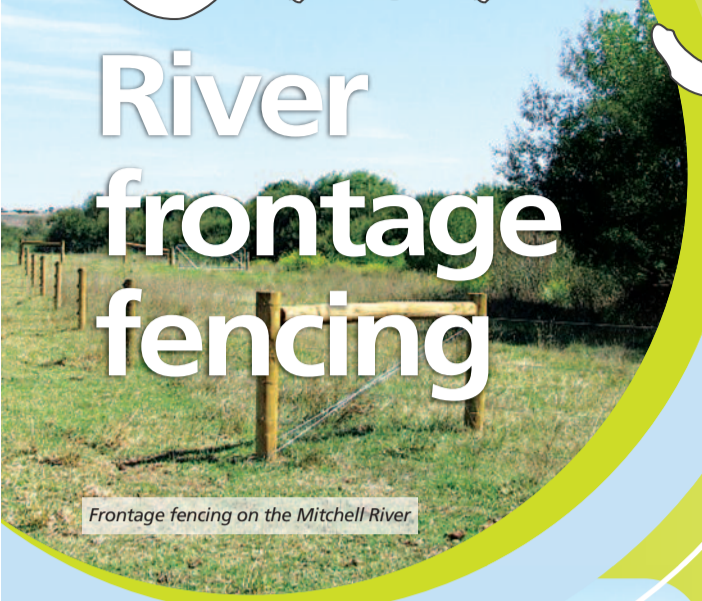


# Giving

## River frontage fencing



Frontage fencing on the Mitchell River.

## the Gippsland Lakes a Hand

Improving river frontages through stock management, revegetation and weed control is a major focus of the East Gippsland CMA's works program.

The East Gippsland CMA recently received \$40,000 as part of the first round of the Gippsland Lakes Environmental Fund, a Victorian Government initiative providing \$10 million to help improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes.

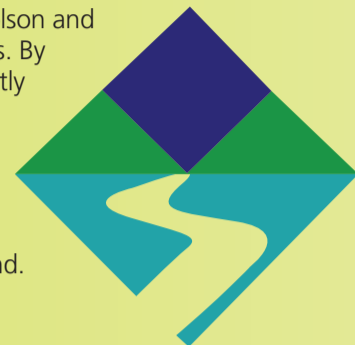
These projects on the Mitchell, Nicholson and Wonnangatta River frontages comprise a cooperative program jointly with landholders to fence off rivers from grazing stock.

This is particularly important on rivers such as the Tambo, Nicholson and Mitchell that contribute significant flows to the Gippsland Lakes. By reducing sediment and nutrients entering the rivers we can jointly help to improve the water quality in the Lakes.

In this article, some examples are presented of these recent frontage fencing projects.

By working together, landholders along the rivers and the Victorian Government are giving Gippsland Lakes a helping hand.

Graeme Dear, CEO



## Why fence the river?



Cattle on lower Nicholson River.

Fencing river banks to control stock access has many benefits. Native vegetation has a chance to regenerate, helping to make river banks more stable and less prone to erosion. Water run-off is reduced and nutrients are filtered from entering the river to improve water quality. A revegetated riparian zone creates diverse habitats for native birds, animals and fish which are essential to a healthy river environment.

A fenced river also leads to more efficient stock management because stock are prevented from wandering to properties on the other side of the river. Off-stream watering systems can be used to provide high quality drinking water so that stock do not need to access the river.



Fenced Wonnangatta River frontage.

## Frontage fencing

Sections of river bank have been fenced on the Mitchell, Wonnangatta (which flows into the Mitchell) and Nicholson Rivers. New (2297 metres) and upgraded (772 metres) fencing has been installed on five properties, a total area of 7.87 hectares of river frontage.

On the Wonnangatta River, we have constructed 1047 metres of new stock exclusion fencing, and upgraded 54 metres of existing fence, a total area of 3.21 hectares.

The land on the other side of the river is heavily forested and will provide a source of seed which will assist with natural regeneration of trees and shrubs in the fenced off area.

Mitchell River frontages have been fenced on properties for the exclusion of stock which will contribute to improved biodiversity in the riparian zone, allowing natural regeneration of native species and overall improvement in water quality and bank stability.

On the Nicholson River, Wendy Cornelissen has fenced off an additional 2.86 hectares of her property (595 metres of frontage). The fenced off area is close to forested areas, so regeneration of native vegetation should occur quickly now that stock has been excluded.

Wendy said: 'The fence along the river stops my stock from wandering off so I no longer have to spend time bringing them back. So the fence has advantages to me as well'.

In all these examples, the fencing materials have been provided by the CMA using funding from the Gippsland Lakes Environmental Fund.



Stock exclusion fencing on a Mitchell River property.



Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee Chairman Dr Peter Veenker on a visit to inspect Gippsland Lakes Environment funded works on Wendy Cornelissen's Nicholson River property.

## Off-stream water systems



Tank for off-stream water system on the Wonnangatta River.

Fencing the river sometimes requires alternative arrangements to be made for stock watering. In these cases, off-stream water systems can be installed, with materials such as tanks, troughs and piping.

Grants are available to eligible landholders who sign a river health agreement. The agreement outlines the extent and quality of the fencing to be constructed, and the responsibilities involved in maintaining the frontage after the fencing has been completed. The Authority welcomes enquiries from landholders who are considering river frontage fencing.

