

MEDIA RELEASE

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CMA seeks community advice for Kiewa River study

Local knowledge is set to play a key role in helping scientists better understand the environmental condition of the Kiewa River.

The North East Catchment Management Authority is inviting people who know the Kiewa Catchment well to participate in a study called an Environmental Flow Determination.

The study will help to determine the environmental water requirements for the Kiewa River and its associated tributaries above its junction with the Murray River.

North East CMA Environmental Water Resources Officer, Mr Matt O'Connell, encouraged people to nominate as a Community Contact that will provide input into the study.

"We're hoping to draw together locals who have an intimate knowledge of water resources and environmental assets in the Kiewa River catchment," said Matt.

"During the study, we will ask local contacts to assist with selection of representative sites and reaches and to assist scientists develop flow objectives."

The Environmental Flow Determination study will involve a FLOWS assessment - the Victorian endorsed method for determining the environmental water requirements for a healthy river.

"This method is a rigorous, clear and independent process that links environmental objectives with flow requirements", explained Mr O'Connell.

The Kiewa River is one of the priority, unregulated catchments identified in the Victorian Government's Our Water Our Future action plan for the development of a Stream Flow Management Plan (SFMP).

When completed, the Environmental Flow Determination will feed into the development of the Kiewa Streamflow Management Plan (SFMP).

Mr O'Connell said the revised Water Management Plan for the Kiewa River is intended to create a balanced and sustainable sharing of available water between all stakeholders in the Kiewa catchment, including, the environment, licenced diverters, and non-consumptive water users (recreation and aesthetics).

Interested community members can register an interest in becoming a community contact. Nomination forms are available from Matt O'Connell at the North East Catchment Management Authority. Tel: (02) 6043 7628 or 0427 220 506.

For further information or to arrange an interview/photograph contact: Matt O'Connell at the North East CMA phone: 02 6043 7628 or email: matthew.oconnell@necma.vic.gov.au.

▲ See following page for quick background re Kiewa catchment

Key points about the Kiewa River Catchment

- ❑ The Kiewa River catchment (estimated catchment area of 1,700 km²) is located between the Ovens and Upper Murray River Basins and joins with the Murray River, 6 km downstream of Lake Hume.
- ❑ The Kiewa River supplies water for hydro electricity, urban and agricultural uses. Predominant agricultural uses in the catchment include dairy, horticulture and viticulture in addition to domestic and stock requirements.
- ❑ The hydrology of the Kiewa River is significantly altered over the summer (low flow) period by the diversion of water. In particular there has been an alteration in the magnitude of summer flows while the duration of low flow events has increased.
- ❑ Some sections of the Kiewa River are identified in the Regional River Health Strategy as Ecologically healthy whilst others have been significantly altered by Europeans.
- ❑ The Kiewa River Floodplain contains significant Freshwater meadows and Shallow Freshwater marshes.
- ❑ The Kiewa River and its tributaries has a diverse native fish fauna with twelve native species (and seven exotic species) recorded in the system. Of the assemblage of nineteen species of fish in the Kiewa River system, twelve are native species and seven of which are acclimatised exotic species. Five of the native species, Murray cod, Macquarie perch (*Macquaria australasica*), golden perch (*Macquaria ambigua*), mountain galaxias (*Galaxias olidus*) and flat-headed galaxias (*Galaxias rostratus*), are considered threatened in Victoria. Murray cod and Macquarie perch are also listed under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.
- ❑ The Kiewa River is also considered an important recreational angling water, focused mainly on introduced species such as brown and rainbow trout.
- ❑ The Kiewa River provides important unregulated flows to the environmentally valued Murray River.