

National Heritage Grants to benefit Grampians

BLAIR BURNS

INDIGENOUS heritage is at the forefront of the third round of the Morrison Government's National Heritage Grants with more than \$5.7 million in funding for 25 different projects.

Helping to create jobs, boost visitor numbers and protect historic sites across the country are all a focus in the third round of the grants.

Wannon MP, Dan Tehan welcomed the announcement of two successful projects in the Grampians National Park.

"These projects continue to ensure the heritage values of the National Park are developed, whilst recognising and protecting the park as a place of national and cultural significance," he said.

The Gariwerd Rock Art Management Forum was given \$192,500 and will bring together indigenous rangers from across Australia to discuss rock art conservation and cultural heritage management.

The second project saw Nature Glenelg Trust (NGT) receive \$198,000 to document the health of the Wannon River in the Grampians National Park.

NGT manager, Mark Bachmann welcomed the news, saying grants like this were the "lifeblood" of the organisation.

"It will enable us to investigate the important upper section of the Wannon River over the next three years," he told *The Spectator*.

"This project will establish monitoring sites and undertake ecological and hydrological assessments along the upper Wannon River in the National Park, between Mount William and Dunkeld.

"It (the project) will better define and articulate the impacts associated with these changes, including the past 50 years of artificial diversions of the upper Wannon River tributaries (from Mount William to the reservoir at Lake Bellfield) - this information will aid ongoing discussions about site values and management options."

Mr Bachmann said NGT had a strong interest in the health of the Wannon River and had been working hard to improve the condition and health of the wetlands over the past nine years - also to provide habitat for a range of



NATURE Glenelg Trust manager, Mark Bachmann, in front of Walker Swamp in the floodplain of the Wannon River. It is one of the many wetlands and cultural sites in the Grampians region that will benefit from the Morrison Government's National Heritage Grants. Photo: SUPPLIED.

threatened species.

"The wetlands include Gooseneck Swamp, Brady Swamp and Walker Swamp, the last of which is now a NGT nature reserve," he said.

The staff member that will be leading NGT's work on the project will be Hamilton local, Greg Kerr.

Mr Bachmann thanked major project partner, Parks Victoria, who had given NGT permission to work with it in the Grampians National Park.

"It builds on an ongoing partnership we have with Parks Victoria, as we are neighbours in that area and hence already work together

closely on a range of biodiversity and water issues," he said.

Environment minister, Sussan Ley said the focus of this round of grants was on preserving and promoting the culture of indigenous Australians.

"I am delighted to announce this year's Australian Heritage Grants which are a celebration of the irreplaceable legacy of our cultural, natural and historic heritage and a commitment to safeguard its resilience into the future," she said.

"This year's funding round was especially

focussed on preserving and promoting the enduring culture of First Nations Australians and on supporting the long-term resilience of the many important and world-renowned sites we have in our states and territories.

"Funding for the successful projects will also support both public and privately owned and operated National Heritage List places hit hard by COVID-19 restrictions and will help create jobs, increase visitation and boost visitor numbers."