

An aerial photograph of a rocky riverbed. A small waterfall flows over a series of large, moss-covered boulders. A group of about a dozen people are gathered on the rocks, some standing and some sitting, observing the water. The surrounding landscape is rugged with sparse vegetation and scattered trees. The text 'VICTORIAN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES' is written in a small, white, sans-serif font above the larger title 'ACTIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT', which is in a bold, white, serif font.

VICTORIAN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES  
**ACTIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT**

2017/2018




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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we work and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

# FOREWORD



THE ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT FOR 2017-18 PROVIDES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE POSITIVE IMPACT THAT CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES (CMAs) ARE HAVING ON VICTORIA'S REGIONAL COMMUNITIES.

This report shows clearly the important role CMAs have in helping to improve liveability for Victorians and supporting more resilient communities in the face of current and future dry conditions and in the wake of previous flooding.

It is particularly encouraging to see CMAs are working closely with Traditional Owners, taking advantage of their unique ability to care for Country. This report illustrates the genuine partnerships between CMAs and Traditional Owners, helping to better integrate Aboriginal values and traditional ecological knowledge in natural resource management.

It is pleasing to see evidence of the rapid progress with the rollout of the Victorian Government's Water for Victoria policy and our largest ever investment of \$222 million in healthy waterways and catchments. The report highlights work to improve the condition of 10 flagship waterways and deliver dedicated environmental water to improve the health of our rivers, wetlands and estuaries.

This investment also includes \$22 million to support the Our Catchments Our Communities strategy, helping form better partnerships between government and community, and so deliver better on-ground outcomes. 19 major projects, many detailed in the report, are delivering for regional communities right across Victoria.

CMAs fill a vital role in the delivery of a range of Victorian Government environmental policy and programs. As well as Water for Victoria, CMAs are key agents for delivery of Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 and our commitment through Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

CMAs are also providing vital support for Biodiversity Response Planning; the new area-based approach to biodiversity conservation. Projects being developed and implemented through Biodiversity Response Planning are starting to roll out across the state and I will be pleased to see the results in future reports.

I would like to congratulate CMAs and their partner agencies for being chosen as preferred service providers for the Australian Government's new National Landcare Program. The work we have all done to develop a strong catchment sector and a strong framework for on-ground delivery has delivered significant investment by the Australian Government over the next five years.

This report is a celebration of the work of the 10 CMAs, their partners and their communities. It also highlights the extraordinary scale of this undertaking right across the state; from the dryland areas of the Mallee to the forests and coastal parks in the south-east.

Hon Lisa Neville MP Minister for Water

# VIC CATCHMENTS' CHAIR OVERVIEW



At the half-way point of delivering projects funded through the Victorian Government's four-year \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative, the State's 10 CMAs are proud of what's been achieved to date.

As well as the many fantastic results coming out of each of the regions, as detailed in the case studies provided in this report, there are numerous other examples of the benefits of the collaborative efforts between CMAs and communities across the State that have improved the health of our much-loved creeks, wetlands, estuaries and rivers.

This is because CMAs fully understand the ripple effect changes in one part of the landscape have on another and the importance of involving local communities in the prioritising of activities to deliver often long-term and integrated outcomes. For example, the four CMAs who are the caretakers of the rivers that flow into the Murray River work with each other, river operators, water authorities, farmers and communities to make sure that every drop of water is used multiple times as the flows make their way along thousands of kilometres of waterways. Doing so helps the State's Ramsar-listed Murray River wetlands cope with climate change and river regulation and also improves water quality for farmers and communities. This also supports activities such as fishing, boating or simply enjoying time out in nature, which is so important to people's wellbeing.

Wimmera CMA partnered with Glenelg Hopkins CMA to deliver the Victorian Government-funded Habitat Tender project, which successfully protected 2408ha of high quality native vegetation by supporting private land managers to manage areas of remnant vegetation. North East, East Gippsland and West Gippsland CMAs worked with Parks Victoria to protect and enhance the EPBC-listed Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens and Port Phillip &

Westernport and Corangamite CMAs partnered to deliver the Victorian Ramsar Site Management Plan.

The Victorian Government's key natural resource management strategies (see page 10) all emphasise the importance of genuinely engaging with Traditional Owners to manage Country. The CMAs are proud of their track record in collaborating with Aboriginal Victorians and a number of examples are outlined on page 16. It's important to note that we don't just talk the talk - 3% of our workforce are Indigenous, compared to 0.9% in the broader public sector.

Genuine Traditional Owner engagement was critical to successfully delivering many of the projects funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, which wrapped up in June 2018. Once again the case studies highlighted in this document illustrate the huge effort that has gone into supporting communities to protect and improve biodiversity on private and public land thanks to this funding. As well as improving the lot of many icon threatened species, these actions provide many valuable benefits for farmers. Planting native trees and shrubs provides shelter for stock, attracts pollinators and improves soil health; managing pest plants and animals reduces competition for crops and water; and hosting field days and events encourages practice change and builds social networks. Most importantly, as we head towards what looks like a dry 2018-19, all these efforts help build the resilience of our communities, so they remain vibrant and productive in the face of a changing climate.

DR. PETER VENKEER

# CMA REGIONS

VICTORIA'S INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK IS WORKING TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE OUR RIVERS AND LANDSCAPES WHILE SUPPORTING PRODUCTIVITY FROM OUR LAND AND WATER RESOURCES.

## NORTH CENTRAL

The North Central region covers 30,000 square kilometres (13% of the state). It is home to 250,000 people, is valued for its internationally recognised environmental assets and supports a diverse agriculture sector.

## MALLEE

The Mallee region covers almost 40,000 square kilometres making it the largest catchment area in Victoria. It runs along the Murray River from Nyah to the South Australian border and south through vast dryland cropping areas and public reserves.

## WIMMERA

The Wimmera region covers 30,000 square kilometres straddling the Wimmera River. Agriculture is the dominant land use, economic driver and employment sector. A quarter of the 50,000 people who live in the region depend directly on agriculture for their income.

## GLENELG HOPKINS

The Glenelg-Hopkins region covers 26,000 square kilometres and is characterised by flat volcanic plains in the south, with the Grampians, Dundas Tablelands and Central Highlands dominant in the north. With 80% of the region cleared for agriculture, it is one of the most productive farming areas in Australia.

## CORANGAMITE

The Corangamite region extends across 13,000 square kilometres of which 78% is in private ownership. The region has rich and diverse landscapes ranging from expansive volcanic plains to coastal environments and the Otway Ranges.

## GOULBURN BROKEN

The Goulburn Broken region covers over 24,000 square kilometres of which two thirds is under private ownership. It extends north from the outskirts of Melbourne to the Murray River. It yields 11% of the Murray Darling Basin's water despite making up only 2% of its area.

## NORTH EAST

The North East region extends across 19,000 square kilometres between the Murray River in the north, Victorian Alps in the south and the Warby Ranges in the west. The region is home to 100,000 people, provides 38% of the Murray Darling Basin's water and is 55% public land.

## EAST GIPPSLAND

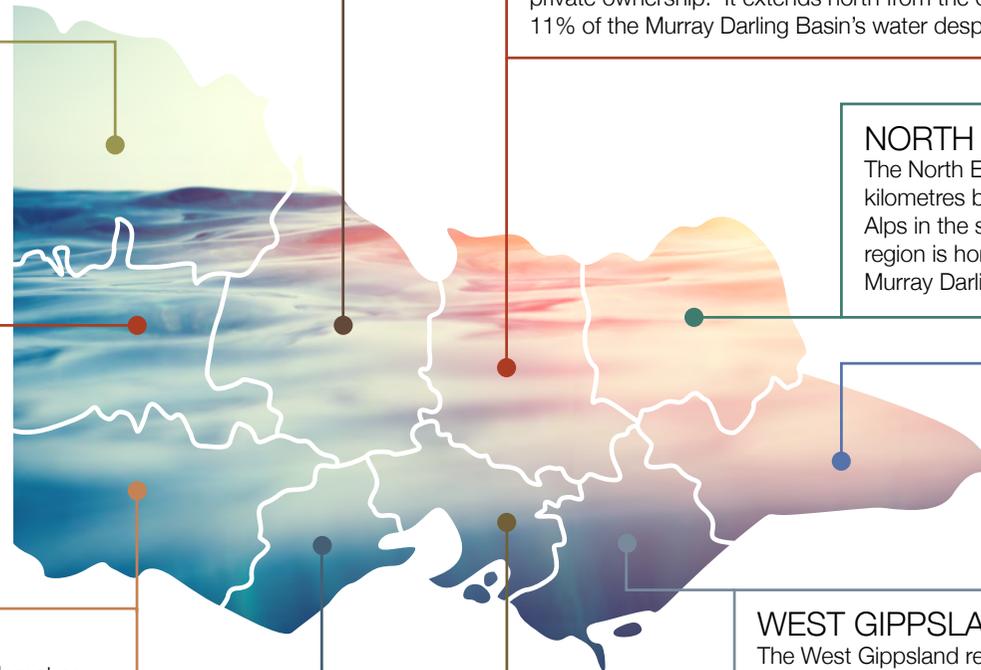
The East Gippsland region covers 22,000 square kilometres and is approximately 80% publicly-owned land mainly as significant State forests, national and coastal parks.

## WEST GIPPSLAND

The West Gippsland region covers 18,000 square kilometres from Warragul to the Gippsland Lakes and from the Great Dividing Range to Wilsons Promontory. It provides the majority of Victoria's electricity, 60% of Melbourne's water storage and 20% of Australia's milk production.

## PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT

Spanning 13,000 square kilometres that feed into Port Phillip Bay and Western Port, this region has a resident population of over 5 million whilst also boasting some of Victoria's most productive farming lands and spectacular parks that are home to all four State flora and fauna



# CMA CHAIRS

EACH CMA HAS A MINISTERIALLY-APPOINTED BOARD OF LOCAL PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR SETTING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR REGIONAL LAND, BIODIVERSITY AND WATER MANAGEMENT, AND MONITORING AND EVALUATING ITS PERFORMANCE.

Board members are appointed for their relevant skills, experience and commitment to statewide catchment management. CMAs have a long and proud history of embracing diversity and fostering inclusion: half the chairs are female and five Indigenous Directors were appointed during 2017/18.



CORANGAMITE  
ALICE KNIGHT



EAST  
GIPPSLAND  
DR PETER VENKEER



GLENELG  
HOPKINS  
ANTONY FORD



GOULBURN  
BROKEN  
ADRIAN WESTON



MALLEE  
SHARYON PEART



NORTH  
CENTRAL  
JULIE MILLER MARKOFF



NORTH EAST  
LEANNE MULCAHY



PORT PHILLIP &  
WESTERNPORT  
TANIA FOSTER



WEST  
GIPPSLAND  
PETER JENNINGS



WIMMERA  
PETER HILBIG

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# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

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FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS CMAs HAVE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY DELIVERED LAND, WATER AND BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT MANY OTHER COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR LANDSCAPES, LIVELIHOODS AND LIFESTYLES.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Genuine engagement with regional communities is at the heart of all CMA work. The CMAs' legislated role is to foster cooperation and community awareness. More than 1,330 agency/community group partnerships are facilitated by the CMAs each year across the State. Examples of the effectiveness of the CMAs' success in collaborating with the community are highlighted throughout the regional case studies.

## LANDCARE SUPPORT

The partnerships between Landcare and CMAs are deep and crucial for Victoria. This relationship was strengthened and formalised through an MoU signed between Vic Catchments and Landcare Victoria in April 2018, which will lead to improved capacity and streamlined approaches to natural resource management.

## LEVERAGE & CO-INVESTMENT

CMAs add value to Government investment and bring multiple fund sources together to deliver integrated on-ground works. Each \$1 of Government funding is complemented by more than \$3 of co-investment. In addition, the community contributes over \$5 of in-kind and their own investment for every \$1 of government funding on-ground.

## PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE

CMAs support agricultural industries to be productive and profitable. CMAs have partnerships and projects with the dairy, beef, sheep, grains, fruit, vegetable, wine, equine, apiary and other industries improving production and efficiency,

boosting farmer profit and supporting the long-term future of agriculture. The regional case studies showcase many of the benefits of this collaborative effort.

## INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

CMAs provide a model for others to follow, employing 14 Indigenous people (3% of our workforce), having direct partnerships with Indigenous organisations and steering funding into Indigenous projects. The case study on page 16 and provides more detail, while further successful collaborations feature in many of the regional case studies.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

CMAs play a critical role in building communities' resilience to cope with drought, fire and flood. The case study on page 17 provides detail on how the CMAs have worked with VICSES, local government, communities and other relevant agencies to develop their Regional Floodplain Management Strategies. The CMAs are already working with communities to prepare and support them during what is forecast to be a drier than average 2018/19.

## REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

CMAs are significant employers with a total of 412 people directly employed by these regional organisations (95% based in regional Victoria). Further, the vast majority of CMA revenue goes out to projects involving landholders, contractors and partner organisations, generating significant employment and economic activity.

MANY INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS  
CONTRIBUTE TO THE HEALTH OF OUR RIVERS AND  
LANDSCAPES.



PARTNERSHIPS ARE VITAL FOR THE EFFECTIVE  
DELIVERY OF A RANGE OF PROGRAMS INCLUDING  
THE \$222 MILLION WATER FOR VICTORIA INITIATIVE  
AND THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL  
LANDCARE PROGRAM.

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## PARTNERSHIPS

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"The only way the river, and our town, would have survived over the past few years is with the flows we've been given through Wimmera CMA. It also means we are able to have our annual fishing comp where the town gets quite busy. It flows onto the hotel, the supermarket, the takeaways, the dollars are really handy for them. The Jeparit Fishing Comp is vital to our town and businesses." *Brett Ireland, Jeparit Angling Club*

"Without the support of a joint partnership with Wimmera CMA, this rehabilitation plan which involved 3.5 kilometres of fencing and planting around 4000 trees, shrubs and grasses on a 9.5-hectare project area would not have gone ahead. The area was ravaged by fire and with all the external fences lost we had to focus on that first. We could not have attempted this work for a number of years," *Michael Overington, Moyston*

"The Wimmera River is a vital asset to both Dimboola and Jeparit; it is the drawcard and lifeblood for both communities. Water for the environment is critical to the health of the river and it is essential that they are maintained." *Cr Ron Ismay, Hindmarsh Shire Council Mayor*

"It's been an important partnership between the farmers and the CMA to establish a very healthy riparian zone. Over the last 20 years I can see the river getting back to what it was like when I was a kid." *Daryl Cameron, 3rd generation farmer at Noorinbee (near Cann River)*

"We have a partnership arrangement with East Gippsland CMA which offers to support and collaborate on the works together. The relationship allows us to be a part of the planning in the works that we undertake. It's part of the role we play in looking after and working on country." *Grattan Mullet Snr from Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation*

"Overall, the projects involved a lot of people and their inputs. One must acknowledge the financial assistance from the various government (agencies) which is often overlooked. The staff have all been very helpful, particularly our facilitator who has led the way. Labour has been provided by different sources along with input from the landholder." *Garry Grant, farmer Longwood*

"Our project site never ceases to amaze us with the new things we are constantly finding. Every year we find at least three new flower species we have never seen before (and we have owned it for over 100 years). I think a lot of the fauna benefits are still to come but we are pretty sure we have a barking owl on site." *Matt Trewin, farmer Devenish*

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# PARTNERSHIPS

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Acheron River. Woody weeds removed and natives replanted



Acheron River. Three years later

“It’s been terrific to be involved in this project with the Goulburn Broken CMA (on flagship waterway Hughes Creek) and see how the efforts of our group members and local landholders to create habitat for Macquarie perch is making difference,”  
*Native Fish Australia (Victoria) President, Tim Curmi.*

“There is always pressure for increased development on floodplains. In my experience the CMAs are always willing to provide advice and to work with developers to ensure a positive and balanced outcome for the community and the environment.”  
*Ben Tate, WaterTech.*

“Working with the Goulburn Broken CMA and VRFish, we believe we had the best ever Angler Riparian Partnership Program planting days at the Jamieson and Steavenson rivers. To have 68 recreational anglers at the Steavenson was fantastic and the day was so well organised .... our volunteer workers enjoyed the day so much and keep asking ‘when is the next one?’.”  
*Terry George, President, Australian Trout Foundation.*

“The fox-baiting program to protect turtles has been one of the biggest successes of the Gunbower Forest Key Asset Protection project. There has been high community interest, the community has been really on board. Credit also goes to Turtles Australia and Graham Stockfeld.”  
*Matt Hawken, DEDJTR.*

“I’ve always been interested in the environment ... when I started Waterwatch this prompted me into thinking that was something I’d like to do with my future. If I wasn’t visiting these parts of the region as part of my monitoring activity, I wouldn’t go there and I wouldn’t get to experience the unique changes the environment goes through.”  
*Tess Williamson, Waterwatch volunteer who monitors two sites on Five Mile Creek, at Woodend.*

“The most significant thing I gained from the Science on Country event was the awareness of other interested parties that are wanting to work with First Peoples. It’s great to know they value our Traditional Ecological Knowledge. It was good to hear that ARI (Arthur Rylah Institute) and the other agencies are open to our suggestions of how to work with us.”  
*Bec Phillips, participant and presenter during the Science on Country event, part of the Regional Aboriginal Capacity Building Project led by North Central CMA.*

CMA's ENABLE REGIONAL COMMUNITIES, PARTNERS AND GOVERNMENT TO PLAN AND WORK TOGETHER IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.



THROUGH 2017/18, CMAs HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING NUMEROUS GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES INCLUDING:

- Regional Catchment Strategies
- Water for Victoria
- Our Catchments, Our Communities
- Biodiversity 2037
- Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan
- Marine & Coastal Planning
- Murray Darling Basin Plan
- Victoria's Regional Statement
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

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## SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT

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### ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Through Our Catchments, Our Communities, the Victorian Government invested \$150,000 in a Victorian-wide Catchment Carbon Offsets (CCO) project. The project was a collaboration between CMAs, water corporations and DELWP.

The project was run as a Catchment Carbon Offsets Trial (CCOT) that aimed to complement Victorian Government policies and strategies including the Climate Change Act 2017, the Victorian Climate Change Framework and Adaptation Plan, Biodiversity 2037 and Water for Victoria, by demonstrating how projects could deliver emissions reductions, climate resilience and improve catchment management outcomes.

A project from a consortium comprising Wannon Water, Corangamite and Glenelg Hopkins CMAs and the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI) was selected to be a "virtual" case study. This case study was designed to improve water quality and river health in the catchment above the Otway South water offtake on the Gellibrand River, provide certified carbon offsets to satisfy Wannon Water's expected annual requirements, build climate resilience in these landscapes and generate other environmental and social benefits.

The case study considered three main vegetation configurations: a 20m waterway buffer; 100m waterway buffer; and floodplain plus a 20m buffer. After investigating each of the scenarios, the project concluded:

- A CCO project could provide a cost-effective option to generate certifiable carbon offsets to help a water authority meet its emissions reduction targets.
- The process and tools used in designing and evaluating the case study project could be applied to potential CCO projects in other settings and at different scales.
- The 20m wide waterway buffer was the most cost-effective option to provide the required carbon offsets and achieve the project's other design objectives.
- In some settings, inclusion of farm forestry plantings could significantly improve the financial performance of a large CCO project. If appropriately integrated with environmental plantings the overall project could provide certified offsets and a variety of environmental and social benefits.

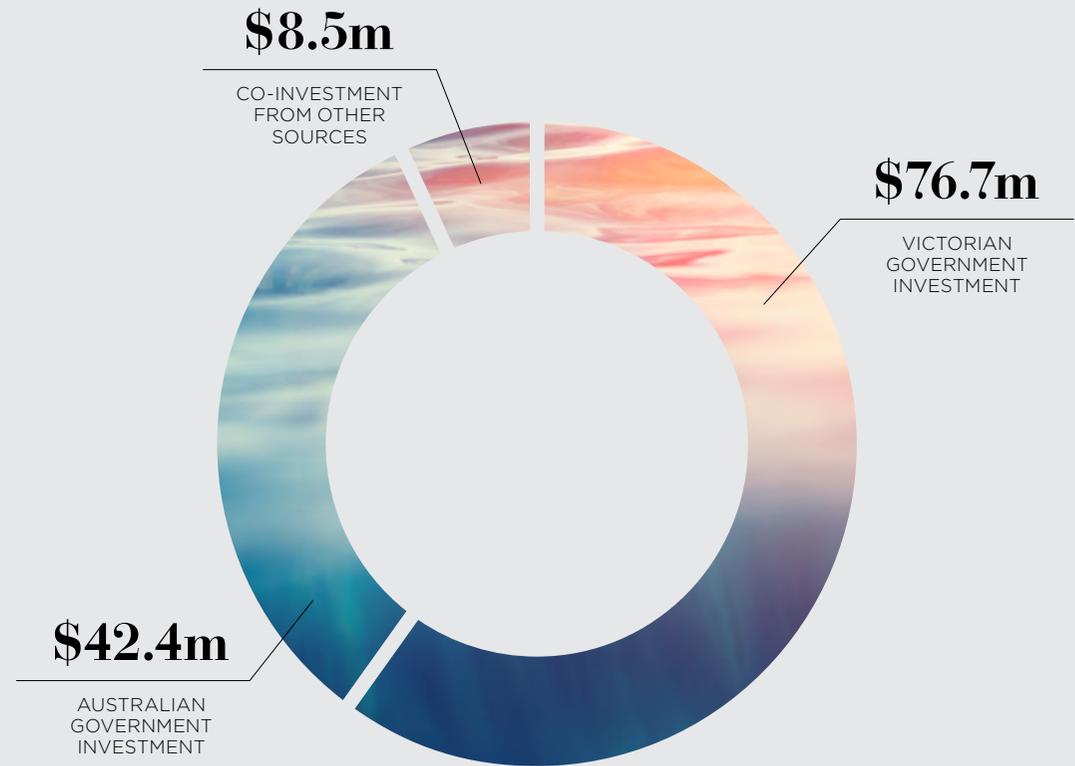


# INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

# 2017/2018 SUMMARY STATEWIDE ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

DURING 2017/2018 THE FOLLOWING INVESTMENT  
WAS MADE THROUGH VICTORIA'S 10 CMAs:

NOTE: The community co-contribution figure is based on modelled assumptive  
data derived from the Catchment Condition and Management Report 2012,  
Victorian Catchment Management Council.



# 2017/2018 SUMMARY STATEWIDE ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

NOTE: Port Phillip Bay covers an area of approximately 193,000 ha. The Royal Botanic Gardens are approximately 38 ha. Melbourne City Centre is approximately 622 ha, including the area between the Yarra River and Spencer, Latrobe, Victoria and Spring Streets.

AS A RESULT OF THIS INVESTMENT, A LARGE NUMBER OF OUTPUTS WERE ACHIEVED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. HIGHLIGHTS ACROSS VICTORIA INCLUDED:

96,956	event participants	that is	1,864	people participating in local events each week of the year
1,331	partnerships	that is on average	133	collaborative arrangements with organisations and individuals being established or maintained by each CMA
1,091,846	ha of pest animal and weed control	that is an area over	5	times the size of Port Phillip Bay
5,615	ha of vegetation	that is an area over	147	times the size of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens which has had vegetation established and maintained
5,999	ha of irrigation infrastructure	that is an area	9	times the size of Melbourne City Centre with more efficient irrigation systems
10,134	planning approvals and advice provided	that is on average	194	times each week
717	km of fencing	that is about the distance of a road trip from Melbourne to Adelaide		



# 2017/2018 SUMMARY

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>					
1.1 Channel (km)	157	87			87
1.2 Water storage (no.)	143	113	18	3	134
1.3 Pump (no.)	7	2			2
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)	1,076	458	5,174	367	5,999
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	368	759	28	31	818
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	14	2	6		8
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	66	165	41		206
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	232	177	14	53	244
1.9 Fence (km)	640	498	212	7	717
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	18	7	5		12
1.11 Road (km)	19	12	2		14
1.12 Crossing (no.)	1	1			1
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	2,067	1,871	3,725	19	5,615
2.2 Weed control (ha)	160,515	236,434	29,824	22	266,280
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	655,726	496,373	329,193		825,566
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	522		19		19
2.7 Soil treatment (ha)			722		722
2.8 Earth works (no.)	55	113	38		151
2.9 Rubbish removal (ha)	10	156			156
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	34,510	2,853	35,693	1	38,547
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	30,032	1,936	52,851		54,787
3.3 Water (no.)	147	176			176
3.4 Fire (no.)	14		9		9
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	5,876	10,061		73	10,134
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	742	531	265	54	850
4.3 Assessment (no.)	4,438	5,412	984	25	6,421
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	40,879	67,625	28,600	731	96,956
4.5 Partnership (no.)	1,163	1,142	170	19	1,331
4.6 Plan (no.)	589	643	145	8	796
4.7 Publication (no.)	1,404	1,794	272	39	2,105
4.8 Information management system (no.)	62	51	8	2	61

# STATEWIDE CASE STUDIES

THESE CASE STUDIES ILLUSTRATE COLLABORATION BETWEEN  
CMAs IN 2017/2018:

- TRADITIONAL OWNER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION
- DEVELOPING REGIONAL FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES





# TRADITIONAL OWNER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Traditional Owner engagement and participation in natural resource management and water management is a key priority of the Victorian and Australian Governments. This year the CMAs have delivered a diverse range of projects tailored to the aspirations and priorities of local Traditional Owner groups.

Examples of actions and outcomes over the past 12 months include:

- Continued support for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to participate in traditional fire practices. An example of this is the North East CMA's Cool Season Burning Masterclass led by Traditional Fire Knowledge Holder Rod Mason in the Kiewa Valley. *"We have to update our skills and do it all as one country men working together"* Uncle Rod Mason Elder.
- Increasing community awareness and connection to local Indigenous culture. An example is a new bird app, Part-parti Mirring-yi (Birds in Country) developed by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA in partnership with Traditional Owners as a tool for learning about language, culture and the natural environment.
- Working with Traditional Owners to recognise Aboriginal values and traditional ecological knowledge in water planning and to increase Aboriginal participation in water management. Examples of this include the Corangamite CMA's Upper Barwon and Yarrowee-Leigh FLOWS Study, where

Wadawurrung representative Tammy Gilson has been supported as a cultural heritage advisor on the study's technical panel, facilitating deep knowledge exchange on the cultural values of these river systems.

- The Wimmera CMA River yarns project supports Traditional Owners to connect with their local waterways. *"River yarns was very successful for our people as it is good to come back to the river and places where we grew up as children our whole life living by the river"* Aunty Hazel McDonald (Wotjobaluk Elder).
- Supporting Traditional Owner employment and participation in natural resource management. An example of this is Goulburn Broken CMA's partnership with Yorta Yorta's Woka Walla work crew, which supports Aboriginal people to secure employment and build skills while caring for Country. *"Working on Country- I love working in the bush- I wouldn't have it any other way"* Woka Walla crew leader Graham Weston.



**1** Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Tammy Gilson conducting site assessments for the Upper Barwon and Yarrowee-Leigh FLOWS study. *Corangamite CMA.*

**2** Traditional Fire Knowledge holder Uncle Rod Mason leading the Cool Season Burning Masterclass, with landholder Bridget Doyle. *North East CMA.*

**3** Wotjobaluk Traditional owners on the River Yarns project at the Scar Tree on the Wimmera River. *Wimmera CMA.*



<http://bit.ly/2MTUHn5>



# DEVELOPING REGIONAL FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

“Victorian communities, businesses and government agencies are aware of flooding and are actively taking measures to manage their flood risks to minimise the consequences to life, property, community wellbeing and the economy.”

Vision: Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy 2016.



CMAS	COMMUNITY EVENTS	FEEDBACK	LOCAL ACTION
EAST GIPPSLAND	4		22
GLENELG HOPKINS	10	90	80
WIMMERA			97
GOULBURN BROKEN	15	95	188
WEST GIPPSLAND		16	45
NORTH CENTRAL	17	23	197
CORANGAMITE	3	25	22
MALLEE	7	8	59
NORTH EAST	12	8	138



- 1 Implementation of Regional Floodplain Management Strategies will increase the resilience of Victorian communities.
- 2 Donald Flood Mitigation Implementation Committee touring newly constructed levee at Donald township.
- 3 2016-17 Steering Committee for Wimmera Regional Floodplain Management Strategy.

Managing flood risk in Victoria requires a partnership approach between Government and communities. Therefore, effective stakeholder engagement was a critical element in determining local actions within Victoria’s Regional Floodplain Management Strategies. CMAs worked closely with their partners and communities to assess flood risks, discuss how best to reduce those risks and ensure regional strategy work plans aligned with the expectations of Local Government Authorities (LGAs), key agencies and communities.

Formally, regional strategies sought to:

- identify those parts of the region with significant risks;
- identify possible actions to mitigate those risks; and
- establish a Regional Work Plan of priority actions.

Various informal goals were also achieved through regional strategies development, including:

- establishing and improving CMA relationships with LGAs, key agencies, water corporations and at-risk communities;
- improved understanding among stakeholders of the policies, accountabilities, and actions from the Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy 2016; and
- applying the learnings from recent flood events.

Engagement with LGAs and key agencies occurred through both participation in project working groups for shared regional issues, as well as consistent direct contact on local matters to develop regional work plan actions. Workshops were held with LGA officers and key agencies representing the areas of infrastructure, planning and emergency management. These workshops were used to apply a state-standard methodology for assessing risks across Victorian LGAs, and for developing options for mitigating those risks. These options were then tested through community consultation for appropriateness and feasibility.

Community consultation approaches were tailored to the needs of each community in respective CMA regions. Traditional approaches of community drop-in sessions and farm-gate meetings were widespread, while more modern methods of online surveys and notices via email to corporate contact lists were also used effectively. Across Victoria:

- 68 community events were held for community members to identify risks and provide mitigation options;
- 265 community members provided feedback to regional strategies; and
- 848 actions have been proposed for reducing flood risk.

The implementation of regional strategies will improve protections and preparations for future floods and increase the resilience of Victorian communities.

# REGIONAL ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

THIS SECTION PRESENTS OUTPUTS DELIVERED BY EACH CMA IN 2017/2018, INCLUDING KEY INSIGHTS OR SIGNIFICANT EVENTS FOR THE YEAR. CASE STUDIES FROM EACH REGION PROVIDE A SNAPSHOT OF THESE OUTPUTS, HIGHLIGHTING THE BROAD RANGE OF ACTIONS THAT WERE UNDERTAKEN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY, AND DEMONSTRATING THE TANGIBLE ON-GROUND IMPACTS OF CMA PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES.





# CORANGAMITE

REMI JEANDET COLLECTING BUGS ON THE GRASSY PLAINS FOR A FIELD GUIDE OF INVERTEBRATES FOUND ON THE VICTORIAN VOLCANIC PLAINS

# CORANGAMITE

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- The Corangamite Aboriginal Water Project in partnership with our Environment Water team supported the inclusion of a Wadawurrung Traditional Owner as a Cultural Heritage expert on the technical panel for the Upper Barwon-Yarrowee-Leigh FLOWS study.
- Our Catchments, Our Communities Sustainable Dairy Project has delivered a whole farm planning program to nine dairy farmers from the Gellibrand catchment, and provided supporting funding to farmers to implement on farm improvements to reduce nutrient runoff into the Gellibrand River.
- EstuaryWatch celebrated 10 years, with nine of our Corangamite EstuaryWatch volunteers being recognised for 10 years of service to the program.
- Waterway Restoration projects awarded 44 contracts supporting a total of 88km of river frontage and 385ha of land under active management. Just over 60 per cent of these projects are landholders working in conjunction with Landcare as well as Corangamite CCMA.
- Completion of the Port Philip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Management Plan.
- Further development of The Corangamite NRM Planning Portal. New features include searching for data at a 'My Property', 'My Catchment' and 'My Region' Scale, improved spatial tools and increasing access to NRM data.
- Flood Recovery Program completed the installation of 180m of stepped rock beaching, track reinstatement and bollard installation at the Lions Park in Colac, in partnership with Colac Otway Shire and VicRoads to protect public infrastructure along Barongarook Creek.

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>					
1.1 Channel (km)	149	84			84
1.2 Water storage (no.)		4			4
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	11	12			12
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	1				0
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	20	31			31
1.9 Fence (km)	110	63			63
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	396	218	239		457
2.2 Weed control (ha)	2,016	874	1,915		2,789
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	569	1,054	546		1600
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	1,512	372	1,322		1,694
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	2,525	1,819			1,819
3.3 Water (no.)	25	29			29
3.4 Fire (no.)	1		1		1
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	1,352	1,210			1,210
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	73	46	27		73
4.3 Assessment (no.)	466	399	187		586
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	6,826	8,928	2,823		11,751
4.5 Partnership (no.)	417	294			294
4.6 Plan (no.)	83	182			182
4.7 Publication (no.)	65	35	25		60
4.8 Information management system (no.)	16	7	5		12



# THE LIVING MOORABOOL PROJECT



“The Corangamite CMA firmly believes integration is needed to achieve success, bringing together people, ideas and practices across land tenure boundaries to achieve an improvement in our catchment health.”

Alice Knight, Corangamite CMA Chair

## LOCATIONS

Moorabool River and Sutherlands Creek West Branch

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

4 assessments  
25 participants at engagement events  
6 partnerships  
2 plans

## PARTNERS

DELWP  
Barwon Water  
Parks Victoria  
City of Greater Geelong  
Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy  
Corangamite Waterway Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program

The Living Moorabool Project is a long-term and large-scale waterway health program intended to increase integration, management efficiencies and the health of the Moorabool River.

The Moorabool River is on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people who have had an ongoing connection with the river for thousands of years. Through The Living Moorabool project, the Corangamite CMA is working with Barwon Water, local communities, the Traditional Owners, landholders and local government to achieve a healthier, more vibrant Moorabool River.

Responding directly to the community’s call for action the project is working to integrate water management, cultural values, waterway restoration works, citizen science, and recreational use of the river.

The Living Moorabool Project is an integrated framework for long-term management and monitoring of the Moorabool River system. It is building on the existing management of the system with a broader integrated approach that allows for greater awareness, communication and reporting on the health of the waterway as well as the activities implemented.

The program’s primary purpose is to facilitate and support improved coordination, delivery and sharing of new and existing projects, monitoring and research knowledge within the Moorabool River.

The project is coordinating action on:

**Riverbank vegetation** - removing willows, restricting stock access, establish native vegetation, and controlling woody weeds.

**Flow regimes and connectivity** - removing barriers to fish and platypus, delivering at least 5,140ML of water for the environment per year.

**Flora and fauna** - improve diversity in streamside vegetation to improve shading, management of rabbits and attracting native fauna.

**1** Wathaurung Elder Bryon Powell performing a smoking ceremony for the launch. *Donna Smithyman.*

**2** The Hon Lisa Neville MP with special guests at the launching of the Living Moorabool Project in Batesford. *Donna Smithyman.*

**3** The Moorabool River at Batesford where a fish ladder is to be installed to improve connectivity and assist fish migration. *Wayne McLaren.*



<http://bit.ly/2MUIwXi>



## LOCATIONS

Surf Coast

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

2 new partnerships  
120 engagement event participants  
0.5ha revegetation  
0.5ha weed management

## PARTNERS

Surfing community and groups  
Surfing Victoria  
Australian Indigenous communities

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy  
Corangamite Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program



1 Graphic: Hooded Plover. *BirdLife Australia*.

2 Indigenous youth at the learn to surf workshop. *Corangamite CMA*.

# COASTAL COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP WITH SURFING VICTORIA

“Through the partnership with Surfing Victoria we have been able to build new community connections, strengthening and extending our coastal restoration works and supporting surfing communities to connect with their coastal environment.”

Alice Knight, Corangamite CMA Chair

The Corangamite CMA Coastal Country program has embarked on a unique partnership agreement with the state surfing body, Surfing Victoria, to strengthen coastal community and environment connections. The agreement has delivered mutually promoting programs and events including on ground works and community engagement and education programs.

The Corangamite CMA and Surfing Victoria partnership aims to achieve a shared vision of strengthening the community's connection, in particular the surfing community's connection, with the local coastal environment and coastal conservation groups.

The partnership agreement actions include mutually promoting programs and events, sponsorship for state and national surfing titles, providing opportunities for surfing groups to apply for funding to carry out, or be involved in, on-ground coastal environment projects, and the Coastal Collaborations program, a community engagement and education program promoting the environmental values of the region's beautiful coast.

Activities supported through the partnership include sponsoring the male and female junior categories at the Australian Indigenous Surfing titles held at Bells Beach which is held on the traditional land of the Wadawurrung people.

As part of the partnership, Corangamite CMA has hosted 80 Indigenous youth group representatives from Ballarat and Bendigo to attend the 2018 Woorangalook Koori Surfing Titles earlier in the year and take part in rock pool ramble education sessions coinciding with the surfing titles.

The partnership has also assisted in establishing the involvement of a new community group as part of the “Adopt a Break” initiative aimed at surfing groups building a greater environmental connection to their local surfing area, and supporting them to undertake activities such as planting out native seedlings, weed control, brush matting and light maintenance works. One such action was the training and volunteering of the 13th Beach Boardrider Club in the Hooded Plover Citizen Science monitoring program. The Club and its members committed to actively participate in the Hooded Plover volunteer monitoring program and education and awareness initiatives at surfing events about how to protect the local Hooded Plover populations.

Corangamite CMA staff also host education sessions during the Indigenous Boys Tour held each year which aims to connect youth to Coastal Country and culture through surfing. CMA staff during 2018 conducted a series of rock pool rambles with a group of 20 boys from across the state at Bancoora, Breamlea.



<http://bit.ly/2NSGovn>



# EAST GIPPSLAND

FORGE CREEK REHABILITATION PROJECT, EASTGIPPSLAND

# EAST GIPPSLAND

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- We have been working closely with Aboriginal people and groups during the year. Involvement has been in planning and delivery of many programs including the Moogji Aboriginal Corporation working on the Snowy River, Gunai Kurnai Land and Aboriginal Waters Corporation (GLaWAC) working on the Mitchell, Tambo and Buchan Rivers; and the GLaWAC Cultural Heritage Assessment Officers undertaking cultural assessment on areas of works.
- Eleven Australian Government National Landcare Program projects were finalised this year. Highlights included the TopSoils project, which enabled ~15% of East Gippsland farmers to adopt and apply improved management practices over 46,000ha, and the Coastal and Upper Snowy Fox and Wild Dog control program. In conjunction with state funding, the program has seen a notable increase in the detection of Long Footed Potoroo and Southern Brown Bandicoot.
- In early February, \$4.7 million of funding went towards Gippsland Lakes projects being implemented by partners over the coming two years. Project partnerships are in place with 22 organisations including the Traditional Owners of the Gippsland Lakes, the Gunaikurnai people, and all key land and waterway managers. The partners are all working together through four integrated programs of work for the Lakes.

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL		
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>				
1.2 Water storage (no.)	22	9		9
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	3	3		3
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	28		28	28
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	4	12		12
1.9 Fence (km)	62	42	24	66
1.11 Road (km)	1		1	1
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>				
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	274	294	92	386
2.2 Weed control (ha)	2,186	3,615	1,296	4,911
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	163,189	21,511	147,998	169,509
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	12		12	12
2.8 Earth works (no.)	3	2	1	3
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>				
3.1 Grazing (ha)	133	449		449
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	2,700		7,281	7,281
3.4 Fire (no.)	2		2	2
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>				
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	362	236		236
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	101	70	60	130
4.3 Assessment (no.)	533	702	68	770
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	2,037	2,539	1,825	4,364
4.5 Partnership (no.)	201	249	18	267
4.6 Plan (no.)	62	63		63
4.7 Publication (no.)	128	373	46	419
4.8 Information management system (no.)	1			0





# OUR CATCHMENTS, OUR COMMUNITIES - WETLANDS OF THE RED GUM PLAINS



“By people working together, our wetlands on the Red Gum Plains will be enjoyed for many generations to come.”

Dr Peter Venkeer, East Gippsland CMA Chair

## LOCATIONS

Red Gum Plains East Gippsland

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

4 troughs and 4km fencing  
 15ha vegetation  
 20ha woody weed control  
 5ha pest animal control  
 1km earth works  
 4 management agreements  
 9 assessments  
 93 engagement event participants  
 12 partnerships  
 2 publications

## PARTNERS

DELWP  
 ARI  
 Turtles Australia  
 Sydney University  
 Field Naturalists  
 Traditional Owners  
 Local field naturalists and schools

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy  
 East Gippsland Climate Change Plan  
 Gippsland Lakes and Hinterland Native Vegetation Plan

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative

Our Catchments, Our Communities Wetlands of the Red Gum Plains is led by Greening Australia (Gippsland) (GA) involving multiple community and partner agencies focused on returning threatened plants and animals across the landscape.

This three year initiative has involved 12 partner groups restoring wetlands on Gippsland's Red Gum Plains.

GA developed targeted partnerships with landholders and commenced revegetation, weed, pest animal and erosion control.

The project has included a strong cultural and community element. Aboriginal Victoria, Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC) and the Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) are planning to undertake further studies of artefact sites located in the area to assist them in understanding the trade routes potentially used by the Gunaikurnai people.

Community members attended the 'ramble along the wetlands' event to celebrate their restoration and share in cultural stories. With participation of the local Aboriginal network, some cultural stories of the area have emerged, including old Turtle stories.

The Eastern long-necked turtle, though culturally significant, is also a focal species whose survival is determined by wetland health. This project is integrating with community citizen science to help locate and record sightings of these species along with involving the local primary schools who will look after turtle nesting sites along with assisting in works. These include planting back threatened plants with DELWP and learning about their own back yard and the wonder of the wetlands.

Together, the partnering agencies, landholders, students and the broader community are not only gaining a greater appreciation, but are an active part of the solution to manage the wetlands of the Red Gum Plains where they live. Working together, wetlands on the Red Gum Plains can be enjoyed for many generations to come.

**1** Working alongside members of Greening Australia and the GLaWAC's On Country crew, 19 students planted 500 of the endangered swamp everlasting and woolly waterlily plants. *Marty Potts, Greening Australia*

**2** A GLaWAC crew member and student plant the nationally endangered Swamp Everlasting. *Marty Potts, Greening Australia*

**3** 30 community members attend the 'Red Gum Ramble' discovering Elder trees over 400 years old and sighting 7 Eastern long necked turtles. *Marty Potts, Greening Australia*



## LOCATIONS

East Gippsland

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

15 events  
378 participants

## PARTNERS

Far East Victoria Landcare

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy  
East Gippsland Climate Change Plan

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program

# REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR

“Our Landcare and farming community are working closely together to ensure East Gippsland fosters a sustainable farming community that is resilient and can adapt to change.”

Dr Peter Venkeer, East Gippsland CMA Chair

The East Gippsland Regional Landcare Facilitator (RLF) works closely with the East Gippsland farming and Landcare community to provide opportunities for farmers to develop improved skills and increased knowledge in sustainable agriculture.

The RLF project is administered by the Far East Victoria Landcare Network (FEVL) with support from the East Gippsland CMA. The RLF works with farmers who farm agricultural land predominantly on the floodplains of the major regional rivers in East Gippsland. The RLF's main objective is to build individuals skills, knowledge and confidence, so that change and experimentation becomes a matter of principle. In the longer term, this contributes to developing a sustainable farming community that is resilient and can adapt to change.

The RLF role is guided by a farmer based Steering Committee, who ensures the project stays relevant to the needs of the East Gippsland farming community.

In 2017/2018, the RLF coordinated 15 events aimed at assisting the farming community. Sustainable agriculture partnerships across the East Gippsland region form an important part of the RLF's role. As well as strengthening existing partnerships with Agriculture Victoria, Landcare networks, and industry partners, a new partnership was formed in 2017 with Monash University's Food Innovation Centre.

2017 also saw the launch of the East Gippsland Women in Agriculture Network (EGWAN). The network was developed to involve women farmers in RLF project events and build the skill base and confidence of women in agriculture. Since the launch the group has completed mentor training, a two-day retreat (confidence building, decision making, and public speaking), and three farm visits.

**1** Participants at a rotational grazing management field day. *Sam Shannon, West Gippsland CMA.*

**2** The launch of the East Gippsland Women in Agriculture Network. *Jeanette Severs.*

# GLENELG HOPKINS

MERRI RIVER, WARRNAMBOOL



# GLENELG HOPKINS

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- Ramsar recognition for Glenelg Estuary and Discovery Bay.
- Fire support activity through Glenelg Hopkins CMA Drought Crew for clean-up with the three major grass fires in Gazette and Terang.
- Support provided to Nature Glenelg Trust for the purchase of Walker Swamp.
- Delivery of the Water and Country series of engagement events including the Art Show and tour of Budj Bim National Park.
- Aboriginal Water Values Pilot Project investigating Traditional Owner values and uses for the Glenelg River.
- Life after Blue Gums event where over 200 community members attended to learn about economic, environmental and financial benefits of reclaiming blue gum plantations back to pastures.
- Budj Bim Connections where landholders and Traditional Owners work together to gain understanding of the Fitzroy River and Darlot Creek priority waterways..



OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL		
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>				
1.2 Water storage (no.)	11	12	18	30
1.3 Pump (no.)	7	2	0	2
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	2	8	15	23
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	6	1		1
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	50	41		41
1.9 Fence (km)	77	79	40	119
1.11 Road (km)	1	0		0
1.12 Crossing (no.)	1	1		1
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>				
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	184	319	1	320
2.2 Weed control (ha)	2,341	1,400	4,234	5,634
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	32,221	32,901	863	33,763.7
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)			4	4
2.8 Earth works (no.)		1	11	12
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>				
3.1 Grazing (ha)	1,064	94	1064	1,258
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	6,000		19,434	19,434
3.3 Water (no.)	11	12		12
3.4 Fire (no.)	11	0	6	6
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>				
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	345	312		312
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	105	80	67	147
4.3 Assessment (no.)	358	462	134	596
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	2,456	2,699	2,586	5,285
4.5 Partnership (no.)	56	28		28
4.6 Plan (no.)	52	13	42	55
4.7 Publication (no.)	145	89	25	114
4.8 Information management system (no.)	10	7	2	9



**1** Merri Alliance Members Alex Lewis (GHCMA), Shane Lowery (OzFish Unlimited), Stephen Ryan (OzFish Unlimited/GHCMA), Harry Obst and Jenny Emeny (Warrnambool City Council) at a joint tree planting day on the Merri River. *Glenelg Hopkins CMA.*

**2** A site undertaken in collaboration with the Merri Alliance members. This site received large woody weed control, mulching, revegetation and instream habitat installation. *Chris Wilson, Glenelg Hopkins CMA.*

**3** Willow control in progress alongside the Merri River. Stock exclusion fencing, off stream water installation, revegetation and instream habitat were also undertaken on this site. *Chris Wilson, Glenelg Hopkins CMA.*



## LOCATIONS

Warrnambool

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

1 partnership  
20 engagement event participants

## PARTNERS

Warrnambool City Council  
Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group  
Mad for the Merri  
Wannon Water Fishcare Victoria  
Friends of Platypus Park  
Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation  
OzFish Unlimited  
Friends of Wollaston Bridge

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Glenelg Hopkins Regional Waterway Strategy  
Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy  
Warrnambool 2040 Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative

# MERRI RIVER ALLIANCE

“The Merri River Alliance offers a fresh approach to collaborative river restoration and open space planning.”

Antony Ford, Glenelg Hopkins CMA Chair

The Merri River Alliance is a new network, established to improve the health of the Merri River. The Alliance uses a novel collaborative approach to optimize opportunities arising from a major change in land-use, as Warrnambool's urban boundaries spread over and along the Merri River.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA saw the opportunity to reclaim sections of the Merri River bank as public open space, and to restore the health of a river reach which is in relatively poor condition. Staff at Warrnambool City Council also saw this opportunity, as did local Landcare and angling clubs. All knew this vision could not be achieved by any individual group or organisation. This gave rise to the Merri River Alliance.

The Alliance is purposely structured to be strong on relationships while light on formality and structure. The group has no terms of reference and no official member list. The group only has one formal meeting each year to review what has been achieved over that year, discuss what plans each organisation might have into the future and, most importantly, to identify opportunities to help one another.

At the heart of the Alliance are working relationships between individuals representing organisations, rather than organisations themselves. Members are encouraged to get to know each other. The Alliance is built on a culture of generosity and enthusiasm, and the bigger vision for the river is kept in the forefront of people's minds.

Over the past year, much has been achieved on the river, including several kilometres of riparian restoration, fish habitat reinstatement and the introduction of a rainwater harvesting scheme. The Alliance has allowed different groups to target the same river sections for different improvement activities and joint funding bids.

The Alliance acts as an important advocacy group for the river and an opportunity for leveraging. Already the network has helped ensure the vision of the river as a green corridor is embedded in key planning strategy for this rural city.



## LOCATIONS

Nelson Victoria, Discovery Bay Coastal Park, Lower Glenelg National Park, Glenelg Estuary, Discovery Bay and Glenelg Estuary Ramsar Site

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

10 engagement events  
320 engagement event participants  
3 technical expert workshops  
5 publications meeting Australian Ramsar guidelines

## PARTNERS

Parks Victoria,  
DELWP  
Nelson Coastcare Landcare Group  
Glenelg Shire Council  
Southern Rural Water  
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Glenelg Hopkins Regional Waterway Strategy  
Victorian Waterway Management Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative

# IMPROVING RAMSAR SITE MANAGEMENT

“This endorsement from Minister Frydenberg is the result of a large commitment of work with our partners and the community to acknowledge the significance of this stunning site in our region.”

Antony Ford, Glenelg Hopkins CMA Chair

The Glenelg Estuary and Discovery Bay is Victoria's and Australia's newest Ramsar site. This Ramsar listing provides protection for highly significant wetland values and raises the national and international profile of these wetlands. The Ramsar site includes the Lower Glenelg National Park and Discovery Bay Coastal Park.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance listed by Australia under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The area listed includes more than 22,000ha of public land and includes part of the Lower Glenelg National Park, Discovery Bay Coastal Park and the Nelson Streamside Reserve. The area is known for its rare dune slack wetlands and a variety of threatened species including plants, waterbirds and fish.

The site meets five of the 11 Ramsar criteria by supporting unique wetlands and providing habitat for 95 birds - with 24 species migrating from Russia and China.

The site has three main systems, including the freshwater wetlands of Long Swamp, Bridgewater Lakes and Swan Lake, the Glenelg Estuary, Oxbow Lake and the dune fields, along 50km of the Discovery Bay Coastal Park.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA conducted extensive consultation that included local

landholders, government agencies, Nelson Coastcare, industry groups and Traditional Owners.

Parks Victoria as the land manager was supportive of the Ramsar listing and the international recognition and tourism opportunities it will bring to the region. The Gunditjmara people are one of the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area and support the nomination through sharing information on cultural values.

The Glenelg Estuary and Discovery Bay Ramsar Management Plan (Glenelg RMP) guides the range of activities for the site. The Glenelg RMP provides a focus for management strategies to protect site values that support the unique ecological character of the area. Parks Victoria and Glenelg Hopkins CMA will work collaboratively with representatives from the community, Gunditj Mirring TOAC, Southern Rural Water, DELWP and Glenelg Shire Council to fulfil the requirements of the annual implementation plan.

**1** Bridgewater Lakes Discovery Bay Road lookout. *Marcel Hoog Antink.*

**2** Glenelg River estuary mouth looking east towards Long Swamp and Discovery Bay. *Marcel Hoog Antink.*

**3** Glenelg River estuary, coastal salt marsh. *Jarred Obst.*



<http://bit.ly/2Q9dYPn>



# GOULBURN BROKEN

COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY, JAMIESON RIVER

# GOULBURN BROKEN

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- 622 projects to improve farm water use, covering 70,000-plus ha, have been completed in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District through the Farm Water Program over the past eight years. Irrigators who have completed Farm Water Program-funded works report improved productivity of 2.3 tonnes of dry matter that equates to a \$280 gross margin, labour savings of \$140 and 1.8 megalitres of water savings on average, per hectare per year. This work has been recognised at the State and National level as well as in Mexico - the first time Australia has received an international irrigation award.
- Almost 600 gigalitres of water for the environment was delivered to the region's wetlands and waterways and native fish responded: silver perch numbers in the Goulburn River were at a record high and there were significant increases in other native fish numbers, including trout cod and Murray cod. The flows provided multiple environmental, social and recreational benefits as they made their way downstream.
- Since 2004 we have worked with landholders, anglers and the community to plant 2000ha of riparian vegetation, build more than 1,000km of fencing to exclude stock and placed more than 3139 snags in waterways. These activities

improve water quality and provide valuable habitat for native fish, birds and other wildlife.

- For the past three years thanks to funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, we have been working with our partners to protect and enhance threatened communities and species. This includes: 56 landholders managing 721ha of nationally significant ecosystems for their long term conservation through fencing and revegetation; Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation staff working on country to improve the condition of Alpine Bogs through weed control; 45ha of revegetation, particularly food plants, for Superb Parrots; 257ha of new habitat for regent honeyeaters, and engaging with thousands of people in appreciating threatened species and communities in our landscapes.
- The Tri-State Murray NRM Regional Alliance's Indigenous Group held two successful Indigenous development workshops in June at Moama and Mildura. This was done in partnership with Indigenous Business Australia, Outback Academy Australia and Murray River Corridor Alliance partners (Victoria's Goulburn Broken, Mallee, North East and North Central CMAs, SA Murray Darling Basin Board and the NSW's North West and Murray Local Land Services). Aboriginal land-based businesses from across Australia shared their experiences in building successful enterprises (eg. bush foods, botanicals and nutraceuticals) and the community benefits of sustainable commercialisation and sharing and protecting Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>					
1.1 Channel (km)	8	4			4
1.2 Water storage (no.)	17	17			17
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)			5,174		5,174
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	311	628			628
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)		127			127
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	22	20			20
1.9 Fence (km)	33	36			36
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	161	249	128		377
2.2 Weed control (ha)	4,257	2,248	982		3,230
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	3,650	3,530	429		3,959
2.8 Earth works (no.)	1	11			11
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	245	242	297	1	540
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	17,000		20,130		20,130
3.3 Water (no.)	26	28			28
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	866	1,206		2	1,208
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	34	30	11		41
4.3 Assessment (no.)	1,234	1,235		2	1,237
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	11,147	24,037	6,074		30,111
4.5 Partnership (no.)	154	180	82		262
4.6 Plan (no.)	57	70	3	1	74
4.7 Publication (no.)	286	361	12	3	376
4.8 Information management system (no.)	6	4			4





## LOCATIONS

Catchment wide

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

8,790 farmers, industry staff, small landholders and students have participated in 325 activities over the past five years  
700+ farm businesses implementing 50,055ha  
24 groups ranging from high schools to industry groups have shared in more than \$800,000 to deliver 49 projects during the past three years

## PARTNERS

The Goulburn Broken Catchment's six Landcare Networks and their member groups, Murray Dairy Riverine Plains Cropping Group, Irrigated Cropping Council, Maize Growers Association, Australian Processing Tomato Research Council, Bestwool Bestlamb, Victorian No-Till Farmers Association, Goulburn Valley Food Cooperative, DEDJTR.

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Goulburn Broken Land Health Strategy  
Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Management Strategy  
Goulburn Broken Biodiversity Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program

# BEYOND SOILCARE

"This testing to fit local conditions is absolutely critical to the project's ongoing success and popularity with farmers and other landholders, as it recognises that what may work in the irrigated region of the catchment may not be applicable in the rockier, hillier or dryland areas of the catchment, or vice versa."

Adrian Weston, Goulburn Broken CMA Chair

Beyond SoilCare is a five-year project, funded most recently by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, that engages with farmers about soil health and gives them an opportunity to direct their own program of learning.

Activities have included field days, workshops, discussion groups, bus trips and short courses on a variety of topics including soil test interpretation, visual soil assessments, building soil carbon, improving groundcover management, reducing soil acidity and improving air and water quality.

The project has led to more than 700 farm businesses implementing 50,055ha of improved land management practices on-farm. This practice change has been measured using an innovative goal attainment scale developed specifically for Beyond Soilcare.

The project also involves a small grants program: 24 groups ranging from high schools to industry groups have shared in more than \$800,000 to deliver 49 projects during the past three years.

The strength of the project has been the 'farmers teaching farmers' model with the project working closely with Landcare and industry groups to deliver sound and practical soil and farm management information in a variety of ways. This has ranged from demonstration sites testing new and innovative farm practices for large-scale primary producers to practical tips and advice on farm planning, water

planning, biodiversity, soil health and animal and pest management for small and absentee landholders.

An unintended consequence has been the positive impacts on social capital this includes creating agricultural leaders and mentors, building social connections amongst the industry/community, providing opportunities for farmers to network (leading to positive impacts on mental health) and building the capacity and skills of community and industry groups to deliver sustainable agriculture activities.

After attending three Digging up the Dirt workshops presented by soil expert Gwyn Jones and run by Goulburn Murray Landcare Network Undera cropper Robert Backway has changed many of his practices - such as incorporating crop rotation and no-till sowing, and says that "now, when walking into a paddock and looking at my soil, I see everything differently and note indicators".

Molesworth beef producer Brad Watts joined the Yea Soilcare group and has found the informal on-farm meetings and the sharing of knowledge and learnings from demonstration trials very beneficial.

"Other groups offer courses which take you away from your farm for days which is undesirable," he says. "The half day workshops put on by this group make them easy to attend and a great way to learn from people in the local area."

**1** Agriculture Minister David Littleproud (second left) opened the Beyond SoilCare showcase in May, where project participants shared the learnings and highlights. Minister Littleproud is pictured (from left) Goulburn Broken CMA CEO Chris Norman, Goulburn Broken CMA Land Health Manager Ashley Rogers and Federal for Murray Damian Drum.

**2** The key to the Beyond SoilCare project's success is its farmer-directed learning approach.

**3** Cropping trial field day held at Fraser Pogue's Ardmona property.



# WINTER FLOW FIRST GREAT FOR FISH, ANGLERS AND WATER QUALITY



“To help keep this popular recreational fishing destination healthy, we were pleased to play a role in bringing back a small amount of natural variability.”  
 Adrian Weston, Goulburn CMA Chair

## LOCATIONS

Mid-Goulburn River (between Eildon and Seymour)

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

Angler engagement  
 Improved river bed and bank condition  
 Shared recreational, economic and environmental benefits

## PARTNERS

Goulburn Murray Water  
 Victorian Environmental Water Holder  
 Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder  
 Local anglers

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Goulburn Broken Regional Waterway Strategy  
 Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative

**1** Anglers, the community and fish all benefit from an environmental flow in winter for the Goulburn River below Eildon.

**2** Water quality, habitat and fish all benefited from the environmental flow.

In a first, environmental flows were delivered along the Goulburn River below Eildon in winter 2017 to provide shelter for fish, water bugs and other aquatic life.

The initiative involved using environmental flows to build on the minimum passing flow of 120 megalitres a day to deliver a flow of 400 megalitres a day.

Goulburn Broken CMA's river manager Mark Turner said the natural flow of the river had changed dramatically.

“Flow is a critical part of river health and here on the Goulburn River, it's significantly altered because we've got Lake Eildon in the upper catchment and the Goulburn Weir in the lower catchment,” Mr Turner said.

“This means the flow in this section of the river runs higher in the warmer months to meet downstream irrigator and community demand and lower in the cooler months – the opposite of what you'd see if the river wasn't regulated. So a lot of the aquatic vegetation, riffle and pool habitat used by water bugs, native fish and trout are exposed during the colder months, which affects breeding and movement.”

Victorian Environmental Water Holder executive officer Dr Sarina Loo said it was important people were connected to rivers and became their stewards.

“We want to create rivers and waterways that people love and want to use, so when the Goulburn Broken CMA put forth this reach as a priority, it made perfect sense to use environmental water to create better habitat for fish.”

Keen trout fisherman and angling advocate Philip Weigall said the delivery was a coup for the state's anglers.

“We're learning very quickly about the importance of habitat for fish. We can have all the regulations you want around fishing but it's all for nothing if you don't have the right habitat for the fish you're trying to protect,” Mr Weigall said.

“The improved flows are going to have a big impact on the quality of trout fishing in the Goulburn River.”



<http://bit.ly/2w3M7J5>

# MALLEE

CITRUS HARVEST AT NANGILOC



# MALLEE

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- Over 650,000 ha of targeted environmental works were undertaken in 2017-18 to protect the region's priority natural, cultural and productive landscapes. This represents a significant increase on recent years (i.e. a 500,000 ha/433% increase from 2016-17); with 438,705ha of pest animal and weed control delivered under funding provided by the Victorian Government's Threatened Species Initiative representing most of this additional works area.
- Effective partnerships with our community are integral to the success of these on-ground activities. In 2017-18 this included the provision of 181 individual funding grants to community groups (40) and private land managers (141).
- Delivery of some structural works (i.e. track rationalisation and visitor facilities) planned for 2017-18 was deferred pending the finalisation and approval of associated Cultural Heritage Management Plans.
- Community engagement and capacity building approaches continue to be well supported. In 2017-18 this resulted in some 8,900 stakeholders participating in 660 individual events. Evaluation of these activities identified that 62% of surveyed participants rated the overall delivery of events as 'excellent', and a further 30%

as 'good'. Participants also reported a 66% (average) increase in their awareness of specific NRM issues, and a 12% (average) increase in skills to address specific threat processes.

- Planning for delivery partnerships and engagement activities continues to be informed and enhanced by advice received from regional stakeholders through forums such as the Mallee CMA's Aboriginal Reference Group, Land and Water Community Advisory Committee, and Catchment Partnership Committees. In 2017-18 this framework was enhanced by the establishment of a Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement, with the aim of further strengthening coordination and accountability between key regional delivery partners.
- Strong partnerships between the Mallee CMA, Lower Murray Water and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning are also continuing to improve salinity management in the Mallee, as part of delivering against Action 4.8 of the Victorian Government's Water for Victoria policy.
- Finalisation and release of key regional strategic documents in 2017-18 (i.e. Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy, Mallee Dryland Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, Mallee CMA Reconciliation Action Plan, and Mallee CMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan) represents ongoing advances in the planning, delivery and evaluation of both NRM and governance (i.e. organisational) focused activities.

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>					
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)	391	230		367	597
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	9	9			9
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	1	1			1
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	6	6			6
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	89	17	2	53	72
1.9 Fence (km)	67	37	26		63
1.10 Visitor Facility (no.)	16	7			7
1.11 Road (km)	16	4			4
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	444	196	200		396
2.2 Weed control (ha)	106,188	151,607	15,424		167,031
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	404,693	407,616	85,501		493,118
2.8 Earth works (no.)	44	18	26		44
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>					
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	1,046		1,046		1,046
3.3 Water (no.)	45	48			48
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	323	224		71	295
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	238	93	59	44	196
4.3 Assessment (no.)	614	449	272	20	741
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	6,332	6,047	2,137	721	8,905
4.5 Partnership (no.)	143	115	24	6	145
4.6 Plan (no.)	160	110	54	5	169
4.7 Publication (no.)	474	391	83	35	509
4.8 Information management system (no.)	21	19	1	2	22



# THE TYRRELL PROJECT - ANCIENT LANDSCAPES, NEW CONNECTIONS

“The Tyrrell Project is protecting a fragile natural landscape through targeted on-ground works, but it is also building community pride and that is an important, shared investment in the future.”

Sharyon Peart, Mallee CMA Chair



## LOCATIONS

Lake Tyrrell (approximately 314km north-west of Melbourne)

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

6 plans, 26 assessments, 20 management agreements, 40 partnerships, 622 participants at engagement events, 2,683ha weed control (Weeds of National Significance), 22ha revegetated (enhanced linkages), 3km stock exclusion fencing (to protect riparian vegetation), 3,101ha pest animal control, 1 visitor facility, 6 terrestrial features, 16 publications

## PARTNERS

DELWP, Parks Victoria, Buloke Shire Council, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Private land managers, Landcare Groups, Community Groups, Committees of Management, Traditional Owners and Organisations

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy, Mallee Waterway Strategy, Mallee Regional Landcare Strategy, Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's Our Catchments, Our Communities initiative

The Tyrrell Project is a community-driven landscape-scale project that celebrates the unique social, cultural and environmental values of an iconic landscape by developing strong working partnerships to deliver integrated and lasting outcomes.

The project is based around one of Victoria's most culturally and environmentally significant sites - Lake Tyrrell, in the central Mallee.

The lake itself is the largest saline groundwater discharge lake in the Murray Basin and is listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands. It is also one of the oldest recorded Aboriginal occupation sites in Victoria at 45,000 years.

In recent times, Lake Tyrrell's stunning sunrises and sunsets, amazing scenery and spectacular night skies have driven a surge in international and domestic tourism. This increased activity came at a cost however - damage was caused to the pristine lake environment and limited tourism infrastructure meant the majority of visitors left the area without contributing to the local economy.

Seizing the opportunity to deliver

something positive for the region, the local community joined forces to secure a grant to develop a tourism strategy. It's under this strategy the "Tyrrell Project - Ancient Landscapes, New Connections" is being delivered, led by the Mallee CMA, together with the community and a wide range of catchment partners.

The goal is to assist the community to increase tourism benefits and to manage and protect the priority assets of Lake Tyrrell, its creeks and wetlands.

Three community-based reference groups (CRGs) have been established by Mallee CMA (Creeks CRG, Wetlands CRG and Lake Tyrrell Project Control Group) and strong collaboration is ensuring the project is community-driven; prioritises local assets and on-ground works; and achieves social, economic and environmental outcomes in line with community goals and aspirations.

Developing this project to align with a high level of community interest in a specific landscape has helped ensure strong, direct alignment with the key principles of integrated catchment management.

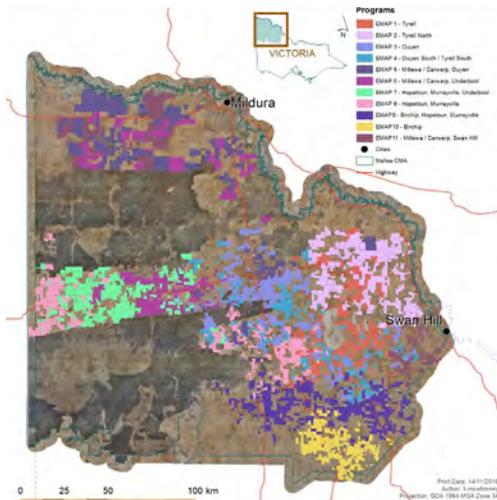
**1** Birchip school students helped plant more than 300 native tubestock adjacent to a new walking trail installed as part of The Tyrrell Project. *Mallee CMA.*

**2** Local school students taking part in a bush excursion, as part of The Tyrrell Project. *Mallee CMA.*

**3** The Inland Carpet Python, which can be found at Lake Tyrrell and surrounds. *Mallee CMA.*



<http://bit.ly/2NRjdBG>



## LOCATIONS

Whole of region

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

\*\*\*Output data details 2017-18 delivery only as standards not applied over life of the project (i.e. pre 2013).  
 33 assessments undertaken (property)  
 33 plans modified (property)  
 77 participants at engagement events (field days & workshops)  
 9 publications produced (written and visual)  
 1 information management system maintained

## PARTNERS

Mallee CMA  
 Dryland Farmers  
 DEDJTR

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy  
 Mallee Sustainable Dryland Agriculture Strategy  
 Mallee Waterway Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program



# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANNING

“We know EMAP engaged up to 250 farmers who had previously not taken part in these programs, and it has helped make several Best Management Practices more mainstream concepts, such as stock containment during dry seasons to maintain groundcover and improve soil condition.”  
 Sharyon Peart, Mallee CMA Chair

Impressive participation rates and significant changes in attitudes have underpinned the widespread success of the Mallee CMA's Environmental Management Action Planning (EMAP) program.

Over the past 13 years (2005-18) EMAP has engaged some 682 dryland farm businesses to develop and implement whole farm environmental plans; representing 1.25 million ha or more than 50% of agricultural land in the Victorian Mallee.

A combination of workshops and individual farm visits were undertaken across 11 target areas to support landholders to identify, map, deliver, and review on farm action plans for both sustainability and productivity outcomes. Final (2018) evaluation of the EMAP program concluded this innovative whole-farm planning program had “extensive reach, influencing the attitudes and practices of a substantial proportion of farming families in the Mallee”. Similarly, 83% of participants reported participation in EMAP assisted them to make informed decisions and identify future priorities.

This also translated into action with an impressive 500 (73%) participants collectively implementing over 4,000 (44%) of the 9,000 on-farm actions they had identified as a priority throughout the EMAP process.

Examples of the specific works completed include: 574ha of revegetation for biodiversity and/or salinity management outcomes; 224ha of eroded dunes reclaimed; 511km of stock exclusion fencing established to protect native vegetation; 108 stock containment areas constructed to help maintain ground cover in dry seasons; and 52 participants changing to no-till farming systems.

Program evaluation has identified a key factor in achieving these on-ground outcomes was the important role that EMAP played in positioning participants to better respond to external funding opportunities.

While the delivery of ‘formal’ EMAP activities concluded in June 2018, participants will continue to be engaged through future programs and supported to deliver on-farm outcomes as an integral component of the Mallee NRM community.

 <http://bit.ly/2wRAILX>

- 1 EMAP was delivered in 11 target areas with participants managing more than 50% of dryland agricultural land in the Mallee, *Mallee CMA*.
- 2 Revegetation works undertaken by EMAP participant, *Mallee CMA*.
- 3 EMAP workshops focused on both environmental and production issues, *Mallee CMA*.



# NORTH CENTRAL

LODDON RIVER, SERPENTINE

# NORTH CENTRAL

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- In an Australian first, four irrigation channel screens have been constructed and will be installed at the Cohuna Weir Pool to stop more than 5,000 native fish, per day during the irrigation season, from entering and becoming trapped in the Cohuna channel system and therefore lost from the breeding population in Gunbower Creek.
- The statewide River Detectives Program engaged 101 schools and approximately 3,500 students across five regions of Victoria. Teachers were provided resources, training and support to deliver curriculum aligned water testing on local waterways.
- 133 gigalitres of water for the environment was delivered to 23 wetlands and waterways across the region. These flows contributed to the environmental, social and recreational values of the wetlands and waterways.
- Following months of comprehensive engagement with communities and working in partnership with VicSES and four local councils, the Regional Floodplain Management Strategy is complete. The strategy will interpret and apply the policies, actions and accountabilities of the Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy at the regional and local level.
- The North Central CMA is in the final stages of endorsing its first Reconciliation Action Plan. The Plan provides a clear and practical pathway towards the CMA's vision of walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as partners, caring for our region's catchments together.
- The Wanyarram Dhelk project partners the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to restore the creek and provide important opportunities for Jarra people to work on Country.
- The Farming for Sustainable Soils project delivered nearly 2,000ha of practice change and involved 643 participants from more than 150 enterprises in improving skills and knowledge in soil management and sustainable agricultural practices.
- The Living Murray 'Flooding for Life' provided water for the environment to Gunbower Creek and restored regular flooding to Gunbower Forest through a combination of environmental watering, engineering works, monitoring, Indigenous partnership programs and community engagement.

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>					
1.2 Water storage (no.)	37	41			41
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	10	10	9		19
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	6	2	9		11
1.9 Fence (km)	77	57	35		92
1.10 Visitor Facility (no.)			4		4
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	275	432	2,315		2,747
2.2 Weed control (ha)	3,117	544	1,415		1,959
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	14,717	29	33,882		33,911
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	8		0		
2.7 Soil treatment (ha)	0	0	722		722
2.8 Earth works (no.)	3	0			0
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	57	142			142
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)		86	3,369		3,455
3.3 Water (no.)	24	40			40
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	604	3,564			3,564
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	20	22	1		23
4.3 Assessment (no.)	648	836	236		1,072
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	3,792	4,262	2,826		7,088
4.5 Partnership (no.)	39	39	10	0	49
4.6 Plan (no.)	46	65	9		74
4.7 Publication (no.)	31	60	9	1	70
4.8 Information management system (no.)	1	1			1



BEFORE



AFTER



## LOCATIONS

Smeaton, Newlyn, Clunes

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

40ha weed control  
30ha Vegetation  
57 participants at engagement events  
5.6km fencing  
16 water storages  
20ha grazing

## PARTNERS

Parks Victoria  
DELWP  
Central Highlands Water

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

North Central Waterway Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative

**1** Discussions at open for inspection session, Anderson's Mill, Birch's Creek. *North Central CMA.*

**2** Heavy willow infestation before works in July 2017, Birch's Creek. *North Central CMA.*

**3** Unveiling the bridge via woody weed control, July 2018.

# UNVEILING THE BEAUTY OF BIRCH'S CREEK

"We keep community needs central to what we do. The North Central CMA's work to remove willows will ultimately benefit the blackfish and platypus in the river, but also complement the community's long-term desire to build walking tracks along the creek and return native vegetation to what will be a very picturesque spot."

Julie Miller Markoff, North Central CMA Chair

Birch's Creek was once a thriving waterway, known for its Murray cod, platypus, blackfish and Macquarie perch populations. Mining, farming, river regulation and the introduction of willows have taken their toll and for almost 20 years, local community groups have worked tirelessly to improve the health of their local waterway.

The community's passion for the creek was a perfect fit for the North Central CMA's Priority Waterways project aimed at restoring the health of Birch's Creek.

Baseline data was collected to understand the health of the creek, in particular, to understand the populations of platypus and blackfish living in the creek. In a first for the North Central CMA, a technique known as environmental DNA (eDNA) was used. The technique involves collecting water samples and testing them for the DNA that species such as platypus and blackfish leave behind.

Positive eDNA results saw the North Central CMA turn its focus to the area of Smeaton, where the creek meanders alongside the historic Anderson's Mill. Building on community engagement with

friends of Smeaton group, local Landcare networks and other community members, a restoration program to reinvigorate the historical site in partnership with Parks Victoria and DELWP is well underway.

The restoration program of weed control, fencing and revegetation has included the removal of willows at Anderson's Mill, Smeaton. In November 2017, the North Central CMA hosted an "open for inspection" on the site, inviting locals for morning tea and to visit the site and provide feedback on the works, with around 30 community members attending.

"The feedback from our open day was great" said North Central CMA project manager Greg Barber.

"Many locals were surprised and impressed to see the natural stone features of the site that had been hidden for so long by the willows, and they're keen to see the works continue along the creek. It could be the start of a range of exciting projects to reinvigorate the Mill site for the benefit of the creek and the community".



## LOCATIONS

Campaspe River and Gunbower Forest and Creek

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

68 engagement event participants  
1 visual publication

## PARTNERS

Members of Barapa Barapa Nations  
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation  
Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation  
Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Traditional Owner groups' Country Plans  
North Central Waterway Strategy  
North Central CMA Reconciliation Action Plan

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, the Victorian Government's Regional Riparian Action Plan and the Living Murray Program

**1** Welcome to Country - Dja Dja Wurrung. *North Central CMA.*

**2** Canoeing down the Campaspe. *North Central CMA.*

**3** Participants on Taungurung Country. *North Central CMA.*

# RIVER TOUR 2018

“Spending time together on Country is really important to learn from each other.”

Julie Miller Markoff, North Central CMA Chair

“We need to do this more often” was the resounding message from 30 Traditional Owners of the Campaspe River and Gunbower Creek, as they came together for the North Central Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) River TOUR event on 27 and 28 March 2018.

Just having the time to talk was an important aspect of the event for each of the Traditional Owner groups involved; Barapa Barapa, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, and Yorta Yorta. Along with Traditional Owners, North Central CMA and DELWP staff, scientists, and local landholders enjoyed perfect weather for canoeing, walking and a cruise on Gunbower Creek during the two-day event. Each of the groups welcomed participants onto their Country and shared information about their priorities and projects.

Platypus Conservancy, Turtles Australia, Victorian Fisheries Authority and North Central CMA project staff also shared their work on waterways with Traditional Owners and the community, talking about the health of the rivers, carp herpes virus, turtle protection projects, birdlife and water for the environment.

Traditional Owners spoke of what it is to care for and connect to Country, and the significance of the mobs coming together to support and learn from each other, and to strengthen the power of their messages to government.

For some who travelled long distances, it was a rare opportunity to be able to travel on the lands and waters of their ancestors “...connecting to land, water, people”.

The event showcased how connections between people are the critical first step towards trusting relationships from which meaningful partnerships may be developed.

A short video of the River Tour has been created by an Aboriginal film maker to share the highlights of the event.



<http://bit.ly/2oLh9An>



# NORTHEAST

BOGONG HIGH PLAINS

# NORTH EAST

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- Leading the delivery of \$9.4 million worth of works at over 70 sites to stabilise waterways for the protection of public assets including major highways, local bridges, culverts and roads with funding from the Commonwealth and Victorian Government National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. During 2017/18 works were undertaken at 54 sites damaged by the 2016 floods that affected the region.
- Worked with North Central and Goulburn Broken CMAs, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to establish joint consultation groups, allowing streamlined CMA consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties who are traditional owners across the three CMAs.
- Supported 22 landholders and 37 community groups with grants and incentives, through Victorian Government Landcare and Waterway Health programs. Investment will deliver approximately 29km of fencing to

protect over 270ha of riparian areas from livestock, 78ha of native revegetation, installation of five nest boxes, 23 off-stream watering points, 160ha of weed control, 104 field days and training events and 21 publications.

- Facilitated collaborative planning processes with the Upper, Mid and Lower Ovens communities to establish conservation actions plans and identify investment priorities for recreational access, biodiversity and waterway management and commenced implementation of priorities.
- Collaborated with Parks Victoria in the delivery of the Australian Government's National Landcare Program funded Victorian Alpine Protection Project to remove 123 deer and treat over 500ha of weeds in the Alpine National Park. The project also allowed for the employment of two Aboriginal Field Services Officers for six months to work on-country with Parks Victoria on Alpine Peatland Protection activities.



**NORTH EAST  
CATCHMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
AUTHORITY**

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL		
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>				
1.2 Water storage (no.)	17	6		6
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	8	77		31
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	32	32	13	45
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	16	20		20
1.9 Fence (km)	34	29	3	32
1.11 Road (km)		8		8
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>				
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	204	84	19	103
2.2 Weed control (ha)	959	699	994	1,693
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	430	126	21,270	21,396
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	501		2	2
2.8 Earth works (no.)	3	75		75
2.9 Rubbish removal (ha)		1		1
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>				
3.1 Grazing (ha)	245	17	98	115
3.3 Water (no.)	3	3		3
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>				
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	412	396		396
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	72	35	8	43
4.3 Assessment (no.)	237	445	22	3
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	3,031	9,075	2,527	0
4.5 Partnership (no.)	71	39	4	43
4.6 Plan (no.)	10	10		0
4.7 Publication (no.)	178	278	48	0
4.8 Information management system (no.)	3	5		5



## LOCATIONS

The seven-day program was delivered at locations across North East Victoria, and the Goulburn Valley, including: Rutherglen, Shepparton, Mudgegonga, Beechworth, Benalla, Wangaratta.

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

115 program participants  
7 engagement events

## PARTNERS

Goulburn Broken CMA  
Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program  
Goulburn Murray Leadership Program

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

North East Regional Catchment Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program

**1, 2, 3.** The Community Landcare and Agriculture Leadership Program supports development of regional leaders.

# BUILDING A NEW GENERATION OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS IN REGIONAL VICTORIA

"It's a fantastic program that gives people strong networks in the community and an ability to recognise how you can fit in, to improve your community..."

Scott McKilop - Dairy farmer

A customised leadership program for people working in agriculture and natural resource management is helping to build a vibrant leadership network across Northern Victoria.

Over the past five years, 115 people have completed the Community Landcare and Agriculture Leadership program, culminating in a legacy workshop in 2018.

Leaders in regional communities need diverse skills and expertise that span emergency response, community engagement, administration, economic development and governance.

During the renewal of the Regional Catchment Strategy in 2012, many Landcare groups, agriculture peak bodies and Government agencies reported challenges in attracting emerging leaders, particularly due to a perceived trend of young people moving to capital cities for work.

The provision of specific leadership skills for these sectors was identified as a pathway to reverse and encourage more local representation on boards, committees and organisations that influence industry and policy development.

## Approach

Building on the success of the acclaimed Alpine Valleys Community Leadership program, the North East and Goulburn Broken CMAs devised a new Community Landcare and Agriculture Leadership program.

Offered for the first time in 2013, the program provided a broad suite of information and techniques designed to instil confidence, and encourage and equip participants to take on diverse roles of responsibility. It included skills workshops in leadership, communication, community capacity building, leading change, decision making and networking, and field trips to innovative and entrepreneurial projects.

The mix proved to be effective. The program was oversubscribed and attracted participants from diverse backgrounds and sectors, helping to build new networks and connections across Northern Victoria.



# BRINGING FISH LIFE BACK TO THE KING RIVER



“If they feel safe, they’ll breed ” Russell Bird, King Valley Tourism Association



## LOCATIONS

King River near the townships of Whitfield and Cheshunt

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

Approximately 200 large hardwood logs  
60 boulders  
250m of fencing for stock exclusion and  
0.5ha of revegetation with indigenous  
species

## PARTNERS

King Valley Tourism Association  
Victorian Fisheries Authority  
Australian Trout Foundation

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

North East Waterway Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian  
Government’s \$222 million Water for  
Victoria initiative and Recreational  
Fishing Grants Program

A small tourist association in Victoria’s North East has used community passion, river science and funding to restore fish populations along an iconic river.

The King Valley Tourism Association devised and led a large-scale fish habitat and angler access project on the King River with support from the North East CMA, funded through the Victorian Government’s Waterway Health Program.

Populations of important recreational fish species in the King River were suffering major declines in 2011, largely due to the destruction of in-stream habitat and the cumulative impact of multiple bushfires, floods and prolonged drought.

In response to concerns over these declining fish populations, the King Valley Tourism Association began discussing options for kick starting the recovery of this iconic river with the North East CMA.

In 2014, with CMA support, the Association successfully secured a large grant from the Victorian Recreational Fishing Grants Program to restore in stream habitats, complete riparian restoration and improve access for anglers.

The CMA continued to contribute to this inspiring restoration project via the Fish for the Future program, a component of the Victorian Government’s \$222 million investment from 2016-2020 to improve the health of waterways and catchments.

The North East CMA assisted King Valley Tourism Association with technical input and construction oversight of a structural works program. Large granite boulders, log jam structures, fencing and revegetation were used to create new fish habitat.

The King River local community is excited about the results of this project, with reports of more fish and more happy anglers!

Momentum from this project contributed to a subsequent collaborative partnership with the Victorian Fisheries Authority and the Australian Trout Foundation in an experimental stocking trial, and contributed to the development of the Victorian Wild Trout Fishery Management Plan.



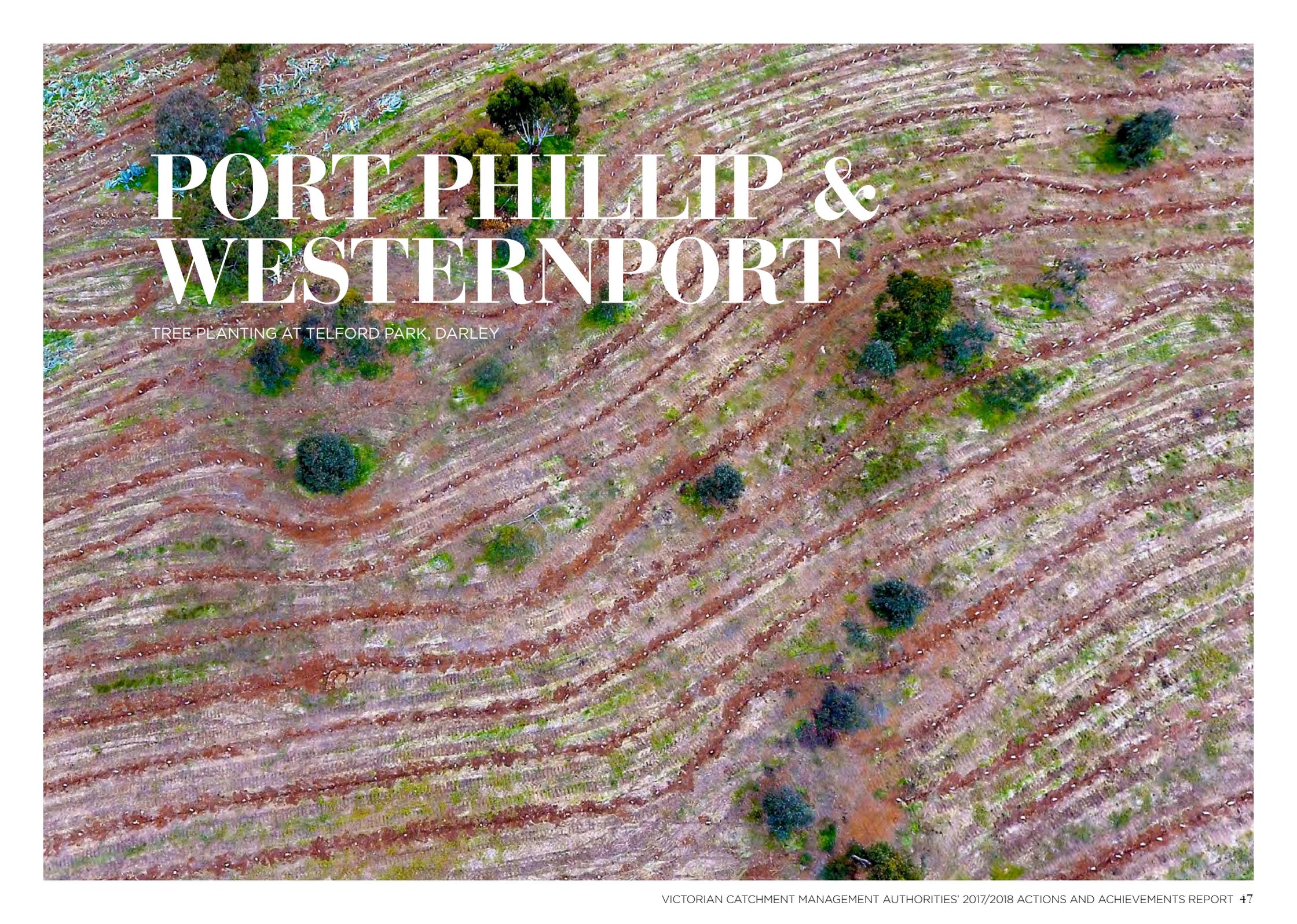
**1** Over 60 large granite boulders were placed at strategic locations within the King River.

**2** Placement of large hardwood logs, secured into the bed and banks with timber piles, and protected by stock exclusion and revegetation.

**3** Local contractors were engaged to carry out the works, showcasing local capacity to deliver this type of program.



<http://bit.ly/2wRhE05>

An aerial photograph of a hillside where a large-scale tree-planting project is underway. The terrain is covered in a grid of rows of small, newly planted saplings, creating a rhythmic pattern across the slope. Some larger, established trees are scattered throughout the landscape. The overall color palette is a mix of brownish soil, green grass, and the dark green of the young trees.

# PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT

TREE PLANTING AT TELFORD PARK, DARLEY

# PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- Implementation of the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA Indigenous Participation Plan to further strengthen partnerships in natural resource management with the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri communities.
- Allocation of \$421,033 to 77 Landcare and community environmental groups to support Landcare and volunteer investment in natural resource stewardship.
- Trialling of sustainable and profitable agriculture including compost under vines, native insectaries for integrated pest management, variable fertiliser rate application and pasture cropping leading to over 740ha of practice change by farmers and landholders.
- Major revegetation in the Maribyrnong and Werribee catchments continued with 561,000 trees planted at 92 sites as part of the Greening the Maribyrnong and Grow West projects funded by the Australian Government's Greening the West - 1 Million Trees initiative.
- Contributing to securing the future of the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leaderbeater's Possum by working with Trust for Nature to purchase 2.3ha of land with funds from the Victorian Government and Australian Government and having it added to Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve.
- Attracting more than 8800 people to Port Phillip and Westernport CMA events in 2017-18, including 350 who attended the inaugural Discover Dandenong Creek Festival and 200 who attended the 12th annual Grow West Community Planting Day.
- Protecting and enhancing the internationally-important Ramsar wetlands with \$640,000 secured from the Victorian Government to implement actions in the new Western Port Ramsar Site Management Plan and \$150,000 from the Australian Government to investigate the feasibility of feral cat eradication on French Island.

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>					
1.9 Fence (km)	6	2	12		14
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	23	35	670		705
2.2 Weed control (ha)	1,324	10,094	2,462		12,556
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	15,656	26,527	19,785		46,312
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>					
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	755		1,591		1,591
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)		30			30
4.2 Management agreement (no.)		61	8		69
4.3 Assessment (no.)	32	45	32		77
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	1,877	2,747	6,090		8,837
4.5 Partnership (no.)		44	14	13	71
4.6 Plan (no.)		18	1	2	21
4.7 Publication (no.)	4	9			9
4.8 Information management system (no.)		1			1



# INDIGENOUS SHOREBIRD AND WETLAND CONSERVATION TRAINING PROGRAM

“Through this great course we have worked with so many fantastic Traditional Owner’s, learning just as much from them as they have us.”

Darren Wandin, Wurundjeri man and 2017 participant

## LOCATIONS

Ramsar-listed wetland sites at Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Western Port

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

20 Indigenous participants attended the 2017 training program  
Attendees represented five Traditional Owner organisations

## PARTNERS

BirdLife Australia  
Corangamite CMA  
DELWP

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy  
Port Phillip Bay (western shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site Management Plan  
Port Phillip and Westernport CMA Indigenous Participation Plan

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program

- 1 Participants visit Mud Islands.
- 2 Australasian Gannet.
- 3 Participants of the 2017 training program.
4. Aerial view at the Melbourne Water Western Treatment Plant.

For the past five years, the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA, through its Ramsar Protection Program has run a Wetland and Shorebird Conservation Training Program for Indigenous Australians. Participants learn how to identify native and migratory birds, giving them the skills to monitor bird populations and take a lead role in natural resource management on Country.

Delivered in partnership with BirdLife Australia and Corangamite CMA, the 2017-18 program was a three-day event held in November that focused on the Port Phillip Bay (western shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site.

Participants learnt first-hand from industry experts about wetland ecology, bird identification, wetland management and conservation monitoring. The training program showcased to participants the actions that can protect wetlands and manage the threats to these sensitive ecosystems.

Participants visited the Western Treatment Plant in Werribee, Lake Connewarre Wildlife Reserve, Swan Bay and Mud Islands, as well as Thirteenth Beach near Barwon Heads to study the Hooded Plover beach-nesting bird project.

2017 participants included representatives from Wurundjeri Land Council’s Narrap Team, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation Budj Bim Rangers, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co Op, Eastern Marr, Wimmera CMA and Glenelg Hopkins CMA.



<http://bit.ly/2wR0eAR>



## LOCATIONS

38 sites along a 22km section of the Dandenong Creek corridor between Bayswater and Dandenong

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

55.5ha weed control  
22.5ha revegetation  
1.2km fencing to protect sensitive natural areas  
22 community events engaging 1251 participants

## PARTNERS

City of Maroondah  
City of Knox  
City of Monash  
City of Greater Dandenong  
City of Casey  
Parks Victoria  
Melbourne Water

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy  
Water for Victoria  
Biodiversity 2037

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's \$222 Water for Victoria initiative



# TRANSFORMING THE DANDENONG CREEK CORRIDOR

“So many health and wellbeing benefits come from connecting with nature ... this project is helping the growing community in Melbourne’s south-east enjoy their local environment, while also learning how they can play a part in its protection.” Tania Foster, Port Phillip and Westernport CMA Chair

Carving its way through a densely urbanised landscape, the Dandenong Creek corridor provides a vital haven and ‘biolink’ for native flora and fauna, as well as for the region’s human inhabitants. However, there are a number of ‘gaps’ that need to be filled.

This project is undertaking on-ground works to enhance and connect green spaces at 38 priority sites along a 22km section of the Dandenong Creek corridor, including weed control, revegetation, litter removal and fencing of sensitive areas. This will increase the extent, quality and connectivity of native vegetation, support more diverse native flora and fauna, boost populations of threatened species and improve water quality in Dandenong Creek (as well as its adjoining billabongs and wetlands) and Port Phillip Bay.

To complement these environmental works, the project is engaging the community to better appreciate the Dandenong Creek corridor. Events and activities have included ‘citizen science’ monitoring activities, working bees, educational events and the inaugural Dandenong Creek Festival.

This project is strengthening the integrity of the entire Dandenong Creek corridor and helping the region reach its potential as a world-class urban ecosystem.

This project is funded with \$1 million through the Victorian Government’s Our Catchments, Our Communities initiative and is being carried out as part of the Living Links program. For the past 11 years, Living Links has brought together a wide range of partners to coordinate efforts to create a web of green spaces across Melbourne’s south-east.



<http://bit.ly/2O1cjJi>

**1** City of Monash residents identify local birds while on a Backyard Bird Discovery Walk.

**2** Community members learn about local wildlife at the Discover Dandenong Creek Festival.

**3.** Member for Dandenong, Gabrielle Williams, with Port Phillip and Westernport CMA CEO David Buntine and Living Living Coordinator, Sarah Maclagan at the Discover Dandenong Creek Festival.



# WEST GIPPSLAND

CORNER INLET

# WEST GIPPSLAND

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- We coordinated the Victorian Landcare Grants and Australian Government's Regional Community Grants. This resulted in 63 projects totalling 24.02km of fencing, 55,883 indigenous plants and 11.75ha of direct seeding (totalling 23.5ha of revegetation) and 25.4ha of weed control.
- The CORE 4 program is a Market Based Instrument (MBI) program that supports dairy farmers to reduce nutrient loss to waterways. This year we delivered the CORE 4 program in the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) to reduce the amount of nutrients entering the Ramsar listed Gippsland Lakes. This year we funded 60 successful projects to the value of almost \$800,000. The program was oversubscribed with local farmers submitting 109 expressions of interest to participate in the program. Each of these project expressions of interest received two farm visits to develop a Farm Nutrient Management Action Plan.
- This was the final year of the five-year Corner Inlet Connections project, funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. The project was delivered in partnership with Parks Victoria, DELWP, Yarram Yarram and South Gippsland Landcare networks. The main activities included fox control on Snake and Dream islands; coastal saltmarsh protection; Spartina control; development of Soil Erosion Management Plans; stabilising sites affected by hillslope and gully erosion; and fencing and revegetating priority waterways to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff.
- Our ongoing commitment to cultural competency has strengthened communication and engagement with traditional land-owning groups. This commitment has resulted in an increase in work On Country. Our cultural competency journey has been shared across Victoria, helping other agencies to engage with Traditional Owners in the regions in which they work. This year, work has been done to renew the MoU with GLaWAC and create an MoU with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC).
- During 2017/18 we fenced more than 90km of priority waterways, completed 292ha of revegetation, removed willows over 146ha, completed more than 1,334ha of weed control and stabilising river beds and banks at three sites. This work will help reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients entering rivers and streams.



OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>					
1.2 Water storage (no.)	39	24		3	27
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)	685	228			228
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	2	1			1
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	6		6		6
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	9	18			18
1.9 Fence (km)	65	40	42	7	89
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	99	44	54	19	117
2.2 Weed control (ha)	34,268	63,261	465	22	63,748
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	17,013	47	17,399		17,446
2.8 Earth works (no.)	1	6		0	6
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	10	106			106
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	30,000		32,524		32,524
3.3 Water (no.)	6	31			31
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	1,287	2,554			2,554
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	45	47	13	10	70
4.3 Assessment (no.)	216	620			620
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	1,041	3,057	574	10	3,641
4.5 Partnership (no.)	60	136	12		148
4.6 Plan (no.)	67	47	25		72
4.7 Publication (no.)	78	178	20		198
4.8 Information management system (no.)	2	5			5



# SOCIAL BENEFITS OF LANDCARE



“Without funding the group would have continued to limp along without any enthusiasm.”  
Merriman Creek Landcare Group member

## LOCATIONS

Merriman Creek Landcare Group boundary loosely covers an area south of Sale in the south-eastern part of Gippsland, following the creek from its headwaters to its mouth at Seaspray

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

1 report  
2 meetings – 20 participants

## PARTNERS

Victorian Government  
DELWP  
Victorian Landcare Program  
Merriman Creek Landcare Group  
Yarram Yarram Landcare Network

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government’s \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative

- 1** Members of the Merriman Creek Landcare Group. *West Gippsland CMA.*
- 2** The SROI study found that for every one dollar the group members received \$3.41 in social benefit. *West Gippsland CMA.*
- 3** Landcare group members reported improved NRM skills as one of the social benefits received. *West Gippsland CMA.*

Landcare groups make a difference to the natural environment. From planting trees, to treating weeds, fencing gullies and stabilising river banks. The benefits of these works are well known, well researched and are current ‘best’ practice in natural resource management.

What has been more difficult to articulate is the social impact of funding a Landcare group. A Social Return on Investment (SROI) study, conducted by West Gippsland CMA, showed that for every one dollar granted to the group there is at least \$3.41 return in social value.

West Gippsland CMA received state government funding as part of the Regional Riparian Action Plan (RRAP) to support community works along waterways. The Merriman Creek Landcare Group received \$15,000 of this funding to complete all on ground work and project delivery including removing blackberries, putting up fencing to stop stock access, and planting indigenous trees along the Merriman Creek.

When the project was completed, Merriman Creek Landcare Group members were asked about the social changes experienced as part of the project. These changes included:

- making a positive impact to the community
- feeling more connected to neighbours
- improved NRM skills and knowledge
- improved emotional wellbeing

By far the largest benefit was giving the group a sense of purpose and renewing enthusiasm as part of the project. One respondent went as far as saying... “without the funding the group would have continued to limp along without any enthusiasm”.

Each of the ‘benefits’ or changes experienced by the participants were assigned a proxy that could be given a value. For example, improved NRM skills and knowledge was given the proxy of a natural resource management course and improved group dynamics had the proxy of a team building course for the Landcare group. This allows a dollar value to be allocated to each benefit.

For more information on this study, funded by the Victorian Landcare Program, visit [www.wgcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.wgcma.vic.gov.au).



# EMBRACING THE CHANCE TO IMPROVE FARMING METHODS

“This is a great outcome for farmers. It also reduces erosion, salinity and nutrient run-off, which is important for the health of our rivers and waterways.”

Peter Jennings, West Gippsland CMA Chair



## LOCATIONS

Across the West Gippsland region

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

60 farm management plans  
16 engagement events-  
262 participants  
6 publications-  
3 case studies and 3 media releases

## PARTNERS

Australian Government  
Bass Coast Landcare Network  
Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network  
Maffra and Districts Landcare Network  
South Gippsland Landcare Network  
Yarram Yarram Landcare Network  
Southern Farming Systems  
DEDJTR

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

West Gippsland Regional  
Catchment Strategy

## FUNDING

Funded through the Australian  
Government's National Landcare  
Program

The pressures of running a farm make it hard to take time out to learn about new methods and ideas, but for Foster farmer David Hall, it's an essential part of his business.

The Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms program regularly holds workshops, trials and information sessions about soil health, and nutrient and grazing management, to build landowner knowledge.

For David Hall, the program has provided a unique opportunity to improve his farming practices.

“I believe if I can learn one new thing, it's worth the time and effort to go to a workshop or information day,” says David.

“I've incorporated quite a few of the things I learned, including fertiliser management, sod seeding oats, Petrik microbes, and most recently, setting up a grazing chart system.”

The new knowledge has changed the way his farm at Foster is operated.

“For years, I tried to run the maximum amount of cattle and I wasn't providing enough nutrition. The quality of your soil and pasture is the major factor in achieving good results. Now I focus on balancing the grass and the livestock,” explains David.

“I've taken a more biological approach to farming. My primary aim is sustainable production and to greatly reduce my reliance on fertiliser inputs.

“I have what I call a 4 x 4 plan. Each year I aim to have four weeks holiday, try four different things, attend four training days and spend four weeks (approximately one day a fortnight) working on the business, not just in it.”

The Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms project has engaged around twenty per cent of agricultural businesses in the region, with almost 1,000 landowners taking part in a range of events and workshops.

“We know that good management of nutrients, ground cover and plants will improve the health of animals and farm profitability,” says West Gippsland CMA Chair, Peter Jennings.

“This is a great outcome for farmers. It also reduces erosion, salinity and nutrient run-off, which is important for the health of our rivers and waterways.”

**1** David Hall on his farm at Foster during a site visit. *West Gippsland CMA.*

**2** Work on farms like David's helps protect the Ramsar Listed Corner Inlet. *West Gippsland CMA.*

**3** Work on farms like David's helps protect the Ramsar Listed Corner Inlet. *West Gippsland CMA.*



# WIMMERA

## KEY EVENTS AND INSIGHTS

- Dry weather had a big influence in the health of our catchment in the six months from November with well below average rainfall and well above average temperatures. Not only has this resulted in low to no sub soil moisture, it also increased the amount of evaporation of our lakes, rivers and streams and parts of the upper catchment were restricted to a series of small pools during this period.
- Year two of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Socio-Economic Value of Recreational and Environmental water survey commenced and we eagerly await the results. Year one conservatively estimated that \$27.5 million was contributed to the local economy and a total physical and mental health benefit of \$8.6 million.
- Development of a Regional Partnership Agreement with key stakeholders formalised our close working relationships and we continue to embrace new technologies that result in increased efficiencies and new target audience.
- One example of this is the creation of the Virtual River Yarns education tool that shares the Wimmera's cultural heritage by allowing users to experience what the Wimmera looked like before European settlement. Another example was the trial of a drone to collect flood data as part of the Horsham - Wartook flood investigation.
- Wimmera CMA also met certification requirements for the new ISO 9001:2015 standard.



**Wimmera** CMA

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL		
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER
<b>1. STRUCTURAL WORKS</b>				
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	12	11	4	15
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	16	16	3	19
1.9 Fence (km)	108	113	30	143
1.10 Visitor Facility (no.)	1		1	1
1.11 Road (km)	1		1	1
<b>2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>				
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	7		7	7
2.2 Weed control (ha)	3,858	2,092	636	2,728
2.3 Pest animal control (ha)	3,588	3,033	1,521	4,554
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	1		1	1
2.9 Rubbish removal (ha)		50		50
<b>3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>				
3.1 Grazing (ha)	1,254	1,489	266	1,755
3.3 Water (no.)	13	16		16
<b>4. PLANNING AND REGULATION</b>				
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	318	329		329
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	54	47	11	58
4.3 Assessment (no.)	100	219	33	252
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	2,340	4,234	1,138	5,372
4.5 Partnership (no.)	22	18	6	24
4.6 Plan (no.)	52	65	11	76
4.7 Publication (no.)	15	20	4	24
4.8 Information management system (no.)	2	2		2



## LOCATIONS

Lower Wimmera River/Barringi Gadyin

## OUTPUTS 2017/2018

212 engagement event participants  
3 assessments  
1 partnership

## PARTNERS

Wimmera CMA  
Barengi Gadjin Land Council  
Parks Victoria  
Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative  
DELWP

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy  
Wimmera Waterway Strategy  
Barengi Gadjin Land Council Country Plan

## FUNDING

Funded through the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria initiative

**1** Wimmera CMA Aboriginal Water Officer Ben Muir with Aboriginal Victoria's Daniel Clarke and Barengi Gadjin Land Council RAP Manager Darren Griffin at the Yungui Bark Canoe Gathering. *Wimmera CMA.*

**2** Wimmera CMA Aboriginal Water Officer Ben Muir at the Yungui Bark Canoe Gathering. *Wimmera CMA.*

# RIVER YARNS

“The relationship between Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council is strong and we share a commitment to continue to work to ensure local Aboriginal values and uses of water are better incorporated in water resource planning and management in Victoria.”

Peter Hilbig, Wimmera CMA Board Chair

*Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council are supporting local Aboriginal communities in sharing 'river yarns' about the Wimmera River to help ensure local Aboriginal values and customary uses are better linked in with water planning and river management in Victoria.*

River Yarns is an Aboriginal Water Project for the lower Wimmera River developed to support Traditional Owner aspirations in relation to culture and traditional practices, Country, economic development opportunities, and to help build relationships and community capacity.

The strong partnership approach of Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) is central to the project. It has supported the employment of a local Traditional Owner in the position of Aboriginal Water Officer.

BGLC has highlighted 'River Yarns' in the new Country Plan "Growing What is Good" as a leading example of collaboration that supports Traditional Owner aspirations for Country and Community.

### Achievements of the project include:

- Support for Aboriginal participation in activity around the Water Resource Plan (includes ongoing communication of results of the Aboriginal Waterways Assessment of the lower Wimmera River with Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations).

- Delivery of the Yungui bark canoe community training and engagement activity with Traditional Owner staff from BGLC, Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative, Parks Victoria, DELWP and other community members.
- Presentations on the project at local, state and national forums including the 2017 International River Symposium and the 2017 Victorian Catchments Summit.
- Support for the development of BGLC's Country Plan "Growing What Is Good", launched in January 2018.
- Continued engagement and foundational work to prepare for watering of the Ranch Billabong and other significant cultural places, including support for BGLC funding applications to increase staff resources and organisational capacity.
- Participation in cultural survey training activities at Lake Albacutya and Outlet Creek with BGLC.
- Support of the BGLC Country Mapping project with Aboriginal Victoria to promote cultural values of the river.
- Cultural awareness training for Wimmera CMA staff and Board.
- Community events in partnership with BGLC and Goolum Goolum to recognise Closing the Gap Day, NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week.



1 Golden Sun Moth female. DELWP.  
 2 Ecological burn for weed management at Salisbury Bushland Reserve with DELWP and PV staff.



### LOCATIONS

Wimmera region wide

### OUTPUTS 2017/2018

8 assessments  
 13ha weed control

### PARTNERS

DELWP  
 Australian Government  
 Nhill Sun Moth Committee  
 Hindmarsh Shire Council

### REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy  
 Wimmera Waterway Strategy  
 Barendi Gadjin Land Council Country Plan

### FUNDING

Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program

# GOLDEN SUN MOTH RECOVERY PROJECT

“We look forward to opportunities to continue to support coordinated local, state and federal government efforts to improve the conservation outlook for small, isolated populations of Golden Sun Moth and other threatened plants and animals across the Wimmera.”

Peter Hilbig, Wimmera CMA Chair

Threat abatement and targeted survey works have been undertaken in the Wimmera region to improve the conservation outlook for the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth.

The critically endangered Golden Sun Moth was spotted in the Wimmera region for the first time in several years as part of this project. Project partners recorded 220 moths during flying season surveys (November-December) at previously known observation sites near Nhill and Kiata in the northern Wimmera. No moths had been observed at these sites for the last two flying seasons.

Low numbers of female Golden Sun Moths were observed in the survey results. This may be due to difficulties in detecting females as they do not generally fly when loaded with eggs.

As well as survey work and population monitoring in consultation with the Nhill Sun Moth Committee, the project included targeted threat abatement and habitat improvement at individual sites.

Five new locations with suitable Golden Sun Moth habitat of low open grasslands, where wallaby grass is dominant, were identified and surveyed and are now being actively managed to contribute to an improved conservation outlook for the species.

Observations made as part of the ongoing monitoring of these potential habitat sites are showing that weed control works are improving the quality of potential habitat at these sites. Forest Fire Management and Parks Victoria staff are observing that the ecological burning undertaken at Salisbury Bushland Reserve has increased the cover of native grasses resulting in lower intensity burns across the site.

DELWP natural environment program manager Pauline Rudolph describes the Golden Sun Moth as an elusive but hardy species that is able to survive prolonged dry periods.

Along with on ground actions the Golden Sun Moth Recovery project included activities to help ensure there is adequate communication and information flow between organisations, local government and the community.

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[www.necma.vic.gov.au](http://www.necma.vic.gov.au)



Glenelg Hopkins CMA  
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Port Phillip & Westernport CMA  
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Phone: 03 8781 7900  
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[www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au](http://www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au)



Goulburn Broken CMA  
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Shepparton VIC 3630  
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Mallee CMA  
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**National  
Landcare  
Program**



Projects featured in this report were supported by Victoria's 10 CMAs, the community and a range of partners through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the Victorian Government.