

RiverConnect Program Annual Progress Report

July 2024 – June 2025



Figure 1. Shepparton East Primary School Grade 5/6 students learning from Tim, Native Fish Australia about threatened native fish at the “Zombie Fish Primary Education Day” before the all-important fish release into the Victoria Park Lake. (not pictured – the students vying to successfully answer questions and gain a bucket of fish to release!)

Schedule 6

Annual Progress Report

For project: RiverConnect

Between
GOULBURN BROKEN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
and
GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL
Funded by
State Government

Organisation Details:

Organisation:	Greater Shepparton City Council	
Project Contact Officer:	Sharon Terry	
Project Phone Number:	(03) 5832 9542	
Postal Address:	Locked Bag 1000, Shepparton VIC 3632	
Email Address:	Sharon.terry@shepparton.vic.gov.au	
Spatial collection method: (please circle) See Schedule 4A for details	DEECA Output Database in ESRI File Geodatabase Format	GB CMA Online Project Management System (enQUIRE)
Reporting contact:	Alison Brett	
Contact name and email address:	(03) 5832 9714 alison.brett@shepparton.vic.gov.au	
ABN:	59 835 329 843	
ABN registered name:	Greater Shepparton City Council	
Are you registered for GST?	Yes	
Incorporation / ACN name:		
Incorporation / ACN number:		
Start date:	1 July 2024	
End date:	30 June 2025	

Project expenditure

Description	Funds Approved	
	2024-2025	
RiverConnect	Budget	Actual
Employment	\$198,354	\$198,354
In-kind/volunteer labour ¹	\$15,000	\$15,000
Total employment Costs (ex GST)	\$213,354	\$213,354
Community Project/Program Delivery ²	\$16,268	\$13,544
Program Operations	\$10,780	\$10,780
Advertising Marketing and Promotions	\$250	\$250
Community Group Support	\$148	\$148
Revegetation	\$0	\$0
Funding received ³	-\$500	-\$500
Total Operating Costs (ex GST)	\$26,946	\$24,222
Total (ex GST)⁵	\$240,300	\$237,576

2024-2025

Comment on variation (10% or greater) of budget vs expenditure:

In-kind/volunteer labour¹ - estimated \$15,000 In-kind Program, Project and Staff Management

Community Project/Program Delivery² – Underspend of \$2,724 due to savings achieved for events and program which will be carried over to 2025/2026 budget

Funding received³ – Caring for Nature Camp participant fees

Note: \$6,393 DEECA funding received 2023/2024 and \$2,727 Emergency Recovery Victoria funding received 2024/2025 for 'Caring for Nature Camp' is considered part of GSCC contribution

RiverConnect 2024/2025 Financial Report

Description	Proponent Funds (GSCC)		Other Contributor (GBCMA)		External Funds		Total Budget 2024/2025	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
RiverConnect								
Employment	\$99,177	\$99,177	\$99,177	\$99,177	-	-	\$198,353	\$198,353
In-kind/volunteer labour ¹	\$15,000	\$15,000	-	-	-	-	\$15,000	\$15,000
Total employment Costs (ex GST)	\$114,177	\$114,177	\$99,177	\$99,177	\$0	\$0	\$213,354	\$213,354
Community Project/Program Delivery ²	\$8,310	\$5,586	\$7,958	\$7,958	-	-	\$16,268	\$13,544
Program Operations	\$5,390	\$5,390	\$5,390	\$5,390	-	-	\$10,780	\$10,780
Advertising Marketing and Promotions	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$125	-	-	\$250	\$250
Community Group Support	\$148	\$148	-	-	-	-	\$148	\$148
Revegetation	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$0	\$0
Funding received ³	-	-	-	-	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500
Total Operating Costs (ex GST)	\$13,973	\$11,249	\$13,473	\$13,473	-\$500	-\$500	\$26,946	\$24,222
Total (ex GST)⁵	\$128,150	\$125,426	\$112,650	\$112,650	-\$500	-\$500	\$240,300	\$237,576

Project Delivery

1. Outputs

- a. **Total outputs delivered** – Please provide the required information in columns K to Q for each output.
- b. **Spatial mapping** – When mapping the outputs achieved, refer to columns I and J for guidance. Column I provides for how the output should be mapped (i.e. as a point, a line or polygon). Column J provides for what information should be mapped. Please include all output attributes in the metadata of the mapped spatial object.

(A) Project	(B) Activity	(C) Annual output target	OUTPUT ATTRIBUTES													
			(D) Output title and type	(E) Activity type	(F) Planned management outcome	(G) Planned management outcome direction of change	(H) Region, area or reach	(I) Spatial object type	(J) Spatial object description	(K) Specific attribute 1 (if applicable)	(L) Specific attribute 2 (if applicable)	(M) Specific attribute 3 (if applicable)	(N) Specific attribute 4 (if applicable)	(O) Specific attribute 5 (if applicable)	(P) Annual Output achieved	(Q) Spatial data recorded and provided (Y/N)
RiverConnect	Weed control	0.7 ha each year	2.1 Weed control – Non-woody	Establish	Species control	Increase control of undesirable species	Shepparton	Polygon	Gross area over which weeds were controlled, including the area searched for target weeds and treated where present	Primary treatment method (select one): Manual search for target weeds	Biosecurity aim (select one): Containment and Eradication	Estimate of percentage (nearest 10%) of the output polygon that was treated: 87%	Arrangement of the target species within output polygon (select one): Scattered individuals, majority cover and small patches	Species ID using the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas: Common sow thistle, Bitter Lettuce, Gazania sp. And Spear-Thistle	0.77 Ha	Y
	Revegetation	1 ha each year	2.2 Vegetation – Native indigenous	Establish	Vegetation extent	Increase vegetation extent	Shepparton	Polygon	Area where vegetation has been established, maintained or modified	Specific activities undertaken (select): Seedling planting, Plant guarding, Weed mat, Supplementary watering, Plant guard removal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.03 Ha	Y
	RiverConnect Paths Master Plan	24/25 Public Land Acquisition Route 2 24/25 Detailed Designs Route 2 (subject to external funding) 25/26 Construct Route 2	4.1 Approval and advice – Advice	Establish	Awareness	Increase awareness of target audience	Shepparton	Point	Location of Organisation’s office 90 Welsford St Shepparton	Identify the status of the approval and advice (select one): Route 2 public land acquisition completed, detailed designs nearing completion, external funding secured for construction 25/26	Identify the specific type of approval and advice (select one): Public acquisition	N/A	N/A	N/A	No. of approvals and advice 1	N
	Community group support	8 each year (Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group, Friends of the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton, Shepparton Camera Club, Shepparton Heritage Centre, BirdLife Murray Goulburn, Shepparton Canoe Club, Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club)	4.5 Partnership – Community Group	Maintain	Governance	Increase governance	Shepparton	Point	Location of Organisation’s office	List the organisations or individuals who are parties to the partnership Goulburn Broken CMA 99 Greater Shepparton City Council 99 Parks Victoria 99 Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation 99 Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative 99 Goulburn Murray Landcare Network 99 Goulburn Valley Environment Group 99 Goulburn Valley Water 99 DEECA 99 DET 99 Great Shepp Young Champions 99 Goulburn Valley Health 2 Community representatives: 99 Rod McLennan 20 Bruce Cumming 20 Kimberley Chau 3 Paul Hockett 3	Duration of the partnership in years, where considered permanent 99 years should be used 99			No. of partnerships 53	N	

(A) Project	(B) Activity	(C) Annual output target	OUTPUT ATTRIBUTES													
			(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)	(N)	(O)	(P)	(Q)
			Output title and type	Activity type	Planned management outcome	Planned management outcome direction of change	Region, area or reach	Spatial object type	Spatial object description	Specific attribute 1 (if applicable)	Specific attribute 2 (if applicable)	Specific attribute 3 (if applicable)	Specific attribute 4 (if applicable)	Specific attribute 5 (if applicable)	Annual Output achieved	Spatial data recorded and provided (Y/N)
										Victorian Fisheries Authority 11 Kaiaela Arts 12 Victoria Walks 8 Birdlife Murray Goulburn 12 Fairley Leadership Program participants 7 GV Mountain Bike Club 8 Shepparton Camera Club 10 Shepparton Historical Society 9 Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare 99 Volunteers 9 Platypus Conservancy 9 Lighthouse Project/ The Haven 8 Disability Advisory Committee 9 Turtles Australia 8 Friends of the Botanic Gardens 8 Shepparton Canoe Club 6 Native Fish Australia 8 FamilyCare disability support group 7 Cussen Park Advisory Committee 7 Headspace Shepparton 7 Scouts Victoria 6 Girl Guides 6 Wellways 6 St Georges Rd Community Hub 6 Shepparton English Language Centre 6 GV Pride - Out in the Open Festival 5 Shepparton Art Museum 6 Veolia 4 Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club 6 Friends of Gemmill’s Swamp 4 Point of Difference Studio 5 Things of Spirit 3 OzGreen 3 National Trust of Australia – Heritage Festival 3 Australian Conservation Foundation 1 Kiwanis Club of Shepparton Sunrisers 1 Find your Feathers 1 Salvos North East Youth Service						
	Engagement events	4,000 participants	4.4 Engagement events Media Social Media Website	Establish	Awareness	Increase awareness of target audience	Shepparton	Point	Location where each event was held	Name of each event Please see table below for detail	Length of each event in hours, to the nearest hour 215 Hours Please see table below for detail	Number of events – where events have identical values for all attributes (e.g. location, type) they can be captured together 77 Events Please see table below for detail	Target audience of each event (select): Community 31 Agency 6 Education 39 Please see table below for detail	Primary focus of each event (select): Art & Culture 5 Awareness/Engagement 19 Canoeing 0 Clean-Up 4 Education 20 Planting 22 Physical Activity 2 Spotlight 0 Tourism 1 Weeding 2 Wellbeing 6	No. of participants per event 5480 Total Attendees Please see table below for detail	Y

Engagement Events Table (More details including dates, description and partners included in complimentary M24/76961 attachment)

Spatial Object Description	Location	Event name	Primary focus of event	Target Audience	Level of engagement	No. Hours	No. Attendees
341023.03 5945969.06	Willoughby Street, Murchison	<i>Murchison Community Planting</i>	Planting	Community	Lead-facilitator	1	17
351715.67 5972034.26	Westview Drive, Mooroopna	<i>Mooroopna Community Planting</i>	Planting	Community	Lead-facilitator	1	47
382129.98 5978833.90	Perdita Street, Dookie	<i>Dookie Community Planting</i>	Planting	Community	Lead-facilitator	1	14
Outside area	Barmah National Park	<i>Dharnya Family Day</i>	Art and Culture	Community	Co-facilitator	5	1000
N/A	Various	<i>Bird Bingo school holiday activation</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Lead-facilitator	0	60
355800.31 5973335.97	Princess Park	<i>OLLY</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	13
355800.31 5973335.97	Princess Park	<i>OLLY</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	13
356928.69 5971568.21	St George's Road Primary School	<i>St George's Road Primary School</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	5	144
355042.33 5970713.48	Kalinga Park, Lincoln Dr	<i>Guthrie Street Primary School</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	2	64
355847.29 5973327.32	Princess Park	<i>Greater Shepparton City Council ICT Department</i>	Planting	Agency	Co-facilitator	1	7
350999.24 5970822.56	Westwood Run, Mooroopna	<i>Greater Shepparton Secondary College Cert II Active Volunteering</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	2	11
358026.99 5975586.56	Shepparton Christian College	<i>Shepparton Christian College</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	3	129
N/A	Various	<i>Work Experience Student - Numurkah SC</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Education	Lead-facilitator	30	1
357043.08 5975917.00	Yakka Basin Reserve	<i>National Tree Day</i>	Planting	Community	Co-facilitator	2	192
356178.39 5971452.96	Healing Garden, Vic Park Lake	<i>Early Years Professional Development</i>	Wellbeing	Agency	Lead-facilitator	2	47
353846.91 5974526.78	Boulevard Bush Reserve	<i>Notre Dame College</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	24
355050.47 5970696.10	Kalinga Park, Lincoln Dr	<i>Greater Shepparton Secondary College Cert II Active Volunteering</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	11
354155.48 5974420.67	Boulevard Bush Reserve	<i>Greater Shepparton Secondary College Cert II Active Volunteering</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	2	11
357067.31 5975922.46	Yakka Basin Reserve	<i>Notre Dame College</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	1.5	58
356228.60 5966280.63	Waterbird Park	<i>St Anne's College</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	4	191
354115.29 5974455.95	Boulevard Bush Reserve	<i>Shepparton Christian College</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	1.25	27
N/A	Various	<i>Cache me if you can</i>	Physical Activity	Community	Online Engagement	0	50
351562.63 5972043.81	Curtain Place	<i>ACE College</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	15
357041.11 5975935.43	Yakka Basin Reserve	<i>Berry Street School</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	2.75	24
355947.31 5971747.31	Victoria Park Lake	<i>Nature Photography</i>	Art and Culture	Community	Lead-facilitator	1.5	15
353574.20 5976891.05	Reedy Swamp	<i>Wander at the Wetlands</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	37
354749.52 5970479.46	Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton	<i>R U OK DAY Planting</i>	Planting	Community	Co-facilitator	1	20
353846.91 5974526.78	Boulevard Bush Reserve	<i>Shepparton Christian College</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	24
353574.20 5976891.05	Reedy Swamp	<i>OLLY</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	10
353846.91 5974526.78	Boulevard Bush Reserve	<i>Nature Scripts</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Material Provision	1	10
353589.39 5958768.30	Arcadia, various	<i>RiverConnect Caring for Nature Camp</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Lead-facilitator	30	23
353574.20 5976891.05	Reedy Swamp	<i>Guthrie Street Primary School</i>	Education	Education	Material Provision	2	76
35.921833, 145.646449	Moirra Shire, Cobram	<i>Knowledge sharing - RiverConnect and environmental engagement programs</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Agency	Guest	1	6
356916.52 5969625.44	Broken River Drive	<i>St Anne's College</i>	Weeding	Education	Lead-facilitator	2	12
353556.29 5976878.42	Reedy Swamp	<i>Verney Road School</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	11
352118.20 5972913.58	Gemmills Swamp Mooroopna	<i>Breakfast with the Birds</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	43
353556.29 5976878.42	Reedy Swamp	<i>Australian Public Service Academy - Senior Executive Service Band 2 Leadership Program</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Agency	Co-facilitator	1	33
356268.40 5972591.69	Shepparton Heritage Centre	<i>River Heritage Walk & Talk</i>	Tourism	Community	Lead-facilitator	1	10
354701.01 5970519.65	Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton	<i>Wasteland to Wetland planting</i>	Planting	Community	Co-facilitator	1	12
356358.29 5971919.57	Quality Hotel Parklake Shepparton	<i>Australian Public Service Commission - Senior Executive Service Band 2 Leadership Program</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Agency	Guest	1.5	50
354920.39 5970506.71	Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton	<i>Verney Road School</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	13
354611.87 5972186.76	Sprout Garden, KidsTown	<i>Plants and Pollinators at Sprout</i>	Education	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	50
353574.20 5976891.05	Reedy Swamp	<i>Queer Sunset Awe-dventure</i>	Wellbeing	Community	Co-facilitator	2	19

N/A	Online	<i>Biomimicry Multi-school activity Day</i>	Education	Education	Co-facilitator	5	64
353574.20 5976891.05	Reedy Swamp	<i>Rambling at Reedy</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	4	77
356122.17 5971543.98	Victoria Park Lake	<i>Awe-dventure at the Lake</i>	Wellbeing	Community	Lead-facilitator	1	18
N/A	Various	<i>University Placement Student</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator		1
340761.14 5966615.51	Cussen Park Tatura	<i>Turtle Talk</i>	Education	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	137
354699.83 5972109.82	KidsTown Mooroopna	<i>Nature Scripts Nature Squad Summer Party</i>	Wellbeing	Community	Material Provision	2	29
352940.21 5970792.99	Family Haven Mooroopna	<i>Nurture Nature at Family Haven</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Co-facilitator	2	44
354056.47 5970106.86	Various - Gemmill Swamp, Watt Rd, Broken River Drive, Tom Collins Drive	<i>Community Clean Up Australia Day</i>	Clean-Up	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	58
359264.40 5971966.49	Overlander Hotel, Shepparton	<i>Presentation to Shepparton South Rotary Club</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	15
355963.13 5972969.73	Princess Park	<i>Business Clean Up Australia Day</i>	Clean-Up	Other	Lead-facilitator	1.5	10
353530.98 5974635.27	Shepparton Weir	<i>SMULG Clean Up</i>	Clean-Up	Community	Co-facilitator	2	18
353579.14 5976752.55	Reedy Swamp	<i>ACE College - Active Volunteering</i>	Weeding	Education	Lead-facilitator	2.5	7
357859.90 5973548.20	Greater Shepparton Secondary College	<i>GSSC - Unit 3/4 Outdoor and Environmental Studies</i>	Education	Education	Material Provision	1	22
354769.00 5970697.11	Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton	<i>ACE College - Active Volunteering</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	2.5	6
357225.60 5969565.27	Broken River Drive	<i>ACE College - Active Volunteering</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	2.5	8
353573.00 5976961.44	Reedy Swamp	<i>Queer Nature Adventure to Reedy Swamp</i>	Wellbeing	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	9
355190.34 5976095.69	PitStop Shepparton	<i>PitStop Program - Nestbox Repairs</i>	Education	Education	Material Provision	5	45
355904.53 5971461.86	Victoria Park Lake	<i>ACE College Year 9 Science</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	8
356012.52 5973208.36	Princess Park	<i>Berry Street School Clean Up</i>	Clean-Up	Education	Guest	1.5	23
353573.00 5976961.44	Reedy Swamp	<i>Shepparton Christian College - Yr 9 Recreation and Health</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1	11
N/A	Various	<i>High School Work Placement Student</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator		1
356925.86 5969609.45	Broken River Drive bushland	<i>River's Palette: A Watercolour Workshop</i>	Art and Culture	Community	Lead-facilitator	3	25
356290.43 5972115.05	Victoria Park Lake	<i>Converge on the Goulburn</i>	Wellbeing	Community	Co-facilitator	7	750
355115.28 5971082.08	Shared pathway between Botanic Gardens and Victoria Park Lake	<i>River Tales and Trails</i>	Physical Activity	Community	Lead-facilitator	2	250
356096.19 5971348.41	Victoria Park Lake	<i>Zombie Fish Education Day</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	4	100
356348.94 5971912.36	Quality Hotel Parklake Shepparton	<i>Presentation to Conservation Regulator DEECA</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Agency	Lead-facilitator	1	60
355798.06 5971411.84	Tom Collins Drive	<i>Multicultural Preparedness Session</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Co-facilitator	2	30
354746.81 5970304.09	Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton	<i>Botanic Gardens Open Day</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Co-facilitator	4	200
352130.97 5972762.85	JA Douglas Reserve Mooroopna	<i>Mooroopna Primary School and Frank R. Puller Children's Centre</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	5.5	132
352229.44 5956449.68	Arcadia Fish Hatchery	<i>Get Hooked on Fishing 2025</i>	Awareness/Engagement	Community	Co-facilitator	4	175
350640.74 5973454.41	Archers Field, Mooroopna	<i>St Mary's Mooroopna PS and Orrvale PS OTPC</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	5	211
354638.28 5967268.28	Sevens Creeks Kialla	<i>Wilmot Rd PS</i>	Planting	Education	Lead-facilitator	5	229
382083.01 5978826.01	Perdita Street, Dookie	<i>Dookie PS</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1.5	9
359338.90 5981580.98	Pony Paddock Park, Congupna	<i>Congupna PS x 2 sessions</i>	Education	Education	Lead-facilitator	1.5	54
ENGAGEMENT EVENTS SUMMARY		NUMBER OF EVENTS	CATEGORY	TARGET AUDIENCE	ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	HOURS	ATTENDEES
		77	5 Art and Culture 19 Awareness/Engagement 0 Canoeing 4 Clean-Up 20 Education 22 Planting 2 Physical Activity 0 Spotlight 1 Tourism 2 Weeding 6 Wellbeing	31 Community 39 Education 6 Agency	51 Lead-facilitator 13 Co-facilitator 5 Material Provision 3 Guest	215	5480

Website Metrics (Measured at end of month)

Month	Jul-23	August	September	October	November	December	Jan-24	February	March	April	May	June	AVERAGE
No. of sessions	436	500	422	482	448	268	397	333	396	404	383	318	399
No. of users	344	367	331	378	379	230	317	293	333	322	311	249	321

Social Media Metrics (Measured at start of month)

	Jul-23	August	September	October	November	December	Jan-24	February	March	April	May	June	INCREAS E	GROWT H
Facebook	1691	1707	1725	1738	1755	1766	1791	1800	1815	1856	1883	1906	215	12.71%
Instagram	617	623	635	639	654	657	661	667	671	683	698	703	86	13.94%

Media Mentions

Article title	Media	Date
Picture this: A fun-filled weekend in Shepparton (Bird Bingo)	Shepparton News	27/06/2024
Bird Bingo Radio Interview (BirdLife Murray Goulburn)	ABC Radio	2/07/2024
Branching out to help nature	Shepparton News	8/07/2024
Protecting the heat and soul of our community: The RiverConnect initiative	Shepparton News	10/07/2024
Protecting the heat and soul of our community: The RiverConnect initiative	Riverine Herald	10/07/2024
ReConnection to the Rover	Shepparton News	15/07/2024
Faces of the GV - Emily Lange	Shepparton News	17/07/2024
Roots of joy: Shepparton community comes together to plant for the future	Shepparton News	29/07/2024
Discover nature at immersive camp	Shepparton News	12/08/2024
RiverConnect Caring for Nature Camp (5 minute Radio Interview)	ABC Shepparton	14/08/2024
Whats On - Cache Me If You Can	Shepparton News	28/08/2024
Geocaching (5 minute Radio Interview)	ABC Shepparton	1/09/2024
Wander at the Wetlands (5 minute radio interview)	ABC Shepparton	7/09/2024
What's On - Breakfast with the Birds	Shepparton News	23/10/2024
Breakfast with the Birds (20 second promotion)	96.9 Radio	24/10/2024
Making 'cents' of spending	Shepparton News	31/10/2024
Turtles on the move - Yvette Williams (5 minute radio interview)	ABC Shepparton	21/11/2024
Year of the Wing's peaceful end	Country news	13/12/2024

Article title	Media	Date
Tatura talks turtles	Shepparton News	9/01/2025
What's on during the summer holidays - Turtle Talk	Shepparton News	10/01/2025
Tatura talks turtles	Riverine Herald	13/01/2025
Turtle Talk - Yvette Williams (5 minute radio interview)	ABC Shepparton	14/01/2025
Gallery Slow and steady stole the show at Turtle Talk	Shepparton News	15/01/2025
Critically endangered birds call north-east wetlands home	Country News	7/02/2025
Save the date! (Converge on the Goulburn)	The Shepparton Adviser	19/03/2025
River Tales and Trails more than just a walk in the park	Dairy News Australia	4/04/2025
River Tales and Trails more than just a walk in the park	Shepparton News	4/04/2025
River Tales and Trails more than just a walk in the park	Shepparton News	7/04/2025
Your guide to an action-packed school holidays in Shepparton	Shepparton News	7/04/2025
Even more holiday fun	Shepparton News	15/04/2025
Zombie Fish' are making waves with big comeback	Shepparton News	24/04/2025
Zombie Fish Education Day (5 minute radio interview)	ABC Statewide Drive	28/04/2025
Victoria's \$24 million plan to revive platypus populations	Shepparton News	18/06/2025
Platy Patch (interview of Carolyn Nigro GB CMA)	WIN News	19/06/2025
Shepparton waterways to be rehabilitated for platypus to thrive	The Goulburn Valley News	19/06/2025
TOTAL		35 items

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Alignment

Strategic Direction	Strategic Actions			Annual Targets	Progress							
					22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27			
ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY	– Enhance opportunities for young people	– Continue learnings about the river	– Engage diverse community	– Engage 4,000 people in river environment activities	Engaged 5,769 people in 89 activities	Engaged 5,154 people in 115 activities	Engaged 5,480 in 77 activities					
				– Support at least five Traditional Owner-led projects and events	Dharnya Day, 2 Flats Walks, Paint by Nature, Turtle Muster, Rumbalara Nangarna Homework Club, Rumbalara Tree Planting Day	Elders Luncheons, Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club launch, An Elder's Stories, Wulumbarra Marrin-Bidja Cultural Burn Workshop, Flats Signage Extension	Dharnya Day, Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club session at Youth Camp, Cultural Education Primary School Session by Aunty Hilda from Parks Victoria, River's Palette watercolour workshop, invites to 3 upcoming TO-led events					
INSPIRE THE EDUCATION SECTOR	– Enable educational participation		– Strengthen connection with education sector	– 50% of Greater Shepparton schools have at least one class engaging in the river environment annually, involving 1,000 students	46% (17 of the 35 schools engaged – not including 4 kindergartens, 1 homework club and 1 home-school group 1,816 students engaged	43% (18/42 schools engaged - not including 2 kindergartens) 1,513 students engaged	42% (19/45 schools engaged - not including two early learning) 1,644 students engaged					
				– One tertiary education project in the RiverConnect area	No tertiary project	PhD Project - Community Priorities in the Goulburn-Broken River Catchment	PhD project investigating 'Embracing Complex Water Futures Together' Work placement students - 80-hour University and 2x 40-hour Secondary					
IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING	– Share health and wellbeing benefits		– Link health and wellbeing to nature	– Deliver one health and wellbeing project that shares the benefits of nature	Goulburn Valley Health joins the RiverConnect partnership and assigns IAC representative	Supported the GV Health headspace Shepparton Nature Scripts pilot program	River Tales and Trails pilot event in April school holidays headspace Shepparton collaboration for Converge on the Goulburn "The Burrow" Youth Chill Space					
				– Monitor increased usage of shared pathways using trail counters	79 daily average visits (impacted by faulty trail counter and flood impacts)	93 daily average visits	91 daily average visits					
ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND CARE OF THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT	– Nurture stewardship culture	– Facilitate opportunities to care	– Understand and realise flexible and inclusive water access	– Enable sustainable on-going management	– Connect the path network	– Support Traditional Owner Connection	– Revegetate 1 Ha area and remove priority weeds in 0.7 Ha area	1.58 Ha revegetation 3.95 Ha weed removal	1.62 Ha revegetation 81.71 Ha weed mapped, 0 Ha removed	2.03 Ha revegetation 0.77 Ha weed removed		
							– Create opportunities and spaces that people actively use	Explored alternative event locations during the flood impacts of October 2022	Invited to use Dunyak Moira and Arcadia Fish Hatchery as outdoor classrooms Monash Park Signage Project completion	Delivered Caring for Nature Youth Camp to build knowledge and open opportunities for young people in the environment Collaborated with GB CMA & Native Fish Australia to offer Zombie Fish Education Day to local primary schools with threatened fish release		
							– Continue to progress the RiverConnect Paths Master Plan	Land acquisition of Route 2 nearing completion	The Flats Signage Extension Project completion Route 2 land acquisition nearing completion and detailed designs to progress	Land acquisition of Route 2 completed, detailed design near completion		
SHOWCASE THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT	– Creatively promote RiverConnect		– Encourage eco-tourism		– Communicate accessibility of the river environment		– Create three promotional materials or campaigns	New event banners in the new Strategic Plan style New 'purposeful' promotional items New inclusion of RiverConnect events in Australian Heritage Festival 36 media mentions 1,962 social media followers	Introduction of World Rivers Day town entry signs RiverConnect River Access Map updated and reprinted Turtle education campaign reached over 5k people Monash Park Signage Project completed 63 media mentions 2,290 social media followers	Turtle education campaign reaching almost 24k people Bat education campaign reaching 2.4k people Rakali education campaign reaching 1.2k people 35 media mentions 2,609 social media followers		
NURTURE PARTNERSHIPS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE	– Leverage RiverConnect partner involvement		– Explore a home for RiverConnect	– Maintain and build relationships with 50 groups and organisations	Maintained 48 partnerships Developed 2 new partnerships	Maintained 50 partnerships	Maintained 50 partnerships Developed 3 new partnerships					
				– Seek funding from government and 'non-traditional' sources consistent with RiverConnect aspirations	Application for Outdoor Victoria's Nature Stewards Program (unsuccessful)	Flood recovery funding for Biodiversity Impact Assessment of Boulevard Bush Reserve Successful \$6,400 DEECA grant for Caring for Nature Youth Camp	\$1.62M for design 24/25 and construct 25/26 of Route 2 secured from Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions - Hub Cities Grant. Successful support for Caring for Nature Youth Camp - \$3,000 flood recovery funds, in-kind provision swags from Giz-A-Break, in-kind staff time from GB CMA & Council Successful GB CMA application for Victorian Government - Statewide Urban Rivers Platypus Recovery Initiative "The Platy Patch Project" - community engagement component to be delivered by RiverConnect					

2. Acknowledgement of Fund Source

- a. Have you acknowledged the fund source (eg. State Government, Australian Government, etc.)?
Yes/~~No~~ (please circle)

3. Spatial reporting and documentation

- a. The outputs reported in the table above are spatially recorded, reported and provided through:
- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Online GB CMA mapping system | Yes/ No (please circle) |
| ESRI File | Yes/ No (please circle) |

Please see attached files

- b. All documents prepared and/or published as part of the project, including those not publicly released (i.e. technical reports and specifications), attached?
Yes/~~No~~ (please circle)

4. Comments on delivery of each project

- a. Overall comments on project progress:

RiverConnect engaged 5,480 people in 77 events/activities including 1,644 students from 19 schools and 2 early learning centres across the year. The program was featured in 35 media items, including 9 radio interviews, and is followed by a total of 2,609 people on social media (increase of 12% from FY23-24). RiverConnect also established three new partnerships whilst maintaining partnerships with an existing 50 groups and organisations to achieve shared objectives from the RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

Council successfully secured flood recovery funding to remove priority weeds such as Noogoora Burr, Pattersons Curse, Bathurst Burr, Box Elder, Ash Trees, Spear Thistle, Blackberries, Caltrop and Nightshade from 10 sites across the RiverConnect area. A total area of approximately 175 Ha was covered including the 81.72 Ha previously mapped through the Biodiversity Impact Assessments. RiverConnect also worked with Secondary students, many completing their Certificate II in Active Volunteering, to perform manual weed removal activities across an additional 0.77 Ha area. Targets for revegetation were exceeded through partnership with Councils' One Tree Per Child Program with a 2.03Ha area restored with indigenous grasses, groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

The formal land acquisition for Yanha Gurti shared path Route 2 (Gemmill's Swamp to KidsTown) has been completed with detailed design nearing completion. Plans to construct in FY25/26 remain in place through Greater Shepparton City Council's capital budget with funding through the Victorian Government's Hub City Support Package Grant. A seating and signage component will accompany the path project.

- b. Key achievements and highlights:

- Empowered Deakin University 80-hour work placement student, Ruby, to step into the role of Acting RiverConnect Project Officer during the month of February whilst the incumbent was on leave. During her time, Ruby flourished at community events, created engaging social media content and networked with organisations within natural resource management.



Figure 2. Ruby looking turtle-ly pleased after co-hosting the Turtle Talk event in Tatura.

- Successfully designed, planned and delivered the RiverConnect 'Caring for Nature Camp' - a two-night immersive camp, targeted to young adults, designed to educate on environmental issues, create positive core memories and inspire continued contribution to nature. The camp utilised \$6,393 received from Environmental Volunteering Hume Pilot through Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, \$3,000 from the Australian and Victorian Governments in response to the 2022 flood event, and in-kind support including swag equipment loan from Giz-A-Break and staff time from Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network (GMLN) and Greater Shepparton City Council.
 - o Participants enjoyed building new connections with other likeminded people, expanding their knowledge through a diverse range of activities, and wholly connecting with nature outside of the busyness of everyday life. The structure of the camp enabled attendees to consider their own values and how they related to others in the space, their skills and new skills in development, issues in our region and solutions, both informed by our guest speakers and guided by group discussions. Their considerations for future action spanned from individual concepts to local and community impacts, and even to global aspirations.
 - o Increasing accessibility, RiverConnect created adjustments to ensure a mother could attend with her baby including adapting sleeping arrangements and enabling a hot protein breakfast.
 - o Attendees were aged 21-33 years old with connections to the local Goulburn Broken region. All attendees were surveyed prior to, and post, the camp experience. Notably they reported an average:
 - 29% increase in connection to nature
 - 28% increase in connections with environmental networks
 - 17% increase in capacity to take action for the environment
 - 55% increase in understanding of the Goulburn Broken catchment environment.



Figure 2-6. RiverConnect Caring for Nature Youth Camp participants soaking up local knowledge, stepping outside of comfort zones and connecting with themselves and nature in new ways.

- Driven by concern from Greater Shepparton City Council, the community and the Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) of RiverConnect, Council advocated to Parks Victoria regarding the reduction in Parks Victoria staff and financial resources for the Northern Hume – Shepparton region. This contributed to the re-establishment of the Ranger Team Leader Shepparton role and confirmation of 4 permanent Ranger positions, including one Designated Aboriginal Position.
- Hosted three successful community planting events in Mooroopna, Dookie and Murchison as part of outreach to small towns. 78 people enjoyed the activity with a resounding 47 people at the Mooroopna location alone.
- Supported Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare (SMULG) volunteers' 'Wasteland to Wetland' revegetation project at the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton. This project aimed to increase biodiversity alongside learning wetland-planting techniques; volunteers completed the project in November 2024.
- Welcomed representatives from the Australian Public Service Senior Executive Service Band 2 Leadership Program. With an aim to broaden their understanding of complex problems from the perspective of community, participants heard from RiverConnect including local environmental volunteers about:
 - o the beauty of Reedy Swamp Wildlife Reserve Shepparton and the impact of past decision making
 - o the environmental decline volunteers have witnessed locally over the past 50 years
 - o the power of volunteers and the ageing volunteer challenge
 - o the risks of overreliance and burnout of volunteers (particularly for the environment) when not resourced or funded adequately
 - o and the potential for partnership programs like RiverConnect to bring community and agency together.
- Hosted 'Rambling at Reedy', a primary school environmental education day for over 70 Bouchier Street Primary School Grade 3 and 4 students. Participating in a jam-packed activity rotation day, students learnt about the natural world in activities such as Mini Beasts with John and a biodiversity and bushwalk talk with Dan from Goulburn Murray Landcare Network (GMLN), waste education artwork creations with Hilary and Carissa from Greater Shepparton City Council, Cultural education with Auntie Hilda from Parks Victoria and an animal encounter with Graham from Turtles Australia.



Figure 7. The Mooroopna community out in full strength at their local community planting day.



Figure 8. Highlighting the power of volunteers to the Australian Public Service Senior Executive Service Band 2 Leadership Program participants.



Figure 9. A jam-packed activity rotation environmental education day out at Reedy Swamp for Bouchier Street Primary School Grade 3s & 4s.

- Welcomed facilitators from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) to host their second 'Biomimicry – Designed by Nature' primary school program in Greater Shepparton. Although originally planned to be delivered at the Australian Botanic Gardens, a thunderstorm forecast meant a quick pivot to deliver the program online. Katandra West and Guthrie Street Primary Schools participated in the day alongside Friends of the Australian Botanic Gardens volunteers and RiverConnect staff. Students learned the concept of 'biomimicry', where humans have observed nature and used these learnings to create grand designs all over the world. Using these concepts students came up with designs that mimicked the function of native Mistletoe plants. Planning for the RBGV's third Biomimicry program has been confirmed for the second half of 2025.

- Collaborated to deliver popular community events including 'National Tree Day' (Greater Shepparton City Council), 'Nature Photography' (Shepparton Camera Club), 'Wander at the Wetlands' (Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group), 'Breakfast with the Birds' (Birdlife Murray Goulburn), 'River Heritage Walk and Talk' (Shepparton Heritage Centre), 'Plants and Pollinators' (Kiwanis Sunrisers, Eden Edible Garden Design and Goulburn Murray Landcare Network), 'Awe-dventure at the Lake' (Find your Feathers) and more.



Figure 10. Inspiring a lifetime of turtle conservation with up close experiences at Turtle Talk in Tatura.

- Reimagined the SMULG volunteers partnership event to create 'Wander at the Wetlands'. Held at Reedy Swamp in the afternoon, the event was advertised in the Greater Shepparton Youth Festival and Activities in the Park. From one community participant amongst many SMULG volunteers at the Boulevard Bush Reserve Community Open Day in 2023, to a total of 37 participants at Wander at the Wetlands; the event was hugely successful and a fantastic showcase of the Reedy Swamp wetlands.

- Welcomed two secondary students for work experience: Chianne, a Year 11 student from Numurkah Secondary College over a 6-week period, and Alexine, a Year 10 student from Notre Dame College during the school holidays. Both students enjoyed meeting staff and rangers from Parks Victoria and Greater Shepparton City Council, with Chianne participating in planting sessions including packing, setting up, and unpacking materials, as well as engaging in Geocaching to deepen understanding of the sport. Alexine supported events led by RiverConnect, including planning, packing, setting up, and packing down event materials, contributed to social media advertising content, and took part in a private visit to Days Mill.



Figure 11. Something new every day for work experience student Alexine including a tour of historical site, Days Mill by Parks Victoria in the lead up to their popular public event.

- Assessed nest boxes previously installed through the RiverConnect education program to inform the distribution, replacement and installation of new nest boxes. 14 nest boxes were installed at ABGS for microbats, sugar, squirrel and feathertail gliders in collaboration with GMLN. An additional 35 nest boxes were distributed to Rushworth Field and Game to be installed along the Murchison Rail Trail. 40 nest boxes with missing back-boards along with additional timber were provided to the Pit Stop program for students to work on. 47 students from Shepparton ACE College, Mooroopna Primary School, Greater Shepparton Secondary College (GSSC), Banmira Specialist School (formerly Verney Road) and Nurtja (GSSC – learning support program) worked on the nest boxes and returned them ready for install. Greater Shepparton City Council's successful funding through the Flood Recovery Program will enable future installations across the Boulevard Bush Reserve, Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton, Broken River and Mooroopna Sandhills in the coming financial year.

- After a period of review in early 2024, the RiverConnect Education Program collated existing and new sessions into the categories of 'A Hollow is a Home', 'Waterbugs & Waterways' and 'Conservation Sessions', alongside material provision for self-guided sessions. All programs are designed to be held in the river environment and can be tailored to classes, year levels or specific sites.
 - 'A Hollow is a Home'
 - Outdoor and Environmental Studies students from Shepparton Christian College, Notre Dame College and Greater Shepparton Secondary College engaged in Walk and Talk sessions at the Boulevard Bush Reserve and Reedy Swamp Wildlife Reserve, these sessions offered students a chance to learn about the history of the site alongside the importance of revegetation to support habitat for wildlife.
 - Active Volunteering students from ACE College and Banmira Specialist School students painted nest boxes and helped with installation at the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton.
 - Participants from Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project's OLLY program and students from Banmira Specialist School enjoyed in bird and wildlife watching at Reedy Swamp.
 - 'Waterbugs and Waterways'
 - St Anne's College Outdoor Education students, ACE College Biology students and Dookie Primary School students learnt about our local river systems, where they start and finish and how aquatic macroinvertebrates can be an indicator of water quality.
 - 'Conservation Sessions'
 - Environmental conservation sessions for Year 10 & 11 students enrolled in a Cert II Active Volunteering provide an opportunity for students to increase their volunteer hours and learn about caring for our local environment. Students participate in revegetation; planting, weeding and guard and rubbish removal; habitat creation and installation; citizen science and vegetation monitoring including photo points. During 24/25 FY RiverConnect provided sessions for students from Greater Shepparton Secondary College, St Anne's College, Shepparton ACE College and Banmira Specialist School.
 - Material provision
 - Where suited, materials and equipment are provided for schools to borrow and perform self-guided sessions. As an example, Greater Shepparton Secondary College borrowed RiverConnect water testing kits for their Unit 3/4 Outdoor and Environmental Studies Students and Waterbug materials and lesson plans were provided and used by Guthrie Street Primary School at Reedy Swamp.
 - The opportunity to borrow and utilise materials has been a valuable option for schools, while still supporting RiverConnect's objectives of engaging students in the river environment.



Figure 12 (above). Guided "A Hollow is a Home" session by RiverConnect Education Officer for Congupna Primary School.

Figure 13 (below). Water quality investigations "Waterbugs and Waterways" with Dookie Primary School.



Figure 14 (above). ACE College checking out Reedy Swamp in its drying phase after setting up some photopoint monitoring for future revegetation comparisons.

- Designed 'River Tales and Trails' to build awareness of shared path connections and promote outdoor recreation for health and wellbeing. The pilot event invited community to walk, run, ride or roll and experience pop-up activities along a section of the shared path network. Activities occurred between the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton in Kialla and the Southern end of Tom Collins Drive/Victoria Park Lake.
 - o Through strategic alignment, 12 RiverConnect partners accepted the invitation to collaborate including Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project Pitstop Program, Parks Victoria, Forest Fire Management, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, headspace Shepparton, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Resilience in Recovery, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Goulburn Valley Environment Group, Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group, Friends of the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton and Greater Shepparton City Council's Environment Team.



Figure 15 (top left). Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare (SMULG) volunteers 'Bugging out by the water'.

Figure 16 (top centre). Forest Fire Management showing how to use firefighting equipment.

Figure 17 (top right). A hive of activity at the Confluence (meeting place of the two rivers) with Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and Parks Victoria.

Figure 18 (bottom left). Bike repair station with Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project's Pitstop Program.

Figure 19 (bottom centre). River love chalk messages with headspace Shepparton.

Figure 20 (bottom right). What goes in your emergency kit with Resilience in Recovery.

- Presented at the Conservation Regulator's Annual Conference in Shepparton, the event brought together staff from across the state – spanning operations, admin, licencing, strategy, capability and management. The Conservation Regulator works to protect Victoria's biodiversity and wildlife and support safe and sustainable use of public land. RiverConnect highlighted the program's success and impact across the last 20 years, celebrated the strength of partnerships and collaboration that have enabled this success, and acknowledged challenges as opportunities for growth and innovation. This followed previous and ongoing discussions between the Conservation Regulator and Council/RiverConnect on understanding local issues and working towards solutions (including education and enforcement) on the Illegal Firewood issues within the Regional and National Parks around Shepparton.

- Boosted local Clean Up Australia Day action by supporting several groups to organise and register their public community clean up event. Clean up groups included Rotary Club of Mooroopna and the Soroptimist International of Shepparton club targeting Watt Road Mooroopna, Rotary Club of Shepparton South targeting Tom Collins Drive Shepparton, the Friends of Gemmills Swamp working in Gemmill Swamp Mooroopna and the Caring for Country community clean up along the Broken River Kialla. Other clean ups including Berry Street School's Clean Up around Princess Park Shepparton and the RiverConnect Business Clean Up supported by Parks Victoria, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Department of Education, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network and Greater Shepparton City Council.
- Attended the 'Get Hooked on Fishing' hosted by new partner, Salvos North East Youth Services at the Arcadia Fish Hatchery. RiverConnect provided relevant engagement activities such as Giant Tiger Snakes and Fish Ladders, magnetic fishing game, fish art mobile creations, colouring and more to supplement the main fishing activity and YouTube celebrity, @robbiefishing.
- Invited to support the 'Multicultural Preparedness Session' which brought together diverse community members from Swahili, Hazaragi, and Arabic-speaking backgrounds to enhance awareness and readiness for natural disaster emergencies, particularly floods. Hosted by Resilience in Recovery and Wise Well Women in collaboration with SES, Council's Emergency Management and RiverConnect, the session provided essential information on emergency warnings, emergency kits, and response strategies, ensuring everyone—regardless of language or background—felt empowered to act in a crisis. Participants also learned about the local river system, gaining insights into how waterways shape the landscape and the unique wildlife that depends on them, including platypuses, waterbirds, and native fish.
- Reimagined 'The Burrow', a low-sensory chill space for young people at Converge on the Goulburn, in collaboration with headspace Shepparton. The youth space included nature sound headsets, beanbags, and art activities alongside a large taxidermy native animal display. Linking to Kaiela, the Goulburn River, the whole of community was invited to think about the river nearby and write messages of river love on a pinboard activity designed by young people from the headspace Shepparton YAC (Youth Advisory Committee).
- Participated in Stephanie Rosestone's PhD project investigating '[Embracing Complex Water Futures Together](#)' and supported her Shepparton Festival exhibition launch '[The Museum of Future Water Exhibition](#)' at the Mooroopna Education & Activity Centre (MEAC).



Figure 21 (above). Rubbish bags in hand, the Friends of Gemmill Swamp take part in Clean Up Australia Day.

Figure 22 (below). Working through language barriers to communicate flooding at the Multicultural Preparedness Session.



Figure 23. "The Burrow" youth chill space returns at Converge on the Goulburn.

- Raised community awareness of turtles, bats and rakali in our region through educational campaigns on social media. Many community members shared images and fond stories of the animals with the campaigns reaching over 26,500 people, fetching 52 comments and 99 shares.
- Collaborated with the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GB CMA) and Native Fish Australia (NFA) to support the translocation of two threatened small bodied native fish species from the 'Magnificent Six', the Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon and Southern Pygmy Perch, into Victoria Park Lake, Shepparton. RiverConnect, alongside the GB CMA, NFA, SMULV and Goulburn Murray Landcare Network hosted over 100 students from Shepparton East and Toolamba Primary Schools to take part in the “Zombie Fish Primary Education Day” including a rotation of environmental education activities and momentous fish release.



Figure 24 (left). Shared via the RiverConnect Facebook Group: community member Robbie Bechaz holding a Broadshell Turtle he helped cross the road.

Figure 25 (right). Off into its new home, Toolamba Primary School student releases the small bodied native fish into the Victoria Park Lake with the help of GB CMA Senior NRM Officer – River Health, Jason Mullins.

c. Challenges and issues faced that have directly impacted on project delivery in the reporting period and how these challenges and/or issues are going to be mitigated or addressed:

- Concern for Parks Victoria resourcing of the Shepparton region due to unconfirmed budget and structure announcements has remained a strong focus for Greater Shepparton City Council, the community and the Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) of RiverConnect.
 - Driven by this concern, Council advocated to Parks Victoria regarding the reduction in Parks Victoria staff and financial resources for the Northern Hume – Shepparton region. The RiverConnect IAC moved to support this advocacy. This advocacy supported Parks Victoria’s re-establishment of the Ranger Team Leader Shepparton role and confirmation of 4 permanent Ranger positions, including one Designated Aboriginal Position.
- The demand for RiverConnect services continues to grow which inevitably is constrained by the availability of two staff.
 - Prioritisation of impactful program outcomes remains a core focus with some requests from community and schools for support, facilitation and projects needing to be scheduled later or differently than originally planned.
- Prompted by an unexpected reduction in funding through the Victorian State Government EC6 funding tranche, a financial deficit was projected over the next 4 years of the RiverConnect program. This raised issues regarding the financial sustainability of the program.
 - Council worked with RiverConnect staff to scope the program under the predicted constraints, including the removal of underutilised assets. The resulting outcome was not sufficient to support community engagement.
 - The RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee discussed options to address this deficit including seeking financial contributions from partner organisations to maintain project delivery.
 - Following discussions on the impacts and constraints, the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority were able to successfully consolidate funds from EC5 to supplement the EC6 program and maintain the baseline community engagement activities.
 - Further funding investigations remain ongoing including the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority’s PlatyPatch project.

d. If previous mitigations have been identified in earlier reports, how successful have these been?

- The Committee of Management process remains ongoing with both Council and Parks Victoria senior management working actively to progress.
- The RiverConnect Education Officer role increasing from a 0.8 FTE to 1 FTE has lifted the capacity of the RiverConnect program to respond to educational demand. Staff continue to actively monitor workload pressures and priorities.

e. A statement about the Project's approach for, and progress towards, supporting aboriginal engagement and collaboration:

- Supported Yorta Yorta man and artist, Chris Walker to host 'River's Palette: a watercolour workshop in nature' as part of the Shepparton Art Festival. Attendees were invited to dip inspiration from the river water to make their artwork whilst sitting on the bank of the Broken River. There were two sessions led by Chris; one for all ages, and one for 12–25-year-olds which Chris supported a young person to facilitate.
- Celebrated Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation's Dharnya Family Day in July 2024 at Barmah with a collaborative display of activities in the newly renovated Dharnya Centre.
- Partnered with Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club to offer an immersive cultural fishing session at the Arcadia Fish Hatchery during the RiverConnect Caring for Nature Youth Camp.
- Maintained connections with Parks Victoria Interpretation, Information and Education Officer, Aunty Hilda to host a Cultural Education rotation as part of the 'Rambling at Reedy' multi-activity multi-Primary School Education Day.
- Invited to three upcoming First Nation-led events in 2025 including Yorta Yorta Aboriginal Corporation's Dharnya Day, Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Operative's Rumbalara Family Day and Ganbina's Year 8 Industry Tour.



Figure 26. Dipping inspiration from the Broken River at 'River's Palette: a watercolour workshop in nature'.




Figure 27 (left). A RiverConnect Caring for Nature Youth Camp participant waiting for a bite at the Arcadia Fish Hatchery.

Figure 28 (middle). RiverConnect partners in action at Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation's annual Dharnya Family Day. Pictured L-R: Patty and Dan Walker (Goulburn Murray Landcare Network), Emily Lange (RiverConnect), Alison White (RiverConnect), Bianca Cattanach-Firebrace (Greater Shepparton City Council), Chris Walker (Shepparton Art Museum), Lizzy Lewis (Goulburn Valley Water).

Figure 29 (right). Aunty Hilda holding an Emu egg and sharing cultural knowledge with students at the 'Rambling at Reedy' multi-activity multi-Primary School Education Day.

Organisation declaration:

We declare that we are authorised representatives* of the recipient organisation, that the information given on this form is complete and correct and that expenditure of moneys paid under the financial agreement have been solely expended upon the project and in accordance with the terms of the Agreement and Conditions.

Name (please print) Fiona Le Gassick			Name (please print) Geraldine Christou		
Position in organisation:	Chief Executive Officer	Phone: 5832 9700	Position in organisation:	Director Sustainable Development	Phone: 5832 9700
Signature			Signature		
Date	17 July 2025		Date	18 July 2025	

* Declaration to be signed by the Organisation’s two responsible officers other than the Project Manager (for example, the Organisation’s President / Secretary or CEO and the Organisation’s Treasurer or Chief Finance Officer).