

Let's explore

MOSSVALE PARK

South Gippsland's historic arboretum

Mossvale Park is bordered by the Tarwin River

The Tarwin River is the primary river system within South Gippsland Shire and has a catchment area of approximately 1,500 square kilometres. The river in the park is part of the West Branch of the Tarwin River which flows south from the Strzelecki Ranges and then joins up with the East Branch of the river near Meeniyan, flowing into Anderson Inlet, a shallow estuary connected to Bass Strait.

Mossvale Park has one kilometre of Tarwin River frontage in the 4 hectare park. The meandering loop of the river almost completely surrounds the park and is a boundary of the Kurnai traditional lands. In the Boonwurrung language the river is given two names: *Tarwin*, meaning 'thirsty' and *Toulerm*, meaning 'gum'.

The park area mostly has an Ecological Vegetation classification of Swampy Riparian Woodland. There is a little bit of Damp Forest in the south of the park. Both these types of vegetation are endangered, which is why it is so important to maintain the endemic vegetation on the river banks.

Want to find out more about Mossvale Park? Use the QR code to visit our website



Crossing the River

This is an old postcard picture of the original entrance to the Park. This entrance was behind the playground. If you look to the other side of the river you can see the two rows of magnificent oaks in the cow paddock that flanked the long gone track. This bridge washed away in the 1930's and was replaced with the current entrance.

By the time this picture from the early 1900's was taken, the riverside vegetation has already been substantially cleared. If you wander over to this area of the park you will note that although the riverside vegetation has been substantially restored, elm suckers and ivy are still an ongoing issue.

Tarwin River Ecology

The park area is mostly Swampy Riparian Woodland. There is a little bit of Damp Forest in the south of the park. Both these types of vegetation are endangered so one of our priorities is to maintain the river banks to encourage the native species to thrive. This also provides habitat for all the native animals that live here. People have reported sightings of platypus, wombats, southern brown bandicoots, koalas and echidnas. The banks host native freshwater crayfish and the river is home to many aquatic bugs.

The park floods often, with the Tarwin breaking its banks when there is heavy rain in the Strzelecki ranges. As many of the original flood plains cleared and drained for agriculture, the remnants of endemic vegetation are valuable for conservation. The park contains Strzelecki gums, Manna gums, blackwood wattles, tea trees and paperbarks, sedges and rushes, mainly on the riverbanks with exotic species in the park proper. Interestingly many of the plants that thrive are flood plain or riverside species, including all the Moss era plane trees, poplars, the taxodiums and even some of the oaks. Alders, our dawn redwood, elms, some lindens and the nyssas are also quite tolerant.

The banks are home to the endangered Strzelecki gum

Eucalyptus strzeleckii is a member of the swamp gum group, probably most closely related to Eucalyptus ovata and E. brookeriana (Rule 1992). It is a medium to tall forest tree growing to approximately 30 m high, identifiable from the glaucous (waxy) new growth evident at the outside of crown that gives a blue-grey colouring to the crown. The species has small ovoid buds, and fruit that is broader than it is long. The species has loose, rough bark at the base of a whitish-grey, with red mottling, trunk (Carter 2006; Ecology Australia 2006; Rule 1992; Walsh & Entwistle 1996). Adult leaves (15x25 mm in size) are lanceolate or ovate, asymmetrical, dark green and glossy (Carter 2006; Ecology Australia 2006).

Immature trees may have copious fibrous grey-brown bark on the trunk, and alternate, glossy green leaves (that vary from ovate to elliptical) that are darker on one side than the other (Carter 2006; Ecology Australia 2006).

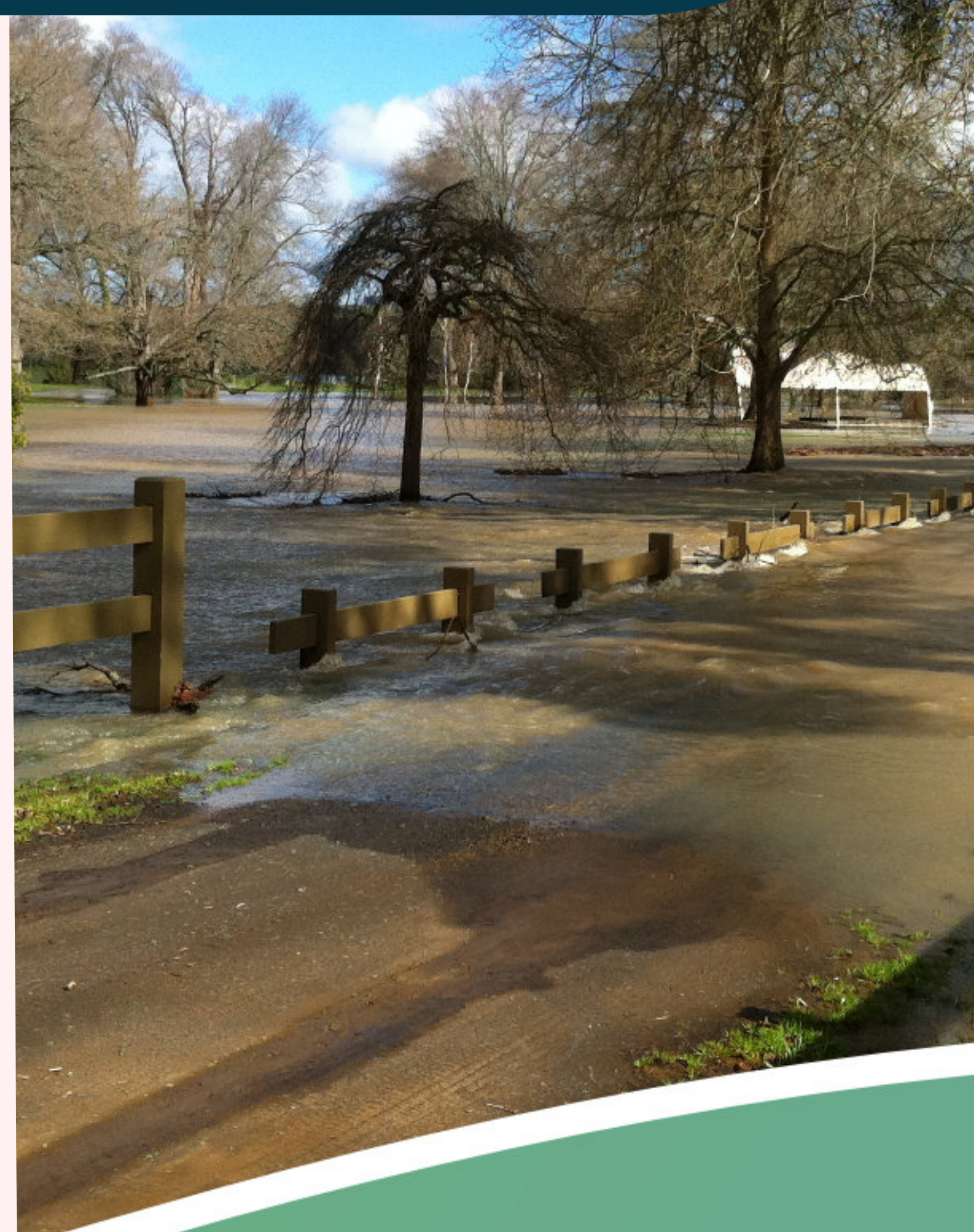
Friends of Mossvale Park

Volunteers support Mossvale Park through a diverse program

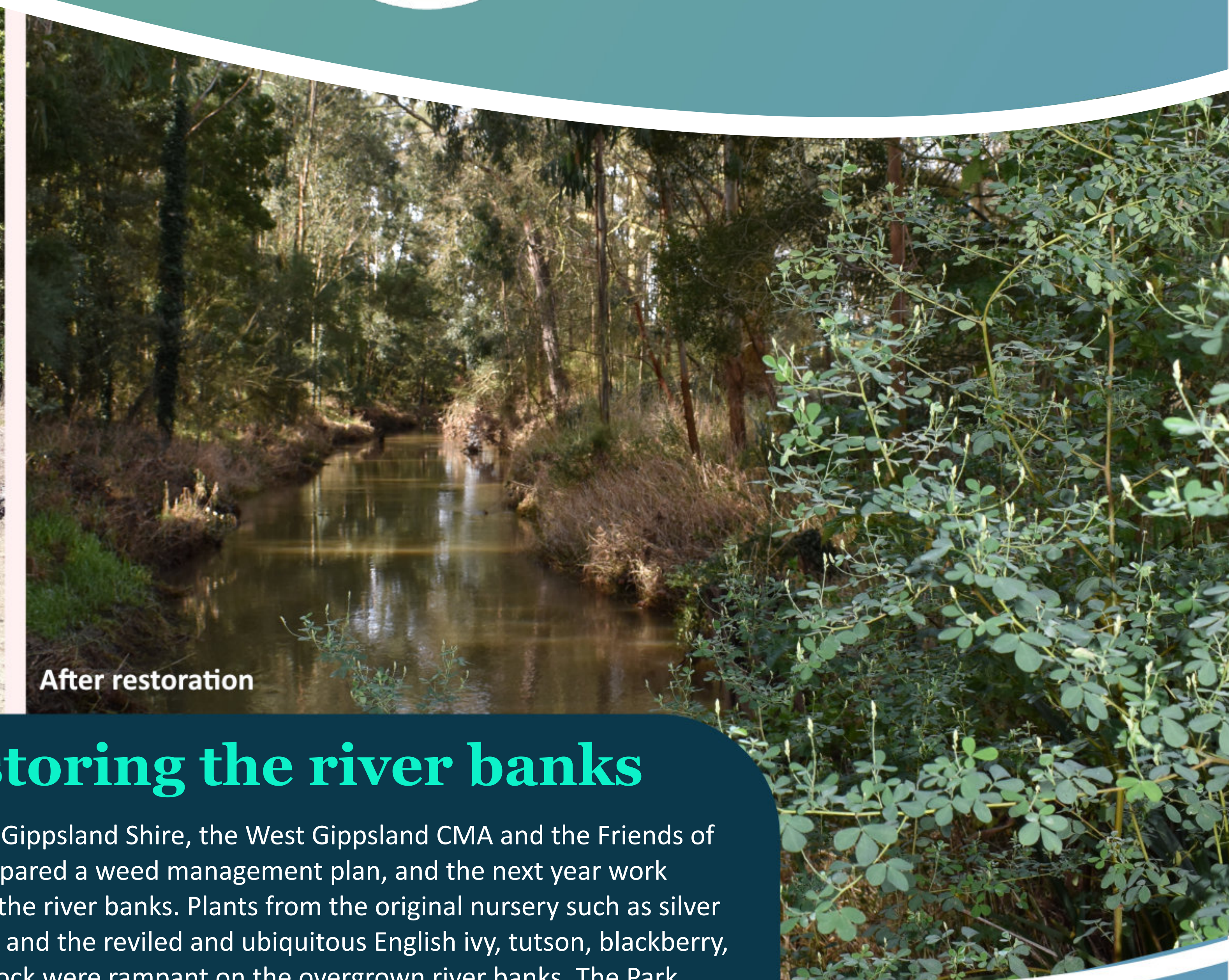
- Visitor engagement
- Promoting the Friends group and the Park
- Helping with our program of events
- Monthly working bees in the Park held on the first Thursday of the month at 10.00am in the park
- Bimonthly meetings are held in the park. We discuss projects and planting and other issues affecting the park.



Regenerated Strzelecki gums



During restoration



After restoration

Restoring the river banks

In 2007 the South Gippsland Shire, the West Gippsland CMA and the Friends of Mossvale Park prepared a weed management plan, and the next year work started to restore the river banks. Plants from the original nursery such as silver and golden poplar and the reviled and ubiquitous English ivy, tutson, blackberry, ragwort and hemlock were rampant on the overgrown river banks. The Park floods on a regular basis and these weeds washed downstream, establishing beside the river wherever they washed up. It was time to rescue the river and protect the banks. There we still a few remnants of the Great Forest on the riverbanks and these, along with the non weedy European trees were preserved and nurtured.

Mossvale Park is managed by South Gippsland Shire Council.

For more information about the Park - South Gippsland Shire web page



South Gippsland
Shire Council

