where the art work has been mounted. Rob Robson, Riverlinks Manager, spoke of the history of the Punt, informing the audience of what the Punt meant for the area, before introducing the artist to speak.

"Shepparton and Mooroopna were once named 'McGuire's Punt' after the old Punt that was the only form of transport across the rivers before the railway was constructed." Mr. Robson stated.



Above Left: Some of the 70 guests who attended the event.

Above Right: Mayor Geoff Dobson is pictured with Barbara Lorains Wendy Cook and Renee Warren, with "McGuire's Punt" artwork in the background.

Barbara and Wendy enlightened guests on how they designed, constructed and pieced together the 7.5 m x1.23m artwork that is an abstract representation of the confluence of the Goulburn and Broken rivers and the McGuire's punt area. The impressive Gean Von Guerard's inspired art piece took many hours to complete.

After an introduction and background on what RiverConnect is and what it does from Dianne Hanna, new Project Officer Renee Warren went on to discuss the exciting opportunities for RiverConnect into the future.

Mayor Geoff Dobson recalled early memories as a boy down on the river banks. He expressed the need to make the river once again the focus for the Shepparton and Mooroopna communities. Mr. Dobson officially launched the brilliant art piece and welcomed Renee Warren to the team.

Teachers Commit to Learning About the RiverConnect Area

As part of the RiverConnect Adopt-a-reach project, a series of five workshops were offered to the local teachers so they could learn more about the RiverConnect area. The response was fantastic with 37 teachers from 13 local schools and Berry Street participating in the weekly program.

Teachers were able to learn from local environmental specialists representing Parks Victoria, the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Area, RiverConnect and the Yorta Yorta Aboriginal community who covered topics such as - How environments work? What is the environmental, economic, social and cultural value of the area? What is the historical and cultural importance of the area to the local aboriginal community? How have we managed the area and what is the future management likely to be like?



Students from St Mel's participate in a river audit recently.

The workshops have led to a flurry of activity in our schools with much planning occurring. Already as a result, some schools have completed activities in their reach. Helen Ryan, from Bouchier St Primary School, organised an Aboriginal Cross Cultural afternoon with 170 middle school students learning from aboriginal elders and cooking damper. Many schools have great plans for next term such as 'Australian animals and birds', 'Mini Beasts', 'The history of Mooroopna' and 'Looking after our environment'. It will be great to give a comprehensive report of the various activities in our next newsletter.

A program such as this once again underlines what a great community we live in. This Teacher Professional Development Program was only possible with the sharing and commitment of so many people. Thank you to all the 14 different presenters and the 37 participating teachers. It is great to have so many individuals so willingly to promote the Adopt-a-reach launch affirmation.

“As members of the Shepparton Mooroopna community we look forward to working together so this community can understand and appreciate the importance of our river environment. It is our hope that this community will feel really connected to the river and to each other”.

St Mary's Mooroopna Update

On Thursday 18 June the children from Grade One/Two St. Mary's Mooroopna, visited Douglass Park for an excursion as part of their unit of study: 'How do we look after living things?' The day was facilitated by Wendy D'Amore, Dhurringile and district Local Area Plan Coordinator in conjunction with Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, who brought with her three other facilitators to run workshops. The workshops included: Jonti the Glider and the food web: Mini Beasts: Wetland Wander and Murray the Fish and the Urban Stew. The children experienced many 'hands on' activities teaching them about pollution, taking care of mini beasts and other animals and caring for our environment and the animals that frequent it. The children thoroughly enjoyed the activities. Our thanks to Goulburn Murray Landcare Network.



OUR EXCURSION: Written by Bridgie Ryan

On Thursday the Grade 1 /2's went to Douglass Park. John showed us mini beasts. Dani showed us squirrel gliders. Wendy took us for a walk to Gemmill's Swamp. Kristie told us about storm water. I had a great time. Isaac helped me to get over my fear of spiders.

RiverConnect Waterways Health Activity Plan



The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has commissioned Water Tecnology to develop a Waterway Health Activity Plan (WHAP) for the Shepparton and Mooroopna area, encompassing the riparian zones of the Broken and Goulburn Rivers, the RiverConnect area.

The plan focuses on the values, threats and actions that impact upon the health of the Goulburn and Broken Rivers. It aims to identify management actions to protect and enhance existing values, recommend actions to reduce the identified threats to values and provide actions that are specific, achievable, costed and prioritised. The purpose of the plan is to guide the implementation of river management works in the RiverConnect project area.

Inspiration

“The time has come to identify and preserve free-flowing stretches of our great rivers before growth and development make the beauty of the unspoiled waterway a memory.”

Lyndon Baines Johnson