



# Media Release

19 May 2017

## Please do not collect firewood from Wimmera Heritage River

Parks Victoria is reminding the community that firewood collection and removal from the Wimmera Heritage River is not permitted.

A fine and infringement notice has recently been issued after an individual was caught on remote camera illegally harvesting firewood from the area.

Parks Victoria is seeking to raise awareness of the river's significant natural, cultural and social values and provide information about what activities are permitted.

District Manager Gavan Mathieson said, "The Wimmera Heritage River is one of only 18 Heritage Rivers in the state. There are just four in Western Victoria.

"The river is a much-loved feature of the Wimmera landscape, and offers boating, camping, fishing, bushwalking and swimming. Mature trees, wildlife and birds make it a perfect place for families and visitors to enjoy.

"The River is especially significant for its rich Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Scar trees and middens occur along the length of the river. Parks Victoria co-manages the river with Traditional Owners through the Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) which is the appointed trustee for Native Title rights and interests."

BGLC CEO Michael Stewart said, "The Wimmera River, part of a successful Native Title determination in 2005, has extreme importance to the Wotjobaluk peoples and all heritage sites are protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006."

Mr Mathieson said firewood collection and removal from the Wimmera River is illegal at all times.

"It is illegal to collect wood without permission from most areas of the bush. Heavy penalties apply and may include a custodial sentence. Penalties also apply to anyone caught selling illegally harvested timber.

"If you see anyone doing the wrong thing, please contact Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or DELWP Customer Service Centre on 13 6186. Information is treated confidentially. Photos of vehicle registration details can help."

Mr Mathieson said that a multi-agency approach to caring for the river and catchment was the best way forward. "Parks Victoria is working with Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP), Traditional Owners and the broader community to manage this stunning natural asset for everyone to enjoy."

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The Heritage River is a 229km section of the Wimmera River system, running between Polkemmet Bridge, 10km north-west of Horsham, and the Wirrengren Plain in Wyperfeld National Park, covering 56,020ha. It has been proclaimed a Victorian Heritage River due to its significant environmental and social values. (Heritage Rivers Act 1992).

### Media enquiries

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