



A Jarvis Norwood crew places a log in the Mitchell River. (PS)

Linking aquatic habitats

East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA) has just completed the installation of 40 woody habitat structures in the Nicholson and Mitchell rivers.

The project, at a cost of \$100,000, was funded by the recreational fishing grants program overseen by the Victorian Government.

Local contractor, Jarvis Norwood used a newly constructed barge to drive the piles along the river banks and tether the two logs to each pile.

In the past, many trees and branches were removed from our rivers because they were thought to reduce the capacity of rivers during floods, increase erosion and make the river look messy. Woody debris in rivers have minimal impact on flow capacity, erosion is a natural part of the river cycle and the debris is an important part of the habitat of fish and other aquatic animals.

Member for Gippsland East, Tim Bull, said providing habitat for fish species was important for a number of factors, both environmental and recreational.

"Apart from providing a more natural habitat in our rivers for ecological and

environmental reasons, there is also the benefit of improving fish numbers for recreational anglers, an important part of our local economy," Mr Bull said.

On the Nicholson River, the authority continues to work closely with members of the Nicholson Angling Club and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Corporation to establish the most appropriate areas for logs to be installed.

Nicholson Angling Club also continues to undertake other environmental activities, including monitoring the water quality of the river and working with Nicholson Landcare Group to revegetate the river banks and control weeds.

These works are linked to previous works and the large wood that occurs naturally within the streams. The links created are important for recreational fish species for shelter, food and migration during the spawning season.

The authority plans to continue to install fish habitat in rivers across East Gippsland with work on the Snowy and Tambo rivers planned for the future. If you would like further information about fish habitats, visit the EGCMA website or phone the authority.