



# 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

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## Annual Progress Report

For project: RiverConnect

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

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### Organisation Details:

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|--|--|--|
| 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:<br>(please circle) See <b>Schedule 4A</b> for details | DEECA Output Database in<br><b>ESRI File</b> Geodatabase<br>Format | GB CMA Online Project<br>Management System (enQUIRE) |
| Reporting contact:   | Alison Brett   |  |
| Contact name and email address:  | (03) 5832 9714<br>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 <sup>1</sup>           | \$15,000         | \$15,000         |
| <b>Total employment Costs (ex GST)</b>          | <b>\$213,354</b> | <b>\$213,354</b> |
| Community Project/Program Delivery <sup>2</sup> | \$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 <sup>3</sup>                   | -\$500           | -\$500           |
| <b>Total Operating Costs (ex GST)</b>           | <b>\$26,946</b>  | <b>\$24,222</b>  |
| <b>Total (ex GST)<sup>5</sup></b>               | <b>\$240,300</b> | <b>\$237,576</b> |

### 2024-2025

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

**In-kind/volunteer labour<sup>1</sup>** - estimated \$15,000 In-kind Program, Project and Staff Management

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

**Funding received<sup>3</sup>** – 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           |
| <b>RiverConnect</b>                             |                        |                  |                           |                  |                |               |                        |                  |
| Employment                                      | \$99,177               | \$99,177         | \$99,177                  | \$99,177         | -              | -             | \$198,353              | \$198,353        |
| In-kind/volunteer labour <sup>1</sup>           | \$15,000               | \$15,000         | -                         | -                | -              | -             | \$15,000               | \$15,000         |
| <b>Total employment Costs (ex GST)</b>          | <b>\$114,177</b>       | <b>\$114,177</b> | <b>\$99,177</b>           | <b>\$99,177</b>  | <b>\$0</b>     | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$213,354</b>       | <b>\$213,354</b> |
| Community Project/Program Delivery <sup>2</sup> | \$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 <sup>3</sup>                   | -                      | -                | -                         | -                | -\$500         | -\$500        | -\$500                 | -\$500           |
| <b>Total Operating Costs (ex GST)</b>           | <b>\$13,973</b>        | <b>\$11,249</b>  | <b>\$13,473</b>           | <b>\$13,473</b>  | <b>-\$500</b>  | <b>-\$500</b> | <b>\$26,946</b>        | <b>\$24,222</b>  |
| <b>Total (ex GST)<sup>5</sup></b>               | <b>\$128,150</b>       | <b>\$125,426</b> | <b>\$112,650</b>          | <b>\$112,650</b> | <b>-\$500</b>  | <b>-\$500</b> | <b>\$240,300</b>       | <b>\$237,576</b> |



| OUTPUT ATTRIBUTES |                   |                          |   |                   |                                |  |                           |                         |                                    |  |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| (A) Project       | (B) Activity      | (C) Annual output target | (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) |  |
|                   |                   |                          |   |                   |                                |  |                           |                         |                                    | Victorian Fisheries Authority 11<br>Kalela Arts 12<br>Victoria Walks 8<br>Birdlife Murrumbidgee 12<br>Fairley Leadership Program participants 7<br>GV Mountain Bike Club 8<br>Shepparton Camera Club 10<br>Shepparton Historical Society 9<br>Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Volunteers 9<br>Platypus Conservancy 9<br>Lighthouse Project/ The Haven 8<br>Disability Advisory Committee 9<br>Turtles Australia 8<br>Friends of the Botanic Gardens 8<br>Shepparton Canoe Club 6<br>Native Fish Australia 8<br>FamilyCare disability support group 7<br>Cussen Park Advisory Committee 7<br>Headspace Shepparton 7<br>Scouts Victoria 6<br>Girl Guides 6<br>Wellways 6<br>St Georges Rd Community Hub 6<br>Shepparton English Language Centre 6<br>GV Pride - Out in the Open Festival 5<br>Shepparton Art Museum 6<br>Veolia 4<br>Burnmanga Indigenous Fishing Club 6<br>Friends of Gemmill's Swamp 4<br>Point of Difference Studio 5<br>Things of Spirit 3<br>OZGreen 3<br>National Trust of Australia - Heritage Festival 3<br>Australian Conservation Foundation 1<br>Kiwamis Club of Shepparton Sunrises 1<br>Find your Feathers 1<br>Salvos North East Youth Service |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|                   | Engagement events | 4,000 participants       | 4.4 Engagement events<br>Media<br>Social Media<br>Website | Establish         | Awareness                      | Increase awareness of target audience              | Shepparton                | Point                   | Location where each event was held | Name of each event<br>Please see table below for detail  | Length of each event in hours, to the nearest hour<br>215 Hours<br>Please see table below for detail | Number of events - Where events have identical attributes (e.g. location, type) they can be captured together<br>77 Events<br>Please see table below for detail | Target audience of each event (select):<br>Community 31<br>Agency 6<br>Education 39<br>Please see table below for detail | Primary focus of each event (select):<br>Art & Culture 5<br>Awareness/Engagement 19<br>Canoeing 0<br>Clean-Up 4<br>Education 20<br>Planting 22<br>Physical Activity 2<br>Spotlight 0<br>Tourism 1<br>Weeding 2<br>Wellbeing 6 | No. of participants per event<br>5480 Total Attendees<br>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      | Moiria 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 &amp; 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-venture</i>  | Wellbeing              | Community       | Co-facilitator      | 2         | 19            |

| N/A       | Online     | Biomimicry Multi-school activity Day                                    | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Co-facilitator     | 5         | 64  |
|-----------|------------|---|--|--|---|--------------------|-----------|-----|
| 353574.20 | 5976891.05 | Reedy Swamp   | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 4         | 77  |
| 356122.17 | 5971543.98 | Victoria Park Lake  | Wellbeing  | Wellbeing                                | Community   | Lead-facilitator   | 1         | 18  |
| N/A       | Various    | University Placement Student  | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 2         | 1   |
| 340761.14 | 5966615.51 | Cussen Park Tatara  | Education  | Education                                | Community   | Lead-facilitator   | 2         | 137 |
| 354699.83 | 5972109.82 | KidsTown Mooroopna  | Wellbeing  | Wellbeing                                | Community   | Material Provision | 2         | 29  |
| 352940.21 | 5970792.99 | Family Haven Mooroopna  | Awareness/Engagement   | Awareness/Engagement                     | Community   | Co-facilitator     | 2         | 44  |
| 354056.47 | 5970106.86 | Various - Gemmill Swamp, Watt Rd, Broken River Drive, Tom Collins Drive | Clean-Up   | Clean-Up                                 | Community   | Lead-facilitator   | 2         | 58  |
| 359264.40 | 5971966.49 | Overlander Hotel, Shepparton  | Awareness/Engagement   | Awareness/Engagement                     | Community   | Lead-facilitator   | 2         | 15  |
| 355963.13 | 5972969.73 | Princess Park   | Clean-Up   | Clean-Up                                 | Other   | Lead-facilitator   | 1.5       | 10  |
| 353530.98 | 5974635.27 | Shepparton Weir   | Clean-Up   | Clean-Up                                 | Community   | Co-facilitator     | 2         | 18  |
| 353579.14 | 5976752.55 | Reedy Swamp   | Weeding  | Weeding                                  | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 2.5       | 7   |
| 357859.90 | 5973548.20 | Greater Shepparton Secondary College                                    | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Material Provision | 1         | 22  |
| 354769.00 | 5970697.11 | Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton                                   | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 2.5       | 6   |
| 357225.60 | 5969565.27 | Broken River Drive  | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 2.5       | 8   |
| 353573.00 | 5976961.44 | Reedy Swamp   | Wellbeing  | Wellbeing                                | Community   | Lead-facilitator   | 2         | 9   |
| 355190.34 | 5976095.69 | PitStop Shepparton  | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Material Provision | 5         | 45  |
| 355904.53 | 5971461.86 | Victoria Park Lake  | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 1         | 8   |
| 356012.52 | 5973208.36 | Princess Park   | Clean-Up   | Clean-Up                                 | Education   | Guest              | 1.5       | 23  |
| 353573.00 | 5976961.44 | Reedy Swamp   | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 1         | 11  |
| N/A       | Various    | High School Work Placement Student                                      | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 1         | 1   |
| 356925.86 | 5969609.45 | Broken River Drive bushland   | Art and Culture  | Art and Culture                          | Community   | Lead-facilitator   | 3         | 25  |
| 356290.43 | 5972115.05 | Victoria Park Lake  | Wellbeing  | Wellbeing                                | Community   | Co-facilitator     | 7         | 750 |
| 355115.28 | 5971082.08 | Shared pathway between Botanic Gardens and Victoria Park Lake           | Physical Activity  | Physical Activity                        | Community   | Lead-facilitator   | 2         | 250 |
| 356096.19 | 5971348.41 | Victoria Park Lake  | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 4         | 100 |
| 356348.94 | 5971912.36 | Quality Hotel Parklake Shepparton                                       | Awareness/Engagement   | Awareness/Engagement                     | Agency  | Lead-facilitator   | 1         | 60  |
| 355798.06 | 5971411.84 | Tom Collins Drive   | Awareness/Engagement   | Awareness/Engagement                     | Community   | Co-facilitator     | 2         | 30  |
| 354746.81 | 5970304.09 | Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton                                   | Awareness/Engagement   | Awareness/Engagement                     | Community   | Co-facilitator     | 4         | 200 |
| 352130.97 | 5972762.85 | JA Douglas Reserve Mooroopna  | Planting   | Planting                                 | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 5.5       | 132 |
| 352229.44 | 5956449.68 | Arcadia Fish Hatchery   | Awareness/Engagement   | Awareness/Engagement                     | Community   | Co-facilitator     | 4         | 175 |
| 350640.74 | 5973454.41 | Archers Field, Mooroopna  | Planting   | Planting                                 | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 5         | 211 |
| 354638.28 | 5967268.28 | Sevens Creeks Kialla  | Planting   | Planting                                 | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 5         | 229 |
| 382083.01 | 5978826.01 | Perdita Street, Dookie  | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 1.5       | 9   |
| 359338.90 | 5981580.98 | Pony Paddock Park, Congupna   | Education  | Education                                | Education   | Lead-facilitator   | 1.5       | 54  |
|           |            |   | CATEGORY   | TARGET AUDIENCE                          | ENGAGEMENT LEVEL  | HOURS              | ATTENDEES |     |
|           |            |   | 5 Art and Culture<br>19 Awareness/Engagement<br>0 Canoeing<br>4 Clean-Up<br>20 Education<br>22 Planting<br>2 Physical Activity<br>0 Spotlight<br>1 Tourism<br>2 Weeding<br>6 Wellbeing | 31 Community<br>39 Education<br>6 Agency | 51 Lead-facilitator<br>13 Co-facilitator<br>5 Material Provision<br>3 Guest | 215                | 5480      |     |
|           |            |   | 77   |  |   |                    |           |     |

**ENGAGEMENT EVENTS SUMMARY**

**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      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>35 items</b> |

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                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance opportunities for young people</li> <li>Continue learnings about the river</li> <li>Engage diverse community</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage 4,000 people in river environment activities</li> <li>Support at least five Traditional Owner-led projects and events</li> </ul>  | Engaged 5,769 people in 89 activities  | Engaged 5,154 people in 115 activities   | Engaged 5,480 in 77 activities   | Dharmya Day, Burnmanga Indigenous Fishing Club session at Youth Camp, Cultural Education Primary School Session by Auntie Hilda from Parks Victoria, River's Palette watercolour workshop, invites to 3 upcoming TO-led events |   |       |       |
|   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 kindergartens, 1 homework club and 1 home-school group</li> <li>1,816 students engaged</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elders Luncheons, Burnmanga Indigenous Fishing Club launch, An Elder's Stories, Wulumbarra Merrin-Bidja Cultural Burn Workshop, Hats Signage Extension</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>42% (19/45) schools engaged - not including two early learning</li> <li>1,644 students engaged</li> </ul>           |  |   |       |       |
| INSPIRE THE EDUCATION SECTOR                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable educational participation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% of Greater Shepparton schools have at least one class engaging in the river environment annually, involving 1,000 students</li> <li>One tertiary education project in the RiverConnect area</li> </ul> | 46% (17 of the 35 schools engaged - not including 4 kindergartens, 1 homework club and 1 home-school group)                                | 43% (18/42 schools engaged - not including 2 kindergartens)  | 42% (19/45) schools engaged - not including two early learning   |  |   |       |       |
|   |   |   | 1,816 students engaged   | 1,513 students engaged   | 1,644 students engaged   |  |   |       |       |
| IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share health and wellbeing benefits</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver one health and wellbeing project that shares the benefits of nature</li> <li>Monitor increased usage of shared pathways using trail counters</li> </ul>  | 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                 |  |   |       |       |
|   |   |   | 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 |  |   |       |       |
| ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND CARE OF THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate opportunities to care</li> <li>Nurture stewardship culture</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revegetate 1 Ha area and remove priority weeds in 0.7 Ha area</li> <li>Create opportunities and spaces that people actively use</li> </ul>   | 79 daily average visits (impacted by faulty trail counter and flood impacts)   | 93 daily average visits  | 91 daily average visits  |  |   |       |       |
|   |   |   | 1.58 Ha revegetation<br>3.95 Ha weed removal   | 1.62 Ha revegetation<br>81.71 Ha weed mapped, 0 Ha removed   | 2.03 Ha revegetation<br>0.77 Ha weed removed   | 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 Zombi Fish Education Day to local primary schools with threatened fish release  |       |       |
| SHOWCASE THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage eco-tourism</li> <li>Understand and realise flexible and inclusive water access</li> <li>Enable sustainable on-going management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to progress the RiverConnect Patris Master Plan</li> <li>Create three promotional materials or campaigns</li> </ul>   | Land acquisition of Route 2 nearing completion   | The Flats Signage Extension Project completion   | Land acquisition of Route 2 completed, detailed design near completion   |  |   |       |       |
|   |   |   | New event banners in the new Strategic Plan style  | RiverConnect River Access Map updated and reprinted  | Turtle education campaign reaching almost 24k people   | 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 Zombi Fish Education Day to local primary schools with threatened fish release  |       |       |
| NURTURE PARTNERSHIPS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore a home for RiverConnect</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and build relationships with 50 groups and organisations</li> <li>Seek funding from government and non-traditional sources consistent with RiverConnect aspirations</li> </ul>                    | Maintained 48 partnerships   | Maintained 50 partnerships   | Maintained 50 partnerships   |  |   |       |       |
|   |   |   | Developed 2 new partnerships   | Flood recovery funding for Biodiversity Impact Assessment of Boulevard Bush Reserve  | Successful \$6,400 DEECA grant for Caring for Nature Youth Camp  | Successful support for Caring for Nature Youth Camp - \$3,000 flood recovery funds, in-kind provision swags from Gt-A-Break, in-kind staff time from GB CMA & Council  | Successful GB CMA application for Victorian Government - Statewide Urban Rivers Playtupus Recovery Initiative "The Play 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/ <del>No</del> (please circle) |
| ESRI File                    | Yes/ <del>No</del> (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.



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

- 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.



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

- 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 Aunty Hilda from Parks Victoria and an animal encounter with Graham from Turtles Australia.



*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' (Kiwans 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) <b>Fiona Le Gassick</b> |   |                  | Name (please print) <b>Geraldine Christou</b> |  |                  |
| 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).