



RiverConnect

Annual Report 2012 – 2013

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



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

1. GENERAL

Key Achievements

- o The Flats Interpretative signage
- o Goulburn and Broken River Access Map - Shepparton and Mooroopna
- o Extensive Community Activities through the 'Activities in the Park' program
- o Australian National University (ANU) Art Exhibition Celebratory Event " Water Water Aesthetic Response to the Goulburn catchment"

Meetings

- o RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee
- o Education Working Group
- o Land Managers Working Group
- o Aboriginal Action Group
- o Communications Working Group

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

Terms of Reference for each group was reviewed in June 2013

The Aboriginal Action group has not had a Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation appointed chair and has therefore not met this financial year however most members remain interested and engaged.

Both project officers meet fortnightly with their department – Sustainability and Environment, where they report on day to day functions and activities.

Staff Changes

- Project Officer was on Maternity leave July - Dec 2012
- Current staffing
 - o RiverConnect Project Officer
 - o RiverConnect Education Project Officer

Events/Conferences/Training

Both project officers attended various trainings and conferences.

Some included:

- Native Vegetation Guide Launch – Sept 2012
- International RiverSymposium Conference – Oct 2012
- Biodiversity Research Forum – Nov 2012
- National Apology Breakfast – Feb 2013
- SLAP Tomorrow – A wake up call – June 2013
- Biodiversity Across Borders Conference June 2013



RIVERCONNECT

Connecting the Community to the River



RiverConnect creates a vibrant, more cohesive community through developing a strong sense of belonging and connection to our river environs.

This is achieved by understanding and enhancing the environmental, spiritual, cultural, aesthetic, recreational and economic value of the Goulburn and Broken rivers, floodplain and wetland areas.

RiverConnect works in partnership with local Indigenous and Environment groups - a multi agency approach.

ACTION PROGRAMS AND OBJECTIVES

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.

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 redgum forest environments.

Connecting Aboriginal People

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

Connecting Education

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

Communications and Consultation

To provide information to the community to support the achievement of the overall RiverConnect objectives, and allow the community to influence the development of the RiverConnect strategic plan.

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.

For more information visit www.riverconnect.com.au

Or contact the RiverConnect Project Officer at Greater Shepparton City Council on (03)5832 9700



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Poster developed for the International RiverSymposium Conference, Melbourne 8 – 11 Oct 2012

2. RIVERCONNECT STRATEGIC PLAN

CONNECTING COMMUNITY

- **Greater Shepparton On the Move 'Activities in the Park' Program** October 2012 – March 2013
 - **Breakfast with the Birds Tassicker Block** (Landcare event) – 18 Nov. 18 participants. Mike Kerr and Don Roberts from BirdLife Australia lead walk. 8am walk. 9 am breakfast.
 - **Canoeing on the Goulburn** with River Country Adventours. 2.5 hrs. Rafferty Bend to Daintons Bridge (10.4 km) 22 participants.
 - **Breakfast with the Birds Gemmills Swamp** – 15 Dec. 27 participants. Mike Kerr and Don Roberts lead walk. 8am walk. 9 am breakfast.
 - **Breakfast with the Birds Reedy Swamp** – 19 Jan. 35 participants. Mike Kerr and Don Roberts lead walk. 8am walk. 9am breakfast.
 - **Come Try Canoe** – 26 Jan and 2 Feb, 83 participants. River Country Adventours contracted to lead these events. Tours departed Daintons Bridge and paddled to either Stuart Reserve or Jordans Bend.
 - **Fishing in the Park** – 26 Jan, 21 Feb, 230 participants. Hosted a stall showcasing RiverConnect and Victoria Park Lake.
 - **Guided Bus Tour** – 11 March, 17 participants. Toured RiverConnect project area. Guides included Dennis Patterson and Leon Saunders. Afternoon tea at Gemmills Swamp.



Photos: Participants at the 'Breakfast with the Birds' events - Tassicker Block (now Boulevard Bush Reserve) and Gemmills Swamp

- **'Art along the River' Classes** with Artist Glenda Cornell from Cockatoo Island Artist Retreat, Nathalia.
 - **Seniors Month- October:** Vic Park Lake, Jordans Bend & Reedy Swamp (1, 15, 22 Oct) – 18 participants.
 - **Shepparton Art Festival - March:** Tom Collins Dve and Jordans Bend (2, 3, 4 March) – 23 participants
- **ANU Art Exhibition** - *"Water Water Aesthetic Responses to the Goulburn Broken Catchment"* was an exhibition of visual art, music and architecture work by students from ANU and RMIT and conducted in conjunction with the RiverConnect program as a RiverConnect Arts project. The exhibition was held from 6 September to 14 October at two locations and received positive feedback from partners, agencies and individuals. A celebratory event was held on 25 September to explain the exhibition, thank community participants and outline the ANU/RMIT connection with RiverConnect project. Approximately 65 people attended including students, guests and staff.

➤ Spotlight Walks

Total for 2012-13: 12 walks, 6 cancelled 185 participants.

- **Jordans Bend** - 10 walks lead. 6 cancelled due to rain, flooding or wind. 161 participants. Sightings: 11 Squirrel Gliders, 2 sugar gliders, Brush-tailed possums, bats, Tawny frogmouths.
- **Botanic Garden Site** (15 Nov & 22 Jan) with Wendy (GM Landcare Network), David Chew (Friends of the Botanic Garden) + Friends of the Botanic Garden members (on Jan walk) Sightings: 2 squirrel gliders, brush tailed possums, owls.
- **Practise Walks (looking for new sites)** – Tom Collins Dve, Broken River Drive (April, May) with Wendy D'Amore and David Chew.



Image: Spotlight Walks Flyer for Sept – Dec 2012

- **KidsFest** - 22-23 Sept - plant give-away (440); Landcare Nature table; Snakes and Ladders game; Planted Common Everlasting, Spreading Eutaxia & Bluebells in garden bed under water tank at Kidstown.
- **Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton** – Developments to the former Kialla tip site continue to progress with the northern end of the mound being planted to reflect the Goulburn Valley region from the air.
- **Twilight Stroll**
 - 19 October: River Quiz for walkers - 27 entrants with GREAT responses; Snakes and Ladders game; brochures.
 - 15 March: Scavenger Hunt and questionnaire – 161 entrants with 36 responses to survey

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- **Youth Week Canoe and Guided Walk event** – 10 April. Daintons Bridge to Jordans Bend. 21 Participants mainly between ages of 13 to 25. Followed up with a guided walk and a BBQ at Word and Mouths reach, Jaycee Park.
 - **Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton** – Developments to the former Kialla tip site continue to progress with the northern end of the mound being planted to reflect the Goulburn Valley region from the air.

CONNECTING ENVIRONMENT

- **Boulevard Bush Reserve**
 - **Flora and Fauna Assessment** for Tassicker block- Shepparton. Prepared by Integrated Catchment Services Pty Ltd. 10 October. The report from this survey will be used to guide works on the property.
 - **Management Statement** – April. Formed with the Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group and Greater Shepparton City Council to enable on-ground works to progress whilst a management plan is developed.
 - Formal naming to **Boulevard Bush Reserve** – June
- **RiverConnect Proposed Path Extensions** – Project Officer held stakeholder and GSCC staff meetings regarding the extension of the existing path network as outlined in the RC Strategic Plan. An Expression of Interest form was sent to Regional Development Victoria seeking funding for project planning. It is anticipated this project will progress significantly in the 2013/2014 financial year.
- **Shepparton Weir** – Grant money held by Goulburn Broken CMA. Parks Vic doing on-ground works. Shepparton High VCAL group planted natives (*Dillwynia cinerascens*, *Acacia acinacea* and *Acacia Implexa*) along the river bank south of the fish ladder in August/ Sept. Parks Victoria undertook some heavy machinery track works in August and further work in February. Further works and a launch event will be considered later in 2013.

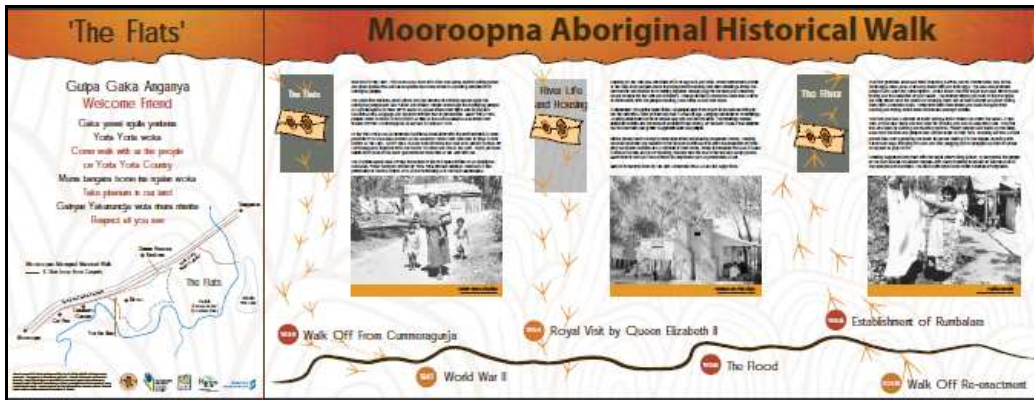


Photos: Left – Shepparton Weir parking area prior to upgrade. Right – Shepparton Weir parking area upgraded February 2013

CONNECTING ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

- **Aboriginal Action Group** - Chairperson from Yorta Yorta stepped down in June 2012 due to work commitments. A new representative was not appointed until June 2013.
- **Flats Signage** – The Flats signage was launched in May 2013. The event saw over 65 people attend, hearing recollections from Yorta Yorta Elders. Directional bollards have been installed to continue to loop the Flats walk, as outlined in the Walk in Greater Shepparton Booklet.

The large sign located at the entrance to The Flats walk:



- **Goulburn River Valley Tourism - Flats Walk** – As part of Goulburn River Valley Tourism's Volunteer Guides 2013 Summit, Leon Saunders guided over 20 volunteers on a walk of The Flats. There has been further discussion to incorporate The Flats into the existing guided walk program ran through the Visitor Information Centre.

CONNECTING EDUCATION

➤ Adopt-a-Reach

Student Visits:

Activities along the River (not including VCAL): 10 schools, 1 tertiary; 1067 new students; 1300.5 contact hours.

School	Year Level	Date	Theme	Activity	Location	Students	length	student hours
Shepparton High School	Year 8	16-Jul-12	Reach Out to your River	Biodiversity/ human Impact	Shepparton Weir/ Tassie	13	1	13
Shepparton High School	Year 8	16-Jul-12	Reach Out to your River	Biodiversity/ human Impact	Shepparton Weir/ Tassie	20	1	20
Shepparton High School	Year 8	18-Jul-12	Reach Out to your River	Biodiversity/ human Impact	Shepparton Weir/ Tassie	33	1	33
Shepparton High School	Year 8	19-Jul-12	Reach Out to your River	Biodiversity/ human Impact	Shepparton Weir/ Tassie	12	1	12
Shepparton High School	Year 8	20-Jul-12	Reach Out to your River	Biodiversity/ human Impact	Shepparton Weir/ Tassie	43	1	43
Bourchier St / Dhurringile Rd	Year 5-6	27-Jul-12	Natures Poetry Pathway	Poetry Pathway Opening	Eastbank	30	1	30
Bourchier Street Primary School	Grade 5	3-Aug-12	Multicultural class	Planting	Princess Park	15	1	15
Shepparton High School	Year 8	22-Aug-12	Big Dig	Soil / bug collection	Shepparton Weir	18	1	18
Shepparton High School	Year 8	27-Aug-12	Big Dig	Soil / bug collection	Shepparton Weir	18	0.5	9
LaTrobe University	Uni	6-Sep-12	Tour	Tour of the River area	Shepparton/ Mooroopna	6	1.5	9
Undera Primary School	All	10-Sep-12	Spring Festival	planting Dodonaea / Squirrel Glider talk	At school	30	0.5	15
St Brendans Primary School	Prep-2	12-Oct-12	Caring for the Enviro	Walk and Talk/Lanies Twister/Johns Invertebrates	Reedy Swamp	175	1	175
Guthrie Street Primary School	Gr 3/4	24-Oct-12	WW - Fabulous Fish Show	MacroInvertebrates + other sessions	at schools	x	x	x
Grahamvale Primary School	Yr 5/6	24-Oct-12	WW - Fabulous Fish Show	MacroInvertebrates + other sessions	at schools	x	x	x
Various	Various	31-Oct-12	Shepparton Youth Sustainability	Mine: Story of a catchment activity	Mooroopna Hall	x	x	x
St Brendans Primary School	Yr 3-4	7-Nov-12	Endangered Species	Nocturnal Story/Walk&Talk/Snakes&Ladder	Reedy Swamp	150	1.5	225
St Brendans Primary School	Yr 5-6	9-Nov	Ecology of Reedy Swamp	A-Z / Bird calls / Walk and talk	Reedy Swamp	140	1	140
St Brendans	Yr prep-2	24-May-13	sustainability and Water	Water saving / snakes and ladders	Reedy Swamp	100	1	100
St Lukes	Yr 5/6	28-May-13	Pest vs Rest	Bugs/plant ID/ Bush Stone Curlew/ poetry	Reedy Swamp	50	4	200
Guthrie St	Yr 5/6	28-May-13	Pest vs Rest	Bugs/plant ID/ Bush Stone Curlew/ poetry	Reedy Swamp	39	4	156
Wilmot Road	Yr 3-6	25-Jun-13	Water bugs & Environment	Bugs/ water bugs/ Walk and Talk/ Birds	Broken River Drive	70	0.5	35

➤ VCAL:

Met at RiverConnect 'Reaches' Weekly: 5 schools, 135 new students, 773 contact hours.

Semester 2, 2012: Notre Dame College (Reedy Swamp), Shepparton High (Shepparton Weir), Wanganui Park S.C (Jordans Bend).

Semester 1, 2013: Notre Dame College, Berry Street School (Young's Bend), McGuire College (Broken River Drive) & Wanganui Park S.C.

Activities included: Orientation, GPS Tracking and weed/feature mapping, Biodiversity audit, site clean-up, Plant ID, picnic table restoration, nest box installation, Indigenous Ranger talk, Bus tour of the RiverConnect area, water sampling, fencing, bird watching, fire management, Flats Walk, Rumbalara Tour, local fishing and revegetation.

Interschool: Notre Dame and Wanganui Park had a combined Indigenous session with Parks Vic Rangers Hilda and Greta at Jordans Bend on 14 March.

➤ **Other:**

- **Snakes and Ladders** 3m x 3m game delivered – Sept 2012 (see images). Used at KidsFest (Sept), Twilight Stroll (Oct) and St Brendan's field day at Reedy Swamp (Nov '12, May '13).



RiverConnect Snakes and Ladders large size board game for school days and community events

- **Undera Primary School Spring Festival** – planting Dodonaea / Squirrel Glider talk - 10 Sept
- **Water Week Fabulous Fish Show** (24 Oct) Fabulous Fish show @ Guthrie St P.S & Grahamvale Primary School - Lead macro-invertebrate session all day.
- **Shepparton Youth Sustainability Forum** (31 October) – lead a 'Story of a Catchment' session (1hr)

➤ **Pest vs Rest / Bug Blitz 2012:**

Nature Poetry Pathway Walk and Morning tea, July 2012 - Dhurringile and Bouchier St Primary School senior students. A celebratory event was held in the Shepparton Art Museum foyer where the student's poetry (developed during the Pest vs. Rest field trip at Reedy Swamp in May) was displayed. Six pieces of work were selected for the Poetry Pathway along the pavement in front of the Shepparton Art Museum. These were on display until February 2013 and were well received by community. Thank you to BugBlitz for their contribution to the event.



Some examples of the students poetry and the introductory pavement piece showing Michael Polan and students and Reedy Swamp

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- **Pest vs Rest 2013:** Tuesday 28 May, Year 5 / 6 Students from two Shepparton primary schools spent a day at Reedy Swamp learning about the natural environment for the annual RiverConnect and Bug Blitz Trust - Pest versus the Rest day. 89 students from St Luke's and Guthrie Street Primary Schools participated in several activities to increase their understanding on the threats to our natural Australian Environment.



Photos: Students at the Pest vs Rest Field day at Reedy Swamp on 28 May 2013 hunting for bugs with John Caldwell (BugBlitz) and studying plants with Jaye Caldwell (DPI).

- **Tertiary:**

- **La Trobe University** (Environment Club) – Bus tour of RiverConnect area on 6 Sept. Spoke to two groups of students at the university on 4 Oct. They expressed interest in looking after the Boulevard Bush Block. With student turn over, this didn't continue into 2013.
- **Berry Street:** joined the VCAL program in Semester 1 2013 and started activities at their reach, Young's Bend. In Term 2 they broadened their focus to the whole river environment travelling as far as Barmah, utilizing agency staff as guest speakers.

- **Equipment loan:**

- **RiverConnect Equipment is available for loan to school and community groups upon request.**
 - **The Equipment Trailer, Binoculars and Spotlights** were loaned out to a Landcare group, VCAL class, and WaterWatch respectively in 2013.
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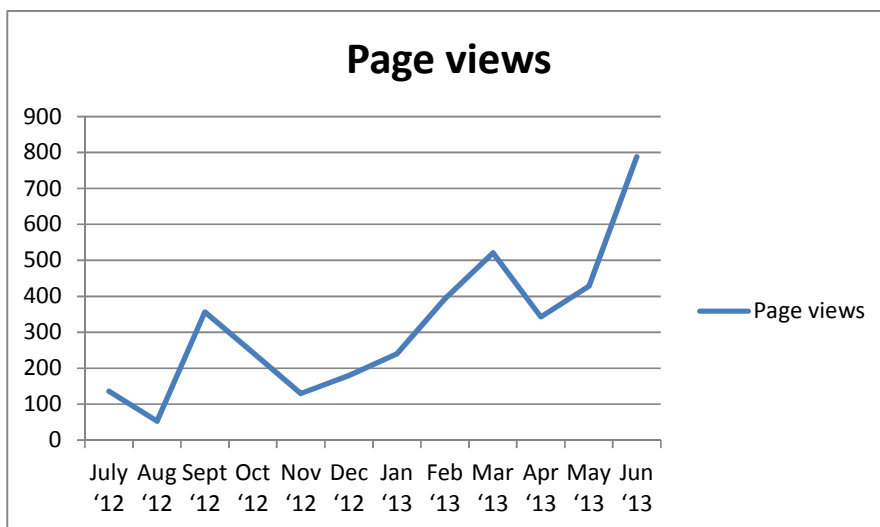
COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

➤ **RiverConnect Website** – www.riverconnect.com.au

- Google Analytics – 2012-2013.

Table: Summary Table Google Stats

Month	Page views	Unique page views	Avg. Time on page	Entrances	Bounce Rate %	% Exit
Jul-12	136	103	1:15	40	47.5	29.41
Aug-12	53	49	0:59	30	83.33	56.60
Sep-12	356	207	1:30	77	45.45	21.63
Oct-12	243	167	2:15	77	54.55	31.69
Nov-12	130	101	1:19	65	70.77	50.00
Dec-12	180	127	1:03	46	47.83	25.56
Jan-13	240	166	1:19	69	44.93	28.75
Feb-13	393	188	1:08	63	44.44	16.03
Mar-13	521	307	1:34	112	52.68	21.50
Apr-13	343	218	1.01	94	67.02	27.41
May-13	428	279	1.03	133	53.38	31.07
Jun-13	788	444	1:12	165	55.15%	20.94



Graph: RiverConnect Website page views from July 2012 to June 2013

- A steady increase of page views over this financial year
- Cultural Section has been updated to include information regarding The Flats and the signage located on site. A QR code links people from The Flats signage to the RiverConnect website for further information on Yorta Yorta servicemen in International Wars.
- The Education section has been edited to include a list of all RiverConnect schools, including VCAL schools. It is intended that this section will become more interactive with school groups in the near future.
- RiverConnect is linked to and from a number of partner and stakeholder websites.

➤ **RiverConnect E-newsletters:**

- December 2012
- March 2013
- June 2013

View RiverConnect newsletters: <http://www.riverconnect.com.au/about/news/newsletters>

➤ **Advertising/ publicity:**

- **RiverSymposium Poster** and power point poster for conference in October (see image on page 3)
- **Articles in Greater Shepparton Official Tour Guide Newsletter** – Aug, Nov 2012, Jan, May 2013.
- **Presentations:**
 - **Friends of the Botanic Gardens** (16 Oct) Guest Speaker with Wendy D'Amore about wildlife in the area.
 - RiverConnect Guest speaker (Bruce Wehner) at the **Regional Achievement and Community Awards** 2013 Launch event – 12 June 2013
- **Goulburn River Valley Tourism Holiday Planner** – submitted quarter page feature on Goulburn and Broken Rivers and surrounding floodplains within Shepparton and Mooroopna.
- **Goulburn and Broken River Access** – Shepparton and Mooroopna. The fold out A3 sized access map highlights key areas of interest and various activities that can be undertaken in Shepparton and Mooroopna's rivers and floodplains.

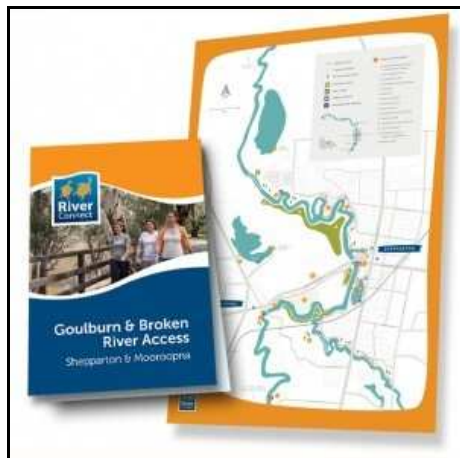


Image: RiverConnect Access map for the Goulburn Broken Rivers

- **Murray River Guardian (Parks Vic)** – submitted article for Summer edition (Aug)
- **New Spotlight Flyer format** for Spring into Biodiversity Edition Sept-Dec 2012 (see image under 'Connecting Community')

➤ **Media**

Table: RiverConnect Media - 10 Newspaper articles, 1 radio session, 2 news stories.

Date	Topic	Title	Media
31-Jul-12	Pest vs. Rest	Following in poet's footsteps	Shepparton News
8-Sep-12	Spotlight Walks	Six Reasons to Visit Shepparton	The Saturday Age
9-Oct-12	ANU	Walking the Solar System	SN
12 & 13 Dec 2012	Breaky with the Birds	Breaky with the Birds	3SR FM (Mandy)
13-Dec-12	Breaky with birds	Birds of a feather flock together	WOW- Shepp News
14-Jan-13	Canoe Come and Try	x	WIN TV
5-Feb-13	Canoe Come and Try	Perfect time for paddle	Shepparton News
1-Mar-13	Clean Up Australia Day	x	WeekNights
2-Mar-13	Clean Up Australia Day	Help Sought	Shepparton News
4-Mar-13	Clean Up Australia Day	Clean Sweep Strikes Swamp	Shepparton News
11-Apr-13	Canoeing	Youths enjoy natural assets	Shepparton News
18-Apr-13	Land	Golf club seeking to buy land to expand	Shepparton News
3-May-13	The Flats	Pioneers' story told	Shepparton News