

GVEG Presidents report 2014

GVEG continues to be active on many fronts across the region and in some cases ventures into the Federal scene in an effort to protect and enhance our natural environmental assets.

Our membership remains constant, your committee meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday at the Yorta Yorta offices, members continue to sit on many regional local government and catchment management committees and our group has lodged submissions on policy and legislative changes that appear never ending.

Iron Ore mining proposals by Vic Iron in the Benalla, Caniambo and Violet Town areas that had come under scrutiny from our committee are now believed to have been shelved. Whilst the exploration licences are still current there appears no likelihood of the Chinese owners of Vic Iron proceeding with the project.

COGS Sustainable Environment Strategy has following extensive consultation and input from GVEG been endorsed by Council. This strategy has seen for first time acknowledgement of Climate Change, the value of natural resources and the ecosystem-services they provide. We need to ensure this Strategy does not just sit on a shelf but is the blueprint for future planning.

Murray Darling Basin Plan is very much in the implementation phase and as expected encountering opposition at almost every level. GVEG continues to be involved in the Lifeblood Alliance with other environmental groups from across the Basin, has been part of the Basin Authority's advisory groups. The key threats to delivery of the agreed environmental flow are political with State Governments and irrigators attempting to lower the volume and not actively working to reduce flooding constraints.

GVEG have again been active in questing and objecting to local government planning applications to remove remnant vegetation. This has now been made more difficult by recent changes to Regulations by the Victorian Government that now allows landholder self-assessment and marginalises oversight by local government. We have now challenged the mapping that self-assessment is based on and the offset requirements.

Gold fossicking has been expanded into limited National park areas, but due to our and many other submissions to VEAC is restricted to hand held equipment and areas that protect our streams, water quality and National Parks.

GVEG submissions were compiled and submitted on both Federal and State Water Act reviews and an important meeting with VIC Roads took place to discuss roadside management and the removal of trees for traffic safety.

Examples of the many committees members represent GVEG on are the management of horses in the Barmah National Park and the Environmental flows advisory committee for the Goulburn and Broken rivers and the Broken Creek.

We are again indebted to speakers who took part in our Sustainability Conversation series and the support of those who attended.

As chair of GVEG I believe we should always review and assess the operation of our organisation and with this in mind a Strategy gathering is planned to discuss members expectations, our relationship to other local groups with environmental interests and what the most appropriate role is for GVEG. As part of this process I have produced a discussion paper that identifies local groups and areas of their interest and possible alliances that could more usefully utilise our limited human resources working to ensure we really do pass on an environment to future generations that we can be proud of.

I would like to recognise the contribution of our committee, and office bearers. GVEG operates with efforts of many applying their strengths where and when required.

Of special mention I would like to single out treasurer Barb Gray who after many years of service has chosen to retire from the position but remain a strong supporter, Peter Jerie our most capable Secretary and vice president Terry Court, all of whom I have relied on heavily throughout the year.

John Pettigrew , Chair

Our committee for the past year

John Pettigrew 58269557

Terry Court 58242642

Peter Jerie 58271378

Barb Gray 58265484

Iris Ambrose

Ian Christoe 58260371

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