



# RiverConnect ANNUAL REPORT 2016 – 2017

For the  
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority  
And  
Greater Shepparton City Council  
(TRIM: C17/13727)



In partnership with: Department of Education and Training, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Goulburn Valley Environment Group, Parks Victoria, Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, Word and Mouth and Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation.

## 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.*

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- RiverConnect Strategic Plan review completed, partners have strongly reinforced their commitment to the project and Goulburn Valley Water has joined the Implementation Advisory Committee
- Final stage of interpretive trail markers installed at Boulevard Bush Reserve
- Hosted 15 events and activities for community as part of Activities in the Park
- Developed a strong partnership with relevant stakeholders to tackle illegal dumping

## MEETINGS

Each RiverConnect committee meeting has a strong focus on partnership program opportunities, therefore enabling cross agency and community discussion amongst partners. Partners represented on the RiverConnect committees include:

- Greater Shepparton City Council
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Parks Victoria
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- Goulburn Murray Landcare Network
- Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative
- Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group
- Goulburn Valley Water (new addition, June 2017 meeting)

### RiverConnect Committees

- RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee
  - Review of Strategic Plan completed
- Education Alliance
  - Not active in 2016/17 due to structural change. Working groups will be established on project by project basis.
- Land Managers Working Group
  - Group indicated they are interested in continuing to meet.
  - Final Interpretive trail marker installed at Boulevard Bush Reserve.
- Communications Working Group
  - RiverConnect short films project finalisation of edits to final films.
  - Completion of revised Access Map.

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

### **Other Council or agency working/steering committees**

- Member of GSCC Cycling Strategy Steering Committee to further support the implementation of the Paths Masterplan
- Illegal Dumping group – Have been meeting to identify actions to address illegal dumping in the municipality. Will look to establish group as RiverConnect Working Group.

### **OFFICER TRAINING**

(EPO- Education Project Officer, PO – Project Officer)

- **Council internal processes**
  - Team building sessions x 2 (EPO & PO)
- **Professional Development**
  - Wise Water Ways (PO)



**Image 1: Tawny Frogmouth – RiverConnect Spotlight Walk (photo courtesy of Diana Padron)**

# 1. RIVERCONNECT FINANCIAL REPORT

## 2016/2017 FINANCIAL YEAR

TABLE 1: RIVERCONNECT OPERATING COSTS BREAKDOWN

Description	Proponent Funds (Greater Shepparton City Council)		Other Contributor Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority		Other Contributor		Total Budget 2016-2017	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Employment / Project Management / Facilitation	90,225	90,225	48,159	48,159	0	0	138,384	138,384
in-kind/volunteer labour	0	12,925	0	0		0	0	12,925
<b>Total employment Costs (GST exclusive)</b>	<b>90,225</b>	<b>103,150</b>	<b>48,159</b>	<b>48,159</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>138,384</b>	<b>151,309</b>
Community Group Support	0	0	25,360	25,360	0	0	25,360	25,360
Communications/Publications	0	0	7,633	7,633	0	0	7,633	7,633
Revegetation	0	0	8,848	8,848	0	0	8,848	8,848
<b>Total Operating Costs (GST exclusive)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41,841</b>	<b>41,841</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41,841</b>	<b>41,841</b>
<b>Total Budget 2015-2016 (GST exclusive)</b>	<b>90,225</b>	<b>103150</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>180,225</b>	<b>193,150</b>

### Other Funding:

Nil

## 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

*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 2: 'ACTIVITIES IN THE PARK' EVENTS LED BY RIVERCONNECT IN THE 2016-2017 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Date	Activity	Location	Community Participant numbers
Saturday 8 October 2016	Breakfast with the Birds	Australian Botanic Gardens, Kialla Tip Road, Shepparton.	11
Saturday 22 October 2016	Photography in the Botanic Gardens	Australian Botanic Gardens, Kialla Tip Road, Shepparton.	7
Wednesday 26 October 2016	Spotlight Walk - October	Goulburn River	5
Saturday 5 November 2016	Art in the Botanic Gardens – ceramics with Kaye Poulton	Australian Botanic Gardens, Kialla Tip Road, Shepparton.	8
Sunday 13 November 2016	Boulevard Bush Reserve Flora Walk	Boulevard Bush Reserve, North Shepparton	3
Tuesday 22 November 2016	Spotlight Walk	Goulburn River	8
Sat 12 November 2016	Flats Walk + Bush Tucker	The Flats - Chinamans Gardens Mooroopna	27
Tuesday 24 January 2017	Spotlight Walk	Goulburn River	20
Friday 27 Jan 2017	Turtle Talk	Behind Council Offices. Marungi St Carpark, Shepparton.	46
Tuesday 28 February 2017	Breakfast with the Birds	Australian Botanic Gardens, Kialla Tip Road, Shepparton.	25
Thursday 23 February 2017	Spotlight Walk	Goulburn River	14
Saturday 18 February 2017	Canoeing on the Goulburn	Kaieltheban Park, off Archer St Mooroopna TO Daintons Bridge, Midland Hwy Shepparton & Daintons Bridge, Midland Hwy Shepparton Jordans Bend, Jordan Place, North Shepparton	50
Friday 17 March 2017	Bat Discovery Night	Aquamoves and Goulburn River	32
Thursday 23 March 2017	Spotlight Walk	Goulburn River	15
Thursday 20 April 2017	Spotlight Walk	Goulburn River	12
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>15 Events</b>		<b>283</b>



**Image 2: “Art at the Botanic Gardens”- a ceramics class in the weaving garden with a wetlands backdrop.**

- **KidsFest 2016** – attended by 5067 people, with approximately 1,500 people visiting the RiverConnect, Parks Victoria and Goulburn Murray Landcare Network marquee. Event numbers were down on previous years due to persistent poor weather.
- **Rakali Information Night** 17 October 2016. As part of a tour funded by the Normal Wettenhall Foundation, RiverConnect facilitated a community information night presented by Geoff Williams from The Platypus Conservancy. The event attracted 11 attendees and was hosted at Shepparton Senior Citizens Centre.
- **Spotlight Walks** –Community walks lead by Goulburn Murray Landcare Network spotting various local nocturnal species along Goulburn River locations, with a total of six walks attracting 74 attendees.
- **Clean Up Australia Day** – RiverConnect partnered with Greater Shepparton City Council’s Waste team to hold three Clean Up Australia Day events, including a schools day, a business clean-up and a community clean-up.
- **Art Along the River** - RiverConnect offered art sessions at the Australian Botanic Gardens on 27 February 2016. The class was aimed at beginner-intermediate skill levels featuring ceramics with Kaye Poulton. Participants made a number of ceramic pieces featuring indentations from sticks, leaves and other natural materials found on the ground nearby.
- **Bat Walk and Talk** –The now annual Bat Talk and discovery walk included a 1 hour information session followed by a bat walk with attendees introduced to bat detectors to locate bats in the river environment. The 32 attendees learned about local bats of Greater Shepparton and the various species around Australia with expert bat enthusiast, Robert Bender.
- **Breakfast with the Birds** – RiverConnect hosted two opportunities as part of Activities in the Park for the community to discover the different types of birdlife in our riverine environment with RiverConnect and Birdlife Murray Goulburn members for a Bird Walk and Talk tour, followed by breakfast, including the popular new addition of a Shrove Tuesday pancake breakfast.
- **Flats walk and bush tucker** - Uncle Leon Saunders lead another popular cultural walk on The

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Flats. The 27 participants learnt about significant events and heard personal stories of life growing up on the banks of the Goulburn River before enjoying a traditional bush tucker inspired lunch.



**Image 3: Uncle Leon and a captivated crowd at the Flats Walk in 2016.**

- **Photography Along The River** - RiverConnect and the Shepparton Camera Club offered a unique nature photography workshop at the Botanic Gardens as part of the Activities in the Park program. The basics workshop was suited to beginners or more experienced photographers looking to diversify their work, with the presenter particularly focussing on macro photography on flora and insects.
- **Turtle Talk** – 27 January 2017. 46 participants discovered the freshwater turtles that live in our local waterways with experts from Turtles Australia. Turtles Australia exhibited live specimens and provided an engaging and interactive opportunity for people of all ages to improve their knowledge.
- **Canoeing on the Goulburn** – Saturday 28 February 2017. RiverConnect offered this free ‘Activities in the Park’ event, supported by special guest Daniel Lovell from GB CMA to discuss environmental water and answer any questions participants may have. It provided a relaxing and informative experience for all ages for 50 participants over the two sessions.



**Image 4: Participants at Canoeing on the Goulburn in February 2017**

**TABLE 3: TOTAL NUMBER OF RIVERCONNECT EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES WITH PARTICIPATION NUMBERS**

<b>Event/Activity</b>	<b>Number</b>
KidsFest	1,500
Rakali Information night	11
Activities in the Park – 15 events (including spotlight walks, turtle talk as described above)	283
World Environment Day	28
Primary Schools Reedy Swamp Days	234
Secondary Schools Life at the Lake	37
Education Events – (51 Events. Events = session with a school/class)	277
Clean Up Australia Day – schools	150
Clean Up Australia Day - community	27
Word and Mouth Canoe Event	23
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2,570</b>



**Image 5: John from Goulburn Murray Landcare Network hosting an insects session at the Reedy Swamp schools cluster day.**

### **Update of Access Map**

The RiverConnect Access Map was updated by the Communications Working Group, in consultation with various stakeholders including the IAC and Council’s Disability Access Officer to identify the accessibility of sites. Additional symbols were added to encourage various uses of the river environment, including canoeing, photography, birdwatching and interpretative signage. Boulevard Bush Reserve was also added as a location to encourage the use of the reserve with the new interpretative signage.



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## 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.*

- Ongoing meeting of the Land Manager's Working Group to continue communication and collaboration on land management projects, including developing ideas around in-river litter traps.
- Completed the final trial marker for the Boulevard Bush Reserve interpretative signage project as per the Boulevard Bush Reserve Environmental Management Plan.
- Partnered with Greater Shepparton City Council and Parks Victoria to run series of public awareness campaigns around anti-illegal dumping radio campaigns over long weekends and public holidays. Anecdotal evidence of decreased illegal dumping, but causation requires ongoing research and clear recording of data. Applied for, and await outcome of, illegal dumping grant to value of \$10,000.
- Participation in Clean Up Australia Day with school, community and business clean ups:
  - Removing litter and illegal dumping from Shepparton Weir and Boulevard Bush Reserve area with 150 participants from local primary schools;
  - Removing litter and illegal dumping in business clean up with 12 participants;
  - Removing litter and illegal dumping at community clean up with 27 participants
- 773.225 m.sq revegetation works by 8 schools (\*Incomplete data regarding size of area revegetated)
- Promotion of environmental water flushes and the benefits of environmental water via Facebook and newsletters to improve community understanding.



**Image 5: Students being briefed ahead of Clean Up Australia Day schools clean up 2017**

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## **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.*

- Flats walk and bush tucker – Uncle Leon Saunders and others lead a unique and memorable cultural walk on The Flats. Participants learnt about significant events and heard personal stories of life growing up on the banks of the Goulburn River before enjoying a bush tucker inspired lunch.
  - Meetings began to develop engagement/education/cultural program with disengaged Koori students at Mooroopna Primary School.
  - Gallery Kaiela were engaged to hold a clay turtle activity at the Reedy Swamp Schools Cluster day, creating turtles to include in their annual Turtle Muster while educating students about the importance of turtles as a totem for Yorta Yorta people.
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## CONNECTING EDUCATION

*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.*

Numbers of school and student participation during this financial year are lower than the previous year, primarily due to changes of staff during term 3 and 4. The Reedy Swamp Primary School Days were popular as usual, however the Secondary Schools Life at the Lake was less popular, likely due to planning for this occurring later than in the past, giving schools less time to plan for it. Also, some of the data recorded during the year is incomplete, therefore the data represented in this document under reports the true amount of student attendance and student works completed.

TABLE 4: TOTAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT RIVERCONNECT ACTIVITIES ALONG THE RIVER 2016 / 2017

Students	Hours at the River	Schools involved	Number of school events
535	2131.5	17	65

**VCAL** : 53 students participated in activities on their schools adopted reach of the Goulburn and Broken Rivers during terms 1 and 2. Activities included conducting biodiversity audits, asset maintenance, rubbish removal and waste education sessions, GPS plotting habitat hollows, weed removal, plant identification, Waste Education, Indigenous Cultural Education and learning about changes to the rivers since European arrival.

**WORKS** Students undertook the following works:

- Weed management - 716.39 square metres of Moth Vine removed from Jordan's bend
- Asset maintenance - Picnic tables were sanded back and lacquered at Jordan's bend
- Revegetation – 437 plants\* were planted by 8 schools in both pre-prepared Council sites and along their adopted reaches. Approximately 47 students\* participated in these planting activities covering approximately 773.22 square metres\*. (\*indicates that there is data missing with regards to revegetation activities therefore information listed here only reflects the data which was recorded).
- Rubbish removal - Rubbish was removed by 150 Primary School students on Schools Clean Up Australia Day, facilitated by Greater Shepparton City Council's Waste Education Officer and supported by RiverConnect.
- Biodiversity Audit Conducted on the Broken River by McGuire Secondary College VCAL students.

**Reedy Swamp Primary School Days:** 234 students from 6 schools participated in the Reedy Swamp Primary Schools Days across 2 days from 23-24 May. Students rotated through various environmental education sessions provided by 10 different presenters (8 presenters per day), including Turtles Australia, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Goulburn Valley Water, Parks Victoria, Kaiela Arts, and Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation. With World Turtle Day being held on 23 May, it was a great opportunity for students to learn about and celebrate our region's local turtles, as well as making their very own clay turtles with Kaiela Arts as part of Gallery Kaiela's Turtle Muster. Schools who participated were Ardmona Primary School, Congupna Primary School, Currawa Primary School, Bouchier Street Primary School, St Lukes Primary School, and Guthrie Street Primary School.

**Life at the Lake:** 37 VCAL students from two schools, Shepparton High School and McGuire Secondary College, participated in Life at the Lake on 28 May. Students rotated through 5 activities, including Cultural Education with Parks Victoria, learning about animal tracks and scats with Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, identifying water Macroinvertebrates with Goulburn Valley Water, recycling old t-shirts with GSCC Waste Education, and a tour of the lake's wetlands with GSCC Native Open Spaces

**Fish release:** 30 students participated in a release of native fish species into Victoria Park Lake on 25<sup>th</sup> May. These were fish which had been living in irrigation channels but needed to be moved due to works being conducted along the irrigation channels. The move and release was facilitated by Goulburn Murray Water and Fisheries Victoria, with students from Verney Road School releasing the fish into the lake.

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**Kinders:** The Education Officer has supported Knight Street Multi-Age Learning Facility in building on their existing Bush Kinder program. This has involved joining in on their Bush Kinder morning sessions, and providing educational sessions regarding the river, its animals and plants and habitat, as well as attendance at tree planting sessions.

**Adopt a Reach:** Bouchier Street Primary School have re-invigorated their interest in their adopted reach, led by their Year 6 Environmental Leadership students, who visited on 26<sup>th</sup> June to learn about the area and brainstorm ideas of what activities they would like to do on their reach. Students will begin regular visits to their reach in Term 3 to conduct revegetation, weed and rubbish removal, and learn about the plants and animals which live in their reach.



**Image 6: Introduction to Rambling at Reedy**



**Image 7: Waste Education – Life at the Lake**

## COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

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.

Overall session increased by ~200, and users by ~300 despite page views and unique page views being down. Bounce and exit rates both increased, but our percentage of new sessions increased. Some of these changes, both positive and negative, may be attributable to the development of RiverConnect's Facebook page and the distribution of information in this way. The Flats and River Access pages continue to be the most viewed pages, aside from the homepage.

### COMMUNICATION

TABLE 5: RIVERCONNECT WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS – JULY 2016 – JUNE 2017

Month	Sessions	Users	Page views	Unique page views	Avg. Time on page	Bounce Rate %	% Exit	Most viewed page	% new session
July	320	282	556	450	1.36	76.56	57.55	The Flats	84.69
August	266	238	624	482	1.15	67.67	42.63	Home page	84.96
September	241	217	510	403	1.13	63.90	47.25	River Access	83.40
October	346	290	889	611	2.13	59.25	38.92	The Flats	79.48
November	306	228	804	597	1.45	61.76	38.06	Home page	67.97
December	186	167	324	263	1:45	70.97	57.41	River Access	83.33
January	317	270	634	501	1:21	61.83	50.00	Home page	80.13
February	296	257	554	450	1:55	67.57	53.43	Home page	81.08
March	390	326	829	645	1:21	67.69	47.04	Home page	77.44
April	256	217	529	423	1:25	67.97	48.39	River Access	81.25
May	356	310	801	609	1:37	67.98	44.44	Home page	80.34
June	167	146	708	445	:32	71.86	23.59	The Flats	81.44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3447</b>	<b>2948</b>	<b>7762</b>	<b>5879</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>66.75</b>	<b>44.41</b>	<b>1. Home page 2. The Flats 3. River Access</b>	<b>80.13</b>
<b>2015/16</b>	<b>3262</b>	<b>2617</b>	<b>8632</b>	<b>6269</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>64.04</b>	<b>37.79</b>	<b>1. Home page 2. The Flats 3. River Access</b>	<b>77.90</b>
<b>2014/15</b>	<b>3500</b>	<b>2770</b>	<b>8845</b>	<b>6199</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>66.09</b>	<b>39.57</b>	<b>1. Home page 2. The Flats 3. Projects</b>	<b>76.69</b>

➤ **Newsletters –**

	<b>Subscribers</b>	<b>% open</b>	<b># clicked a link</b>	<b>Most popular link clicked</b>
November/December 2016	216	40	12.2	RiverConnect Facebook
March 2017	214	35.12	11.11	iSpy app & R/C website
June 2017	219	246	10.14	GB CMA Environmental water flow link

➤ **Marketing Campaign –**

- Free Community Event teardrop banners designed and purchased
- RiverConnect uniforms
- Stickers, tattoos designed for Community Consultation
- RiverConnect Summary Document also completed in addition to Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- Included in the new Goulburn Valley Tourism Planner

➤ **RiverConnect Facebook Group**

The new RiverConnect Facebook Group has 366 members as at 5/07/2017 and features regular updates with the community on RiverConnect and partner activities and events, informative articles related to RiverConnect themes and also encouraging community member to share information or post photos of their activities in the river environment.

➤ **Media Coverage**

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF RIVERCONNECT MEDIA COVERAGE 2016/2017

<b>Media Source</b>	<b># of articles/ interviews</b>
Newspaper	7
Radio	2
TV	1
YouTube	2
TOTAL	12

TABLE 6: ITEMISED RIVERCONNECT MEDIA COVERAGE 2016 / 2017

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Media</b>
29/07/2016	Award Win	Beautiful wins for Shepparton Lake and Partnership	Shepparton News
26/02/2017	Strategic Plan	Greater Shepp Update February 26 2017	GSCC Youtube
25/02/2017	Turtle Talk	Learn more about the lives of Turtles	Shepparton News (also available online)
01/02/2017	Turtle Talk	Saving Turtles	Shepparton News (also available online)
1/2/2017	Turtle Talk	“Turtles are helping the region’s youth understand more about native populations in the Goulburn Murray ecosystem”	WIN News
02/03/2017	Clean Up Australia Day	Help in cleaning up Shepparton	Shepparton News (also available online)
19/03/2017	Strategic Plan	Greater Shepp Update 19 March 2017	GSCC Youtube
09/04/2017 – 22/04/2017	Illegal Dumping Radio Campaign (78 ads)	Do the right thing – say no to illegal dumping	Radio Southern Cross Austereo
28/04/2017	RiverConnect	RiverConnect	One FM
31/05/2017	World Environment Day	World Environment Day	Radio – ABC GM
04/06/2017	Illegal Dumping Radio Campaign (62	Do the right thing – say no to illegal dumping	Radio Southern

17/06/2017	ads)		Cross Austereo
13/04/2017	Spotlight Walk	Enjoy a spotlight river walk	Shepparton News (also available online)
05/06/2017	World Environment Day	Vital role of wetlands celebrated at swamp	Shepparton News (also available online)
08/06/2017	Illegal Dumping	Do the right thing with rubbish	Shepparton News

## Consultation

A significant project of the 2016/17 financial year was the completion the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 including extensive community consultation.

This included the following media:

- Media release
- Public notice
- GSCC Facebook live (three videos)
- GSCC youtube (2 videos)

The consultation process involved the following 31 meetings, events and activities where the Draft Strategic Plan was discussed and/or on display.

Date	Event
14-Feb-17	Toolamba Community Plan meeting
15-Feb-17	LaBIF
17-Feb-17	Twilight Stroll
18-Feb-17	Canoeing on the Goulburn River
20-Feb-17	Mooroopna Rotary
21-Feb-17	Tourism & Economic Develop meeting (Council)
21-Feb-17	Tatura Community Plan meeting
23-Feb-17	Project Wild Thing Screening
23-Feb-17	Spotlight Walk
24-Feb-17	Shepparton Summer Market
25-Feb-17	Shepparton Summer Market
25-Feb-17	Screen on the Green
27-Feb-17	Dookie Community Plan meeting
28-Feb-17	Breakfast with the Birds
1-Mar-17	GV Water - Kristy Elrington
1-Mar-17	Word and Mouth
1-Mar-17	Mooroopna Community Plan meeting
2-Mar-17	Recreation and Parks (Council)
2-Mar-17	Aged Services meeting (Council)
2-Mar-17	Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project
2-Mar-17	Disability and Rural Access
5-Mar-17	Clean Up Australia Day
6-Mar-17	Arcadia Community Plan meeting
7-Mar-17	Strategic Planning Meeting (Council)
8-Mar-17	GMLN meeting
15-Mar-17	Active Living Coordinators Meeting (Council)
15-Mar-17	Boulevard Estate Community Plan
17-Mar-17	RiverConnect Bat Talk
19-Mar-17	Mooroopna Farmers Market
20-Mar-17	Seven Creeks Community Plan meeting
23-Mar-17	Ethnic Council – Chris Hazelman

A physical community survey was also on display at five locations and an e-survey was made available over six weeks to obtain feedback, receiving 27 responses. A survey designed for NRM agency and organisations was also made available online receiving 7 responses.

Information gathered at events, activities and via survey was incorporated in to the final Strategic Plan in close consultation with RiverConnect partners. The final document is a reflection of community and agency

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aspirations for the area, with the process providing detailed insight into projects and activities considered to be priorities for the area. This information regarding priorities will be used to inform annual actions for the program.

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## **RiverConnect 2016 / 2017 Summary**

RiverConnect had several fantastic outcomes during the year 2016-2017. The program experienced some interruptions with staff changes throughout the early part of the financial year, which impacted on the delivery of programs in early months, particularly for term 4 of the schools program in 2016.

Despite this, 2016/17 financial year was a strong year for RiverConnect, completing the Strategic Plan, a number of educational activities, building new partnerships and conducting another series of 15 activities through Activities in the Park.

Media coverage continued to be positive with good response to major events, and RiverConnect joined social media with the development of a Facebook group.

Projects including the Boulevard Bush Reserve trail markers were completed, and the work of the Land Managers and Communications Working Groups continues.



**Image 8: VCAL students learning new skills undertaking maintenance works on picnic tables at Shepparton Weir.**

**RiverConnect staff would like to thank all community and agency members who participated, assisted or provided guidance on any RiverConnect event, activity, meeting or Management Plan**

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