



**NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Waterway works to improve river health near Wangaratta.

The Northeast Catchment Management Authority is about to embark on a major waterway health program that will deliver benefits to people, plants and fish living near Wangaratta.

Work teams will soon start removing willows and weeds that are choking the Fifteen Mile Creek and having a negative impact on the quality of water flowing through the Three Mile Creek into Wangaratta.

The work is being funded by the Victorian Government's "Our Water, Our Future" large-scale river restorations project.

Waterways Project Officer, Mr Anthony Wilson said the North East CMA is targetting an area between Tone Road and the Hume Freeway in response to support from local landholders adjoining the Fifteen Mile Creek.

" The North East CMA improves local waterway health in a planned way, so we'll undertake this repair work in three stages, " said Anthony.

" We will first remove willows and other exotic tree species that are restricting water flows throughout the reach of Fifteen Mile Creek. We will then carry out a sand extraction program that is designed to reduce local flooding events and increase stream water carrying capacity in the Wangaratta area. Finally, we will start a revegetation program, where we will plant native riparian trees, shrubs and grasses to help stabilise the creek bank and further improve river health".

Mr Wilson said sand quantity has been increasing in the targeted area for a number of years, resulting in significant raising of the bed level of the Fifteen Mile Creek which was severely reducing its water carrying capacity and smothering in-stream habitat for flora and fauna.

" These repair works will also see a reduction in the level of sand entering the Wangaratta urban area and benefit the health of the heritage listed Lower Ovens River," he said.

In 2005, the Northeast Catchment Management Authority completed a Waterway Action Plan for the Fifteen Mile Creek covering an area from Fairfield Park at Greta South to its confluence with the Ovens below Wangaratta. The Action plan identified threats to the creek system and appropriate work actions for improvement in river health.

" The work we're undertaking in the Wangaratta area in coming weeks will complement previous works the North East CMA has completed at Greta West and is currently conducting in the Ovens and King Basins, " concluded Mr Wilson.

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For further information or to arrange a photo/interview, please contact:

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The North East CMA region – key facts:

- covers approximately 1.9 million hectares of North East Victoria;
- contributes an estimated \$3.24 billion to the National economy each year;
- supplies 38% of total water to the Murray Darling Basin;
- key industries include agriculture, forests, tourism and valued added processing;
- more than 55 per cent consists of public land.