

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Water
Minister for Equality



Friday, 19 January 2024

BRINGING DRINKING WATER TO COUNTRY AT THE KNOB RESERVE

The Allan Labor Government is helping Stratford locals and visitors stay hydrated, through the completion of new drinking fountains and water main in partnership with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and Gippsland Water.

Minister for Water Harriet Shing launched the \$230,000 project at Knob Reserve in Stratford today – which will mean the local community and visitors will no longer rely on bottled water while taking advantage of the Knob reserve with family, friends and the wider community.

The project has been made possible through a \$70,000 grant as part of the Labor Government’s Integrated Water Management (IWM) Program and a \$160,000 investment by GLaWAC and Gippsland Water.

The project involved the installation of a new water main to connect the reserve to Stratford’s water network and four drinking fountains, making it easier for people to access drinking water within Knob Reserve.

The fountains feature artworks by local artist Robbie Farnham, titled ‘Big Dreaming’ and ‘Tidilick’, celebrating the culture of Gunaikurnai people and their intrinsic connection to water.

GLaWAC and Gippsland Water worked together closely throughout the project to ensure culturally significant areas of the reserve were not impacted by the construction process.

The project is one of 12 Traditional Owner-led IWM projects funded through a grants stream designed to better support Traditional Owner self-determination and to support putting IWM into practice.

Projects funded through the grants stream have supported Traditional Owners to care for waterways and cultural landscapes and build and share traditional ecological knowledge.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

“The Knob Reserve is a culturally significant location for the Gunaikurnai people, and the addition of water fountains means it can be used more often as a meeting place, to share knowledge and hold events.”

“This important project shows the value of working together, of planning and delivering water projects together; to achieve more sustainable use of our precious resources and deliver more for communities across Victoria.”

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

“This is a unique approach to water saving and water recycling, and will have great outcomes for residents and the environment.”

Quotes attributable to Knob Reserve Committee Chair Cath Thomas

“As Traditional Owners we have a responsibility to manage the impacts on this significant landscape in a way that protects our cultural values and heals Country.”

“Providing drinking fountains will reduce people’s reliance on bringing bottled water to the reserve and highlights the importance of this essential resource for our health and well-being.”

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Quotes attributable to Gippsland Water Managing Director Sarah Cumming

“We’re proud of the work we do together with GLaWAC and it’s wonderful to see initiatives like this come to life after years of planning and close collaboration between our teams.”

“Having clean, fresh drinking water flowing to this very special site means visitors can now stay hydrated, save money and reduce their environmental impact all at the same time.”