

# **ATTACHMENT TO AGENDA ITEM**

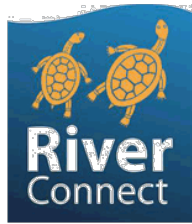
**Ordinary Meeting**

**20 June 2017**

<b>Agenda Item 9.14</b>	<b>RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022</b>	
<b>Attachment 1</b>	<b>RiverConnect Draft Strategic Plan Consultation Schedule .....</b>	<b>1056</b>
<b>Attachment 2</b>	<b>RiverConnect What You Said document 2017-2022 Strategic Plan .....</b>	<b>1057</b>
<b>Attachment 3</b>	<b>RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 FINAL .....</b>	<b>1109</b>

## RiverConnect Draft Strategic Plan Event/Activity/Meeting Schedule.

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



## RiverConnect Draft Strategic Plan 2017-2022 “What You Said” document



The information collected over the six week Draft RiverConnect Strategic Plan consultation period has been processed and included into the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 in collaboration with RiverConnect partners. There were twenty seven community survey responses, seven agency responses and five emailed responses. RiverConnect representatives also collected feedback from community members at thirty one community events, activities and meetings between Monday 13 February and Monday 27 March 2017.

The information is presented as follows:

1. Comments and Emailed Responses (qualitative data).

This data includes references to the relevant section of the plan, the comment and the outcome/action of the comment.

2. Survey Responses (quantitative data)

- a. Agency/Organisation Survey
- b. Community Survey
- c. Event Survey
- d. Overall Survey Responses (comparable data only)

The priorities indicated by the surveys will be used to inform annual planning in line with partners' strategic direction and funding availability.

Please contact RiverConnect on 5832 9700 or [riverconnect@shepparton.vic.gov.au](mailto:riverconnect@shepparton.vic.gov.au) with any questions or enquiries related to this information.



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

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

## 1. Comments and emailed responses (qualitative data)

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Keyword/Topic</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Potential outcome/action</i>
<b>Partners, Signatures, Summary</b>	<b>Signatories</b>	SMULG should appear as one of the signatories on the inside front cover.	Signatories' page is for program partners as per the Terms of Reference, SMULG is a broader stakeholder project partner.
		GVW will continue to assist River Connect to implement programs where suitable (including educational programs and activities which contribute to improved water management and quality objectives), and will nominate a member to sit on the Implementation Advisory Committee.	Noted, complete.
	<b>Summary document</b>	Strategic Plan Summary This could be improved/clearer if it included the long-term goals, aspirational targets, indicators, actions etc (not the content but the concept as part of the plan's hierarchy). E.g. how do these things relate to the priorities and 5-yr targets? The priorities are called Connection Priorities in the Summary and Strategic Priorities in the body of the plan.	Noted , changed to connection priorities, but think summary contains most of content needed to give a clear overview of what is in strategy.
		In the priority list although some of the points link to tourism a little such as art and culture and private enterprise I think a key area clear priority that could be including in here is tourism and visitor economy initiatives aimed at showcasing this key tourism product to the nature tourism market. Also do we need a clear priority in there around indigenous tourism/ education specifically? Understand this is just broad level framework list but we think the wording could be tweaked to make the tourism element stand out more.	Noted, language around tourism strengthened throughout.



## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	RiverConnect is a partnership between numerous land management agencies, stakeholders and community groups.	Included 1.1.
	<b>Where is RiverConnect?</b>	The focus area is the Goulburn & Broken River areas surrounding Shepparton and Mooroopna; with the Shepparton Regional Park & Lower Goulburn National Park being the two priority areas. Murchison and Toolamba may be included in the future.	Included 1.2.
		It would be good to include a range of locations beyond Shepparton and Mooroopna for RiverConnect activities and projects. Daunts Bend and Campbell's Bend come to mind.	Noted, all communities are able to be involved but primary focus area is for projects along river, improved description in 1.2.
		Expand coverage - consider other non-river towns.	Noted, all communities are able to be involved but primary focus area is for projects along river, improved description in 1.2.
		Broaden reach of project with schools in municipality.	Noted, all communities are able to be involved but primary focus area is for projects along river, improved description in 1.2.
		Can the project be extended to the entire municipality?	Noted, all communities are able to be involved but primary focus area is for projects along river, improved description in 1.2.
		Interested in project area being extended and include projects in Arcadia.	Noted, all communities are able to be involved but primary focus area is for projects along river, improved description in 1.2.
		Expand the project to include more around Seven Creeks, use the wetlands for regeneration works etc.	Noted, all communities are able to be involved but primary focus area is for projects along river, improved description in 1.2.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	<b>Strategic Plan</b>	The plan aims to make the river environments a place for greater community use, education and a place of cultural awareness.	Concept covered.
		Funding and operational staffing are key to this partnership. GBCMA & City of Greater Shep contribute \$100,000 annually to this program. Parks Victoria currently contributes limited funding in terms of direct financial contributions however Parks Victoria does contribute in-directly through ongoing park management, staffing, management of visitor facilities and delivery of interpretation, information and education. Parks Victoria will look at calculating our in-kind contributions and including that commitment to the plan.	Included 5.2.2.
		Parks Victoria is investigating options to further support RiverConnect in the II&E field and to manage operational aspects of this project through formal agreements and alignment of projects and priorities.	Comment, included 5.2.2.
<b>2. Vision, purpose and values driving goals and priorities</b>	<b>Vision</b>	Maybe the vision could be "connecting" rather than "connected". I strongly agree that all 4 goals are very relevant to the aspirations of visitors to Greater Shepparton. Whilst the goals talk about the direct benefits for our local community, the offshoot is that visitors engaging with the river will also have benefits for the community (social - community pride, economic - increasing length of stay, and environmental if our visitors are also respecting the river environs.).	Noted. Connected is the end point of the ultimate vision.
		Vision - could be phrased river and wetland environment, so as to encompass the aquatic and terrestrial interface. In the "vision and purpose will be achieved by..." - add in "community benefits of.." Value 1 - don't think the second part is clear or needed - should be broader than project design and delivery.	Noted - was discussed through workshopping, is encompassed with wording.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	<b>Targets</b>	Another 30km of bike paths are proposed in the future which is supported by Parks Victoria and will be captured in the draft Red Gum Management Plan.	
	<b>Priorities</b>	Increased access to the river and the river environment is a priority.	
		Licensing of City of Greater Shepparton assets located within the Shepparton Regional Park is a priority and is being progressed.	
		Resilient and accessible may be difficult to achieve simultaneously (disturbance factors etc).	Comment, projects will be considered for their benefits to both resilience and accessibility as IAC believes these to be interrelated.
		Removal of rubbish determines if all of the other priorities can be achieved. No-one wants to have activities along a dirty, polluted waterway.	Comment, agreed.
		Litter management is listed as a major issue and a high priority. The issue of litter in this landscape is a major community issue which needs to be addressed by all parties. Potentially the Environmental Protection Authority & DELWP should play bigger roles in managing this issue.	Noted included RARE action 4.
		I believe that increasing and improving access will open up opportunity for all other aspects, particularly if there is a reason for people who wouldn't usually access the river environment by providing commercial ventures (i.e. boating or cafe) and by continuing to educate the next generation.	Comment, agreed.
		Community engagement and education is so important with our beautiful river areas. I would love my children to learn about how our river was/ is important in Bboriginal culture.	Comment, agreed.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	Climate change.	Noted, included in care goal section.
	Would love to see fishing encouraged. We need a usable boat ramp with facilities for parking, toilets, picnic. Could also act as a parking area for walking tracks or rest area for cyclists or bus parking for cultural/education visitors. Should have a large eco-friendly caravan and camping park in the bush and alongside the river - this would be great for tourism and could manage/maintain public spaces like a boat ramp and picnic area. Bush camping tourism is huge in places like Cobram and Echuca, but we could have a controlled environment and attract tourists who want to camp but also want facilities. The fact that ski boats do not use our rivers is a huge selling point.	Noted.
	Extend the outlet pipe behind war memorial then I'll in old river bed, extend levee from bridge to current princess park that would create large garden and car park on edge of CBD that then connects us directly to the river Tier the levee to the water edge and grass it . Requires considerable fill which over time could come from developments that currently goes to waste long term but need to truly make River accessible at water level. Lift weir height at cemetery to increase water level/ flow Clean up The tributaries upstream of Shepparton Need increase in environmental river flow from storages on broken.	Council priority is for Eastbank Lake project, much of this may be satisfied by Eastbank Lake.
	Build more resilient and accessible river environment - most important.	Comment, noted.
	No more funding from Council. It receives enough.	Comment.
	Why don't we have tree planting days along the river to replace natural decline?	Comment, see resilient and accessible action plan for planting projects.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	<b>Goals</b>	In relation to the frog reference on p8, we wondered if the following species would be the most relevant to include: Murray cod; Trout cod; Fat-tailed dunnart; Nankeen night heron; Broad-shelled turtle.	Noted, updated 2.4.1.
		A paragraph mention of weed control in the river and wetlands environment in the "Increase care of" section. Also edit to Marsh Frog	Noted, paragraph not considered necessary but language strengthened throughout.
		On Page 9 add under "increase care of riverine environment " a specific target for weed control. Performance could be assessed by weed mapping.	Noted, actions around decreasing priority weeds included in ETC action 5, RARE action 4 and 5 year target.
<b>3. Current Environment</b>	<b>Attributes and Issues</b>	Shepparton is a community of great diversity and as such the community have varying needs.	Comment, see 3.1 for similar comment.
		Overall in my opinion as CEO it is a start to ongoing development. Epistemology could have been a part of the plan, again YYNAC need to add, this adds to the strong links of Aboriginal community and an education toll. If connecting Aboriginal people it needs to go beyond the contemporary to historical. Cultural environmental management systems prior to occupation could tell an ancient way of viewing the landscape. This is related to language/cultural biodiversity, interlinks of space, time and spirituality landscapes.	Agreed, will look at opportunities and strengthening partnerships.
<b>4. RiverConnect Achievements</b>	<b>IAC evaluation</b>	p.24 of Plan - what works well. Add in partnerships, e.g. GMLN.	Section is about information received during initial consultation.
		Page 16 SMULG should be in the achievement section as we Partner with Clean Up Australia Day and National Tree Day.	Noted, included in 4.3.
	<b>Achievements</b>	More than 6400 people have participated in RiverConnect events with 6800 students spending more than 10,000 hours at the river. This is a	Comment.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		great outcome.	
		GSCC Economic Development, Tourism & Events Strategy.	Noted, included 4.6.
		I believe the plan should acknowledge Yorta Yorta Nation as the Registered Aboriginal Party for the planning area and the Yorta Yorta Co-operative Management Agreement 2004 which covers much of the RiverConnect planning area.	Amended 4.6.
		There are 2 key requirements that have been neglected to be included which are the Cooperative Management Agreement 2004 and the Cultural Heritage ACT 2006 which requires YYNAC to have a governance role in this area of the Goulburn. These are legally binding processes of the VIC State Government and requirement of Local Council also to take a more proactive role in Joint Management and protection of the environmental cultural landscape.	Noted amended 4.6.
	<b>Strategic Links</b>	The plan also should acknowledge the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and the need for compliance with this act in any works undertaken by RiverConnect.	Amended 4.6.
		The plan also should acknowledge the Victorian Heritage Act 1995 which is soon to be updated.	Amended 4.6.
		The focus area falls within the area covered by the River Red Gum Management Plan with a draft plan due for release in coming weeks. Key themes in the draft plan include: Protection and awareness of cultural values, protection of the River Red Gum Environment, providing educational opportunities, promotion of recreational activities including fishing, camping & boating. All of these aspects fit under the Parks Victoria Shaping Our Future plan which focuses on Connecting people &	See 4.6.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		parks, Conserving Victoria's special places and Providing benefits beyond boundaries. The outcomes from this plan will help shape and influence future projects delivered by RiverConnect.	
		Healthy Parks Healthy People are recognised in the plan.	Noted, see 4.6
		Gemmil's Swamp upgrades (tables, paths, signage) and Kaieltheban Park upgrades (caravan stopover, boat ramp, beautify) mentioned in Mooroopna Community Plan.	Noted, Community Plans acknowledged in 5.2.1, projects to be included in River Masterplan.
		Links with Arcadia Community Plan including signage, strong knowledge of European history in area and increased use of river.	Noted, Community Plans acknowledged, projects to be included in River Masterplan.
		Shepparton Mooroopna Framework being worked on that may take in some of the ideas of the River Masterplan.	Comment, await development of framework.
		p.25 Include Goulburn Broken Biodiversity Strategy 2016-2021 as a key sub strategy of the GBRCs.	Noted, included 4.6
<b>5. Action, implementation, evaluation</b>	<b>Actions/Key Projects - Engage the community</b>	Building on our comments re: support for engaging with disengaged you, Lighthouse if investigating the potential of opening another "Haven" in Mooroopna to support a-risk youth. There may the potential to partner here to provide activities for participants.	Noted, follow up in future.
		Partner with "The Haven" and/or alternative education settings to offer outdoor activities along the river for disengaged youth.	Noted, included ETC Action 2.
		We are glad to see that engagement with vulnerable groups has been incorporated. We are happy to be part of the discussions on how best to	Noted.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		implement this, following Lighthouse's extensive consultation with the audience.	
		Fairley Foundation has good money around for projects involving young migrant groups.	Suggestion, alternate funding source to be investigated.
		p.27 Action 2 - Add in Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project as a potential lead.	Noted.
		Include stuffing up the system by Europeans.	Comment, post-contact human impact discussed in various education topics.
		Art, science, maths, philosophy, literature...	The aim of the education program is to encourage use of the river environment for a range of education subjects, including those outside environment/sustainability.
		I know getting the local Aboriginal History into schools has been a priority for many groups. Is there an opportunity to pump this up through River Connect?	RiverConnect will continue promote, support and link schools with Aboriginal organisations to provide education about Aboriginal history.
		Climate change and adaptation.	Theme is incorporated in a number of topics and RiverConnect will continue to investigate future opportunities.
		Perhaps link in with the importance of the river for agriculture, and how we need to work to bring the agricultural and environmental issues closer together to find joint solutions.	Theme is incorporated in a number of topics and RiverConnect will continue to investigate future opportunities.



## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		<p>Some of the events that have been held so far...night strolls, turtle hugging etc. Is this for everyone, no...but as far as I'm concerned, if 5 people turn up for anything you organise then who cares. Whatever floats people's boats (except art...I totally dislike art)! Keep it up. And I dare say the events may have been well attended anyway.</p>	<p>Comment.</p>
		<p>Last but not least...we should be trying to get as many children as possible fishing! Better than sitting on their arse looking at a screen. Linking this into the river could be problematic! As in, it may be difficult to organise any fishing event for kiddies on the river. Finding a suitable place would be difficult if a heap of people attended. Other issue is the chances of catching carp in the river...this species has to be killed and therefore not a good thing for children's first fishing experience. Mind you, I have been fishing with people when their kids have caught carp and there is no issue when it comes to the killing bit if explained properly to the child. Just not something I think that should be done with lots of people around.</p> <p>Council had some learn to fish days at Vic lake several years ago...maybe last year as well. From memory the weather may have affected it last year but I can remember earlier ones being attended extremely well...once again...I have to use the word shitloads again of people went. I don't think many carp are caught from the lake either which is good. But if fishing the river is something that you would like to promote...then a starting point may be a session at the lake then turn the people loose at their own leisure upon the river.</p>	<p>RiverConnect partners continue to conduct fishing days on a regular basis, and access is recognised as an issue in focus of strategic plan.</p>
		<p>More opportunities to pat/hold/connect with native animals.</p>	<p>Noted. Will consider in future events, reliant on funding.</p>

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		More Reedy Rambles.	Noted. Will consider in future events, reliant on funding.
		School holiday programs/activities (daytime, not just evening information sessions).	Noted. Will consider in future events, reliant on funding.
		Clarity around who is running Activities in the Park events or RiverConnect.	Noted. Will improve communication about partnerships.
		Most of the programs EC do are with new arrival women as are often less mobile and more socially isolated, often have an element with child care and art based, possibility of this near river area?	Noted. Will consider in future events, reliant on funding, will follow up with EC and other potential partners.
		More opportunities like Canoeing.	Noted. Will consider in future events, reliant on funding.
		More "Clean Up Australia" days.	Noted. Some consideration in R & A action 4.
		p.26 Action 4. Electronic and printed media seems too narrow.	Noted - changed wording to various media.
		Support teacher professional development, e.g. Flats education/tour. Regularly check in with schools on how to improve school engagement. Understand and learn from factors that have lead to fluctuating levels of participation from schools.	Noted - further investigation recommended.
	<b>Actions/Key Projects - Access and Resilience</b>	Find a spot for solitude silence; easier access for chill/therapeutic spaces.	Noted, will consider in future projects.
		Access to river for all abilities - green spaces, picnics etc.	Noted. Eastbank Lake project may provide these opportunities, will be considered in future projects.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	Consider gradient on paths and access points for wheelchair/all abilities people. Potential to engage with team to measure gradients and provide input into future planning or maps of area to promote for all abilities.	Noted, see ETC Action 1.
	Link Paths network more with the Cycling/Movement and Place Strategy.	Noted. Follow up meetings planned.
	Update Access Map to include map of all abilities access points.	Noted, see ETC Action 1.
	The river is under used as a recreational resource special for kayaking as access is very unsafe. The steps opposite the lake should be removed or upgraded as I would not let any of our club members risk their safety or equipment damage by using these steps.	Noted, upgrading access points identified, further investigations required as to location of upgrades.
	All good projects. I've probably written this before somewhere, but personally I think that there are behind Welsford street chambers should be highest priority for a project. This is the closest river forest environment to the Shepparton CBD and has had the city turn its back on it for over 100 years. There is amazing opportunity in this area, even though residing in floodzone, including improved access and signage inviting people from Welsford st/CBD, key view points along river, cultural heritage including wharf and old light fittings (as it used to be the town beach)and existing indigenous vegetation including some very large old gums. It could be the key native open space area for Shepparton, including being the link between the lake/Aquamoves, the CBD and Council offices/Princess park precinct. It could be a key education area within the Riverconnect area with a school to adopt the reach and revegetate and conduct maintenance. There are a number of issues with this area including lack of maintenance, weeds, unformed tracks, grass cutting dumping ground for tennis club and need for screening at rear of GV water site. The history of this area is why	Noted. Some elements of this project may be incorporated in Eastbank Lake Project and weed control and revegetation measures. Will consider as part of River Masterplan and in line with VEAC requirements.

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		<p>Shepparton is where it is today.</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="604 510 1388 742"> <p>[Triple tick at Rehabilitate and revegetate, double tick at Aboriginal cultural events] Why does the project only involve Shepparton? It could be celebrated from Murch to Undera. Make more access at Mooroopna. You'd think the river begins and ends at Shepparton.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1388 510 1892 742"> <p>Please see 1.2. All Greater Shepparton communities are welcome to be involved; access at Mooroopna has been identified, Murchison also has a flood marker and the school is engaged in the education program.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="604 742 1388 909"> <p>The walking paths along the river a real drawcard for Shepparton. We use this facility everyday and a safe way to travel into town with young children whilst enjoying the environment. Look forward to more connections to Botanic Gardens, all the way to 7Creeks.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1388 742 1892 909"> <p>Comment, included in Paths Masterplan, will be implemented as funding becomes available.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="604 909 1388 1305"> <p>Clean up the banks, tier areas behind the lake to allow access. The old large sandbars disappeared with the river course alterations leaving a cesspit in the remaining old river bed south of princess park Perhaps extend the outlet piper behind the war memorials to the current river course and then overfill the old riverbed to create parking and parkland on the edge if the CBD. This would take time and expense but could make it attractive like the park created over the area south of the high road around to the old punt. Parking is desperately needed and the area could become a most appealing entry/access to the waters edge. The levee behind Princess Park would need to extend to the bridge and Significant amount of fill would be required to reach a height above</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1388 909 1892 1305"> <p>Part of comment will be included as part of Eastbank Lake Project (subject to funding) and some additional project ideas that will be considered. Remainder involves dramatically modifying the natural environment and would not align with "Lighter Environmental Footprint" value driving RiverConnect.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>[Triple tick at Rehabilitate and revegetate, double tick at Aboriginal cultural events] Why does the project only involve Shepparton? It could be celebrated from Murch to Undera. Make more access at Mooroopna. You'd think the river begins and ends at Shepparton.</p>	<p>Please see 1.2. All Greater Shepparton communities are welcome to be involved; access at Mooroopna has been identified, Murchison also has a flood marker and the school is engaged in the education program.</p>	<p>The walking paths along the river a real drawcard for Shepparton. We use this facility everyday and a safe way to travel into town with young children whilst enjoying the environment. Look forward to more connections to Botanic Gardens, all the way to 7Creeks.</p>	<p>Comment, included in Paths Masterplan, will be implemented as funding becomes available.</p>	<p>Clean up the banks, tier areas behind the lake to allow access. The old large sandbars disappeared with the river course alterations leaving a cesspit in the remaining old river bed south of princess park Perhaps extend the outlet piper behind the war memorials to the current river course and then overfill the old riverbed to create parking and parkland on the edge if the CBD. This would take time and expense but could make it attractive like the park created over the area south of the high road around to the old punt. Parking is desperately needed and the area could become a most appealing entry/access to the waters edge. The levee behind Princess Park would need to extend to the bridge and Significant amount of fill would be required to reach a height above</p>	<p>Part of comment will be included as part of Eastbank Lake Project (subject to funding) and some additional project ideas that will be considered. Remainder involves dramatically modifying the natural environment and would not align with "Lighter Environmental Footprint" value driving RiverConnect.</p>
<p>[Triple tick at Rehabilitate and revegetate, double tick at Aboriginal cultural events] Why does the project only involve Shepparton? It could be celebrated from Murch to Undera. Make more access at Mooroopna. You'd think the river begins and ends at Shepparton.</p>	<p>Please see 1.2. All Greater Shepparton communities are welcome to be involved; access at Mooroopna has been identified, Murchison also has a flood marker and the school is engaged in the education program.</p>							
<p>The walking paths along the river a real drawcard for Shepparton. We use this facility everyday and a safe way to travel into town with young children whilst enjoying the environment. Look forward to more connections to Botanic Gardens, all the way to 7Creeks.</p>	<p>Comment, included in Paths Masterplan, will be implemented as funding becomes available.</p>							
<p>Clean up the banks, tier areas behind the lake to allow access. The old large sandbars disappeared with the river course alterations leaving a cesspit in the remaining old river bed south of princess park Perhaps extend the outlet piper behind the war memorials to the current river course and then overfill the old riverbed to create parking and parkland on the edge if the CBD. This would take time and expense but could make it attractive like the park created over the area south of the high road around to the old punt. Parking is desperately needed and the area could become a most appealing entry/access to the waters edge. The levee behind Princess Park would need to extend to the bridge and Significant amount of fill would be required to reach a height above</p>	<p>Part of comment will be included as part of Eastbank Lake Project (subject to funding) and some additional project ideas that will be considered. Remainder involves dramatically modifying the natural environment and would not align with "Lighter Environmental Footprint" value driving RiverConnect.</p>							

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	regular flood level. I think it's around 28ft at Shepp. There's thousands of potential filling dumped at the tip now. Negative to that is that Council would see it as lost revenue. May take some years but in time our river front could look like Mildura, Berri, Renmark, Albury, where lawns and gardens intermingle with parking and river trails	
	Increasing mountain bike tracks around the rivers to bring people to Shepparton. Sculptures, art, local history information each kilometre along the shared paths to entice tourists and families to go out and explore, they must be able to be changed to prevent them getting tired or stale. A link to the old tip site? Picnic spots along the shared paths.	Will consider as part of River Masterplan and ongoing projects. Link to tip site identified in Paths Masterplan - see website.
	Also look to create a safe and user friendly area along the river bank between the causeway and Aquamoves. This would provide a friendly and safe walking link, but also parkland that could be used by city workers and shopping visitors. Would government or private funding be available to establish a native fish aquarium?	Noted, will be considered in River Masterplan. Native fish aquarium is considered outside the scope of this Strategic Plan.
	Access to fishing spots with young children/people.	Noted, access identified as high priority.
	Potential boardwalk from anabranch along river, under causeway and around the river to join near Aquamoves to allow people to get closer to the river, could be good in conjunction with Eastbank Lake Project.	Noted, some elements may be captured in Eastbank Lake and other upgrades in area; subject to funding and infrastructure in floodzone requirements that will require investigation and unlikely to be possible within this Strategic Plan.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	How about raising the water level by building up the cemetery weir.	Comment, unlikely to align with government policy, current river management best practice and lighter environmental footprint value.
	Improvements at Gemmil's Swamp - paths, tables, signage - (mentioned in Community Plan).	Noted, will be considered in River Masterplan.
	Improvements at Kaieltheban Park - upgrades, caravan stopover, beautify (mentioned in Community Plan).	Noted, will be considered in River Masterplan.
	Other comments: make the area from Balaclava Rd to CMA offices more visually appealing and accessible for more of a park, not entirely manicured but more appealing and better managed. Consider opportunities and challenges of future development along Welsford Street.	Noted, may be improved through proposed revegetation and weed control and potential projects discussed above. To be considered in River Master Plan.
	Expansion of shared path networks is really important for Shepparton to compete with rail trails (eg high country/Mansfield Tallarook). Need a study of the economic benefits of trails to Shepparton and then get on with expanding the network.	Agreed. Further investigations and funding required in partnership with other agencies including Council Economic Development Department.
	Don't feel safe along the river.	Noted - see IHW Action 4 and RARE action 2.
	Perceived safety along the river is low, talk to Joel (Council Community Safety Officer) re: safety.	Noted - see IHW Action 4 and RARE action 2.
	Possibility of lighting improvements to help with safety.	Noted - to be considered in river Masterplan.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	Toilets - helpful for encouraging access for all ages, particularly if encouraging families to go on big walks or for older people.	Noted - will consider locations and feasibility in River Master Plan, see IHW action 4.
	Should there be an action around improving signage here? Seems to be missing and is a key conduit for engaging with the community. From a visitor and local education perspective this is imperative and we could aim big for this.	Signage is included in the 2030 aspirational targets and as parts of Paths Masterplan, will also be considered in the River Masterplan.
	Stormwater monitoring should be included as well as Waterwatch as ongoing projects.	Noted. Monitoring benchmarks will be used to measure future improvements discussed in R & A 5.
	Re anti-dumping perhaps more advocate for vouchers and affordable dumping for tip to encourage appropriate waste disposal.	Councils Resource Recovery Centre's operate on a user pays principle, meaning residents pay for the waste they create. Tipping vouchers may encourage residents to generate more waste as disposal would be free.
	Rubbish dumping! What is stopping council or parks or whoever wants to accept responsibility from installing 'trail cameras' at popular dumping sites? Even at entrance tracks to bushland areas. Vehicle comes in with load...departs empty, the owner of the vehicle can at least be questioned about it. Without proof of actually seeing them dumping it you could not prove anything but if the individuals at least get questioned about it...they will think twice about doing it again! And word will spread. Backpackers who camp along the river permanently...I guess they are told to move on at times. Can they be stopped altogether? Or is it hard to differentiate between people camping for a few days and people staying for an extended period while working. Please don't tell me it is breach of privacy to do so as I know an	Noted. Subject to feasibility and funding, will be considered in illegal dumping campaigns.

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		<p>organisation that does it...legally. There is a lot of red tape shit they have to go through but I would assume it can be done by any government body.</p>	
		<p>More focus on invasive species.</p>	<p>Noted. Included 2.4.1, 3.1, 3.2, RARE action 4 and long term goal 75% decrease in weeds.</p>
		<p>Groups need to work together better to manage weeds in area, each agency only looks after their patch, need to collaborate in maintenance SCC could share some of the outdoor workers with the understaffed Parks Vic, all know difficulties but it is not impossible to set up a collaborative plan Set up a shared workforce (GV Water, GSCC, Parks, CMA, Landcare, Enviro Group, GM Water). Have volunteer rangers to examine &amp; report. Present plan is not working. RiverConnect must be more involved in the maintenance issues in the riparian zones.</p>	<p>Agreed. Weed control included 2.4.1, 3.1, 3.2, RARE action 4 and long term goal 75% decrease in weeds.</p>
		<p>Concerns about quality of tracks and vegetation in the area near the river in Arcadia.</p>	<p>Noted, subject to land manager funding. Feedback forwarded to partner agency.</p>
		<p>Interested in revegetation work along the river to improve riverbed, potential partnership with RiverConnect and Council's One Tree Per Child, may have some Landcare funding to contribute to a project.</p>	<p>Noted. Potential partnership being investigated.</p>



## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	Reduce campers littering near river in municipality including Arcadia, not very supportive of camping at river in Arcadia or promotion of camping there as litter is a problem.	Noted, illegal dumping and littering key focus area in Strategic Plan, including RARE action 4.
	Rubbish art to bring to people's attention the illegal dumping.	Noted in SAC action 5.
	Fire pits in river area to contain fires and encourage people to use.	To be considered in consultation for River Red Gum Management Plan - Parks Victoria.
	"Friends of" group may help to create ownership.	Noted, see PGG action 2.
	Stronger language around water quality and causes of decreased water quality.	Improve water quality included in 2.4 and RARE action 5.
	Presently there is a blackberry, bridal veil creeper, moth vine, Madiera Winter Cherry and nightshade are rampant in areas upstream from Aquamoves and towards the confluence of the Broken and Goulburn and Jordan's Bend. Also we feel there should be more liason to increase the involvement of schools.	Weed control included 2.4.1, 3.1, 3.2, RARE action 4 and long term goal 75% decrease in weeds. Re: schools, agreed will investigate future opportunities.
	I would like to see a strategic response from all agencies to deal with the terrible wee problem we have along our rivers and along our bike and walking paths. Three of these areas are the walking track and riverside along 1. Jordan's Bend and right along2. from behind Vic Park Lake on Tom Collins Drive right along the walking track that leads to the convergence of the Broken River. 3. along the Broken River walking paths. The problem is way out of hand and from a tourism, community and environmental point of view is an eyesore. Leading the Spotlights along some of these areas is embarrassing because of the number of weeds. Overseas visitors and out of town visitors often enquire about the plants. I have to point out that they are weeds and the berries	Weed control considered 2.4, 3.1 and RARE action 4, added 75% decrease in weeds along shared path goal.

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		poisonous.	
		GVW continues to implement the WaterWatch program which provides data on water quality throughout the catchment.	Comment, noted.
		Regenerate understory, possibly funded through carbon sequestration funding?	Revegetation included which considers species mix. Will investigate funding opportunities.
Actions/Key Projects - <b>Social and Private Enterprise</b>		we need to highlight the importance of increasing promotion of the river as this links heavily in other key priority areas.	Agreed.
		Not sure if it fits here or Priority engage the community (3 celebrate the river environment through events) or Priority encourage social and private enterprise sections which is around tourism but in the recently adopted economic development tourism and major events strategy action 48 includes diversifying the events base and leverage significant investment in arts and cultural assets support more arts, food, cultural and music events specifically indigenous event (including the establishment of annual large scale event) This is something that could really fit well into the river connect strategy so needs to be considered. We would love to see a large scale flats festival that celebrates indigenous culture in a large scale. It would be hoped that this would become more than a local / regional festival but have state and national significance. This links well with 1, 2 and 3 actions in that section.	Noted Tourism Strategy in 4.6, included comment around Corroboree or Festival in SAC action 3.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	<b>Actions/Key Projects - Art and Culture</b>	Street art – based on the recent success of the aboriginal street art project in the cbd significant opportunity to look to expand this in the river connect strategy particularly as a way of linking to the cbd and new Sam development as part of a big picture thinking trail to further leverage our indigenous tourism strengths. There could be some really interactive innovative ways to link this to river connect that could really help put this project on an even larger scale.	Noted, see SAC action 5.
		Cultural art based projects along the river.	Noted, see SAC action 5.
		Art ideas for side of Dainton's Bridge (Near WAM reach).	Noted, see SAC action 5.
		Identify and build suitable event/activity sites along the river: this is really important from a tourism visitor perspective and word visitor could be included emphasised more around this point.	Noted. Further investigations required. Must consider Light Environmental Footprint value in support for this project.
		Live music, events near river - not just lake focussed.	Noted see SAC action 1.
		RiverConnect could easily be based within an existing education facility. SAM is perhaps not the best fit for this project.	Noted, SAM location no longer considered feasible for "home" project. Will investigate alternate options.
		The redevelopment at Kidstown (food hub etc) will include an education center. Consideration needs to be given as to how RiverConnect will relate to this - could be a potential base for the Project too?	Noted, altered SAC action 4 to be investigate viable location for home inc. KidsTown.
		From memory, it may have been suggested that Riverconnect have some sort of presence at SAM when it is built. Yeah...Nah! The words art and river should not be used in the one sentence as far as I'm concerned!	Comment, noted.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	<p>Interpretative signage around European history around Monash Park, was the beginning of "Shepparton" with McGuire's Punt and old pool - Use Tungamah Signage as an example for Euro Heritage signage.</p> <p>Concerns about carparks at Monash Park and increasing parking in area should the Shepp Post Office Project go ahead and improvements to Monash Park attract more people, will need better parking.</p>	<p>Noted, partnership with Historical Society to be pursued. Subject to funding. See SAC action 3.</p>
	<p>New arrivals often walk in the Lake open space, not so much the paths themselves, particularly women as they have had bad experiences along the paths particularly when wearing hijabs etc. Lake is a common place to "be seen", opportunities for lake orientated events and activities as is a known and sense of safe place for new arrivals. Festivals and events also opportunities.</p>	<p>Comment, noted, will investigate opportunities.</p>
	<p>RiverConnect generally weak on European history.</p>	<p>Comment, noted. Greater engagement being pursued.</p>
	<p>Thinks probably more opportunities and potential with younger people across all new[er] arrival communities.</p>	<p>Alterations to Engage the community - "at risk" groups to At risk and new arrival groups.</p>
	<p>Multicultural communities have an interest in Aboriginal culture, could do multicultural Flats Walk session?</p>	<p>Added to ETC Action 2.</p>
	<p>Home for River Connect - the Visitor Centre in the new SAM development may provide the ideal place for interpretation and info provision.</p>	<p>See SAC action 5.</p>
	<p>Increase Flats Signage.</p>	<p>Noted, consider project as part of SAC action 2.</p>

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		<p>The two 5 year targets in the 'showcase art and culture' connection priority are another avenue by which La Trobe University and RiverConnect can partner in a staged level of development over the next five years. In particular, the University can extend invitations to the university community to assist with these targets. Further in regard to 'events and projects to celebrate our shared history and river inspired creativity', University students could become involved in events organised by RiverConnect to this end as part of regular student engagement activities. This would serve to promote closer connection between the University community and the river environments and the community as a whole.</p>	<p>Noted, listed as partner SAC Action 5.</p>
		<p>Would be interested in European history around Monash Park.</p>	<p>Noted in SAC action 3.</p>
		<p>Language around European heritage should be "post-contact".</p>	<p>Comment, decision made to retain current language.</p>
		<p>When upgrading the Flats interpretive signs, the amount of text needs to be significantly reduced.</p>	<p>Comment, noted.</p>
		<p>SAM linkage – huge opportunities to leverage this game changing project so perhaps needs a bit more detail in the document. Also note although a great idea the incorporation of the interpretive centre may be very unlikely. In the new eco dev strategy tourism and major events strategy (as per action 33.3 snippet at the end of the email below) there is opportunity to perhaps look at that further at the Australian botanic gardens as part of a future review into developing a visitor and education / interpretation space / centre. May be something to consider if appropriate.</p>	<p>Noted in SAC action 4.</p>

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	<b>Actions/Key Projects - Health and Wellbeing</b>	Eastbank lake project – as a key game changing tourism and community project this could be highlighted further? Also feel as per notes further below on the priority encourage social and private enterprise section feedback more detail is required around generating commercial opportunities on the river.	Noted, considered as one of a number of significant projects to be investigated and/or supported.
		River crossing – as per above point should we be aiming higher re river crossings (and based what's in the 10 year council capital plan).	Considered unlikely within 5 years with current capital budget planning, but will pursue additional funding opportunities as they arise.
		The major project behind the council and the education is ridiculous! Stop crafting plans for money on infrastructure with no viability.	Comment -contributed to prioritisation.
		Eastbank lake project? No. Waste of money.	Comment -contributed to prioritisation.
		Shared path connecting Toolamba along river to Murchison, can R/C provide support? Toolamba River connection to Old Toolamba	Support for the growth of shared path network in region considered in Paths Masterplan.
		I would like to see the Jodie Ridges Memorial Bike Path included - this is a key link from Tatura into the Goulburn, and will help promote access from our surrounding towns into Shepparton and Mooroopna. I would also like to see path connections from Murchison/Toolamba into Mooroopna.	Support for the growth of shared path network in region considered in Paths Masterplan.
	Supportive of implementation of Paths Masterplan.	Comment - aides prioritisation.	
<b>Actions/Key Projects - Social and</b>	Encourage social and private enterprise - from a tourism team perspective as this priority predominantly relates to visitor economy initiatives in attracting visitors we wonder if wording can be tweaked to	Noted, see SPE Action 2.	

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	<b>Private Enterprise</b>	clearly indicate tourism / visitor economy type terminology.	
		Develop regional tourism plan - as mentioned above and below council has just recently adopted the economic development tourism and major event strategy the tourism section isn't specifically re river connect but has a number of actions that relate to the Goulburn river parkland and related tourism product. So as such not sure if another plan is required? Happy to discuss brainstorm this more.	Agreed, action removed from section 5.
		I don't think another plan that sits outside Riverconnect's strategic plan and the Greater Shepparton Economic Development, Tourism & Major Events Strategy is what is needed here. The action needs rewording - the intent of the example activities under this target is ideal, but I think asking the communications WG to deliver a tourism plan is beyond the scope of that group. The action should be more around River Connect keeping abreast of and involved in proposals for tourism development and activities within the River connect area - ensuring partners are informed and supportive of wider strategies that encourage tourism activity and are aligned with River connect directions. Similarly, whilst the idea of River connect developing its own tourism marketing plan is great, surely just actions written the overall RiverConnect marketing plan that are designed to target visitors would suffice. What is more critical is that these activities don't happen in silo from what is happening on a broader scale in terms of visitor attractions and engagement - a major action in Council's Economic Development, Tourism & Events Strategy is to review the structure of the tourism industry in Greater Shepparton, especially re. duplication of marketing bodies - it would not be helpful if River Connect was to attempt to become yet another "driver" of marketing activities - makes more sense to leverage and contribute to	Comment, noted.

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		<p>existing tourism marketing activities.</p> <p>You may not be aware but at the moment the state government is throwing shitloads (not sure exactly so used a generic term) of dollars at getting Victorians motivated to go fishing. You may not be aware that our area (upstream and downstream as well) is a popular fishing camping spot for Melburnians chasing Murray cod etc. Fisheries inaugural Codference (conference talking about cod) was held in Shepparton last December. Yes, here in Shepp as they obviously deemed it to be cod central here.</p> <p>Anyway, I am not sure how but you may be able to promote the fishing aspect to draw people into the area...or make the most of the ones that come here. It may not be a massive economic boost but you may be able to improve the visitors local spending.</p> <p>Reality is they are camping, therefore not paying any money for accommodation. However, they need fuel, alcohol (I don't drink but rumour has it many fishos do), food...more alcohol. Many campers to the area may arrive and be totally independent but you never know. Also, I will admit, I have no suggestions as to how. Several years ago I organised a meet and greet on a fishing forum. Most members were in Melbourne. We met up south of Tatura. One question I was asked...where is a bakery (Murchison in this case)! So they are always after something. Just got to get the message to them.</p> <p>Better access would help as well...just a few spots. Hard I know with fluctuating levels but a couple additional platforms would be great.</p>
--	--	--



## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		<p>Make reference to Eco Dev Tourism and Major Events strategy and incorporate actions – this strategy has a number of actions around developing tourism product that link to river connect. I have done a snippet of these below. Can these please be reviewed and incorporated into this section or as appropriate. Particularly important are items mentioned around:</p> <p>Commercial water and other activities and experiences  Nature based accommodation  Commercial waterfront activities  Explore long term opportunities to establish a riverfront precinct and expansion of Eastbank including commercial opportunities and river activation  Linkage to the development of other key tourism precincts and master plans in the Australian Botanic gardens and Kidstown as well further enhancement of the Vic Park Holiday Park and VPL</p>	Noted - see SPE action 1.
	<p>Actions/Key Projects - <b>Education Sector</b></p>	<p>In particular, the tertiary education project target in the 'Inspire the education sector' connection priority compliments La Trobe University's commitment to sustainability thinking embedded in our offerings of undergraduate subjects. We are of the view that this opens the way for joined-up projects which utilise the University's work-integrated-learning (WIL) subjects so they firstly, encourage sustainability thinking vis-a-vis the Goulburn River and Broken River environments. Secondly, facilitate supervised undergraduate research placements progressively to assist with activities which strengthen the Strategic Plan over its lifetime.</p>	Noted, see IES action 1.
		<p>Re the education. There lacks obvious connection to curriculum or support from the key gov departments? Why? What investment are the schools/ed dept providing?</p>	Comment, needs further consideration.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		GVW run extensive educational programs throughout the Goulburn Valley, and will continue to implement programs based on material designed by GVW staff – if opportunities exist to develop shared educational material to meet River Connect objectives they can be discussed with River Connect’s GVW representative.	Comment.
		I think a more complete list of projects will evolve as a result of the updated Plan. This list seems a little premature? Some additional ideas: Hold an annual event for schools to promote the importance of the river to environmental health, community health, sense of place, employment etc - including a range of stories and take-home messages.	Noted, example activities only. Event will be considered as part of Inspire Education.
	<b>Governance</b>	p.31 Consider establishing an education working group.	See below, will explore regular educators meeting.
		Environmental Educators meeting - catch up with all educators may be more useful than meeting with teachers.	Noted, include in IES action 2 example activities.
		p.32 mentions Table 4 (Staffing roles), but this isn't in the document.	Noted, mention removed from Strategic Plan.
	<b>Partnerships</b>	GSLP can be a good connector between organisations and individuals and has the Industry Links Coordinator currently working with Shepparton High School to improve links between curriculum and industry/community.	Noted, included in IES action 2.
		Seem to all be key river connect core issues. Need to maintain and further develop partnerships.	Comment.
		Conservation Management Networks should also be included: Whroo Goldfields and Lower Goulburn both have active networks that should be included. Also there is no mention of Shepp Mooroopna Urban Landcare	Whroo Goldfields considered outside of municipality, Lower Goulburn, SMULG and FOTBG included 5.2.1 .

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	or Friends of the Botanic Gardens as partners.	
	To be honest, looking at the organisations involved, it (Riverconnect) appears to me that it is possibly one big tree hugging movement anyway. Please excuse my negativity so far but I do get annoyed a bit at times with some of these mobs. Parks Vic etc.	Comment.
	Social Connections may have some programs that could work as partners.	Included pg 31 in broader stakeholder groups.
	I would like to have the Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group acknowledged for its contribution.	Agreed. IAC appreciative of SMULG's strong partnership. SMULG listed as partner in numerous sections and noted for work with Clean Up Australia Day and tree planting.
	GM Water should be a partner.	GM Water have advised will be involved as broader stakeholder group and/or on a project by project basis.
	Historical Society are interested in working together on projects, have not been engagement in past but are interested.	Noted in broader stakeholder group 5.2.1 and noted in ACTIONS***
	Friend of Botanic Gardens could be partners.	Noted in broader stakeholder group 5.2.1, will consult to establish interest.
	These targets should include GMLN among the lead agencies - especially Engaging the community; Inspire the Education sector and "clean up the RiverConnect area.	Noted, included in ETC actions 1, 3, 4 & 5, RARE action 1 and 4, and IES action 1, 2 & 3.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

		<p>The SMULG has been involved with RiverConnect since inception. The SMULG has been represented on the Land Managers group and has often helped with educational activities and has partnered with RiverConnect or Sustainability team for Clean Up Australia Day and National Tree Day. Also SMULG has played a large role in the purchase of the council of the Boulevard Bushland Reserve, it's clean up, management plan and signage.</p> <p>It would be good if our group were acknowledged in the plan as separate to Goulburn Murray Landcare.</p>	<p>Noted, included in 4.3, ETC action 1, 3, 4 &amp; 5, RARE action 4 &amp; 5 and Broader Stakeholder group 5.2.1 .</p>
		<p>The Strategic Plan offers significant opportunities for La Trobe University Shepparton Campus to engage in partnership with RiverConnect to address the goals of increasing awareness and participation in the river environment and its cultural heritage. This is most apparent in the Strategic Plan's operating principle of joined-up efforts as well as the 'Inspire the education sector' and 'showcase art and culture' as a two connection priorities and their respective 5 year targets.</p>	<p>Noted, added specific partnership.</p>
		<p>There is a canoe and adventure club located on the south end of lake these are great assets that could be used by RiverConnect.</p>	<p>Noted, included in broader stakeholder group 5.2.1 and ETC action 1.</p>
<b>Appendix</b>		<p>p.36 Correct Light House to Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project.</p>	<p>Noted, updated.</p>
		<p>Page 36 SMULG should be included as a partner.</p>	<p>Agreed, noted.</p>

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	Document who in the education sector was consulted.	Primary/Secondary education sector did not arrange a Coffee Catch Up consultation nor in Draft Consultation. Universities completed feedback in Draft consultation. Emailed information circulated to RiverConnect Education email lists.
<b>Does the plan reflect what the community wants?</b>	Those that know about it - strongly. There are too many that don't know about the river or RiverConnect.	Comment.
	Just need to increase access to the river for passive recreation. Promote ecology and health of the river as vital. Promote removal of all farm animals from river banks in rural locations.	Comment.
	General community need to be constantly updated on river issues.	Comment - see GBCMA and GV Water website. RC will promote via social media and website.
	Connecting to the river doesn't need a heap of money to build big buildings. Keep it simple. Opportunities to engage with the environment like kayaking or fishing. That's about it. This plan is over the top. I hope my rates don't get wasted on that.	Comment.
	I think the community wants to acknowledge the rivers that run through our towns. At present our CBD turns its back on it. Presently very little encouragement of river tourism. RiverConnect needs a 'grand plan' idea. Probably with private enterprise, to motivate and get momentum - boardwalks along the banks, conference and events centre with expansive windows facing the bush, restaurants on Welsford St overlooking bush park, aboriginal education centre, tourism/camping centre.	Several of these suggestions have been included in amendments or partners' strategies.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	Needs to reflect an informed community; not just any old ratbag.	Comment.
General	Actions you have listed have most of the ideas from my end covered; • Increased participation in activities with an Aboriginal component. • Improved knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal history and cultural issues in the River Connect area. • Showcasing arts & culture.	Comment.
	Happy with proposals.	Comment.
	KidsFest does not get a mention in the strategy as a very useful tool for promotion.	Mentioned in ETC action 3, is one of many useful local events for promotion.
	There is confusion between RiverConnect and Activities in the Park (along with other user groups) which need clarification.	Noted will address in future, not relevant for inclusion in plan.
	RiverConnect is wider than just Shepp/Mooroopna area. All rate payers need to see value for their rate \$\$\$\$. All towns/communities are connected to the river in some way and this should be reflected in the strategy in some way.	Noted see 1.2.
	RiverConnect utilize the services of GMLN staff and resources. At some stage this may lead to a "pay for use" strategy so we can continue to provide support at an ongoing level.	Noted. Requires further investigation.
	Maps on page 4 and 21 are unreadable.	Noted - updated.
	I started to read the draft and, well, some of the jargon just put me off....a bit long winded but I understand that as a document it must be written rather, full of jargon! Anyway, I did notice that 'anglers' got a mention a couple times.	Comment.
	I really visited Deniliquin and was impressed with that town's focus on	Comment.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	and use of their Edward River. Shepparton could learn from Deni's experience.	
	Lack of funds. Real Council commitment not lip service and short term mentality Successive council have shown by there inactivity they are not really committed. Hopefully RiverConnect will change this Shepparton / Mooroopna have never valued the river for what it could be. In travels right around Australia the fast majority of places have made the river a focal point for a vast array of activity. We seem to have treated it as a drain. Take on the water sharks who see it only as a commodity to be traded. Rising the water level and regular flow could have a major impact on the river quality. Must clean up the feeder creeks/rivers that deliver tonnes of slush each year. Look at what comes out of the Broken River now.	Comment, noted revegetation works and planned projects may assist.
	I think RiverConnect is a great program and it would be great if the model is replicated in other regions too.	Agreed, subject to funding and agency support.
	Budget inclusion in the plan. Community needs to understand the investment in these projects.	Included in page 32 under 5.2.2.
	Important that it remains community driven and isn't caught up in red tape.	Agreed.
	The major projects are not required. We don't need monuments for the river. It is a natural environment.	All projects are considered within the lighter environmental footprint value and any project is developed to build resilience in the natural environment.

## RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

	The plan doesn't spell out your coverage area. Whist it talks about all of the council area, in reality your mandate is much, much smaller (eg ends at Raftery Road, Doyles Road etc). It would be good to, in the least, see the Seven Creeks Estate area included - given our connection to the water and the importance of this connection to our estate. Our community is active and embraces the outdoors and participation in community events.	Noted, see 1.2.
	It would be great to hear how RiverConnect works with other state organisations to promote and develop programs.	Noted, will investigate communications and reporting to improve.
	Overall I think it looks good. Cool layout, easy to read & show what work has been done before going into what you are doing in the future. Priority areas are good & like that you have listed important things like cleaning up the river and creating tourism opportunities but also have some new initiative that will attract people to the river like yoga!	Comment.
	RiverConnect is the biggest waste of investment on output. It was previously, and may still be, stacked with politics costing rate payers a fortune, over and above all other community projects. Accountability to the community for output is paramount on all projects, but especially this one.	Comment.
	GVW is aware of the past River Connect strategy and programs performed within the Shepparton-Mooroopna areas, and has participated in programs aimed at meeting past strategy objectives.	Comment.
	Good format, great document, easy to read.	Comment.

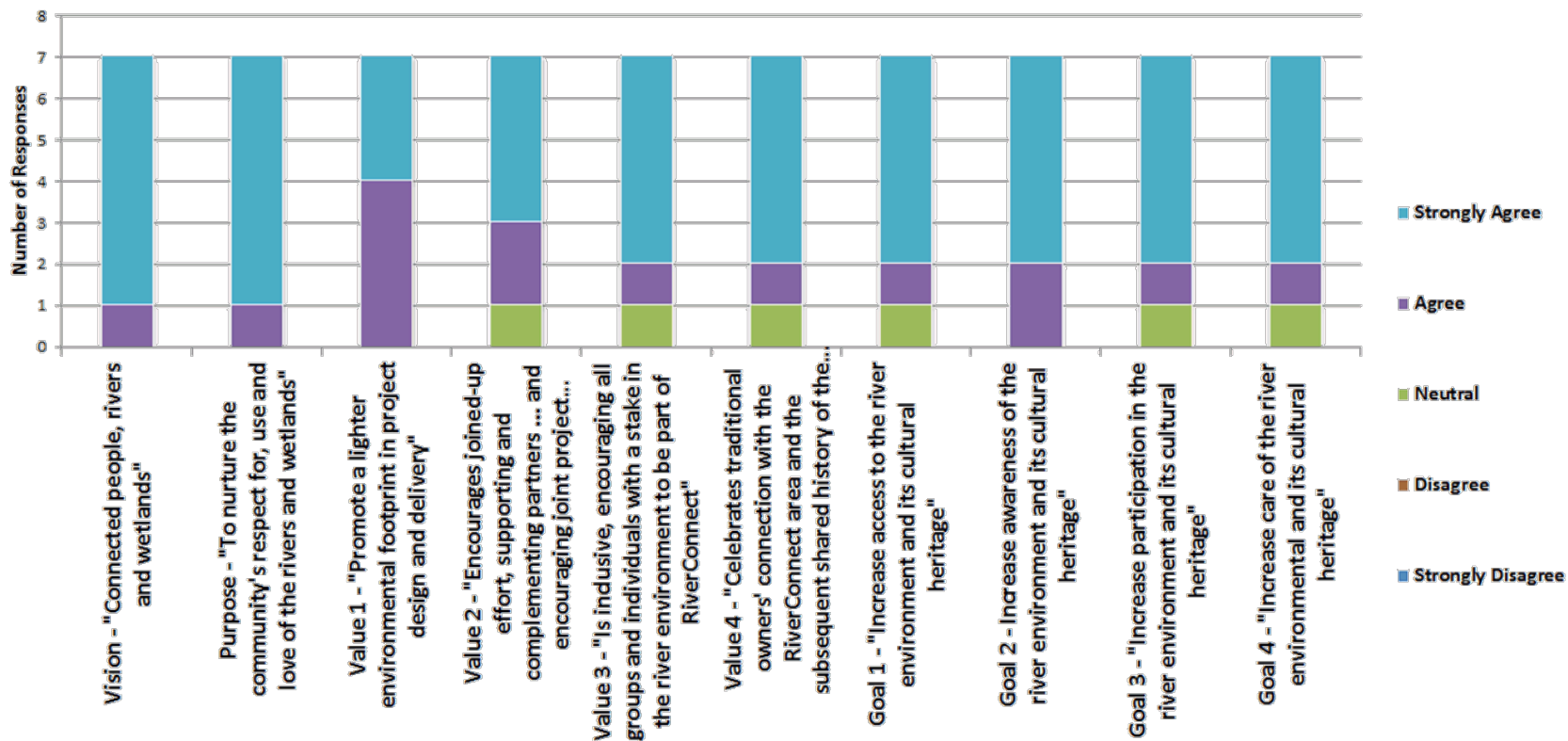


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

## 2. Survey Responses (quantitative data)

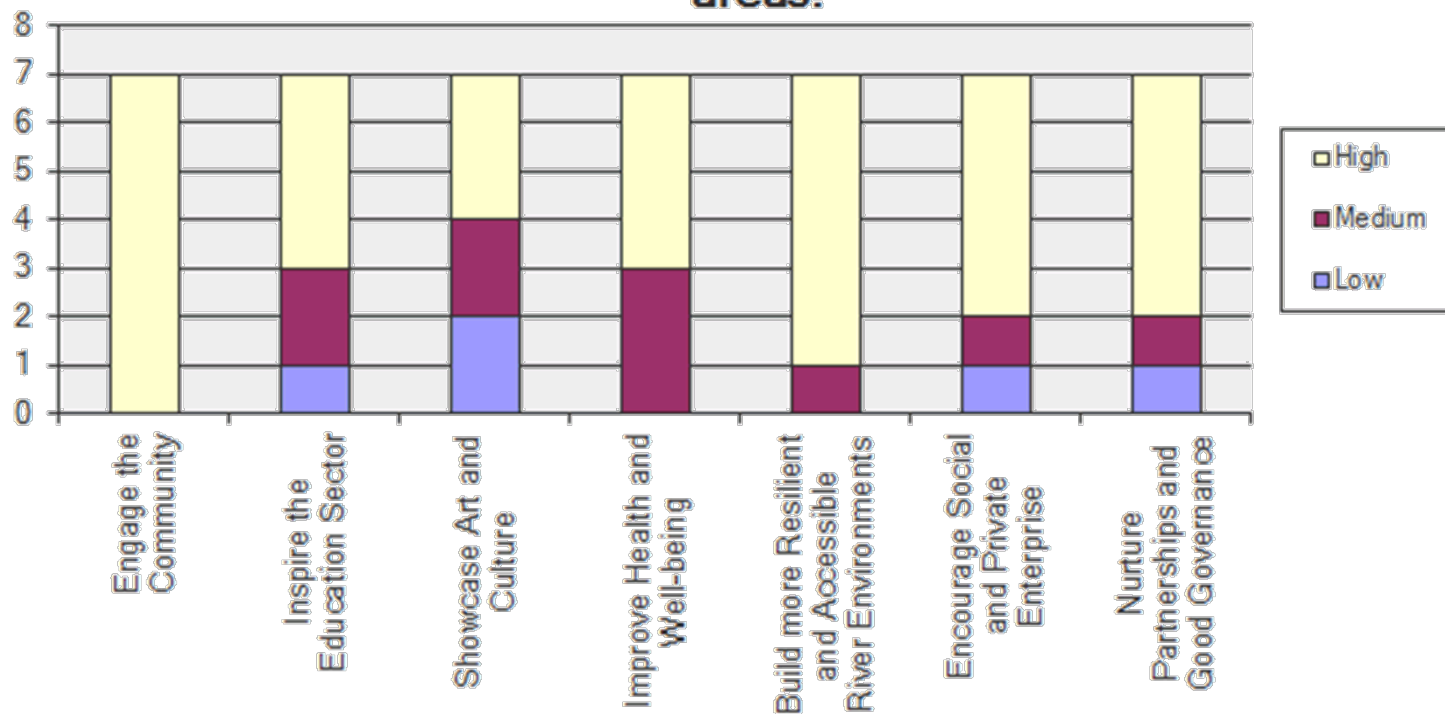
### a) Agency/Organisation Survey

How strongly do you agree with the proposed Vision, Purpose, Values and Long Term Goals of RiverConnect

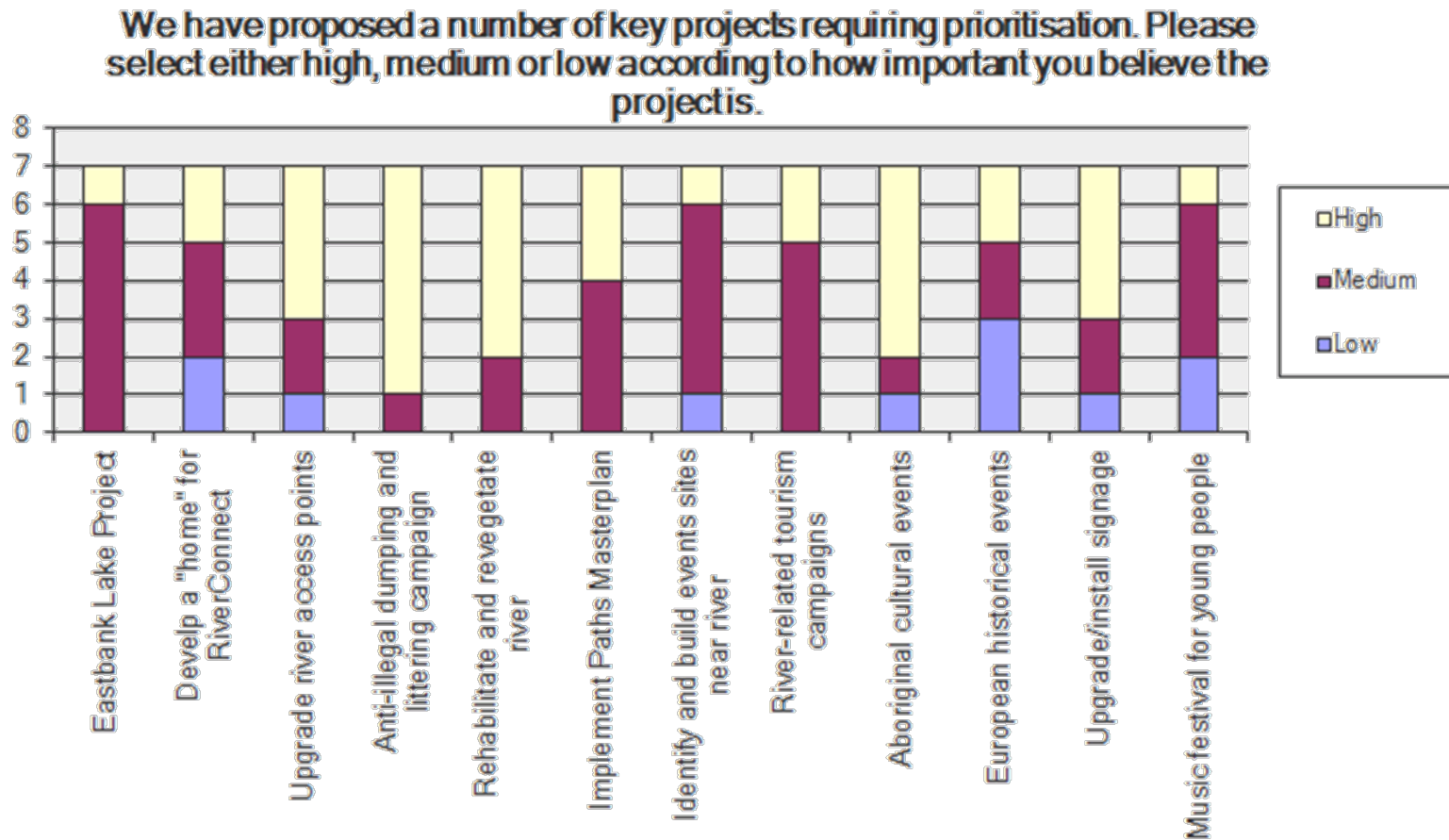


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

**We have proposed 7 key priority areas. Please rate these priorities from high to low to assist us to determine our focus areas.**



RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

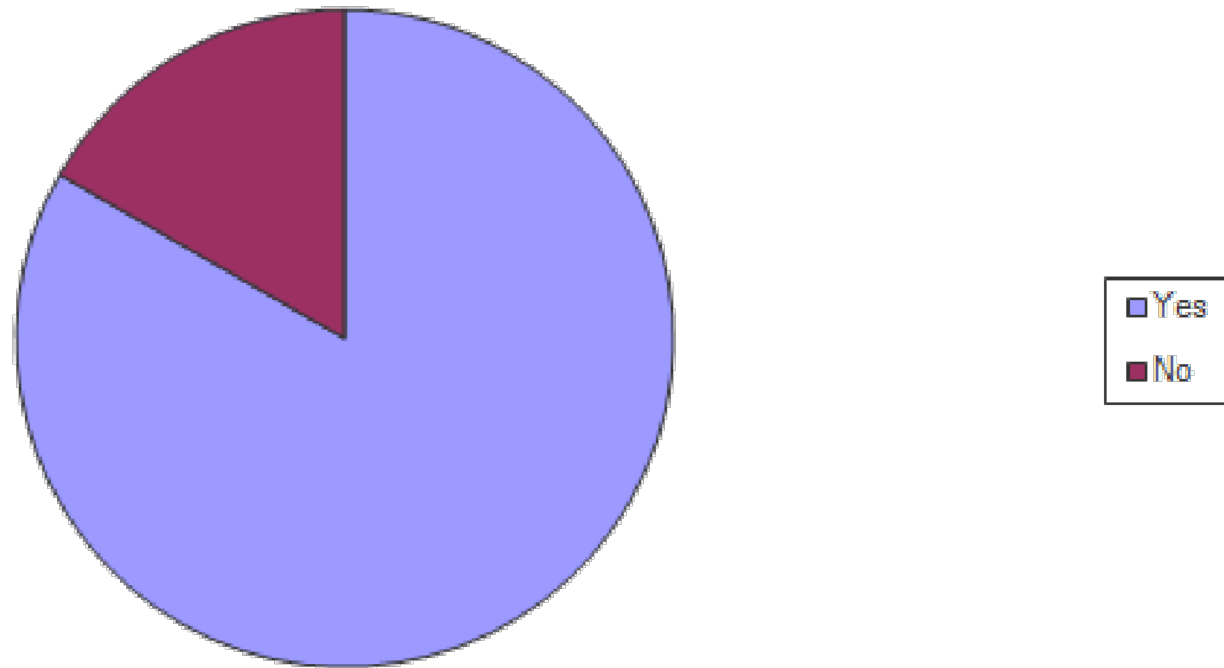


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document



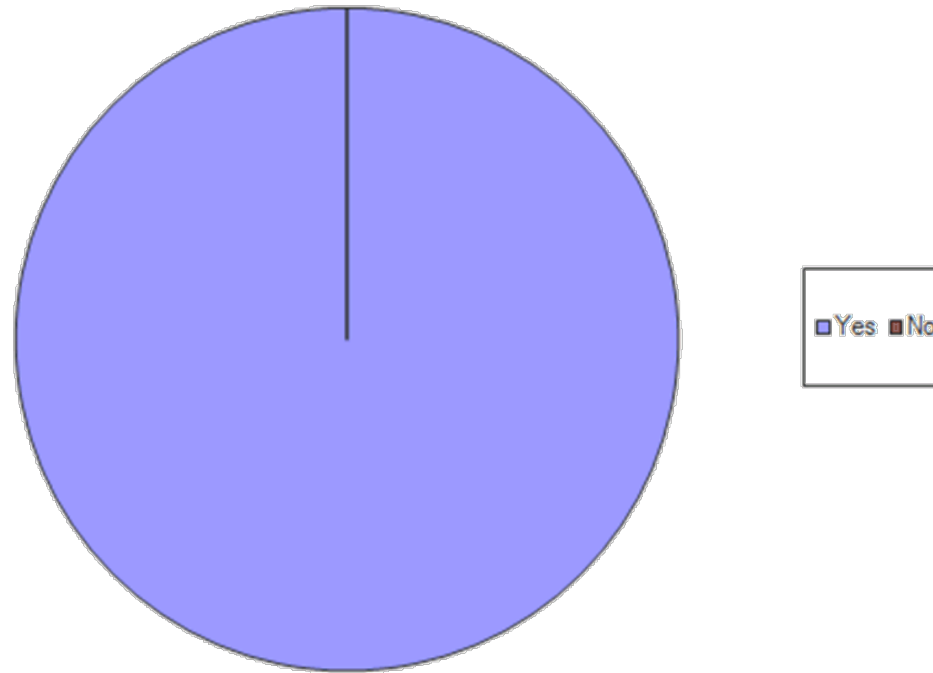
RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

### Has your organisation been involved with RiverConnect in the past, and if yes, in what capacity?



RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

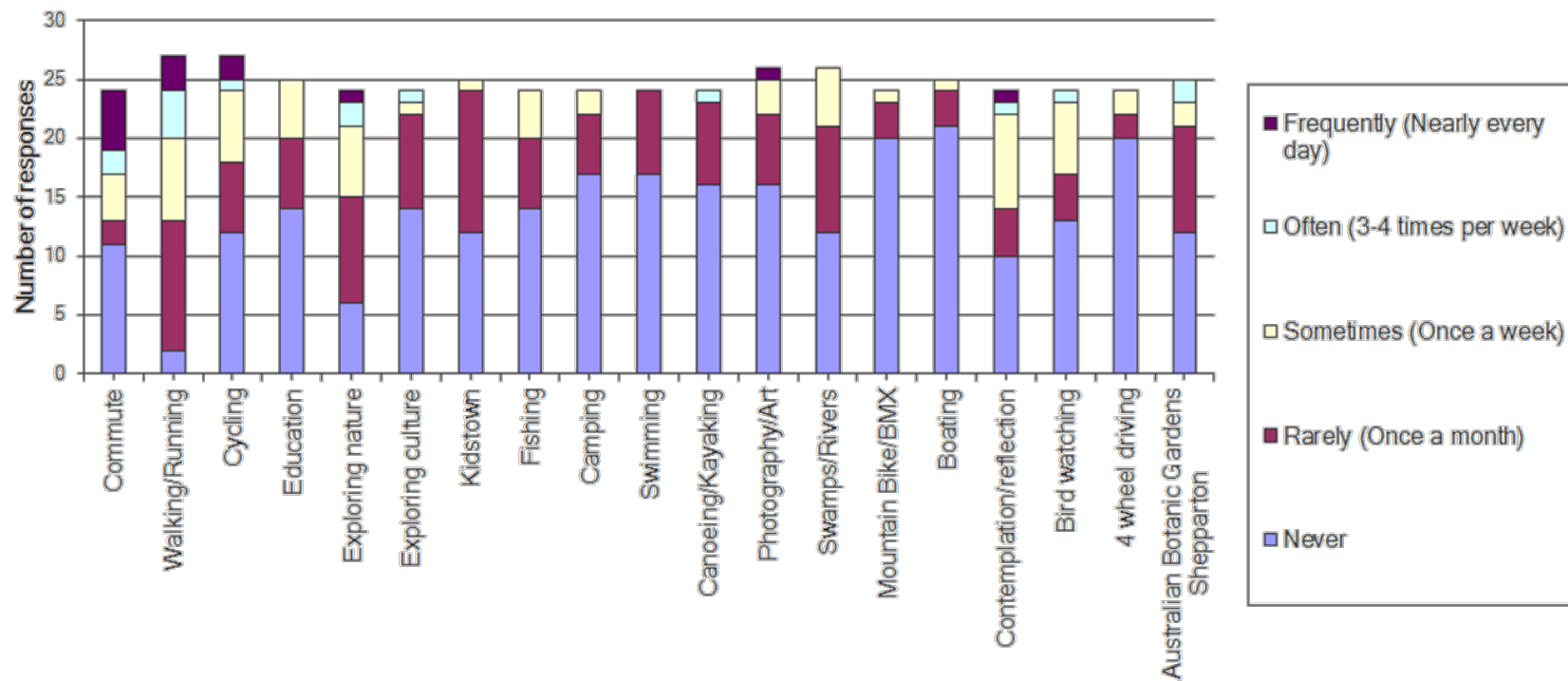
### Would you like to be involved in RiverConnect in the future?



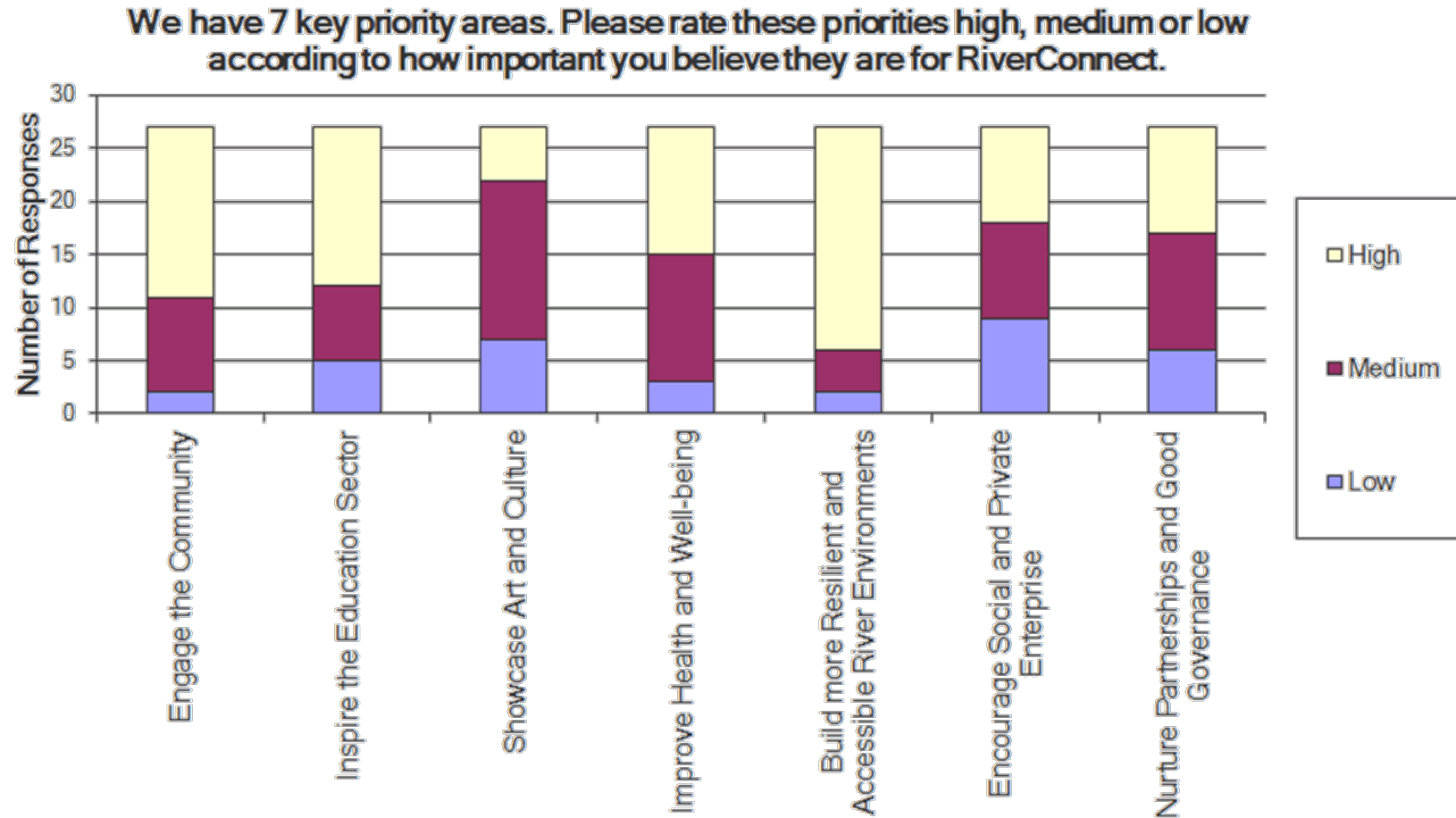
RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

### b) Community Surveys

What activities to do you enjoy near the river and how often to do them?



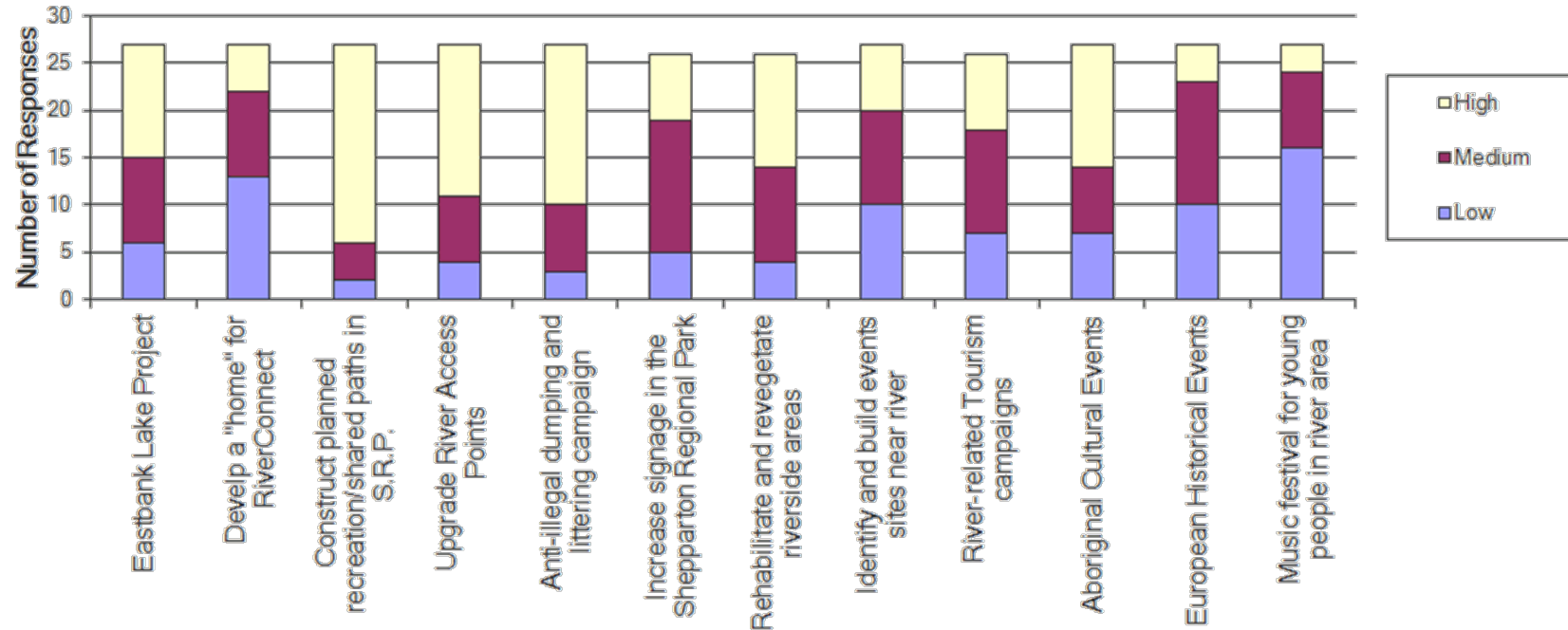
RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document



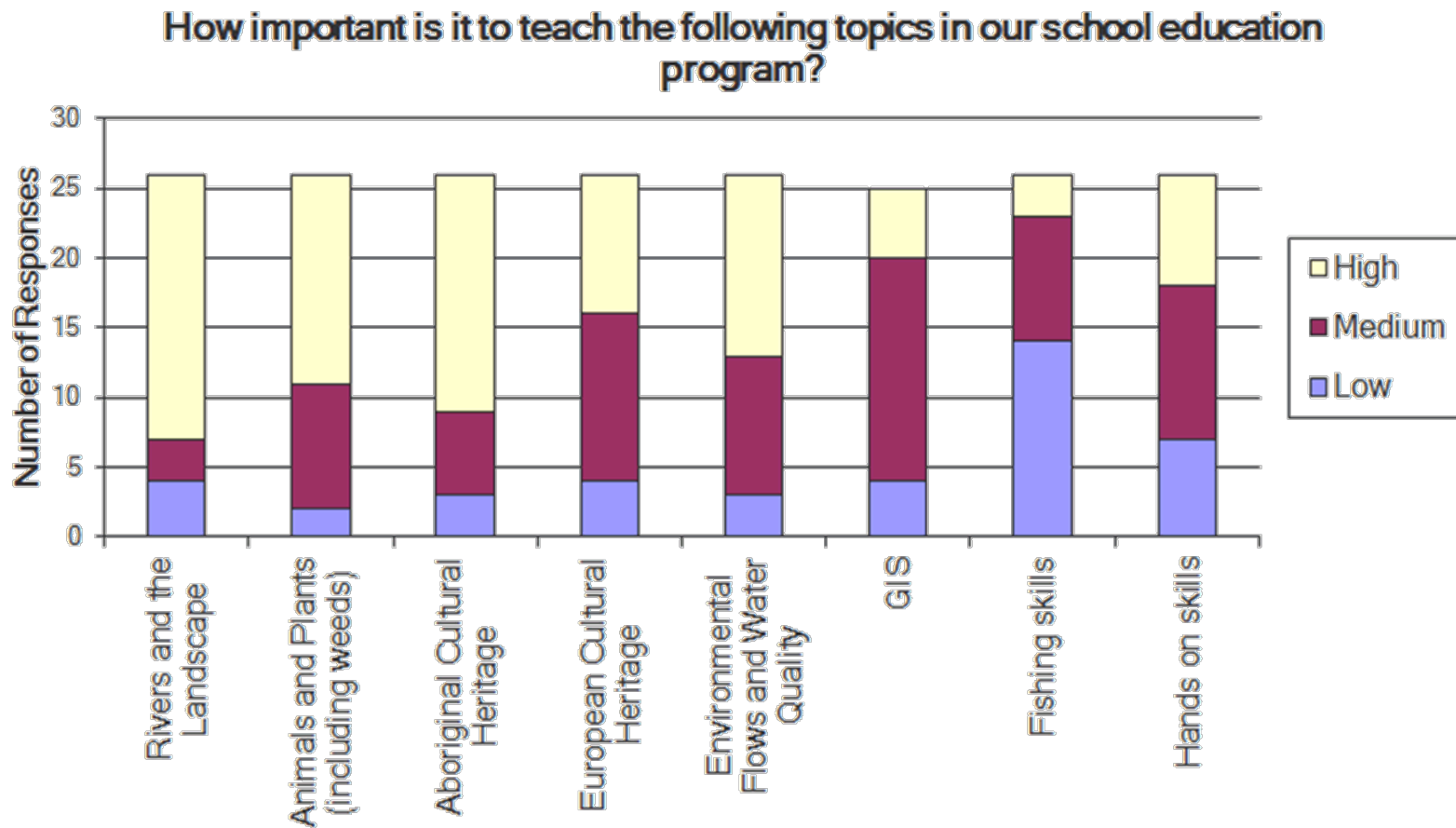


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

We have a number of key projects, can you help us to prioritise them? Please select either high, medium or low according to how important it is for RiverConnect to focus on the project.

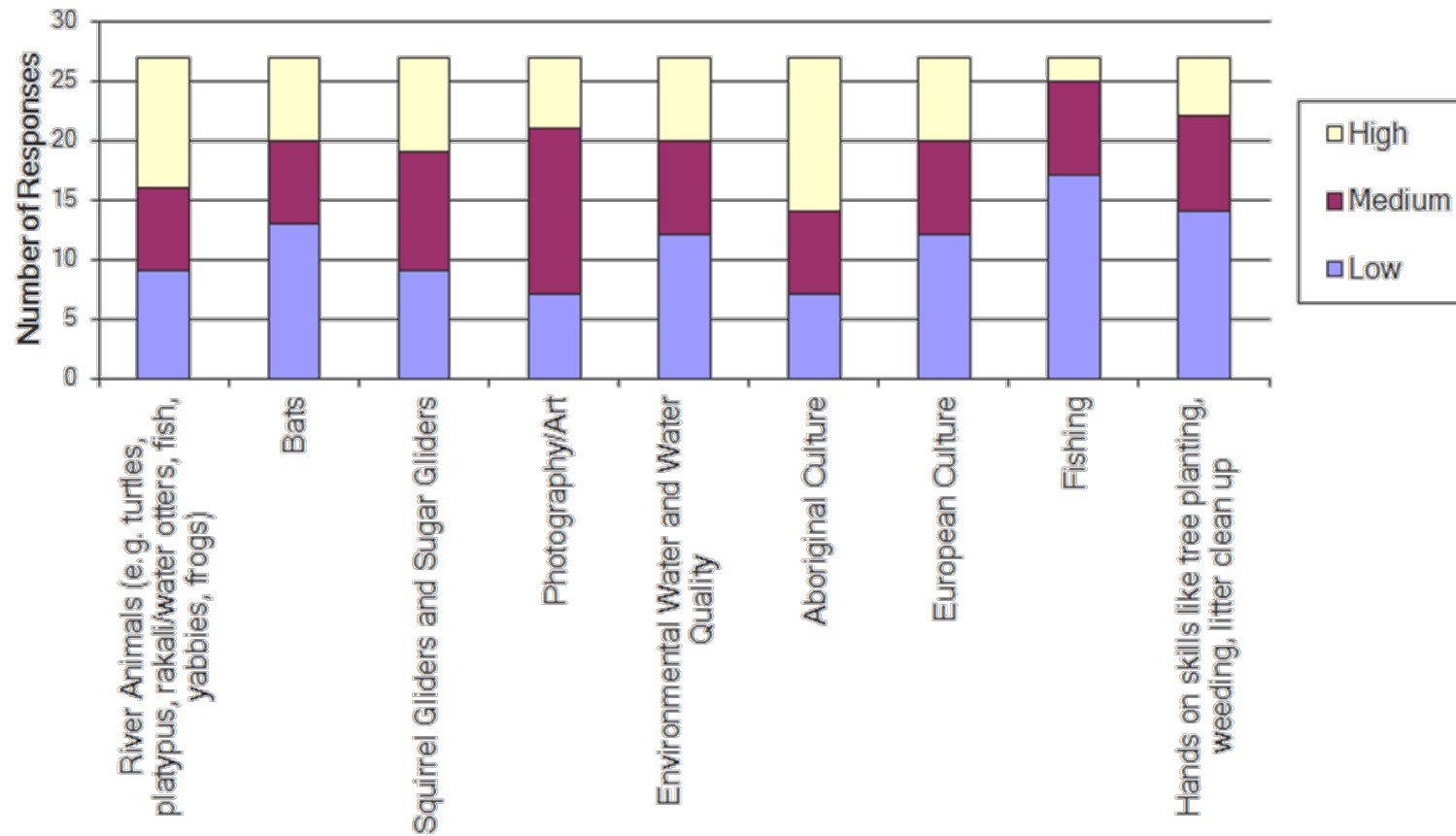


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document



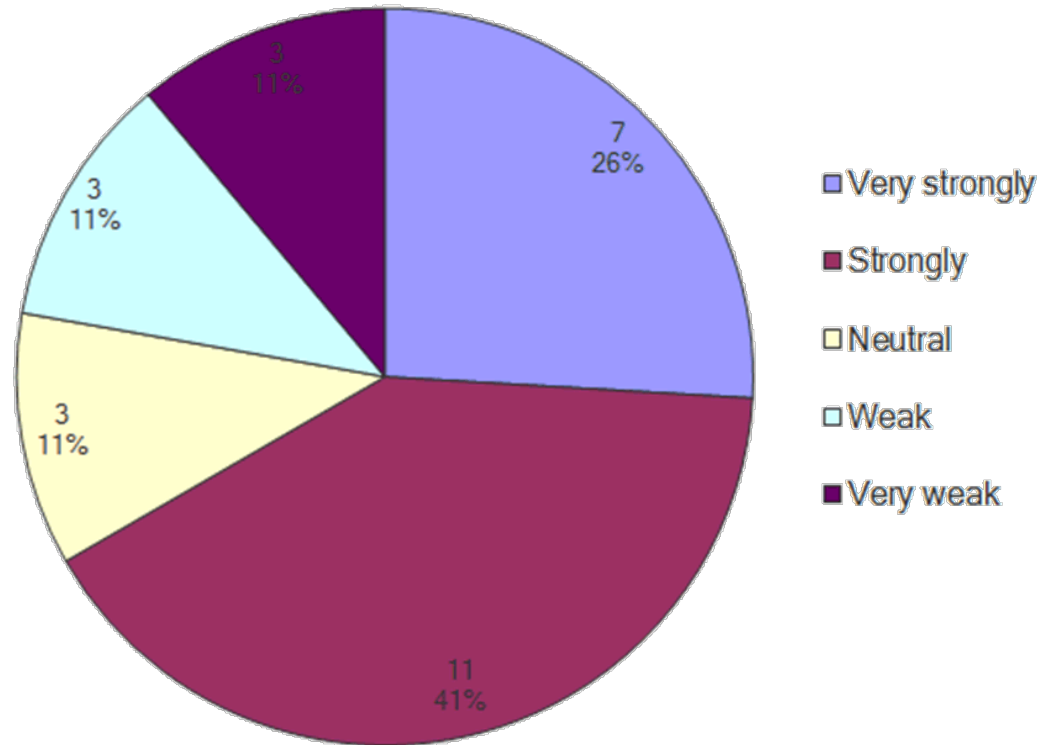
RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

### How interested are you in attending informative and entertaining events/activities on the following topics?

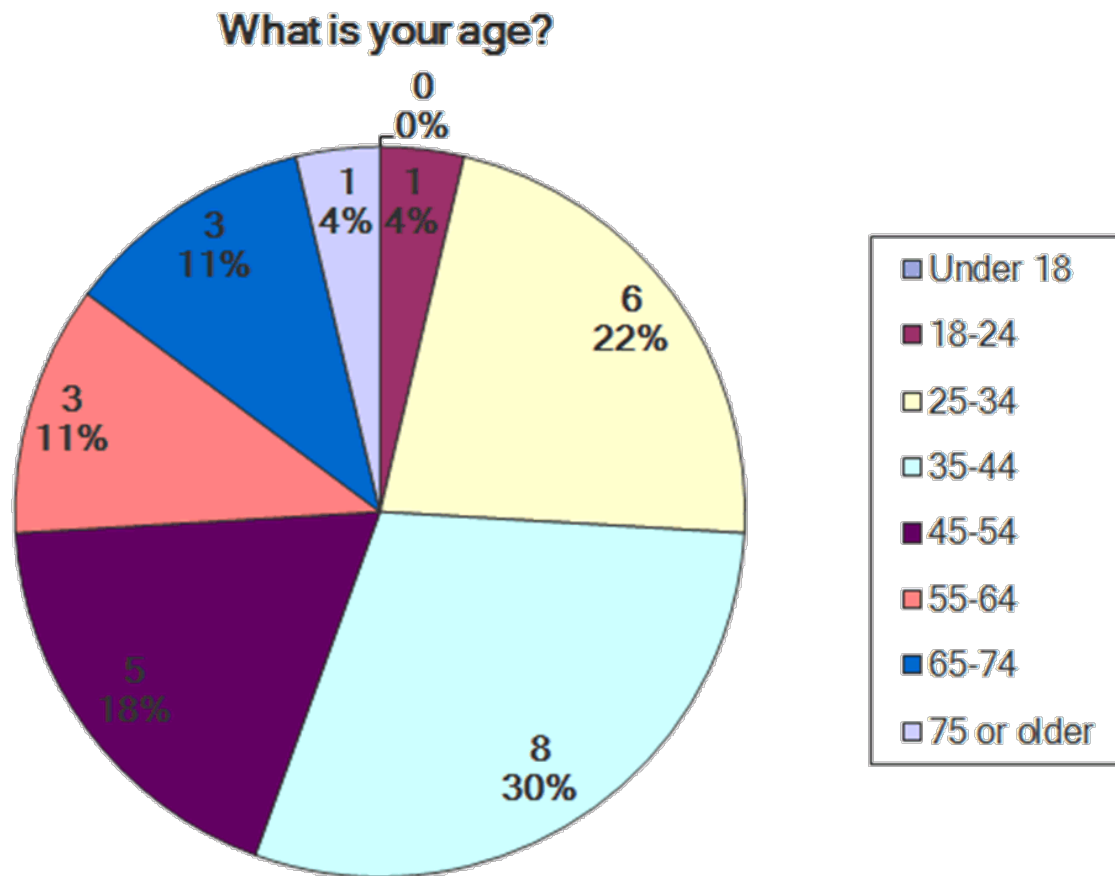


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

### How strongly do you think RiverConnect's future plans reflect what the community wants?

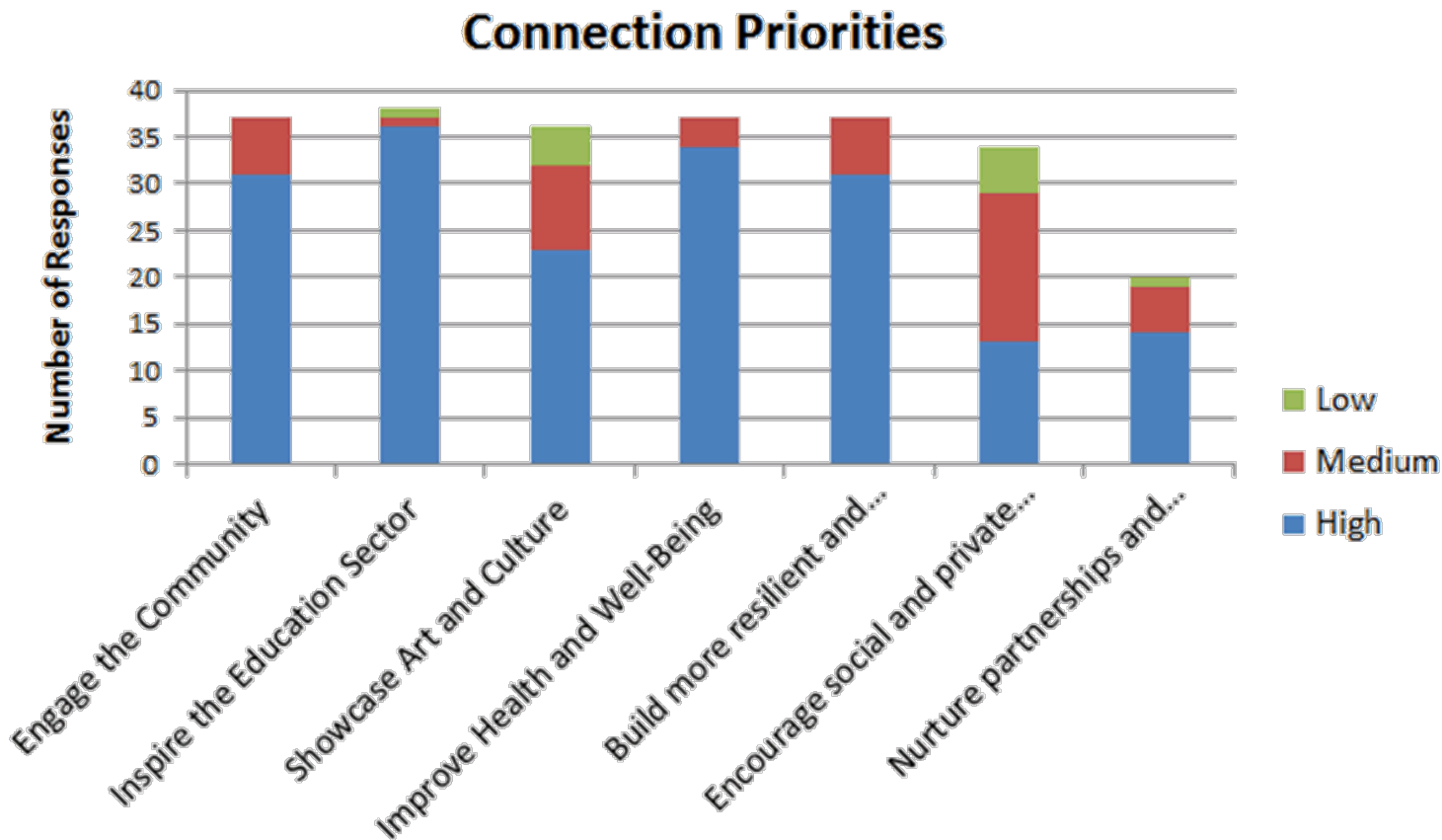


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

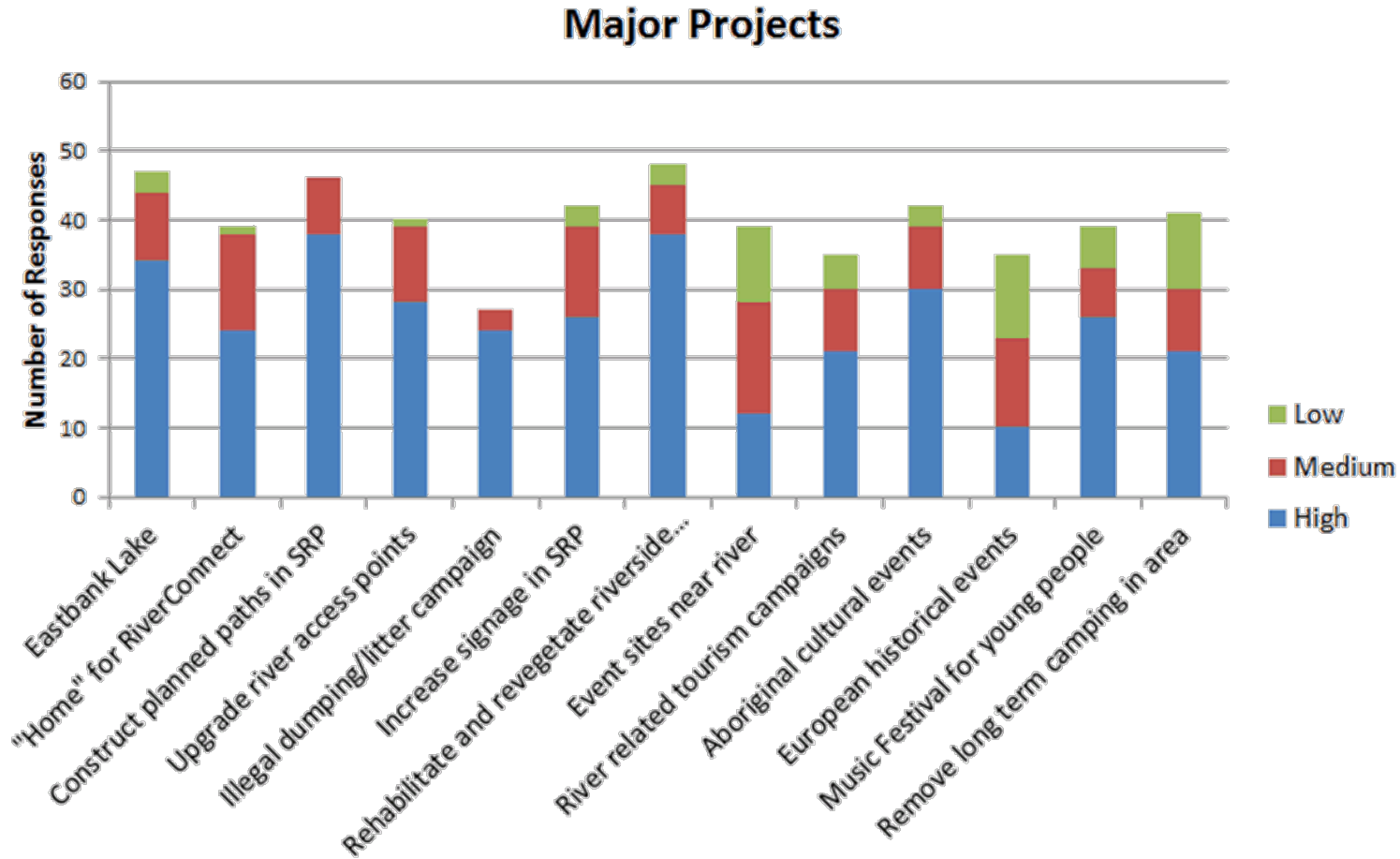


RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

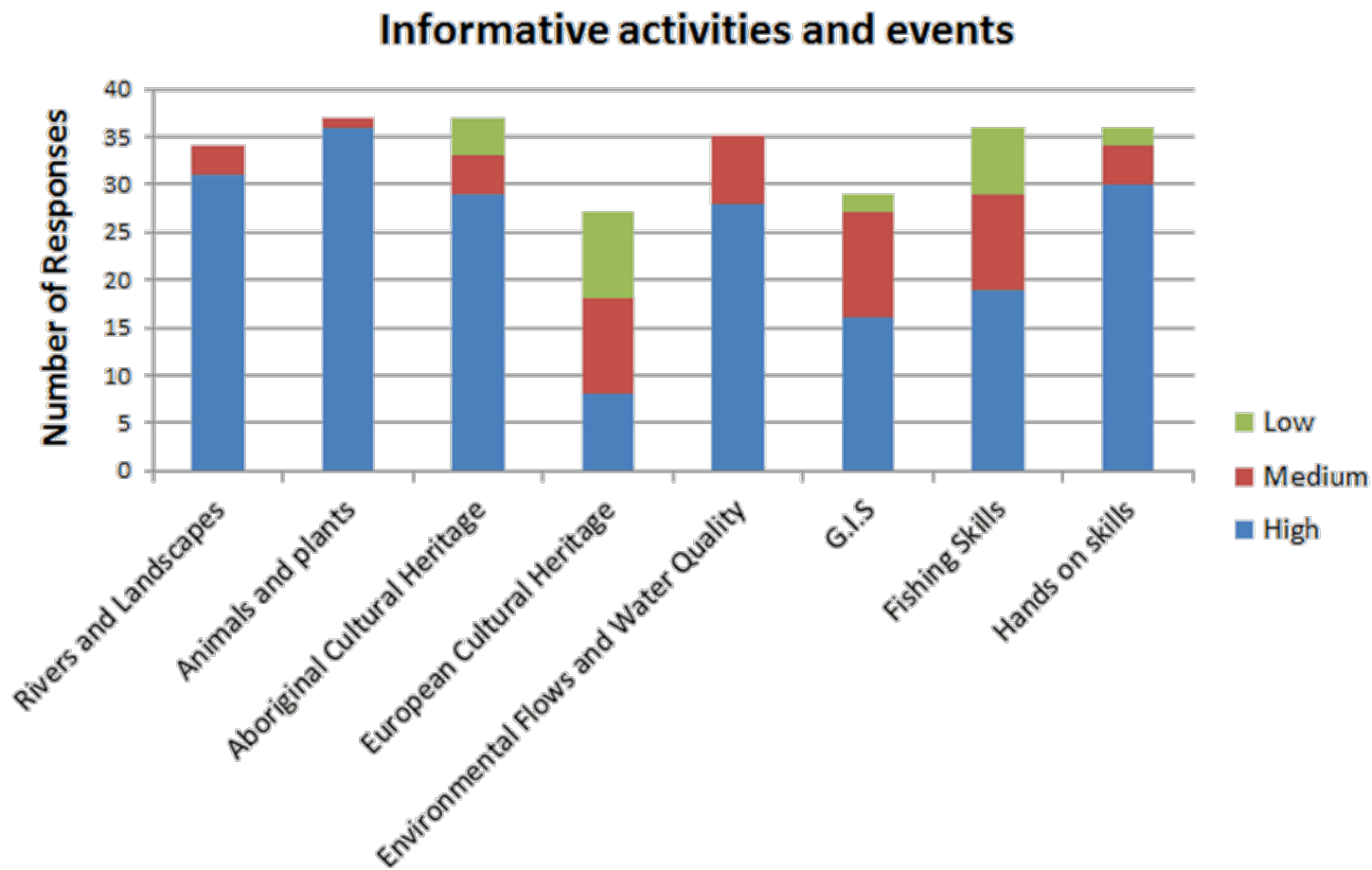
**c) Event survey responses**



RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document



RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

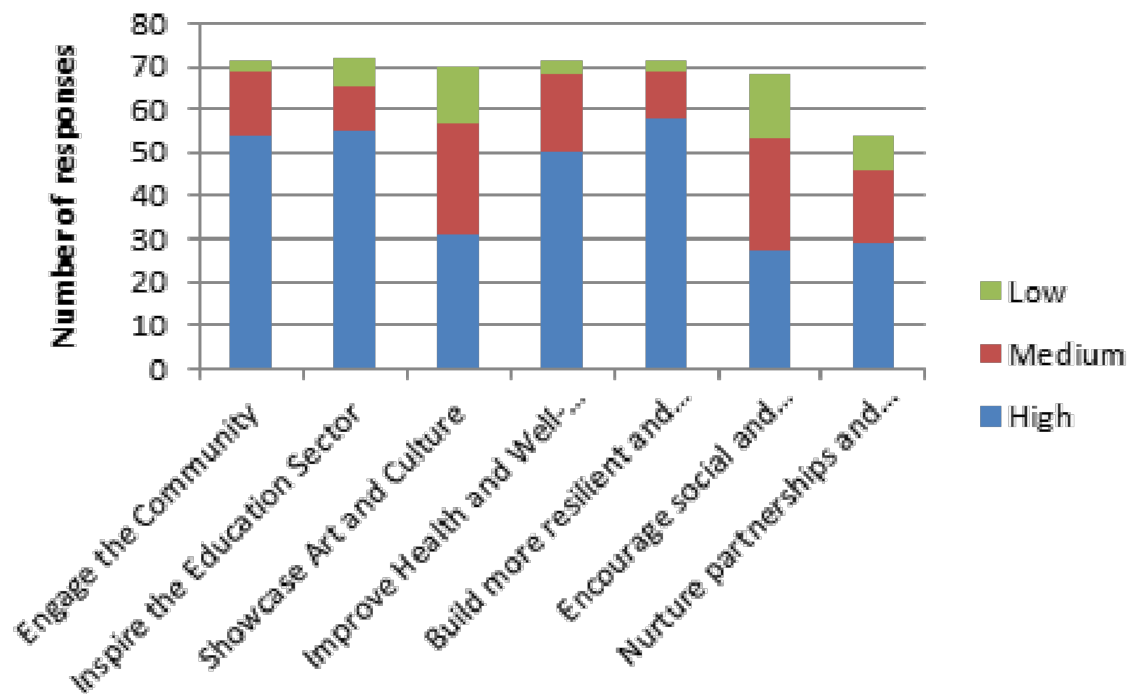




RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

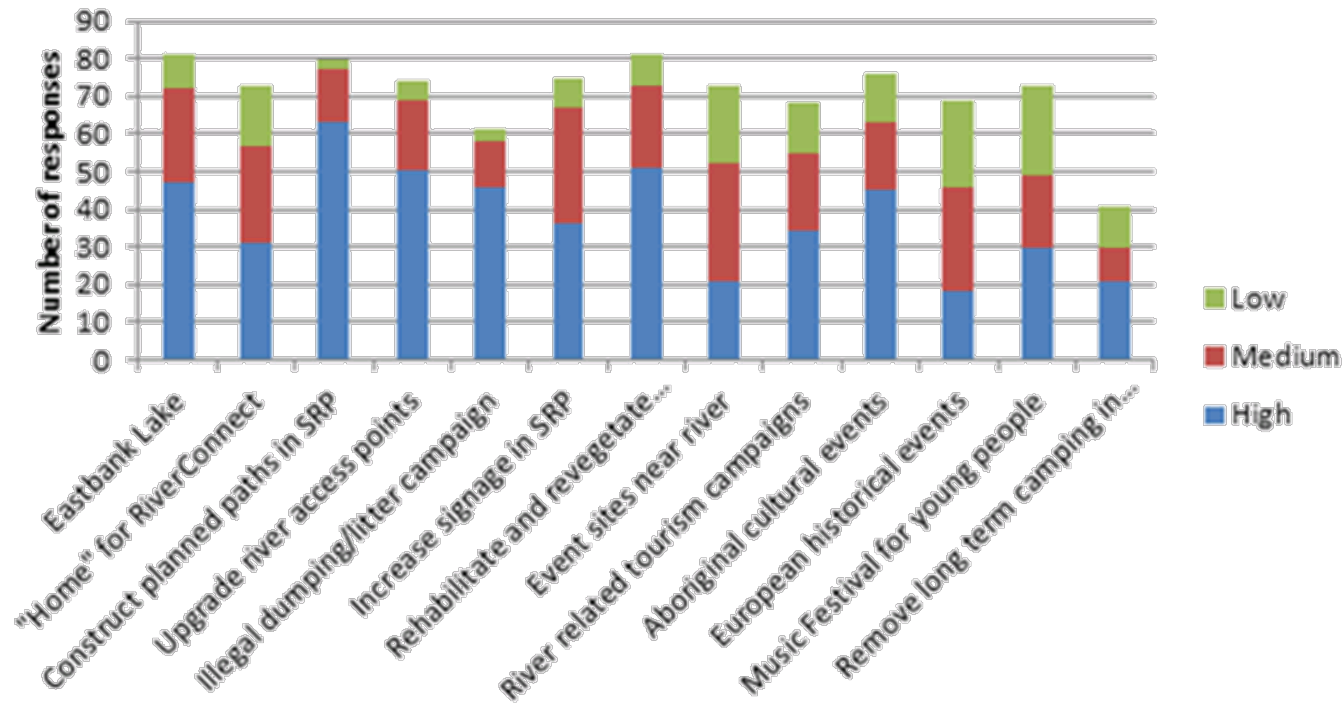
**d) Overall Survey Responses (comparable data only)**

**Prioritising Connection Priorities  
(total)**



RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 What You Said document

### Prioritising Major Projects (total)





# Strategic Plan 2017-2022

# We the undersigned ...

Are pleased to have contributed to the development of the RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and look forward to working in partnership to deliver the Strategy.

**Peter Harriott**  
CEO, Greater Shepparton City Council

**Chris Norman**  
CEO, Goulburn Broken CMA

**John Laing**  
President, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network

---  
Goulburn Valley Environment Group

---  
Parks Victoria

---  
Word and Mouth

---  
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

---  
Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative

---  
Goulburn Valley Water

---  
Community representative

---  
Community representative

---  
Community representative

# Contents

RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 Summary	2
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 What is RiverConnect?	3
1.2 Where is RiverConnect?	3
1.3 Why the RiverConnect model?	3
1.4 The first RiverConnect Strategic Plan	5
1.5 The RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022	5
<b>2. Vision, purpose and values driving goals and priorities</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Vision	6
2.2 Purpose	6
2.3 Values	6
2.4 Long-term goals	7
2.5 Priorities	10
<b>3. The current environment</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 River environment attributes and issues	11
3.2 Issues and threats identified by community	12
<b>4. How have we been doing – RiverConnect achievements 2011-2016</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 What difference has RiverConnect made?	13
4.2 RiverConnect Achievements	14
4.3 Within Action Programs	14
4.4 Action Program progress in detail	18
4.5 IAC Evaluation	23
<b>5. Action, implementation and evaluation 2017-2022</b>	<b>24</b>
5.1 5-year priorities, targets and actions	24
5.2 Implementation	29
5.3 Monitoring, assessment, review and adaptation	33
<b>Appendix 1: Strategic Plan review process</b>	<b>37</b>

# RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 Summary

## VISION & PURPOSE

**Vision**  
Connected people, rivers and wetlands.

**Purpose**  
To nurture the community's respect for, use and love of the rivers and wetlands.

The vision and purpose will be achieved by realising long-term goals that increase:

- access to,
- awareness of,
- participation in, and
- care of

the river environment and its cultural heritage, through seven connection priorities for action.

## CONNECTION PRIORITIES

impact on one or more of the above long-term goals

## 5-YEAR TARGETS

for implementing action

Engage the community	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25% increase in use of shared pathways</li> <li>- 25% increased participation in river environment activities</li> </ul>
Inspire the education sector	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50% of Greater Shepparton schools have at least one class engaging with the river environment annually, involving 1,000 students</li> <li>- One tertiary education project in the RiverConnect area</li> </ul>
Showcase art and culture	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,000 participants annually in traditional owner-led events in the river environment</li> <li>- Significant whole-of-community events and projects celebrate our shared history</li> </ul>
Improve health and wellbeing	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared path network is extended by 9km and one river crossing built</li> <li>- Opportunities and spaces are created that people actively use</li> </ul>
Build a more resilient and accessible river environment	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extent and quality of native vegetation and water quality is improved</li> <li>- Access for various community sectors, from anglers to the elderly, is increased at five locations</li> <li>- 75% decrease in volume of illegally dumped rubbish</li> <li>- Decrease of priority weeds along shared paths and priority areas</li> </ul>
Encourage Social and Private Enterprise	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One example each of a social and private enterprise associated with RiverConnect aspirations</li> </ul>
Nurture partnerships and good governance	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key stakeholders continue to endorse and support the partnership and governance arrangements of RiverConnect</li> <li>- Funding levels 'won' (and shared), from government and 'non-traditional' sources consistent with RiverConnect aspirations</li> <li>- RiverConnect is accountable and adaptive</li> </ul>

# 1. Introduction

Our rivers bring life to the region and hold a wealth of untapped secrets and opportunities. In the past, the Shepparton - Mooroopna communities' appreciation of, and engagement with, the Goulburn and Broken Rivers have varied, famously "turning our back to the river". The river systems were largely managed by agencies in isolation, with little connection between these managers or with the community.

The creation of RiverConnect was driven by the desire to develop a strong sense of belonging and connection to our rivers and a more cohesive approach to river management. And so, in 2005, RiverConnect was born. Original partners included Greater Shepparton City Council (GSCC), Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GB CMA), other natural resource groups, and Aboriginal and educational organisations. Together, they supported a multi-agency and whole-of-community approach to future management of the Goulburn and Broken Rivers and the surrounding Red Gum forests and floodplains (the river environment).

Most of the original partners are still committed to RiverConnect. Together, we have come a long way to addressing those barriers, but in such a complex environment, we still have things to achieve.

RiverConnect aspires to see the Goulburn and Broken River environment duly recognised as the life and soul of river communities. Over its first ten years, the dynamic concept of RiverConnect has supported a raft of existing and new alliances. These partnerships resulted in activities that inspired the community to increase their appreciation and custodianship of the river as a social, economic, environmental, educational and cultural asset.

RiverConnect has been pivotal in the growing appreciation of the significance of the river environment. The river is a vital artery, supplying water for homes, irrigation, food processing, industry and gardens. It provides a key wildlife corridor from the mountains to the Murray and important habitat for threatened native species.

It also offers a beautiful backdrop for recreation and is an enormously significant cultural heritage site for the Aboriginal population. There continues to be a wealth of untapped secrets and opportunities around the river.

## 1.1 What is RiverConnect?

RiverConnect is a partnership program between land management agencies, stakeholders and community. RiverConnect is a network, not an organisation, auspiced by GSCC. The network includes many partners who use, manage, or are responsible for, the river environment in some way.

## 1.2 Where is RiverConnect?

The RiverConnect area traditionally covered the river frontages and forest floodplain areas adjacent to the Shepparton-Mooroopna urban zones, broadly within the following limits (refer Figure 1 on next page). The emphasis moving forward is to bring the broader community to the river. River communities such as Toolamba and Murchison, as well as community members across the Greater Shepparton municipality, are encouraged to be involved and discuss ways to bring the RiverConnect Program to them.

## 1.3 Why the RiverConnect model?

RiverConnect is working in a complex area; effective, management requires high levels of collaboration and co-operation to achieve better environmental, economic and social outcomes for the river and the community. The partnership model of RiverConnect has been at the heart of its success by enabling community and agencies to come together to identify and action shared priorities.

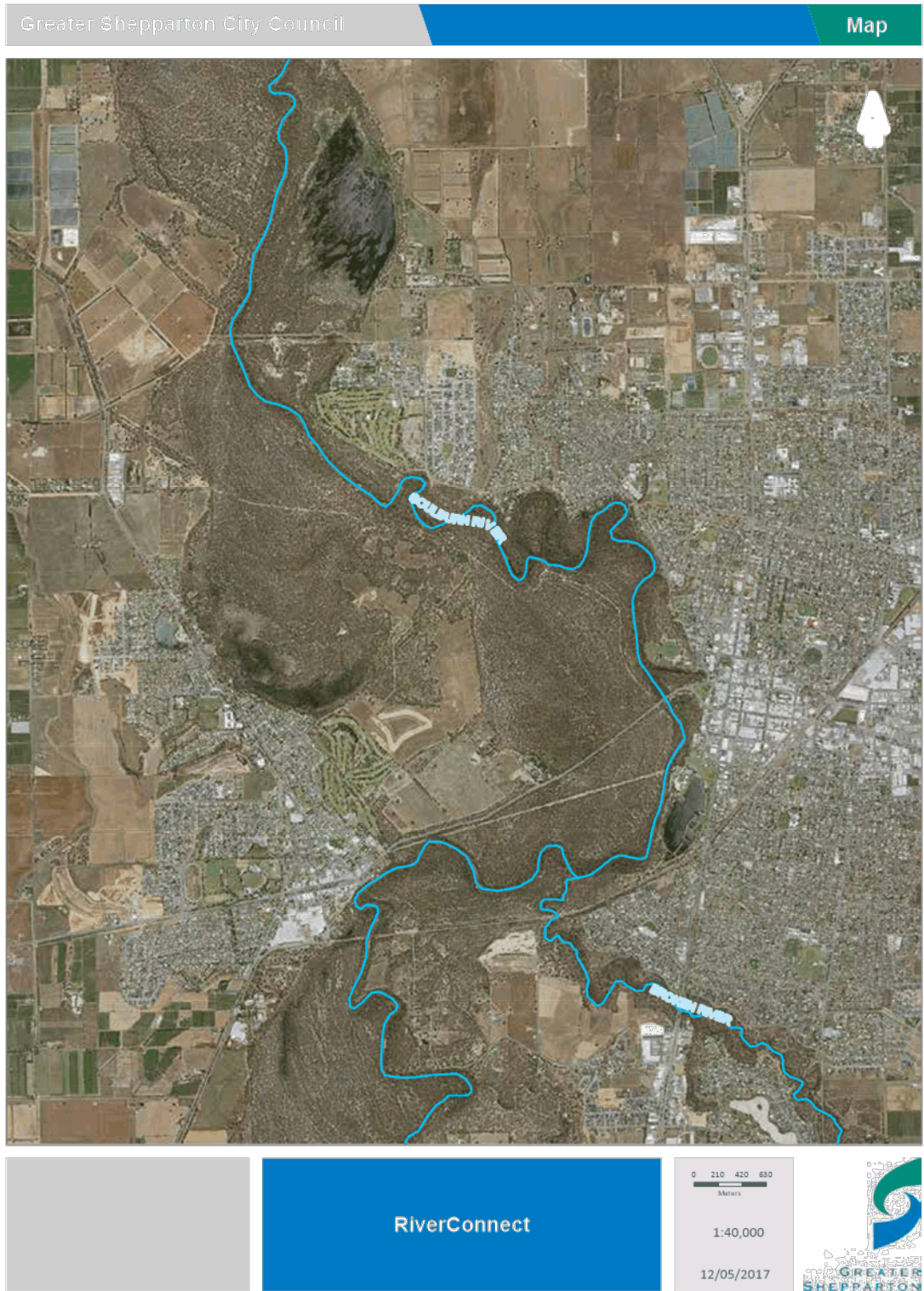
Partners in RiverConnect believe:

- there are great opportunities to use the river environment of Shepparton and Mooroopna in promoting people's connectedness with each other, personal connectedness with the natural environment, personal wellness, and community wellbeing;



4 | RiverConnect

Figure 1: RiverConnect primary project area





- the resilience of the river environment of the RiverConnect area is challenged by the increasing population, increased usage and occasional poor behaviour and deliberate damage;
- there are many people and organisations who have an interest in the RiverConnect area, and there are many benefits from 'joined-up efforts' (working together);
- joined-up efforts require trust and goodwill, and partners understand it takes time and perseverance to build;
- risks and opportunities can arise unexpectedly, especially in a multi-stakeholder operating environment, and plans therefore need to be flexible and adaptive; and
- given the above, working together to achieve the vision is worthwhile.

#### 1.4 The first RiverConnect Strategic Plan

The RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) led the implementation of the first RiverConnect Strategic Plan (2011-2016). The actions put in place through that Plan have yielded a range of significant benefits. These include a vibrant educational program, land managers working more closely together to improve the health of the river environment, exciting activities that engage more of the community with the river and further opportunities for the Aboriginal community to recognise, record and share their ancient relationship with the waterways.

RiverConnect has gone a long way to meeting the needs identified in the first Strategic Plan through the integration of effort brought about by enduring partnerships. This integration has led to RiverConnect attracting funding for a range of exciting projects that continue to connect many parts of the community to the river.

It was time to consult with our partners and the community to renew the Strategic Plan. We needed to look over the achievements of RiverConnect, reaffirm the vision for the future, and identify a new suite of actions to be undertaken to achieve the vision.

#### 1.5 The RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022

As with the first Strategic Plan, this renewed Plan is not a "blueprint" with every future action fully detailed. It is an adaptive plan. Many of the actions will require further investigation to determine their detailed design and feasibility.

Funding for implementation will be determined by each of the partner organisations through their normal budgetary processes. Levels of activity will be dependent on the overall availability of funding in each organisation. Many of the actions will be suitable targets for external funding from State and Federal government sources or philanthropic organisations. A number of the actions in the Plan will only proceed if this external funding is available.

This renewed Plan continues to provide a high level, integrated strategy to guide the activities of all of the RiverConnect partners. This will ensure a co-ordinated approach to enhancing the environmental, cultural, recreational and economic value of the rivers and will ensure that the available funds are directed to achieve the greatest possible benefit.

Four chapters follow this introduction:

1. RiverConnect vision, purpose, values, long-term goals and priorities;
2. About the RiverConnect area; attributes and issues;
3. Documentation of RiverConnect achievements;
4. Actions for the future and implementation guidance, including governance and evaluation.

## 2. Vision, purpose and values driving goals and priorities

Vision and purpose statements are important beacons that provide direction for a program. The RiverConnect IAC has updated the purpose and vision statements for RiverConnect from the original strategy to reflect current thinking and the direction for RiverConnect in the future.

Values form the operating philosophies or principles that guide an organisation's internal behaviour as well as its relationship with its partners. The values agreed upon by the IAC underpin the way RiverConnect operates and directs how partners work together.

The vision, purpose and values combine to direct a set of long-term goals for RiverConnect. Delivering these goals in a way that meets our values is the reason we are all part of RiverConnect; our purpose. Achievement of these goals will see us meet our vision.

### 2.1 Vision

Our vision:

*Connected people, rivers and wetlands*

### 2.2 Purpose

Our purpose:

*To nurture the community's respect for, use and love of the rivers and wetlands.*

### 2.3 Values

As a network of partners collaborating to achieve outcomes in a complex and dynamic setting, the success of RiverConnect depends on an agreed set of operating principles or values. RiverConnect:

- Promotes a **LIGHTER ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT** in the design and delivery of all projects;
- Encourages **JOINED-UP EFFORT**, supporting and complementing partners (is not in competition with them) and encouraging joint project ownership via strong partnerships, with a shared understanding of responsibilities;
- Is **INCLUSIVE**, encouraging all groups and individuals with a stake in the river environment to be part of RiverConnect; and
- Celebrates **TRADITIONAL OWNERS CONNECTION** with the RiverConnect area and the subsequent **SHARED HISTORY** of the diverse cultural groups who have come to the region.



## 2.4 Long-term goals

The vision and purpose of RiverConnect will be achieved by realising long-term goals that increase:

- **access** to,
- **awareness** of,
- **participation in**, and
- **care** of

the river environment and its cultural heritage, through seven connection priorities that direct actions.

### 2.4.1 LONG-TERM GOALS IN DETAIL

#### ► **GOAL: Increase access to the river environment and its cultural heritage**

In order to connect to our river environment and its cultural heritage, the community must be able to access the river in ways that are compatible with their lifestyles. The shared path network is central to this access and will be expanded through implementation and revision of the RiverConnect Paths Master Plan.

There is currently 30 kilometres of shared pathways across the river landscape. Doubling the paths network would create interlinked paths that connect the community and visitors to the river.

In addition, access to the river's edge and water will be upgraded in strategic locations across the region so that residents can visit the river in reasonable proximity to where they live and access for people with families and individuals with a disability is improved.

Directional signage and strategic pedestrian routes from urban centres and key tourism locations will encourage people to visit the river, and interpretative signage will educate them about the spaces they are using.

#### ► **GOAL: Increase awareness of the river environment and its cultural heritage**

The Greater Shepparton community has a strong desire to learn and understand more about all aspects of the RiverConnect area. Increasing this understanding will improve our appreciation of the area and build our connection to the river environment.

RiverConnect has had a strong educational program that has involved students using the river environment as an outdoor classroom. New opportunities to learn in the environment will continue to be investigated and expanded to connect more students and teachers.

RiverConnect participation in a range of community events will continue to provide education opportunities for the community. There is also a strong desire to better understand and learn from the rich and diverse legacy of both Aboriginal and European history and culture unique to the region. The Strategic Plan sets priorities to facilitate the sharing of this knowledge with the wider community.

RiverConnect will continue to engage the community about the many values of the river environment. It will also support the community to live and interact positively with the active floodplain. The community will, at times, need to face large natural floods, but will also see smaller, over bank flows that will benefit the riverine environment.

#### ► **GOAL: Increase participation in the river environment and its cultural heritage**

In conjunction with improving physical access to the river environment, co-ordinated efforts need to continue to encourage people living locally or visiting to use these areas and connect physically and emotionally. As an example, self-guided tours may be developed for the area and maps could be produced in new and innovative ways to provide information to the community; residents and visitors alike.

Shepparton hosts a range of events and festivals and there is continued encouragement to incorporate activities based in or relating to the RiverConnect area in these events. Investigations are needed to examine the feasibility of new events and activities.

Physical health and well-being and mental health and well-being can be strengthened through physical activity and interaction with the natural environment through educational, social, cultural and artistic endeavours.





► **GOAL: Increase care of the river environment and its cultural heritage**

The Goulburn River is the longest river in Victoria, and is one of 18 declared Heritage Rivers in the state. The declaration aims to protect public land in particular parts of rivers and river catchment areas in Victoria which have significant nature conservation, recreation, scenic or cultural heritage attributes. The river also provides a wildlife corridor between the mountains and the Murray, which will become increasingly important in a changing climate.

Key environmental and social values that led to recognition of the Goulburn River include:

- Areas with intact understorey in river red gum open forest/woodland, and yellow box and grey box woodland/open forest communities, particularly downstream of Murchison;
- Areas of significant habitat for vulnerable or threatened wildlife including Squirrel gliders, Nankeen night herons, Fat-tailed dunnarts and the Tree goanna;
- Native fish diversity, Murray cod and Trout cod habitat;
- Canoeing opportunities; and
- Cultural heritage sites.

The quality, diversity and sustainability of the river environment underpin its value to the community. These aspects need to continue to be protected and enhanced through a co-ordinated program of dedicated action and planning.

There needs to be ongoing effort to reduce rubbish dumping in the river and on the floodplain. Actions are required that lead to further improvement to water quality, revegetation, control of weeds and pest animals along waterways and support timed delivery of environmental flows. Support for the implementation of these actions will have a strong focus on providing opportunities for community participation and understanding.

## 2.4.2 LONG-TERM GOALS, TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE

Long-term goals are set beyond the life of this Strategic Plan and encapsulate what we want to achieve in the future. The 2030 aspirational targets and performance measures or indicators are listed in Table 1 for each of the long-term goals.

Table 1: RiverConnect Long-term goals, 2030 aspirational targets and performance measures/indicators

Long-term goal	2030 aspirational targets	Performance measures/indicators
<b>Increase access to the river environment and its cultural heritage</b>	Implementation of RiverConnect Paths Masterplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Completion of all five stages of the RiverConnect Paths Masterplan</li> <li>– Kilometres of path built and improved</li> <li>– Crossings built</li> </ul>
	6 new or significantly upgraded direct river-access points and usage spaces, including viewing points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Number of access points and spaces built and improved</li> </ul>
	All shared paths include real and virtual signed information on the environment and cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Number of signs (real and virtual) installed</li> </ul>
<b>Increase awareness and understanding of the river environment and its cultural heritage</b>	80% of residents know and understand facts about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Traditional Owner's connection with the environment</li> <li>– Development of Shepparton and Mooroopna around the river</li> <li>– Recreation and participation opportunities in the area</li> <li>– Environmental, social and economic value of river environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regional well-being survey data to understand knowledge and understanding and perception of value</li> <li>– Event/activity participation data</li> <li>– Benchmark and periodic awareness survey needed</li> </ul>
	Number of residents spending time in the RiverConnect environment is increased by 30% by 2030 Average time spent by each resident annually is increased by 30% by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Event participation data</li> <li>– Usage data</li> <li>– Benchmark and periodic usage data needed</li> </ul>
<b>Increase care of the river environment and its cultural heritage</b>	Increased extent and quality of native vegetation and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Area of vegetation, habitat score</li> <li>– Index of Stream Condition</li> <li>– Water quality parameters –turbidity, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH, stormwater runoff</li> </ul>
	Decreased levels of rubbish in river environment by 75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Volumes of rubbish collected from land, gross pollutant traps, rivers and wetlands</li> <li>– Benchmark data needed</li> </ul>
	Decreased presence of weeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Benchmark data required</li> <li>– decreased presence of priority weeds in priority areas</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Priorities

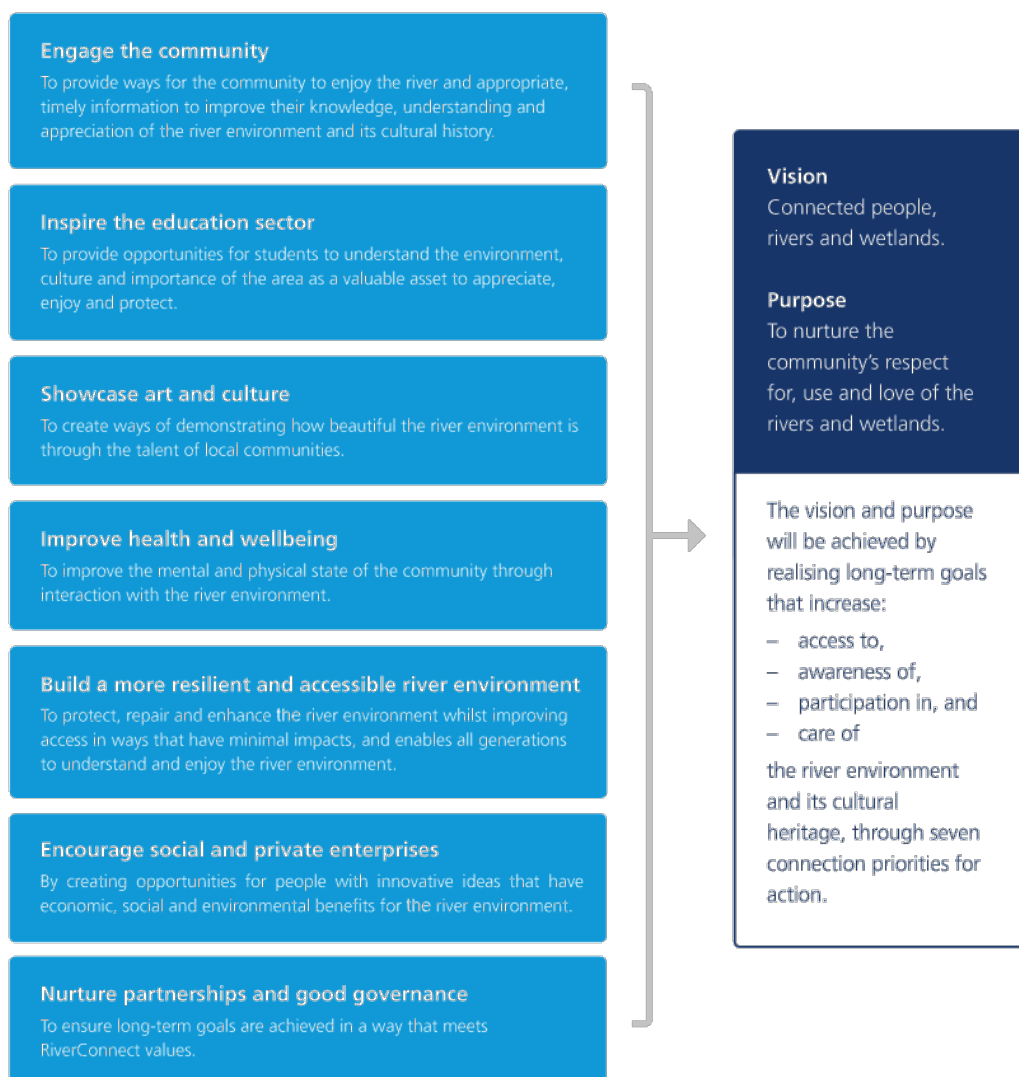
In renewing the Strategic Plan, the IAC considered the needs of the community and agencies based on previous studies, consultation and a current understanding of a range of regional issues. This has led to the identification of a series of actions grouped under connection priorities that will support the RiverConnect purpose and enable achievement of its vision for the region and long-term goals.

Actions are grouped under seven priorities identified by the IAC to provide an integrated strategy for RiverConnect for the next five years.

A specific objective has been developed for each priority. The priorities, their objectives and the linkage to delivery of the RiverConnect vision, purpose and long-term goals are shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.

Figure 2: RiverConnect strategic priorities linked to the vision, purpose and long-term objectives

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## 3. The current environment

### 3.1 River environment attributes and issues

The priorities of RiverConnect capture opportunities to protect and enhance key physical and social attributes that enable our river environment to function in ways that bring economic wealth and environmental and social well-being. Key attributes of the RiverConnect area include:

- A diverse urban population
- Rich cultural links
- Enough clean water available for drinking, living, production, recreation and the environment
- A relatively natural river landscape positioned in an urban setting; and
- Strong working partnerships.

The current state of these attributes forms the basis for what we wish to protect or enhance from a range of issues and drivers. Attributes and issues are described in more detail below.

**Shepparton and Mooroopna are the major population centres** within the City of Greater Shepparton. These twin cities sit on either side of the Goulburn River. The Broken River also flows into the Goulburn within the Shepparton urban area. The population of Greater Shepparton is over 61,000 people. The region is home to over 6,000 Indigenous Australians – the largest Aboriginal population in regional Victoria.

The region is also home to a multi-cultural community, with people from all parts of the globe, including India, Afghanistan, Sudan, Italy, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, New Zealand and the Philippines. With these people come many languages, cultures and faiths.

Whilst the community is culturally diverse and drawn from widely differing backgrounds, a common element that unites us is that without the rivers, most of us would not live here. Issues that arise from this diversity relate to different values placed on the river environment by various cultures and subsequent use.

**The Aboriginal community has extraordinarily strong links with the rivers and lands** that stretch back through the ages. In recent history, Aboriginal people walked off the Cummeragunga mission at Barmah and established settlements in the red gum forest between Shepparton and Mooroopna in an area known as “The Flats”.

**The Goulburn and Broken Rivers in Shepparton and Mooroopna are recognised in European history.** They were an important source of economic, recreational and social activity in the early days of settlement and underpin what these urban centres are today.

Over the last fifty years, as the focus on utilisation of the area for economic benefit increased and our urban centres grew, the quality of the rivers and their banks has declined. The Goulburn River was redirected away from the Shepparton town area, complementary buildings and infrastructure were removed and the focus of the urban development turned away from the river. Historically, water has overflowed the river banks during high rainfall periods and caused flooding impacts on regional infrastructure and communities.

The Goulburn and Broken Rivers are now considered functional working rivers. However, in recent years the beauty, recreational and cultural values of the rivers are being increasingly recognised by the community and there is an opportunity to reconnect urban spaces to the river through strategic development. Whilst river regulation has decreased how often flood events will occur and how long they will last, flooding has historically, and will continue to be, a part of the landscape. Flooding creates environmental benefits but can also pose a threat to the community.



**The Goulburn and Broken Rivers are a source of water for drinking, living, production, recreation and the environment.** The environment, industry, residents, service providers and recreational reserves all depend to varying degrees on reliable, good quality supplies of water. At times we have water overflowing streambanks and protecting the community and infrastructure during flood events needs careful planning and management, including warnings of rising river levels and risks. We also need to consider river management in times of drought.

Water quality is impacted on by a range of activities and the key threats in the RiverConnect area include streambank erosion, stormwater, agriculture and industry runoff, litter and channel modification. Actions such as the installation of gross pollutant traps, improved stormwater management, environmental flows and revegetation of streambanks all improve water quality locally and at catchment scale.

**The river environment in the RiverConnect area is seen as unique in terms of its natural state.** While there has been a decline in biodiversity and vegetation extent and quality surrounding the river this has not been as significant as in other urban centres situated on rivers. This is largely because of the nature of the floodplain and regularity of flooding, and its protection by reservation of the area as State Forest and utilisation as a timber resource, followed by the National Park declarations. The public land within the RiverConnect area is now under the control of a number of different agencies including Parks Victoria (PV), Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC), the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and GSCC.

The Shepparton Regional Park includes most of the public land adjacent to the rivers which is now managed by PV. PV is also responsible for the management of the Lower Goulburn River National Park which incorporates the former Reedy Swamp Wildlife Reserve. The YYNAC is a key director in the management of major public lands within their traditional country including the entire RiverConnect area. In addition, the GB CMA has overarching responsibilities as caretaker of river health across the region.

Litter, weeds, pest animals, and vegetation removal and degradation are all issues that threaten the state of the river environment. Floods can provide environmental benefits but also put at risk infrastructure and community safety. Further growth of Shepparton and Mooroopna could increase the risk of these threats to the river environment.

**Strong partnerships underpin much of the effort** in managing resources in our RiverConnect area. These types of partnerships were first formed back in the 1980s to manage salinity issues at a regional scale. Whilst those partnerships have persisted around the salinity issue, one of the drivers for the formation of RiverConnect was to set up a similar model for river management in an urban setting built on positive relationships, good communication and trust.

We have seen much progress made over time to work with new and existing partners, but an ever present threat to successful partnerships and subsequent action is the misalignment of RiverConnect with partner priorities, organisational structures and funding availability. The loss of individuals in organisations can also affect partner relationships.

### 3.2 Issues and threats identified by community

Consultation undertaken through RiverConnect with project partners, existing and new, also identified issues that agencies and the community in the Shepparton and Mooroopna areas are concerned about. These consultations confirmed that many people see the RiverConnect area as very important for health and well-being, art and culture, historical significance, environmental features, water supply and recreation. They are concerned about the threats to the local environment including rubbish dumping, water quality, spread of weeds, pest animal species including cats and Noisy miners and loss of vegetation through developments.

Other key issues identified include a lack of consideration of climate change in relation to future water availability and ensuring the alignment of policies and strategies developed by local agencies, particularly by GSCC and GB CMA, with RiverConnect.



## 4. How have we been doing – RiverConnect achievements 2011-2016

The RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2011-2016 was built upon five strategic priority programs with a total of 167 actions documented:

- Connecting Community (60 actions)
- Connecting Environment (32 actions)
- Connecting Aboriginal People (22 actions)
- Connecting Education (38 actions)
- Communication and Consultation (15 actions)

Annual Reports documented the achievements and progress against the priority programs of the Strategic Plan and are endorsed by the Greater Shepparton City Council.

### 4.1 What difference has RiverConnect made?

A partnership approach has been at the heart of the success of RiverConnect, enabling community and agencies to come together and identify and action shared priorities. This is seen as a major achievement for RiverConnect. This has been supported through the guiding IAC, comprising agency and community partners, and working groups focussed on education, land management, communications and Aboriginal action.

The IAC is seen as an effective way to share ownership and direction of RiverConnect, supported by project staff. Some working groups have worked better than others, in particular the Communications Working Group has gone from strength to strength. There have been challenges in maintaining focus and commitment for other working groups over time.

RiverConnect has gone a long way to meeting the needs identified 10 years ago through strong integrated effort and enduring partnerships. This integration has led to RiverConnect attracting funding for a range of exciting projects that continue to connect many parts of the community to the river.

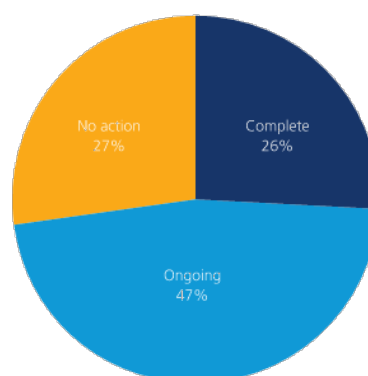
Despite a dynamic working environment, RiverConnect has been able to adapt, consistently achieving many objectives. This included undertaking or participating

in many and varied activities that have increasingly engaged the community and schools across the region. Actions have enabled more people to access and use the river environment and increase their knowledge and understanding of the river and its value to the region. This increased understanding has been further enhanced by the development of a range of print and electronic media resources, all housed at the RiverConnect website.

A particular highlight has been the successful engagement of local schools. Every year more and more students have participated in annual or ongoing programs that have seen environmental improvements as well as educational outcomes.

Plans have been completed, access points upgraded, signs installed and information developed. One of the most successful and acclaimed achievements has been the development and delivery of the Flats walking tour and signage. This has significantly increased community understanding of local Aboriginal history and their deep connection to Country.

Figure 3: Progress on actions (167 total) over life of first Strategic Plan (2011-2016)



Of the 167 actions identified, 45 have not been progressed in any way (Figure 3). As a program that depends on many partners for success, the challenge remains to attract external funding to achieve our objectives amidst changing government priorities and funding availability.



## 4.2 RiverConnect Achievements

### Significant achievements

- Regional Achievement and Community Award
- RiverConnect 10 year celebration 2015
- Increased number of partners
- Continued investment and support of GSCC and GB CMA over time
- Increased funding – extension of RiverConnect
- Keep Victoria Beautiful Sustainable Cities Award for Community-Government Partnerships

## 4.3 Within Action Programs

Within each action program a set of performance measures or indicators were identified to measure delivery against the targets set in the first Strategic Plan. Due to the large number of actions it has been a challenge to report progress against all the indicators and an abridged number of measures were chosen to show progress annually. In some instances it has been difficult to report progress directly against performance aspects due to data inconsistencies.

Table 2 shows the targets and indicators for RiverConnect and provides commentary on overall achievements over the life of the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan.

Table 2: RiverConnect targets, performance indicators and achievements

Performance aspect (targets and performance Indicators)	Achievements/progress
<b>1. CONNECTING COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>Improved access to the RiverConnect area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved public access to the rivers</li> <li>- Access path network extensions</li> <li>- Interpretive signage improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved river access at three points through ongoing weir upgrading, boat ramp improvements and Stuart Reserve improvements</li> <li>- RiverConnect Paths Master Plan completion</li> <li>- Three Flood Markers at Shepparton, Mooroopna and Murchison</li> <li>- Boulevard Bush Reserve and The Flats interpretive signage</li> </ul>
<b>Increased community usage of the area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50% increase in visits to the area, as measured through direct surveys of key access routes and interest points.</li> <li>- Increase in the number of people who use the area as determined through survey of Greater Shepparton community (e.g. Council customer satisfaction surveys).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased number of people using the paths and being in the river environment through events and activities e.g. Canoeing and other events – 125 events and 6,400 participants, 6,800 students spent 10,000+ hours at the river</li> </ul>
<b>Increased use of the area for events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of new events or existing major events that incorporate a significant RiverConnect component</li> <li>- Increased community participation in events with a RiverConnect element</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 125 community activities including Spotlight walks, canoeing and Kidsfest</li> <li>- 6,400 participants in RiverConnect events</li> </ul>
<b>2. CONNECTING ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>Reduced pollution reaching the river through storm water discharges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Install three new gross pollutant traps on key storm water discharge points as identified in Waterway Action Plan.</li> <li>- Reducing trend in amount of litter cleared from traps over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 21 strategies/events have been contributed to</li> <li>- Rubbish clean up days</li> <li>- VCAL student rubbish collection – 2013/14 24ha, 2014/15 12.2ha</li> <li>- Five Gross Pollutant Traps (GPT's) installed</li> <li>- Average of 70-80 tonnes p.a. of waste captured in GPT's</li> </ul>
<b>Improved water quality in rivers within the RiverConnect area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GB CMA water quality monitoring indicates a reduction in key pollutant inputs within the RiverConnect area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water Quality parameters measured through Waterwatch (since 1995) at Chinamans Bridge Mooroopna and Balaclava Rd Shepparton show no decline in pH, DO, turbidity or EC, possible improvement in EC in last 5 years (compared as annual median)</li> </ul>



Performance aspect (targets and performance Indicators)	Achievements/progress
<b>Revegetation of RiverConnect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 90% of planned revegetation works completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tree planting by community groups, VCAL students, school groups, PV, GB CMA</li> <li>- RiverConnect revegetation activities continue to increase through National Tree Day partnership with GSCC and Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group (SMULG)</li> </ul>
<b>Improved health of existing vegetation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Habitat scores for selected forest monitoring transects improvement.</li> <li>- Index of Stream Condition score for Goulburn at Shepparton improves over time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased value and protection of River environment through parks declaration – extension of RiverConnect</li> <li>- Boulevard Bush Reserve Environmental Management Plan and Action Plan</li> <li>- ISC score for Goulburn River improved between 2004 and 2010 assessments from poor to moderate</li> <li>- Weed and hollow GIS mapping and biodiversity audits along Rivers</li> </ul>
<b>Improved health of fauna</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bird numbers and diversity increase at Reedy Swamp.</li> <li>- Numbers of key species increase over time (e.g. squirrel glider).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2016 Goulburn River Shepparton turtle survey identified all local species including Broad-shelled and Murray River turtles – both listed species</li> <li>- Squirrel gliders seen during Spotlight walks have remained consistent over time from 2010/11 to 2014/15 – more than one glider has been seen on average per walk every year, increasing up to more than two gliders per walk in 2013/14</li> <li>- Tree hollow survey Boulevard Bushland Reserve</li> </ul>
<b>3. CONNECTING ABORIGINAL PEOPLE</b>	
<b>Increased participation in activities with an Aboriginal component</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 300 people per year participate in activities with an Aboriginal component.</li> <li>- Participant feedback shows 60% of attendees at activities improved their understanding of Aboriginal history and culture issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Flats Walks and signage</li> <li>- 3,900 estimated community/students/teachers involved in activities with an Aboriginal component (780/year average)</li> <li>- Survey results from RiverConnect Festival show 40% increase in understanding of Aboriginal history and culture.</li> </ul>
<b>Improved knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal history and cultural issues in the RiverConnect area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community surveys show increased awareness and understanding of Aboriginal history and cultural issues for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal segments of community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RiverConnect Festival participant survey shows 40% increase in awareness of Aboriginal history and culture from event</li> </ul>

Performance aspect <i>(targets and performance Indicators)</i>	Achievements/progress
<b>4. CONNECTING EDUCATION</b>	
<p><b>Effective participation by educational institutions in programs and activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 75% of schools in Shepparton and Mooroopna participate in RiverConnect activities each year.</li> <li>- 1,000 student visits per year for RiverConnect related activities.</li> <li>- A collection of stories indicates increased student understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Average 65% of schools involved in RiverConnect participate annually in events/activities</li> <li>- 6,300 student visits to river over 5 years (average 1,260/year)</li> <li>- Increased young people’s value of river and river reaches</li> <li>- Adopt a Reach program started 2008</li> <li>- VCAL Program run over last 5 years, 3-6 schools annually, 50-130 students involved</li> <li>- Regular blogs and stories online on RiverConnect posted by schools</li> </ul>
<b>5. COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION</b>	
<p><b>Improved awareness of RiverConnect programs and activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 10 RiverConnect related stories per year published in the media.</li> <li>- RiverConnect website registers 3,000 visits per year.</li> <li>- RiverConnect eNewsletter has 250 subscribers.</li> <li>- At least 50% of the community are aware of the RiverConnect program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 65 articles/radio/TV – average 13/year</li> <li>- 41 groups presented to</li> <li>- 18,000+ Website visits (site launched May 2011, external visits only recorded post May 2013), average 3,600/year</li> <li>- 267 eNewsletter subscribers – 2-3 newsletter produced annually</li> <li>- Many more people know RiverConnect both locally and broader i.e. ANU Arts/Architecture program</li> <li>- Gradual change of people’s perception of river</li> </ul>



## 4.4 Action Program progress in detail

### 4.4.1 CONNECTING COMMUNITY

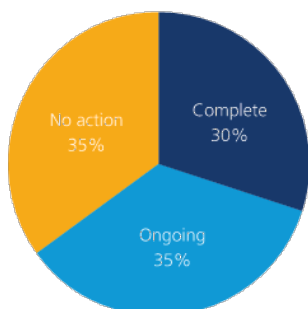
#### Objective

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.

#### Significant milestones

- RiverConnect Festival 2012
- Australian National University Art Exhibition 2012
- Goulburn River Access Guide – Shepparton and Mooroopna 2013
- Shepparton – Mooroopna Goulburn River Paths Master Plan 2014
- Murchison, Shepparton and Mooroopna Historical Flood Markers 2014

#### Progress on actions (60 total) over life of first Strategic Plan (2011-2016)



#### Performance measures reported annually

Figure 4: Number of Connecting Community events/activities

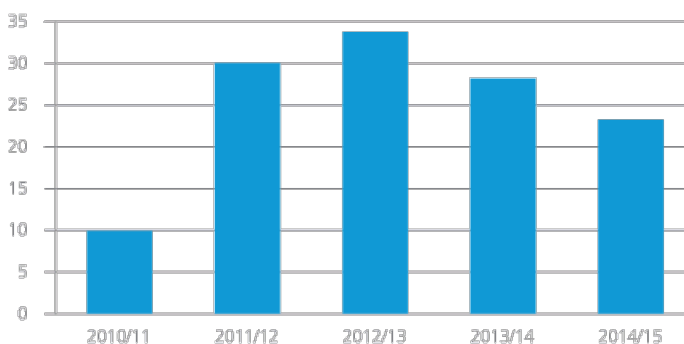
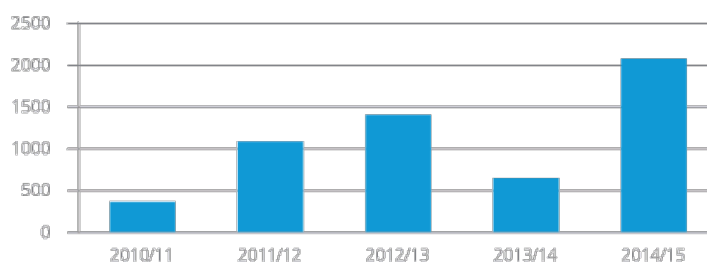


Figure 5: Number of participants in Connecting Community events/activities



#### Summary

This program has achieved some amazing results over the past 5 years, with 125 events organised (Figure 4), attracting more than 5,500+ community members and 6,200 students to the river environment (Figure 5). Activities have included art classes, educational days, tree planting, art exhibitions, festivals and more. Feedback from participants has been positive with people appreciating the opportunities that RiverConnect staff have created to connect them to the river and the associated wildlife.

As well as events and activities, RiverConnect has created a number of guides and signs to provide people with information on how to access the river environment and to make their river experiences more enjoyable and informed. One of the most significant achievements has been the development of the Paths Master Plan. This Plan sets the priorities to extending and improving the existing river environment shared paths network and will be an important part of planning in the future.

### 4.4.2 CONNECTING ENVIRONMENT

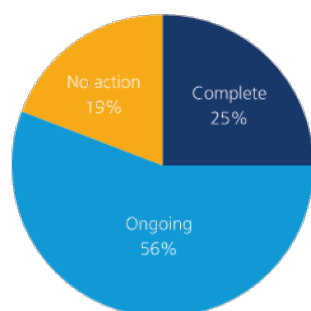
#### Objective

To protect, repair, enhance and sustain important river, wetland and forest environments, so that current and future generations can understand and enjoy natural river and red gum forest environments.

#### Significant milestones

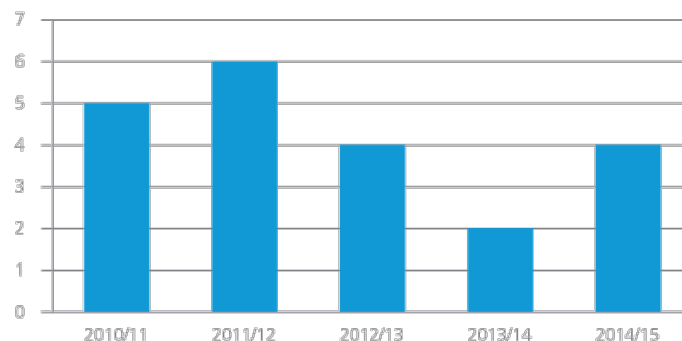
- Work at the weir – continued upgrading including bollard installation
- Stuart Reserve upgrade
- 5 boat ramp upgrades
- VCAL student works – weed management, tree planting, fencing, rubbish collection

#### Progress on actions (32 total) over life of first Strategic Plan (2011-2016)



#### Performance measures reported annually

Figure 6: Number of strategies/plans or events



#### Summary

It is difficult to measure environmental condition changes over a relatively short period of time and attribute any improvements to particular projects. River condition indicators can be very climate driven however there does seem to be some changes in condition that show an upwards trend in improvement.

Reserve improvements, access upgrades and the installation of gross pollutant traps have all contributed to improving the environment. These actions have been complemented by a range of activities targeting rubbish removal and improving vegetation condition, such as those undertaken regularly by VCAL students, including tree planting.

It has been challenging to manage the ever increasing problem of rubbish in the river environment as populations increase and we encourage more people to access the river. We also need to set in place a method for measuring the impact we are having on the environment through the works done by RiverConnect.

Since 2004, environmental water (other than base and natural flow) entitlements have grown to enable and prioritise in-bank flows to be delivered. These flows have been targeted at improving bank vegetation, fish breeding, and habitat and macro-invertebrates. Overbank flows still occur less often than what is needed to maintain the health of the Lower Goulburn River floodplain.



### 4.4.3 CONNECTING ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

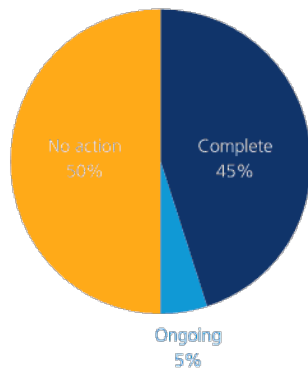
**Objective**

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

**Significant milestones**

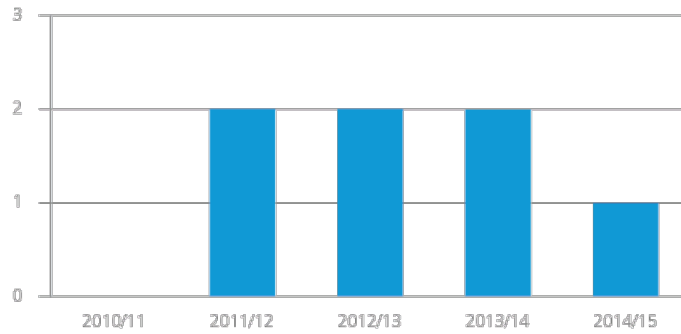
- The Flats signage and booklet recognition through award
- Traditional owner talks at RiverConnect Festival

**Progress on actions (22 total) over life of first Strategic Plan (2011-2016)**



**Performance measures reported annually**

Figure 7: Number of specific Aboriginal cultural events/activities



**Summary**

One of the most rewarding outcomes of RiverConnect has been the development of the Flats signage and walks. This award winning project provides self-guided and guided tours along the Flats walk for people to learn about a very small part of recent aboriginal history in the region.

Almost 4,000 people have been involved in events that include Aboriginal culture and heritage components. There have also been a number of specific Aboriginal cultural events such as cooking, dance workshops and the Flats Walk (see Figure 7).

Participant surveys from the RiverConnect Festival recorded a 40% increase in awareness of Aboriginal history and culture from the event.





### 4.4.4 CONNECTING EDUCATION

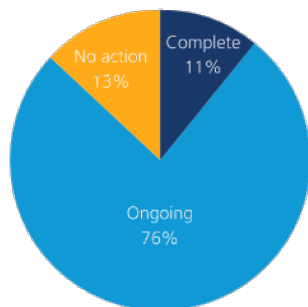
#### Objective

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

#### Significant milestones

- VCAL Partnership Award
- Professional development training for teachers
- Development of education days such as 'Rambling at Reedy' and 'Life at the Lake'

#### Progress on actions (38 total) over life of first Strategic Plan (2011-2016)



#### Performance measures reported annually

Figure 8: Student numbers and hours spent at the River with RiverConnect

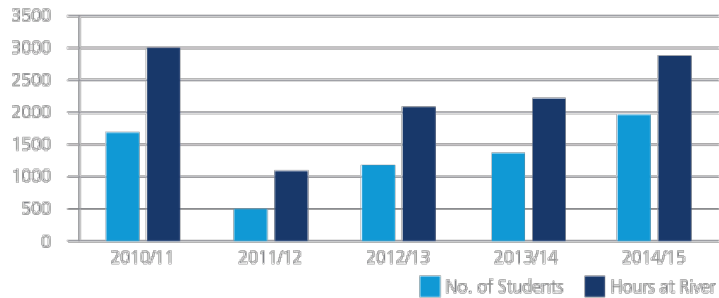
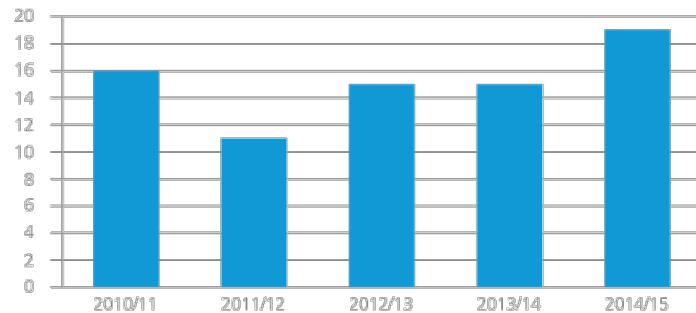


Figure 9: Number of schools visiting the River



#### Summary

The achievements of the RiverConnect Program have been extraordinary in terms of reaching local students and engaging them in the river environment. More than 6,300 students have been part of RiverConnect over the past 5 years (Figure 8), involving an average 15 schools visiting the river each year (Figure 9).

Many local schools have been involved in learning more about and enhancing the river environment through the Adopt-a-Reach project. This has been complemented by a range of events and activities targeting students. The VCAL Program has been recognised for its efforts in bringing students to the river on a regular basis to learn and to undertake works.

There have been many partnerships developed amongst environmental educators over the time of the first Strategic Plan. This not only includes local educators but has expanded to regional and metropolitan experts. This has opened up the opportunities for our local schools to engage more intimately with local wildlife such as turtles and bats.

There has also been an emphasis on teacher development and the creation of resources to support teachers. Keeping teachers engaged on an ongoing basis has been a challenge and creating opportunities that do not place additional workload pressures on teaching staff is an important consideration. The target education level has been mostly primary and secondary schools to date but recent engagement with kindergartens, children's centres and tertiary students is further expanding this component of the RiverConnect Program.

### 4.4.5 COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

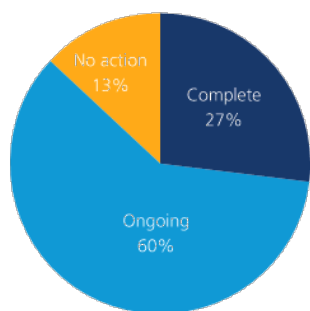
#### Objective

To provide appropriate, timely information to the community to support the achievement of the overall RiverConnect objectives. To provide well planned consultation processes that will allow the community to effectively influence the development and implementation of the RiverConnect Strategic Plan.

#### Significant milestones

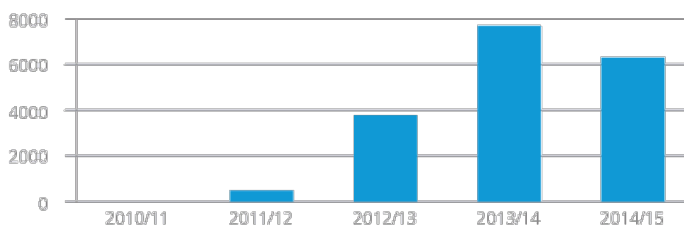
- New RiverConnect branding 2011
- RiverConnect Website created and launched 2011
- Regional Achievement and Community Award
- Poster presentation at International River Symposium 2012
- Presentation to NRM Knowledge Conference 2014

#### Progress on actions (32 total) over life of first Strategic Plan (2011-2016)



#### Performance measures reported annually

Figure 10: Website visits



Note: website first launched May 2011 and from May 2013 only external visits recorded

Figure 11: Marketing campaign – groups presented/spoken to

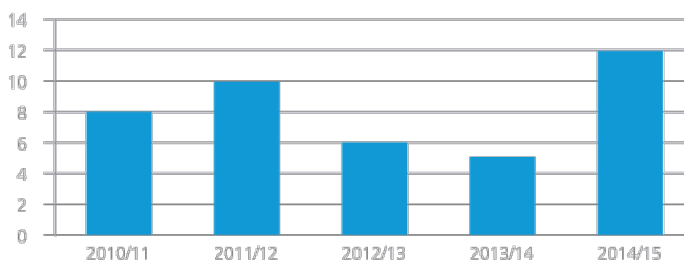
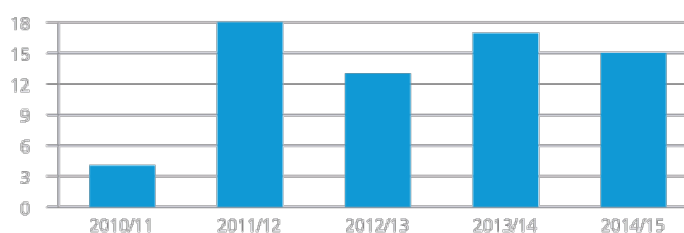


Figure 12: Articles/radio/TV



#### Summary

The Communication and Consultation Working Group has many achievements, with perhaps its greatest success being the development, continued update and demonstrated use of the RiverConnect website. The website is used not only to store and access information, but to share stories and pictures, provided by schools as well as RiverConnect staff with steadily increasing visitation (Figure 10).

RiverConnect has also regularly engaged with the community through visits, events, newspaper articles, radio interviews and television coverage (Figures 12 and 13). The continued interest in the members of the Communications and Consultation Working Group demonstrates the commitment to the promotion of RiverConnect. Consultation has occurred around specific activities, such as the development of the RiverConnect Paths Master Plan. The River Festival is an event that has not persisted but could possibly be reinvigorated to connect people to the river, celebrate RiverConnect successes and garner ideas for future RiverConnect activities. This could be run as part of the SheppARTon Festival.

## 4.5 IAC Evaluation

As part of the Strategic Plan review process a survey was undertaken of IAC members. This included agency representatives and community members. A small number of questions were asked to get their perspectives on the success of RiverConnect and improvements for the future, based on their observations and involvement. The results show:

### Biggest achievements for RiverConnect

- School engagement – Adopt-a-Reach
- Paths Master Plan
- Strengthening of Partnerships
- Community Engagement
- The Flats Walks and signage

### What works well in the RiverConnect project?

- Hands on activities
- In the field learning
- Collaboration on projects
- Involving the community
- Project co-ordination and management
- Engagement activities (spotlights, canoeing)
- Website

### What is the perception of RiverConnect in the community?

- Low awareness by wider community
- Positive for those that are aware of it
- Lack of awareness outside Shepparton/Mooroopna

### What could be improved?

- An increase in funding for projects
- More community buy-in
- Clearer roles and responsibilities of partner organisations
- Ground staff/labour – not relying on volunteers for education sessions
- Strategic level co-operation
- Partnership with tertiary institutions
- More path connections
- Partnerships could be better communicated – need to recognise all partners
- Celebration of Shepparton and Mooroopna as river towns
- Students involved in monitoring and recording
- Better advertising of events



## 5. Action, implementation and evaluation 2017-2022

We recognise RiverConnect achievements and also where it has not performed as was planned. Whilst we understand that the first Strategic Plan had many priorities to address, one challenge in Plan implementation was reporting against the large number and detail of actions. With input from the IAC and partners, through the renewal process, we have redefined the priorities, some are ongoing, some with new emphasis, and simplified the actions and measures to direct implementation and monitor performance and impact in the short and long term.

### 5.1 5-year priorities, targets and actions

Table 3 identifies a suite of high-level actions with targets and performance measures or indicators grouped under the connection priorities. For reporting purposes each connection priority has an acronym e.g. Engage the Community (ETC). The third column describes agencies or organisations that have been identified or are willing to partner for projects in that area. The last table column suggests the types of events, activities, planning and products that could be designed and delivered through each action on an annual basis. These are examples only. Annual planning and review processes will enable RiverConnect to adapt over the life of the Strategic Plan.

Table 3: RiverConnect 5-year priorities, targets and actions

5 year targets	Action	Lead agency/ organisation	Example activities
<b>PRIORITY: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY (ETC)</b>			
25% increase in use of shared pathways	1. Encourage use of the river environment	GSCC, PV, GSCC RiverConnect, GMLN, SMULG, Yarrowonga Mulwala Amateur Canoe Club (YMACC)	Update access map of the RiverConnect area highlighting path network, access points (including all ability access) and historical and cultural sites
25% increased participation in river environment activities	2. Improve access and usage for 'at risk' groups, including disadvantaged youth, and new migrant communities	GSCC RiverConnect, IAC, The Haven, Ethnic Council, Word and Mouth	Work with local service providers to implement activities that target disadvantaged youth New migrant community targeted Flats Walk
	3. Celebrate the river environment through events	GSCC RiverConnect, Word and Mouth, GMLN, SMULG	Incorporate RiverConnect aspects into existing events e.g. Clean Up Australia Day, Kidsfest
	4. Educate about and involve the community in the river environment through various media	Communications WG, GSCC, GB CMA, GMW, GVW, PV, GSCC RiverConnect, GLMN, SMULG	Build on and enhance public education programs on water use, quality, flooding and environmental flows in the Goulburn and Broken Rivers
	5. Increase community awareness on appropriate behaviour in the river environment	Communications WG, PV, GSCC, GB CMA, GVW, DELWP, GMLN, SMULG, GSCC RiverConnect	Campaigns could include activities such as vehicle use, camping, campfires, dogs, collecting firewood, rubbish disposal and weed control



5 year targets	Action	Lead agency/ organisation	Example activities
<b>PRIORITY: INSPIRE THE EDUCATION SECTOR (IES)</b>			
50% of Greater Shepparton schools have at least one class engage with the river environment annually, involving 1,000 students  One tertiary education project in the RiverConnect area	1. Create opportunities for schools and universities to participate in onsite river activities and river environment related projects	GSCC RiverConnect, GSCC, GMLN, Department of Education, PV, GMLN, LaTrobe and other universities and GoTafe, SHS, SAM	Extend Adopt-a-Reach, Bug Blitz
	2. Develop links between schools and community resources, including land managers and agency officers	GSCC RiverConnect, GMLN, GVW, GMLN, GSLP, SAM, SHS	Work with the Historical Society to connect the European cultural connections to the river environment for students  Establish viability and implement environmental educators regular meeting
	3. Facilitate opportunities to develop curriculum materials that are relevant to primary, secondary and tertiary education needs	GSCC RiverConnect, Department of Education, GMLN, LaTrobe, GoTafe and other universities, GVW	Identify RiverConnect projects for senior/ student students that meet curriculum needs and contribute to understanding of the river environment
	4. Enable students to contribute to river environment improvements	GSCC RiverConnect, PV	VCAL activities, tree planting days
<b>PRIORITY: SHOWCASE ART AND CULTURE (SAC)</b>			
1,000 participants annually in traditional owner-led events in the river environment  Significant whole-of-community events and projects celebrate our shared history and river-inspired creativity	1. Promote the RiverConnect area as an event and activities location	GSCC, GSCC RiverConnect, Word and Mouth	Investigate with Word and Mouth a youth focused music festival to be held in a river/forest setting
	2. Understand Aboriginal history in the RiverConnect area	GSCC RiverConnect, Rumbalara, YYNAC, Communications WG	Expand the story of the Cummeragunja Walk-off and life on the Flats. e.g. "Evenings with the Elders" program to share knowledge
	3. Connect with Aboriginal and European culture and community involvement	GSCC RiverConnect, Rumbalara, YYNAC	Stage a large scale festival to showcase Aboriginal dance, music and culture, e.g. a corroboree  Develop European settlement history story and display along the river walking paths
	4. Create a RiverConnect "home" for cultural and Interpretive information	IAC, GSCC RiverConnect	Investigate suggested locations including SAM, Kidstown, Australian Botanic Gardens or other existing education facility
	5. Create programs that blend environmental and creative elements	GSCC RiverConnect, Gallery Kaiella, Word and Mouth, universities	Investigate creating art installations from rubbish collected in gross pollutant traps  Environmental and/or cultural street or mural style art on appropriate infrastructure in river environment, for example, Dainton's Bridge

5 year targets	Action	Lead agency/ organisation	Example activities
<b>PRIORITY: IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (IHW)</b>			
<p>Shared path network is extended by 9km and one river crossing is built</p> <p>Opportunities and spaces are created that are actively used by residents and visitors</p>	1. Implement the RiverConnect Paths Master Plan	GSCC, PV, GB CMA	<p>Incorporate the paths into GSCC 10 year capital budget program</p> <p>Finalise PV and GSCC licensing agreement</p>
	2. Build healthy living programs that incorporate the river environment	GSCC RiverConnect, GSCC	<p>Work with GV Health to develop and implement a healthy living program with businesses and local community</p> <p>Create opportunities for activities such as 'yoga by the river'</p>
	3. Develop active living activities/opportunities for residents and visitors to do in the river environment	GSCC RiverConnect, GSCC, PV	<p>Create walking, cycling, canoeing tours of the area</p> <p>Build an exercise circuit along the paths network</p>
	4. Develop a River Master Plan for Shepparton	GSCC	Include safety improvements, access, additional toilets, signage (directional, interpretative)
	5. Facilitate and auspice large-scale river environment projects	GSCC, IAC	Implement the Eastbank Lake project
<b>PRIORITY: BUILD A MORE RESILIENT AND ACCESSIBLE RIVER ENVIRONMENT (RARE)</b>			
<p>Extent and quality of native vegetation and water quality is improved</p> <p>Access for various sectors, from anglers to the elderly, is increased at five locations</p> <p>75% decrease in volume of dumped rubbish</p> <p>Decrease of priority weeds along shared paths and priority areas</p>	1. Contribute to development and implementation of relevant plans and programs to manage and improve the river environment	GB CMA, GSCC, PV, DELWP, GMLN	Support and assist with messaging (e.g. signage) to improve community understanding and acceptance of environmental flows
	2. Improve access to and management of access to the river	PV, GSCC	<p>Develop key pedestrian links from Shepparton CBD and key tourism locations to the river environment</p> <p>Upgrade pedestrian, all ability and boating access to river at key sites as per developed River Master Plan</p> <p>Consider in River Master Plan key managed native open space, e.g. historical parkland link between Lake, CBD, Council/Princess Park precinct (and future Eastbank Lake) in area near Dainton's Bridge, Heritage Society and CMA offices</p> <p>Safety improvements along park network and in river environment</p>

5 year targets	Action	Lead agency/ organisation	Example activities
	3. Identify and build suitable event/activity sites along the river	PV, GSCC	Identify, develop plans and build sites (e.g. marquees, toilets, camping areas) and develop guidelines for groups wishing to use the area
	4. Clean up the RiverConnect area	PV, GSCC, GB CMA, GMLN, GSCC RiverConnect, DELWP, EPA, SMULG	Initiate rubbish and weed removal in priority areas identified by PV, GSCC and GB CMA  Hold annual community "Clean-up RiverConnect" event in conjunction with Clean-up Australia Day activities
	5. Improve water quality in the RiverConnect area	EPA, GV Water, GB CMA, GMW, GSCC, GMLN, SMULG	Install rubbish collection pontoons in Goulburn River at Shepparton
	6. Revegetate RiverConnect priority areas	PV, GB CMA, GSCC RiverConnect	Rehabilitate and revegetate key riverside areas
<b>PRIORITY: ENCOURAGE SOCIAL AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (SPE)</b>			
One example each of a social and private enterprise associated with RiverConnect aspirations	1. Support innovative business ideas from the community	GSCC, VIC	Encourage the attraction or establishment of a bike and/or canoe hire business  Nature based accommodation  Commercial water and waterfront activities and businesses/business precinct
	2. Encourage increased tourism and visitation to the area	GSCC, VIC	Engage with tourism groups to develop RiverConnect river/red gum tourism opportunities  Link RiverConnect with local Tourism and Marketing Plans



5 year targets	Action	Lead agency/ organisation	Example activities
<b>PRIORITY: NURTURE PARTNERSHIPS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE (PGG)</b>			
Key stakeholders continue to endorse and support the partnership and governance arrangements of RiverConnect  Funding levels 'won' (and shared), from government and 'non-traditional' sources consistent with RiverConnect aspirations  RiverConnect is accountable and adaptive	1. Develop methodology and templates to measure targets over time	GSCC, RiverConnect, IAC	
	2. Implement processes to ensure ongoing organisational support for RiverConnect	IAC	All RiverConnect partner organisations will include formal processes in their decision making and planning activities to ensure consistency and alignment with the RiverConnect vision and objectives, wherever possible
	3. Encourage broader participation in RiverConnect	Communications WG, IAC	Start up a 'Friends of' group Create A RiverConnect Ambassador's Program
	4. Implement a marketing plan to attract more funding to RiverConnect	Communications WG, IAC	Develop a plan that includes active partnerships with key media to inform community of RiverConnect actions
	5. Implement, monitor and adapt RiverConnect to reflect Plan progress, needs and funding	IAC, GSCC, GB CMA	Set indicators for measuring progress against targets Continue to create an annual work plan and provide an Annual report to all stakeholders Develop reporting tools
	6. Provide expert input and advocacy for partners and community to strategies, plans and large-scale projects that impact on river environment	IAC, GSCC RiverConnect	MDB Constraints Strategy implementation

## 5.2 Implementation

### 5.2.1 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

During the Draft Strategic Plan consultation period survey respondents and event attendees were asked to identify whether Connection Priorities, major projects and educational themes were high, medium or low priorities. This information, along with partner strategic priorities and legislation requirements listed in 5.2.2, will be used to develop annual actions plans. Detail can be found in the What You Said document available on the RiverConnect website.

### 5.2.2 RIVERCONNECT LINKING OTHER STRATEGIES

The RiverConnect Strategic Plan is not a typical organisational plan, reflecting the fact that RiverConnect is a network of organisations and individuals rather than being an organisation itself.

The Strategic Plan therefore:

- has a large degree of in-built flexibility (through an annual review process)
- lists actions that support or contribute to the achievement of partner organisational strategies
- acknowledges that while the listed aspirations and actions listed in the Plan are expected to align with partners, they will not all be relevant to all partners
- has aspirations and actions that are expected to guide progress rather than be prescriptive.

#### Key strategies for RiverConnect

Alignment with the strategies and plans of partners is critical to make sure RiverConnect:

- delivers actions that contribute to the implementation of these strategies
- negotiates roles and responsibilities of delivery agents (e.g. asset management in the Regional Park)
- can increase the region's ability to attract investment (and bring investment directly to RiverConnect to contribute to implementation)
- is able to represent the views and needs of the community
- influences strategic priorities
- can continue to build on a well-established successful partnership model

There are a number of strategies and action plans with which RiverConnect is aligned but the four major current strategies sit with the GSCC, GB CMA, PV and DELWP. RiverConnect's relationship with these is presented in Figure 13.

Relevant RiverConnect partner plans and legislation include:

- Council Plan 2013-2017 (GSCC)
- Greater Shepparton Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2014-2030 (GSCC)
- Shepparton Stormwater Management Plan (GSCC)
- Shepparton CBD Strategy (GSCC)
- Public Health Plan (GSCC)
- Community Plans – (GSCC – including Mooroopna, Arcadia, Toolamba and Murchison)
- Greater Shepparton Economic Development, Tourism and Major Events Strategy (GSCC)
- Greater Shepparton Cycling Strategy 2013-2017 (GSCC)
- Movement and Place Strategy (GSCC – to be finalised)
- Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy 2013-2019 (GB CMA)
- Goulburn Broken Waterway Strategy 2014-2022 (GB CMA)
- Goulburn Broken Regional Floodplain Management Strategy (GB CMA - to be finalised)
- Goulburn Broken Water Quality Strategy (GB CMA)
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Biodiversity Strategy 2016-2021
- River Red Gum Park Management Plan (PV - to be finalised)
- Healthy Parks, Healthy People – (PV)
- Yorta Yorta Co-operative Management Agreement 2004 – (YYNAC)
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* – Victorian Government
- *Victorian Heritage Act 1995* – Victorian Government
- River Red Gum Forests Investigation Final Report – (Victorian Environmental Assessment Council)
- Water for Victoria Plan (DELWP)
- Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036 (DELWP)
- Regional Riparian Action Plan – (DELWP)

Figure 13: RiverConnect's relationship with major strategic plans



**5.2.3 GOVERNANCE**

In order to bring all the parties together to work towards a co-ordinated plan for the revitalisation of our rivers, the RiverConnect Program, through the first Strategic Plan, developed clear governance arrangements to ensure that all the key stakeholders involved were represented and had access to appropriate forums to bring forward their issues for consideration.

Some of the key strengths and weaknesses are:

- Members of the IAC from key stakeholders in GSCC and GB CMA in particular, have been Directors/ Mayor and senior officers. This has lifted the profile of the program within those key organisations and provided representatives who can commit their organisation to action.
- Strong attendance at IAC meetings has persisted over time, with community members continuing to nominate and contribute to meetings.

- The working group structure has been effective for some priority programs, providing a forum to co-ordinate actions on the ground and to ensure consistent approaches from all stakeholders. This sharing of information, skills and the alignment of actions between organisations involved is a significant benefit flowing from the RiverConnect Program, which was very important when RiverConnect began. This needs to be more adaptive with working groups coming and going as required.

Building on the strengths and weaknesses of the current governance arrangements is seen as highly desirable, so a modified structure is proposed to govern and manage implementation of the next iteration of the RiverConnect Strategic Plan (see Figure 14).

Implementation of the agreed actions will be managed directly by the nominated lead agency. The key functions to be undertaken through RiverConnect Program implementation includes:

1. Oversight of implementation activities.
2. Assessing progress against objectives and monitoring of actual performance against agreed measures.
3. Program accountability through preparation of annual reports on achievements against the Plan.
4. Review and adaptation of the Plan to modify priorities or strategies where objectives are not being achieved, or in light of changing circumstances or new information.
5. Undertaking community consultation and seeking community feedback to ensure that the Plan and actions being implemented continue to meet community needs effectively.
6. Co-ordination of implementation activities between various partners organisations, including communications and promotional activities, to maximise impact and avoid duplication.

Figure 14: Implementation governance structure



The implementation structures and the expectations and obligations of partner organisations will be clearly documented through the RiverConnect Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding. A public process for partner organisations and IAC/ Working Group members to “sign-on” to these arrangements will provide a strong legitimacy for the role and operation of the governance arrangements.

Key features of this structure include:

#### **RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)**

This will continue to be a high level, strategic forum responsible for providing advice, identifying strategic links within their organisations, obtaining project buy-in and co-ordinating major projects from their organisations perspective. The IAC will provide the delivery of the first five functions from the list above.

Members to be drawn from:

- Greater Shepparton City Council
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation
- Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative
- Parks Victoria
- Goulburn Murray Landcare Network
- Goulburn Valley Environment Group
- Word and Mouth
- Goulburn Valley Water
- Community representatives

Membership to the IAC may change over time and is subject to the Terms of Reference.

The Implementation Advisory Committee will look for opportunities to inform the community on progress and receive input to guide annual implementation activities.

#### **Broader Stakeholder Group**

This group is proposed to be an electronic communication forum to keep stakeholders not involved in the IAC up to date about the progress of RiverConnect implementation and to seek interest and expertise when forming major project working group membership.

Members of this broader stakeholder group may include, but are not limited to:

- Shepparton Mooroopna Urban Landcare Group
- Goulburn Murray Water

- Ethnic Council
- GSCC Social Connections Program
- GSCC Active Living
- Friends of the Botanic Gardens, Shepparton
- Shepparton Historical Society (SHS)
- Lower Goulburn Conservation Management Network
- Shepparton Art Museum (SAM)
- Yarrawonga Mulwala Amateur Canoe Club

#### **Working Groups**

The three types of working groups are:

- Communications Working Group – the key ongoing group where the communication and engagement skills and expertise of the partner organisations and the community can be brought together to address the detail needed to effectively design, share and deliver key communication activities of RiverConnect
- Land Managers Working Group – consisting of representatives from land management agencies and organisations. This group will meet quarterly to discuss on-ground land management works and progress projects as required. Examples include, weed control and anti-litter programs, revegetation and water quality improvements.
- Special Project Working Groups – working groups with a defined life period that will be responsible for developing detailed plans and implementing major projects involving multiple but variable stakeholder representatives, depending on need. These working groups will be making appropriate recommendations to the Implementation Committee on the progress of major projects until they run independently, are complemented or are auspiced directly under RiverConnect implementation. Membership will include relevant stakeholders.

At least one member of the RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee will be on all working groups. Wherever possible, working groups should be convened by a member of the RiverConnect Implementation Advisory Committee. All working groups will seek advice from the Aboriginal representatives on the IAC.

### Community Input Forums

These forums will be held periodically across the Shepparton and Mooroopna area. They will be designed and facilitated to provide regular progress reporting to the community on implementation and to provide an opportunity for ongoing community input to the implementation and further development of the Strategic Plan. These forums will also be supplemented with specific community consultation on key projects as they are developed.

### 5.2.4 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM AND FUNDING

The Goulburn Broken CMA currently contributes \$100,000 per year towards funding project staff and other project costs and this funding is matched by GSCC, who manage the day to day operation and support for RiverConnect.

GB CMA contribution will continue at the same level for a four year period (as set by the Victorian Government funding guidelines) and GSCC will match funding to provide staffing resources for implementation.

Program partners have, and will continue, to provide funding or in-kind contributions for various projects as opportunities arise.

## 5.3 Monitoring, assessment, review and adaptation

Monitoring progress and adapting the Plan are critical activities for the RiverConnect IAC to oversee. This section outlines the monitoring and evaluation program that enables:

- the effectiveness of this Strategic Plan; and
- this Strategic Plan to adapt quickly to changed circumstances and needs.

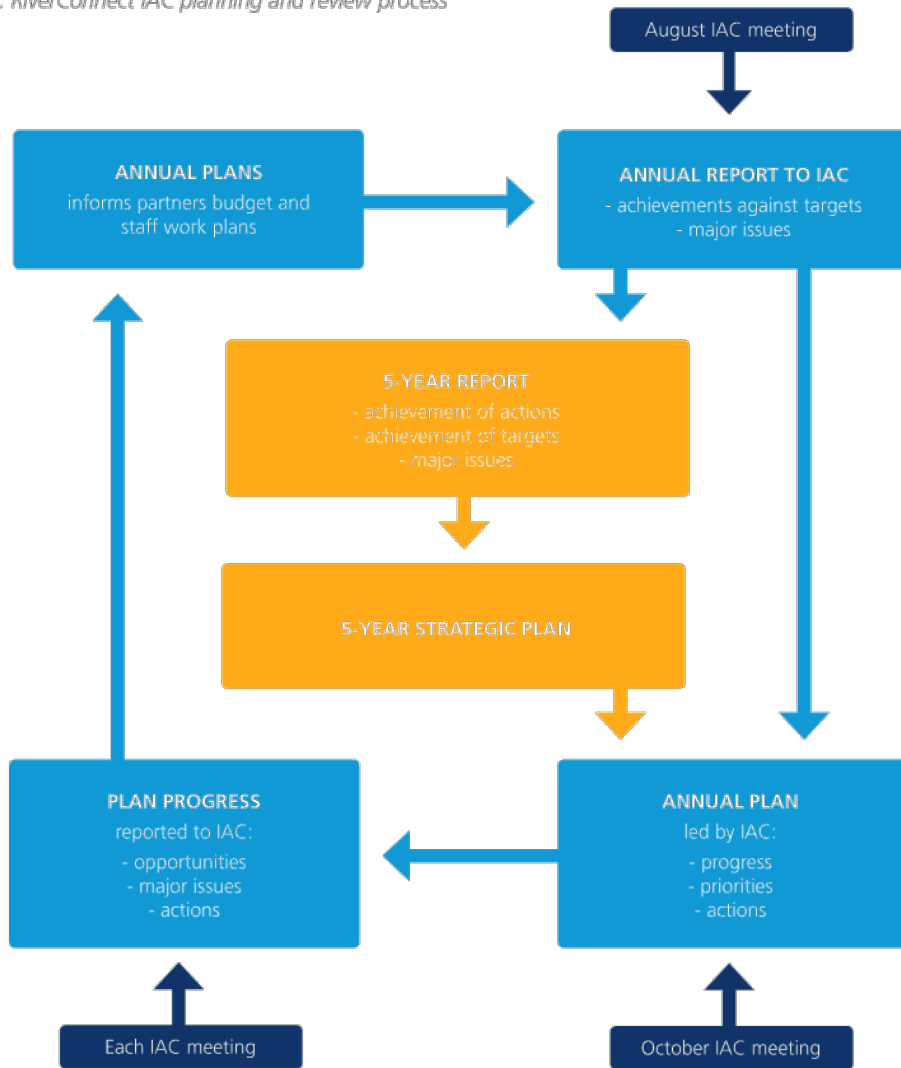
### 5.3.1 THE ADAPTIVE NATURE OF THE PLAN

The Plan is not a 'blueprint' with every future action fully detailed. Many of the actions listed might be completed by a wide range of stakeholders and might require further investigation to determine their detailed design and feasibility. There is little value in developing detailed designs for projects that might not happen for five years, or which might ultimately be undertaken by partners who unexpectedly become well positioned.

Essential features of the Plan are therefore regular reviews to ensure current opportunities are captured, and targeted and timely community consultation to develop and refine project proposals is undertaken. Detailed actions and activities are more appropriately developed on an annual basis, with input from the IAC and community through the governance structure described earlier. Reporting achievements against annual action plans and long-term goals to the IAC becomes an integral part of the planning and review processes (Figure 15).



Figure 15: RiverConnect IAC planning and review process





### 5.3.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESSES

Monitoring and evaluation are prone to becoming unwieldy and therefore futile if they are not rigorously focused. Monitoring and evaluation focuses on three critical and connected levels, which will drive short and long-term performance and adaptation of this Plan (Table 4).

Table 4: Logic to drive short and long-term performance and adaptation

Evaluation level	Key evaluation question	Evidence to inform evaluation		
		Parameter monitored	Data	
1. Annual performance	How did we go this year against what we said we would do?	Activities (listed in annual plan) completed against funds received, such as those from the GB CMA and GSCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Usage information</li> <li>– Paths built and access points improved</li> <li>– Information material developed, including signage and educational</li> <li>– Media activities and website usage</li> <li>– Numbers and types of events organised or participated in</li> <li>– Number of participants in events</li> <li>– Satisfaction surveys and stories about participation</li> <li>– Number of schools and students participating</li> <li>– Activities, hours and outputs achieved by students</li> <li>– Numbers of plans contributed to</li> <li>– Completed works e.g. tree planting</li> <li>– Monitoring activities eg bird counts, rubbish collected</li> <li>– Meeting involvement</li> <li>– Major project progress</li> </ul>	
		Action examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Schools engaged in the river environment</li> <li>– Spotlight walks conducted</li> </ul>		
2. 2017 - 2022 strategy implementation progress	What progress has been made in implementing what we said we would do when the Plan was written?	Actions (listed in Strategic Plan) completed by all partners, regardless of fund source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Collated outputs above e.g. Number of tour groups and individuals participating (total of all years)</li> </ul>	
	How effective were the actions?	Progress towards 5-year targets (listed in Table 3)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participation numbers in activities (total of all years)</li> <li>– Length of shared path extended (km) (total of all years)</li> <li>– Perception and knowledge about river environment</li> </ul>
	Do the priorities for action need to change?	All of the above		All of the above
3. 2030 Vision realisation	What progress has been made towards vision?	Progress towards the four long-term goals (Table 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participation numbers (total of all years)</li> </ul>	
	Have circumstances changed sufficiently to warrant change in the strategic directions?	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Institutional changes (especially for partners)</li> <li>– Government and other funding priority changes</li> </ul>	Anecdotal evidence, discussion papers, meeting papers, etc.	



**5.3.3 REPORTING**

While data is expected to be gathered continually during Plan implementation, reporting timeframes vary for each evaluation level.

Evaluation level	Report to RiverConnect IAC
Annual performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Update every RiverConnect IAC meeting (anticipated to be every two months)</li> <li>– Complete report (including quantitative data and stories) and present to IAC in August prior to major planning reset in October each year</li> </ul>
Long-term strategy implementation progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Report on progress annually, prior to major planning reset in November each year</li> <li>– Complete report as part of strategy review at the end of this Plan update (in five years)</li> </ul>
Vision realisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Report on progress and other evaluation questions annually</li> <li>– Complete report as part of strategy review at the end of this Plan update (in five years)</li> </ul>

**5.3.4 DATA, DATA GAPS AND BENCHMARKING**

While measuring progress towards some of the 5-year and long-term goals (Table 3 and Table 1) will require new data gathering and benchmarking, it is likely that several partners will have existing monitoring processes that RiverConnect can ‘piggyback’ on or complement. Targets have been chosen and designed to capitalise on mutual benefits and create efficiencies.

The detailing of specific performance measures and data requirements is a task to be completed early in the life of this 2017-2022 Plan.

## Appendix 1: Strategic Plan review process

The review of the RiverConnect Strategic Plan was directed by the IAC, with guidance from a small working group of GSCC and GB CMA staff and IAC community representatives.

Stage 1 IAC direction setting	
May 2015	Member survey
June 2015	Workshop 1: Achievements and assessment
August 2015	Workshop 2: Future priorities and governance
Stage 2 Partner (existing and potential) coffee catch ups to inform Plan	
January 2015 – June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Goulburn Murray Landcare Network</li> <li>– Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>– Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority</li> <li>– Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project</li> <li>– Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative</li> <li>– Gallery Kaiella</li> <li>– Word and Mouth</li> <li>– U3A</li> <li>– Shepparton Historical Society</li> <li>– Goulburn Valley Water</li> <li>– Aboriginal Partnerships Officer – Council</li> <li>– Parks Victoria</li> <li>– Shepparton Art Museum</li> <li>– Committee for Greater Shepparton</li> <li>– Education sector</li> <li>– Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation</li> <li>– GV Health</li> <li>– Shepp Show Me</li> <li>– VER Fish</li> <li>– Ethnic Council</li> </ul>
Stage 3 Plan drafting	
April - August 2016	Presentation to IAC June 2016 and review by members July/August 2016
Stage 4 Presentation to Council	
December 2016	Council meeting
Stage 5 Broader community consultation	
February – March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Community group catch ups</li> <li>– Consultation at events and activities</li> <li>– Draft available for comment</li> <li>– Partner sign on</li> </ul>
Stage 6 Council endorsement	
June 2017	Council meeting

We would like to thank all the people who contributed to the review and development of the second of what we hope will be many RiverConnect Strategic Plans.

