



Harriet Shing MP (left) and East Gippsland CMA acting chief executive officer, Craig Parker (kneeling), with Eastwood Landcare members during a recent tour of the group's landscaping and tree planting works. (PS)

River and lake environmental work featured

Eastern Victoria Region MP, Harriet Shing, recently took the chance for a first-hand look at some of the environmental work being done along the Mitchell River and on the Gippsland Lakes.

Along with staff from East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Ms Shing's first stop was with the Eastwood Landcare Group on the edge of Bairnsdale. The group showcased landscaping and tree planting it has done over the past two years, turning an overgrown weedy gully in to a thriving urban bush habitat.

Eastwood Landcare Group president, Pauline Stewart, explained the group regularly works on planting, weeding and general maintenance with assistance of local community members, local government, residential developers and the CMA.

Next was a visit to Picnic Point on the Mitchell River, possibly Bairnsdale's best kept secret.

Here the Picnic Point Reserve Landcare Group showcased the work it has done to create a site that provides habitat for frogs, birds and native plants.

The CMA supported Picnic Point Reserve Landcare to removed willows in 2009 and the Landcare group has since worked tirelessly on creating a place where people can feel a million miles from town.

Most recently with the help of Rotary and a Landcare grant, the group has rebuilt the walking track, providing safe access to the point.

"These are fantastic examples of what can be achieved by a dedicated community with support from local business and government agencies," Ms Shing said.

Finally Parks Victoria gave Ms Shing a tour of Pelican Island off Nungurner where sand works have vastly improved the nesting environment for swans and terns.

Sean Phillipson, from Parks Victoria, led a walk around the island and said this is another example of government agencies and community groups working together to enhance the health of the Gippsland Lakes.

CMA acting chief executive officer, Craig Parker, said it was a delight to showcase the work being done in the region.

"We live in a unique region with passionate people," Mr Parker said.

"Whether it's boating, fishing or land based recreation, the entire community benefits from healthy rivers and lakes.

"This visit was a great opportunity to demonstrate first-hand, the value strong community and agency co-operation adds to