



A two - three week old  
Australasian Bittern chick  
photographed in February 2020 on a  
participating landholders farm  
by Matt Herring

# Incentives for landholders: BOOSTING THE BUNYIP BIRD YIELD

Did you know that the Riverina is home to the largest population of Australasian Bitterns in the world? It is recognised that about 500 Bitterns utilise rice crops over the summer months for breeding purposes. Riverina Local Land Services has developed a suite of incentives for rice growers to provide additional and improved habitat on farm for this threatened species.

The project is now entering its second season with great results achieved last year. Four times as many Bitterns were found in Bittern Friendly Rice when compared with our control crops. We also recorded a successful breeding event with four chicks identified and when last seen fully fledged.

## INCENTIVE OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- *Growing Bittern Friendly Rice:* Including **early permanent water and a minimum of 20 hectares of rice**
- *Modifying irrigation structures:* Such as drains and storage dams on farm to provide additional habitat as refuges for Bitterns after draining and over the winter months
- *Additional habitat:* Watering natural wetlands on farm

## ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY:

- You must be the owners of the land
- You must be willing to enter into a land management agreement with Riverina Local Land Services
- All previous works funded by Riverina Local Land Services or Catchment Management Authorities must be completed
- Your property must be located in the Project Area (see map below) and you must be growing rice in the current season
- You must have no outstanding debts to Local Land Services
- You must have public liability insurance for a minimum of \$10 million to be considered for funding
- Landholders will be required to declare any conflicts of interest when submitting an application. Persons who have associations that are considered by Riverina Local Land Services to represent a conflict of interest which is unable to be managed will not be eligible
- Allow project staff access to nominated rice growing areas to conduct monitoring of bittern populations, breeding success and agreed management actions.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Contact Anna Wilson to register your interest in the project by 30 September 2020
- Landholders will then be supplied with further details about the project and asked to complete an application form

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