



MEDIA RELEASE

3 February 2015

Walk on the wild-side at Bairnsdale's Macleod Morass and wastewater treatment plant

Free tours of Bairnsdale's internationally significant Macleod Morass and the nearby wastewater treatment plant will be running on Saturday 7 February - as part of the region's #SoNotCrap program of activities helping to mark World Wetlands Day.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the interdependence of both sites, with the flora and fauna of the morass thriving on high quality recycled fresh water produced by the treatment plant. It also provides a rare chance to learn more about the cultural and historical significance of the morass itself to the Gunaikurnai – the traditional owners of the land.

The Ramsar-listed* Macleod Morass is a deep, freshwater marsh covering more than 500 hectares on the southern fringe of Bairnsdale. Managed by Parks Victoria, it is home to hundreds of species of birds, fish, insects, mammals, reptiles and frogs – including a number that are endangered.

East Gippsland Water has been helping to conserve the flora and fauna, with the Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant treating and transforming wastewater into high quality fresh water suitable for reusing in the wetland.

On Saturday 7 February rangers from Parks Victoria and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) will be running guided tours of the morass at 11am and 12 noon. East Gippsland Water will be providing, regular tours of the wastewater treatment plant between 11am and 2pm.

There is no need to pre-book. Simply turn up on the day with sensible footwear and a hat.

Said East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Bruce Hammond: "Our priority has been to ensure that the ecological value of the wetland is protected and that its value as a wildlife habitat is maintained. Close monitoring shows that using recycled water to supply the morass is paying dividends."

Everyone is invited to get involved with the #SoNotCrap program of events in February, for a thought-provoking exploration of how East Gippsland is safeguarding its beautiful, natural environment through the smart use of recycled water. The initiative is sponsored by East Gippsland Water and East Gippsland Shire Council. It is supported by Parks Victoria and GLaWAC.

Bairnsdale's Water Tower in Main Street will be the backdrop for the public launch of the program on Saturday 7 February, with the inside of the tower providing the canvas for a captivating audio and visual experience to stimulate the senses. This is the work of artist Sue O'Connor, who conceived #SoNotCrap, with starring roles going to Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Macleod Morass.

In addition the #SoNotCrap exhibition will run from 7 to 28 February, showcasing some fantastic images and short films submitted over recent weeks by East Gippslanders and visitors to the region, which will be displayed on the projection wall at Bairnsdale Library and at other key locations. There will be a People's Choice Award of a GoPro for the best entry, so the public are encouraged to vote for their favourite.

More follows.../

#SoNotCrap dates for the diary

Date	Event	Location	Time
Sat 7 Feb	Public launch (including a Welcome to Country ceremony by GLaWAC) and meet the artist Sue O'Connor	The Water Tower, Main St, Bairnsdale (near McDonalds)	10am - 10.30am
Sat 7 Feb and Sun 8 Feb	#SoNotCrap audio and visual experience	The Water Tower, Main St, Bairnsdale	10.30am - 5pm (Sat) 10am - 5pm (Sun)
Sat 7 Feb - Sat 28 Feb	Photo and video exhibition	- Bairnsdale Library (22 Service St) - East Gippsland Shire service centres in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bairnsdale (273 Main St) • Lakes Entrance (18 Mechanics St) • Omeo (179 Day Ave) • Orbost (1 Ruskin St) • Paynesville (55 the Esplanade) • Mallacoota (70 Maurice Ave) - Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance Visitor Information Centres	Business hours
Sat 7 Feb	Tours of Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant	Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant, 143 Holloway St	11am - 2pm (regular tours - approx. 35 mins duration)
Sat 7 Feb	Tours of Macleod Morass	Meet in the morass car park at the bottom of Bosworth Rd, Bairnsdale (access via Forge Creek Rd)	11am and 12 noon

For more information contact East Gippsland Water on 1800 671 841 and ask for the communications team.

Ends

NOTE TO EDITORS: You are invited to send a reporter/photographer/camera crew to cover any of the events. For more information please contact East Gippsland Water's Communications Manager Ronan Carroll in the first instance on 5150 4434 / 0428 539 303.