

# Stop the degradation of our waterways!

## HANDY HINT

The first step to protecting our waterways is to fence off and exclude stock.

## the uniqueness of our waterways

Waterways are dynamic systems that are naturally changing over time by processes such as erosion and sedimentation.

Our present day land uses have altered these processes causing a decline in waterway quality.

As custodians we must ensure our waterways are protected for future generations.

## unhealthy waterways

Characteristics of our deteriorating waterways include:

- depletion of riparian vegetation
- bed and bank erosion
- sedimentation
- loss of environmental flows
- loss of aquatic life and
- high nutrient loads resulting from agricultural and urban runoff

Waterways displaying these characteristics have harmful implications for humans, livestock and wildlife. Unhealthy waterways erode productive landscapes, disrupt ecosystem processes and can become an economic burden on the community.

## benefits of a healthy waterway

There are many benefits for human health, stock health, environmental health, agricultural productivity, profitability, and recreation. These include:

- provision of a quality water supply
- protection from waterborne diseases and toxic algal poisoning
- reduction in the loss of productive agricultural land which occurs with erosion
- maintenance and protection of biodiversity
- production of 'clean and green' produce
- provision of wind shelter and increased safety for stock
- maintenance of recreational opportunities in and alongside water bodies

## what can I do?

- reduce the likelihood of agricultural runoff and other pollutants entering waterways by maintaining adequate riparian vegetation
- fence off and revegetate waterways to stabilise the bed and banks
- remove willows
- carry out regular weed and fence maintenance
- improve water use efficiency to maintain environmental flows
- match fertiliser application rates with soil requirements by performing soil tests. This will reduce leaching of fertilisers into waterways.

### South Gippsland Landcare Network

The South Gippsland Landcare Network is made up of 22 landcare groups within South Gippsland. Landcare encourages land stewardship and aims to improve the long term productivity and sustainability of our land.

If you would like to become involved in Landcare within South Gippsland you can contact us on 5662 5759 or email us on [sgln@landcare.net](mailto:sgln@landcare.net)

