

VICTORIAN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES' ACTIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VICTORIA'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Catchment Management Authorities proudly acknowledge Victoria's Indigenous communities and their rich culture, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country and value their role in the management of land, water and biodiversity. We acknowledge the ongoing contribution this makes to catchment management. We support the need for genuine and lasting partnerships with Indigenous people and communities to understand culture and connections to Country in the way we plan for and manage our catchments. We acknowledge our legislative obligations to Traditional Owner groups and consider them paramount amongst our responsibilities.

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FOREWORD



HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE
AND PRODUCTIVE LAND,
WATER AND BIODIVERSITY
MAINTAINED THROUGH
INTEGRATED CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT THAT IS
STRONGLY COMMUNITY
BASED, REGIONALLY FOCUSED
AND COLLABORATIVE.

This latest Action and Achievements Report clearly shows the impact that Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) are having in our regional communities – delivering the rivers and landscapes that we love and use. The achievements, now spanning twenty years, have made a clear difference to Victoria's liveability and to our land, water and biodiversity.

It is great to see progress with the roll out of the Victorian Government's Water for Victoria and our largest ever investment of \$222 million in healthy waterways and catchments. The report highlights work to improve the health of 36 priority waterways and delivers 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 to demonstrate how better partnerships between government and community can deliver better on-ground outcomes. 19 major projects are delivering for regional communities right across Victoria.

The value of CMAs is also recognised through considerable and important complementary investment of over \$57 million by the Australian Government. The work we have done to develop a strong catchment sector and a strong framework for on-ground delivery is also working to secure and support future investment by the Australian Government.

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 the Andrews Government's investment in Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2017 and our commitment through Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Together with the CMAs, the Government has been working to improve equality and diversity across Victoria's water sector. CMA Boards now include a majority of women as well as five Aboriginal Victorians, enabling them to better reflect the communities they represent.

This report is clear evidence of the 10 CMAs' commitment to improving transparency and accountability in the sector and achieving on-ground improvement.

A blue ink signature of Hon Lisa Neville MP.

Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Water

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

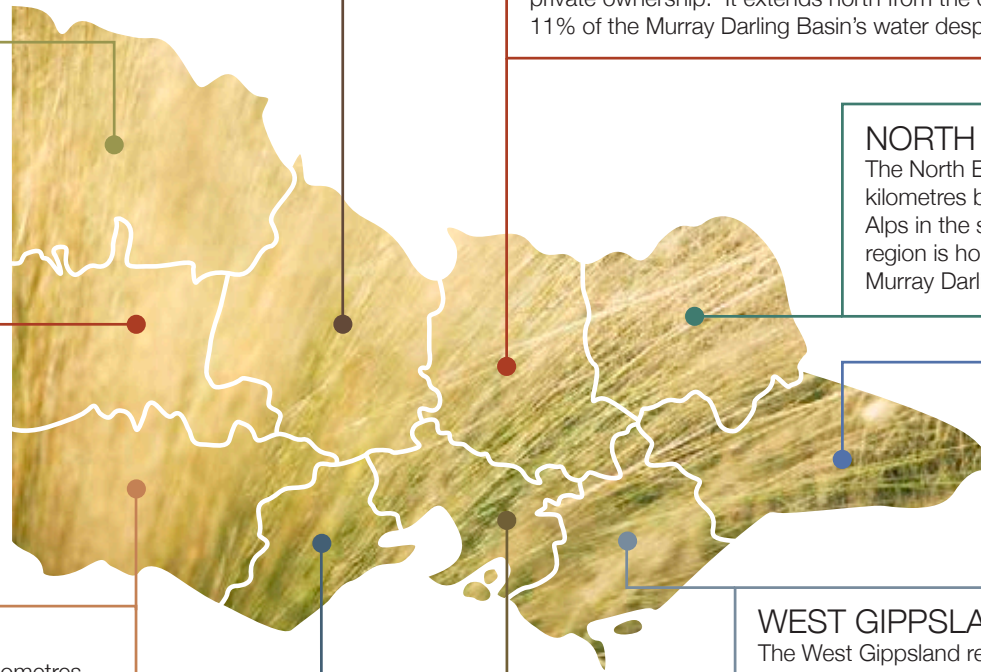
The East Gippsland region covers 22,000 square kilometres and is approximately 80% publicly-owned land mainly as significant State forests, national and coastal parks.

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.

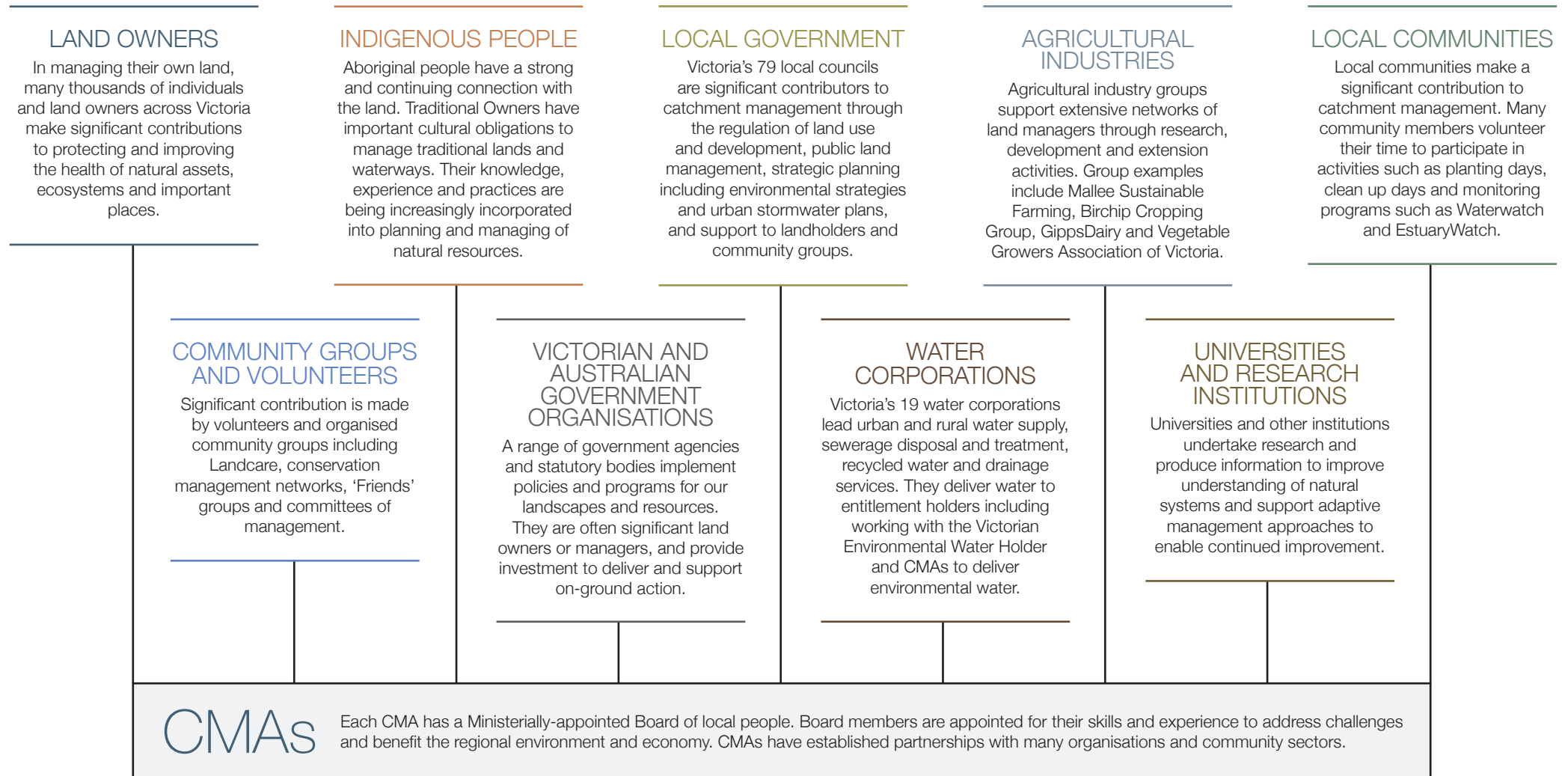
PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT

Spanning 13,000 square kilometres that feed into Port Phillip Bay and Western Port, this region has a 4.5 million resident population whilst also boasting some of Victoria's most productive farming lands and spectacular parks that are home to all four State flora and fauna emblems.



PARTNERSHIPS

MANY INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO THE HEALTH OF OUR RIVERS AND LANDSCAPES. PARTNERSHIPS ARE VITAL TO EFFECTIVELY SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT, UNDERPIN OUR ECONOMY AND PROVIDE A RANGE OF SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL BENEFITS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.



SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT



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

THROUGH 2016/17, CMAS HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NUMEROUS GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES.

REGIONAL CATCHMENT STRATEGIES

The 10 Regional Catchment Strategies covering Victoria are key documents that integrate State and National policies and strategies with local community knowledge and priorities. They are the regional roadmaps for healthy and sustainable catchments. CMAs coordinate their development and implementation in collaboration with their regional communities.

WATER FOR VICTORIA

The Water for Victoria plan was launched by the Premier Hon. Daniel Andrews MP and Minister for Water Hon. Lisa Neville MP in 2016. As Victoria's waterway management authorities, CMAs are important players in the implementation of this \$222 million dollar program. More information is provided on page 11.

OUR CATCHMENTS OUR COMMUNITIES

The Our Catchments Our Communities strategy for integrated catchment management in Victoria was launched by Minister for Water Hon. Lisa Neville MP in 2016. CMAs are leading implementation of many of its actions including 19 major on-ground projects involving many partners and using \$22 million of Government's Water for Victoria investment to leverage much more from partners and communities. The 19 projects are depicted on page 12.

VICTORIA'S ENVIRONMENT - BIODIVERSITY 2037

The Biodiversity 2037 plan was launched by Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP in 2017. CMAs are important contributors to its implementation, bringing regional communities and partners into project planning and integrating funding from the Victorian Government with various other investments to achieve optimum and efficient on-ground results.

VICTORIAN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLAN

The Climate Change Adaptation Plan was launched by Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP in 2016. CMAs are supporting its implementation by including through region-scale planning. The case study on page 19 provides further detail.

MARINE & COASTAL PLANNING

CMAs are assisting the development of a new Marine and Coastal Act and preparing for an increased role in strategic planning, advice on coastal erosion risk and monitoring. CMAs also continue to support implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy with various coast enhancement projects in partnership with community groups and others.

MURRAY DARLING BASIN PLAN

CMAs are important contributors to the Basin Plan including by implementing Sustainable Diversion Limit projects and on-farm irrigation efficiency works, developing a constraints management strategy for the Goulburn River and engaging northern Victoria communities to better understand the implications and opportunities from the plan.

VICTORIA'S REGIONAL STATEMENT

Victoria's Regional Statement was launched by the Premier Hon. Daniel Andrews MP and Minister for Regional Development Hon. Jaala Pulford MP in 2015. CMAs are contributing to its implementation by including catchment management information and helping engage regional communities.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

CMAs embrace diversity and inclusion and are model organisations influencing the public sector and the broader community. For example, a majority of CMA Board members and CMA staff are female, and 14 CMA staff are Indigenous. Further information is outlined on page 20. CMAs are now each developing a Diversity & Inclusion Plan outlining actions for continued improvement.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES



VICTORIA'S CMAS HAVE BEEN IN PLACE FOR 20 YEARS. IN THIS TIME, THEY HAVE GUIDED THE INVESTMENT OF HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE OUR LANDSCAPES, LIVELIHOODS AND LIFESTYLES.

WHILST FOCUSSED ON THE DELIVERY OF LAND, WATER AND BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMS, CMAS SIMULTANEOUSLY CONTRIBUTE TO VARIOUS OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS AND GOVERNMENT DIRECTIONS.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Genuine engagement with regional communities is at the heart of all CMA work. The CMAs legislated role to foster cooperation and community awareness is delivered through an extensive and diverse array of activities and partnerships. The summary on page 13 illustrates this further.

LANDCARE SUPPORT

CMAs proudly lead the Victorian Government's support for Landcare including the provision of grants, training opportunities, planning assistance and networking. The partnerships between Landcare and CMAs are deep and crucial for Victoria. The report on page 14 provides more detail.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

The Australian Government is a significant investor in environmental and agricultural work in Victoria. CMAs have forged a strong and effective partnership with the Australian Government, securing over \$200 million for Victorian projects over the past 4 years including from the current National Landcare Program. More details are provided on page 16.

LEVERAGE & INTEGRATION

CMAs add value to Government investment and bring multiple fund sources together to deliver integrated on-ground works. In 2016/17, \$132.8 million of Victorian and Australian Government funding generated approximately \$292.4 million of works by leveraging funds from other sources and significant contributions from landholders.

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. Page 17 gives more information.

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

CMAs are proud to be working hand-in-hand with Indigenous land managers and communities. 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 18 provides further detail.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

CMAs are important members of Incident Control Centres in various emergencies with a formal intelligence role associated with flooding. In 2016/17, CMAs have also been significant partners in natural disaster recovery including running Drought Employment Programs in the west of the State, delivering river recovery programs from flooding in the North East and responding to the new year blackwater event in the Goulburn Broken.

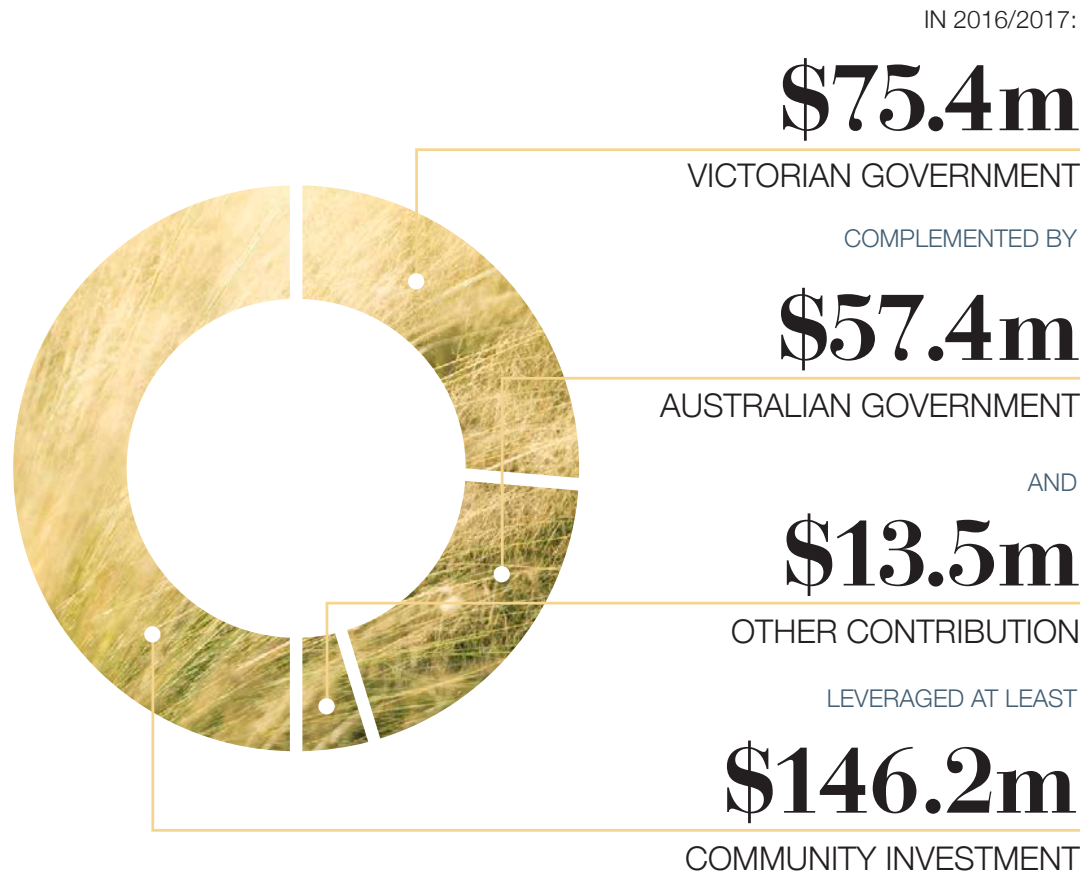
REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

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

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

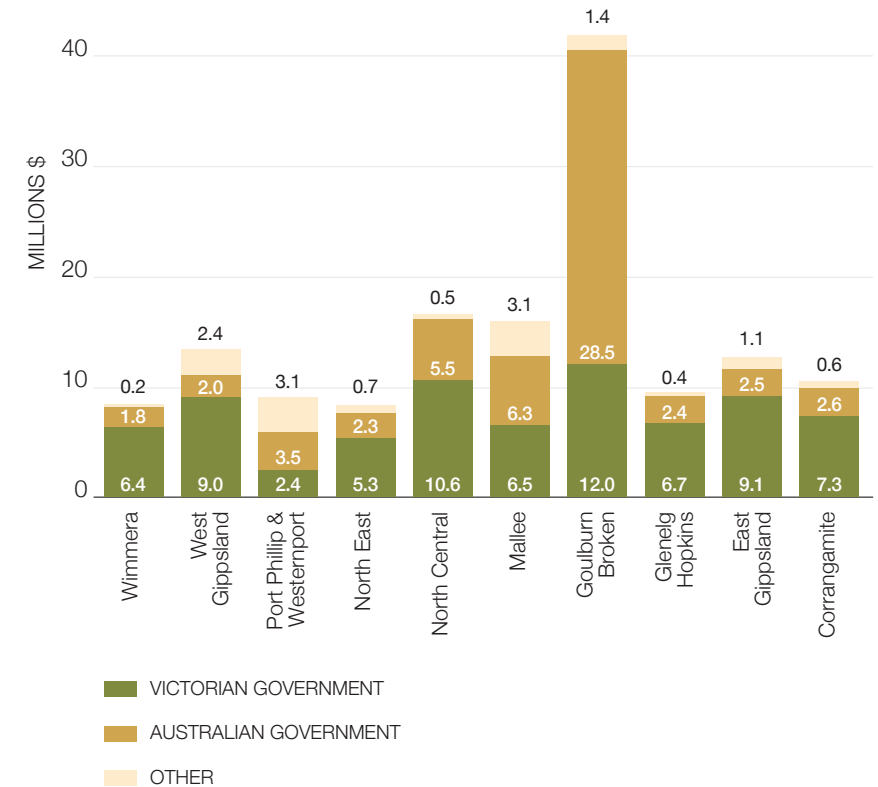
As Victorian Government statutory authorities, CMAs apply the highest standards of governance to ensure taxpayer monies are managed and expended responsibly and to achieve optimum outcomes. The finances of each CMA are audited by the Victorian Auditor General's Office each year and reported upon in Annual Reports tabled in Parliament and made publically available.

INVESTMENT



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.

DURING 2016/2017 THE FOLLOWING INVESTMENT WAS MADE THROUGH VICTORIA'S TEN CMAS:



NOTE: Goulburn Broken CMA funding in 2016/17 is significantly higher as a result of Australian Government investment in the Victorian Farm Modernisation Program.

OUTPUTS

● CMAs are at the **front-line of natural resource management** and side-by-side with regional communities.

● CMAs convert revenue to action, spending more than **80% of their revenue on direct service delivery.**

● CMAs leverage other funding and in-kind contributions so each **\$1 of Victorian Government funding is complemented by almost \$3 of additional support.**

● CMAs are **efficient and perform exceptionally well** in project delivery including effective achievement of targets for example in 2016/17:

- 549 waterway structures established such as large wood snags and erosion control works **(499% of the target)**
- 9,853 hectares of native vegetation enhanced **(227% of the target)**
- 98,952 hectares of weed control undertaken **(152% of the target)**
- 147,641 hectares with improved agricultural practices **(185% of the target)**
- 93,545 participants in engagement events **(250% of the target)**

Note: There is a list of 'standard outputs' specified by the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning to ensure consistency in monitoring and reporting. This table lists the 31 outputs directly contributed to by the CMAs.

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.1 Channel (km)	79	70			70
1.2 Water storage (no.)	69	130	30		160
1.3 Pump (no.)	19	10			10
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)	5,079	257	4,455	358	5,070
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	110	544	4	1	549
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	9	36			36
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	119	110		28	138
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	793	193	17	604	814
1.9 Fence (km)	567	739	252		991
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	145	194	2		196
1.11 Road (km)	25	657			657
1.12 Crossing (no.)	11	18			18
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	4,336	3,262	6,591		9,853
2.2 Weed control (ha)	65,003	36,836	62,116		98,952
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	445,224	30,495	493,389		523,884
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	22	6	14		20
2.7 Soil treatment (ha)	0	75	1,000		1,075
2.8 Earth works (no.)	33	47	24		71
2.9 Rubbish removal (ha)	2	53			53
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	14,457	1,765	4,761		6,526
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	79,794	130	147,511		147,641
3.3 Water (no.)	142	174	1		175
3.4 Fire Regime (no.)	39		140		140
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	7,613	6,996		43	7,039
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	922	537	581	49	1,167
4.3 Assessment (no.)	5,319	4,320	1,327	20	5,667
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	37,358	58,474	34,632	439	93,545
4.5 Partnership (no.)	1,512	1,264	347	15	1,626
4.6 Plan (no.)	463	366	99	5	470
4.7 Publication (no.)	1,241	1,551	247	22	1,820
4.8 Information management system (no.)	71	45	15	5	65

A kookaburra with white, brown, and blue feathers is perched on a weathered wooden fence post. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest. The title 'STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS' is overlaid in large white serif font on the right side of the image.

STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

THESE CASE STUDIES ILLUSTRATE COLLABORATION BETWEEN CMAS & VARIOUS PARTNERS IN 2016/2017:

- WATER FOR VICTORIA
- OUR CATCHMENTS OUR COMMUNITIES
- ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES
- SUPPORTING THE LANDCARE MOVEMENT
- 20 YEARS OF CATCHMENT IMPROVEMENT
- DELIVERING THE NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAM
- SUPPORTING PRODUCTIVE & SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
- ADVANCING INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION
- PLANNING AND ACTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
- INCREASING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

WATER FOR VICTORIA



Water for Victoria is the strategic plan for management of our water resources now and into the future.



“CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES BRING REGIONAL PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL OWNERS, TOGETHER IN THE MANAGEMENT OF WATERWAYS AND CATCHMENTS.”

Water for Victoria

A record investment of over \$222 million over 4 years by the Victorian Government is helping to improve the health of waterways and catchments to ensure Victorians have rivers and landscapes that they love and use.

The Water for Victoria plan and initiative was put in place by the Premier Hon. Daniel Andrews and Minister for Water Hon. Lisa Neville in 2016. This new plan and investment recognises the need for Victoria to improve our knowledge in waterway and landscape management, implement works efficiently and communicate better with the Victorian community.

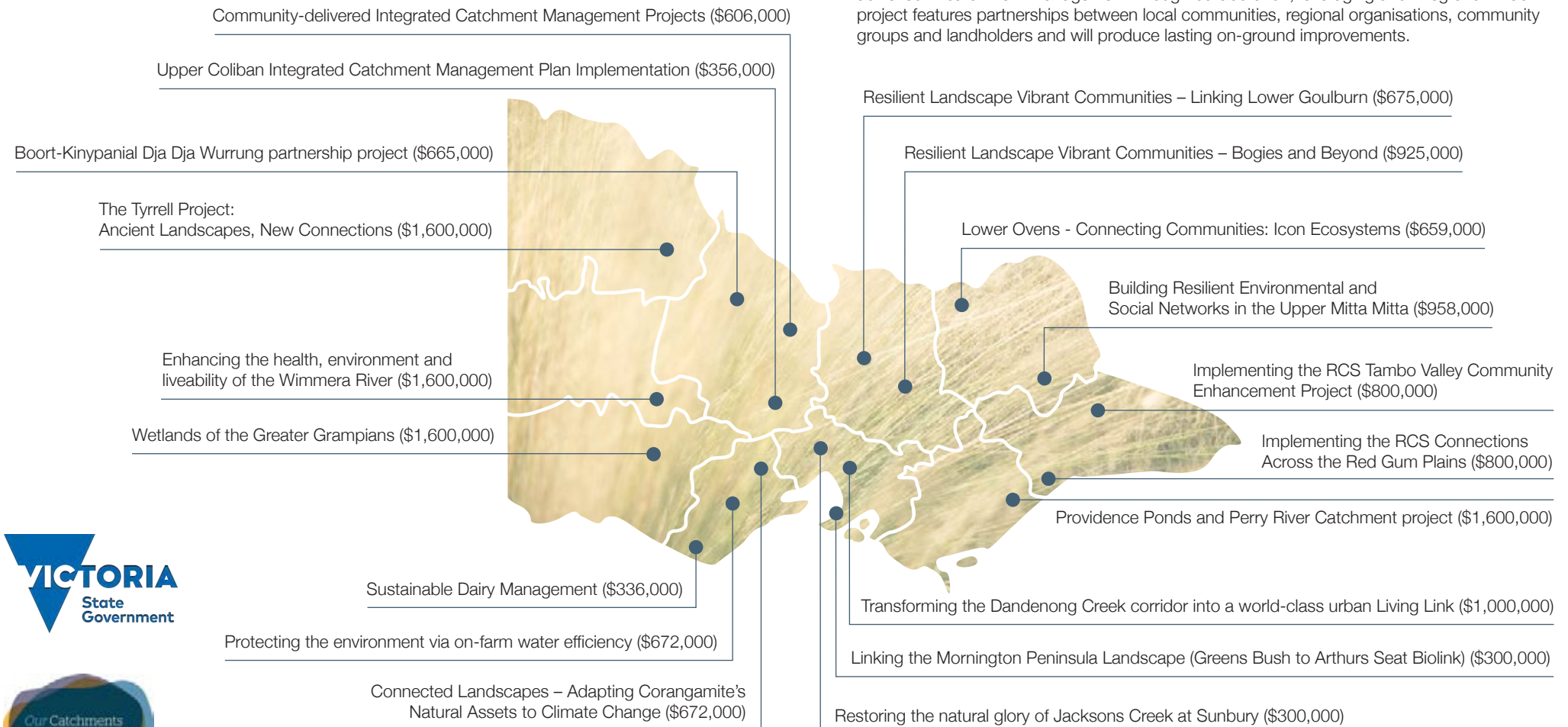
The CMAs play an important role in implementing Water for Victoria. In 2016/17, this has included:

- Implementing the Regional Waterway Strategies across Victoria.
- Undertaking large-scale projects to improve the health of 36 priority waterways, the first 10 of which are trialling new approaches to track progress and report back to communities including at the Cann River in East Gippsland, Merbein Common in the Mallee and the Moorabool River in the Corangamite region.
- Delivering water for the environment to rivers, wetlands and estuaries in collaboration with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, storage operators and local communities. For example, environmental water releases have been made into the Thomson River in West Gippsland to trigger migration and spawning of the nationally-threatened Australian grayling and are also timed to benefit recreational users such as kayakers.
- Supporting development of the state's Rural Drainage Strategy.
- Providing specialist advice to water corporations and local government on waterway-related statutory referrals and other statutory obligations under the Water Act and Planning & Environment Act.
- Helping Traditional Owners to play a stronger and more active role in waterway planning and programs.
- Coordinating 19 major catchment management projects benefitting Victoria's catchments and communities (see page 12 below for more detail).

OUR CATCHMENTS OUR COMMUNITIES

AS PART OF THE WATER FOR VICTORIA PROGRAM, THE \$22 MILLION 'OUR CATCHMENTS OUR COMMUNITIES' INITIATIVE IS FOCUSSED ON INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT INCLUDING \$16 MILLION OVER 4 YEARS FOR 19 MAJOR ON-GROUND PROJECTS.

The Our Catchments Our Communities projects highlight the significant benefits that can be achieved in catchment management through collaboration, leveraging and integration. Each project features partnerships between local communities, regional organisations, community groups and landholders and will produce lasting on-ground improvements.

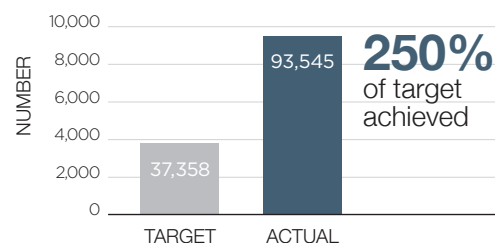


ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES



Wimmera CMA connecting people and nature.

PARTICIPANTS IN ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



"TO HAVE THE WIMMERA CMA SUPPORTIVE OF WHAT WE DO, WE'RE EVER GRATEFUL. EVERY FISHERMEN WAS IN RAPTURES AS TO HOW GOOD THE RIVER LOOKED. AND THE QUALITY OF THE FISH COMING OUT OF IT WAS JUST AS GOOD! THE RIVER MAKES OUR TOWN SPARKLE."

Kevin Dellar, community group leader and fisherman, Wimmera CMA region

CMA's engage regional communities using a planned and efficient approach. At the core of this is a 'Community Engagement & Partnerships Framework' that was adopted by all CMA's in 2012.

The framework outlines the following commitments:

- We will embed community engagement and build partnership in all that we do;
- Our people will be actively supported to engage communities and to build partnerships;
- Our community engagement and partnership approaches will be well planned, targeted and evaluated;
- We will provide meaningful opportunities for our communities and partners to contribute to strategies and initiatives; and
- We will work transparently and respectfully with our communities and partners, and establish clear roles and expectations.

CMA's implemented this framework in 2016/17 to engage communities in various ways including:

- Conducting hundreds of events such as field days, seminars and farm inspections which collectively attracted over 93,000 participants. An example was the Chris Humfrey waterway wildlife show organised by Wimmera CMA

in conjunction with the Horsham Fishing Competition which attracted over 1,000 community members on the banks of the Wimmera River in Horsham in March 2017.

- Partnering with councils, water corporations, agricultural industry groups, Landcare groups and others to support hundreds of other events relevant to natural resource management.
- Developing over 1,100 formal management agreements with landholders to undertake specified works. An example is the 330 agreements established by the Mallee CMA with land managers to undertake works such as exclusion fencing, revegetation, earth works, rubbish removal and invasive species management; all underpinned by mutual respect and trust built through years of engaging with each other.
- Building on our use of traditional media and websites through social media to reach diverse community sectors including youth, education, research, scientific and urban communities. CMA's now have over 8,500 Facebook and 7,000 Twitter followers.

A recent assessment has shown the Community Engagement & Partnerships Framework is well embedded in CMA policies and practices, but it will be regularly reviewed to pursue improvements and new opportunities.

SUPPORTING THE LANDCARE MOVEMENT



Celebrating 30 years of Landcare in Victoria with the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network and community members in November 2016.

“WE’VE HAD WONDERFUL SUPPORT FROM THE WEST GIPPSLAND CMA INCLUDING GRANTS FOR OUR LOCAL PROJECTS, HELP WITH ORGANISING OUR EVENTS AND ASSISTANCE WITH TRAINING OUR FACILITATOR. THE JOB OF BEING A VOLUNTEER LANDCARER ISN’T ALWAYS EASY, SO THE CMA SUPPORT IS A GREAT BOOST TO OUR EFFORTS.” Helga Binder, President, Yarram Yarram Landcare Group

Landcare in Victoria involves 794 Landcare groups that have formed 69 networks and together cover around 68% of Victoria’s rural land.

Together, these Landcarers have reported contributing over 375,000 hours in 2016/17 to land, water and biodiversity protection across the State, worth in the order of \$11.2 million.

CMAs are proud to be the lead Government organisations supporting and assisting this army of committed and knowledgeable volunteers.

With funding from the Victorian Landcare Program, CMAs provide strategic support and leadership for Landcare, guided by a Landcare Support Plan for each region and spearheaded by a Regional Landcare Coordinator position in each region.

Support is provided in diverse ways. In 2016/17 these have included:

- Community grants programs in each region that collectively provided over \$1.9 million of grants for 138 projects and support grants for 207 groups and networks.
- Coordination of training and development opportunities for Landcare leaders and staff, such as the Intrepid Young Leader training managed by the West Gippsland CMA that improved the skills for 25 young Landcarers.
- 23 celebratory events involving over 1,600

people across Victoria and 7 commemorative publications to recognise the 30th year of Landcare in Victoria and highlight the long-standing and substantial contribution that Landcare has made in Victoria. For example, the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA delivered an event with the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network and Trust for Nature that took 132 people into a rarely-observed part of the Tootgarook Swamp.

- Additional events and forums designed to enhance networks and share information amongst the Landcare movement, such as support for a Rural Women’s Network by the Corangamite CMA.
- Development of an annual Landcare report card in each region that summarises the activities and ‘health’ of Landcare to demonstrate and promote the value that Landcare provides for the Victorian community and environment.

No of Landcare Groups	794
No. of Landcare Networks	69
Reported no. of members/volunteers	26,499
Reported volunteer labour	375,873
Value of volunteer contribution	\$11,276,190



20 YEARS OF CATCHMENT IMPROVEMENT



Cann River, 1969



Cann River, 2014



Hattah Lakes, 2006



Hattah Lakes, 2011

“THIS LONG-TERM CARE FOR OUR RIVERS IS SOME OF THE MOST SATISFYING WORK WE DO. WITH FUNDING AND TRUST FROM GOVERNMENT, WE CAN SPEND THE NECESSARY TIME TO SLOWLY BUT SURELY BRING THESE RIVERS AND LANDSCAPES BACK TO GREAT HEALTH.”
Graeme Dear, CEO, East Gippsland CMA

Repairing and renourishing a degraded river takes a long time, 20 years or more. It's a job that requires planning, persistence, partnerships and consistent effort in order to be successful.

CMAs are proud to have been in place for over two decades and to be tackling issues that demand stability, time and persistence.

Degradation of waterways, loss of native vegetation extent and quality, reduction in species diversity and declines in soil quality have occurred in many parts of Victoria and cannot be reversed easily. However, CMAs are in place to bring together the technology, funding and people that can deal with these problems and to plan and oversee the implementation.

Two examples of CMAs applying methodical, persistent care for waterways and landscapes have been along the Cann River in East Gippsland and at the Hattah Lakes in the Mallee.

In the Cann River, repair works date back to the early 1900s as people trialled methods to manage flooding impacts. The East Gippsland CMA has learned from and built upon the past efforts and worked for the last 20 years with local landholders to stabilise the river channel, control willows and fence off and revegetate the riparian zone. Work was ramped up after the 1998 floods and is now clearly paying off with the river moving steadily to excellent recovery. Recent Victorian Government investment to implement the Water Plan for Victoria will help achieve the long-term targets for the river condition over the coming few years.

By the early 2000s, after a century of river regulation and a changing climate, the Hattah Lakes faced an uncertain future. However, an emergency watering of the lakes in 2004 was the catalyst for state and federal agencies including the Mallee CMA to collaborate and begin one of Australia's largest environmental projects. Jenny Collins, CEO of the Mallee CMA, says “Working together with our partners over a long time, we have restored the lakes from a place on the brink of ecological disaster to a site that supports diverse flora and fauna and attracts visitors from around the world.”

DELIVERING AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS



Works to enhance the Dandenong Ranges funded by the National Landcare Program.

“REGIONAL BODIES INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE PROGRAM BY DELIVERING INVESTMENT THROUGH ESTABLISHED LOCAL AND REGIONAL NETWORKS.”

from the Report on the Review of the National Landcare Program, 2017

There are very strong partnerships in place between the CMAs and the Australian Government that have attracted major investment into Victoria.

The CMAs are part of a nation-wide network of 56 organisations through which a major component of the National Landcare Program - the regional delivery stream - is delivered. The CMAs have also secured funds for Victoria from other streams of the National Landcare Program including the 20 Million Trees initiative and Threatened Species Recovery Fund, and have been directly involved with 43 Green Army teams.

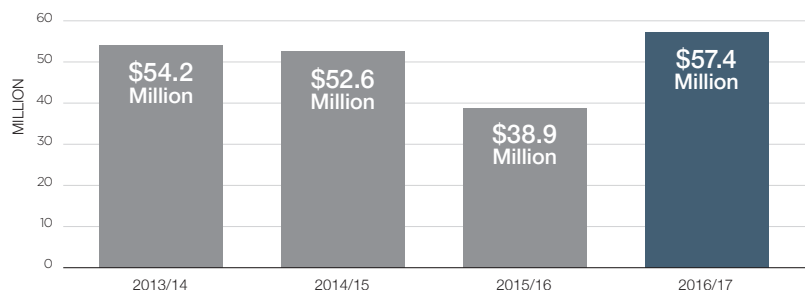
In total, over \$57 million of Australian Government funding has been brought into Victoria through CMAs in 2016/17 and over \$200 million in the past 4 years.

To ensure this investment is well managed on behalf of the Australian Government and community, the 10 Victorian CMAs provide sound governance and exceptionally strong business management. This was demonstrated with the CMAs collectively scoring 196/200 in the governance performance assessments undertaken by the Australian Government in 2017.

The review of the National Landcare Program released in 2017 also highlighted that:

- Regional natural resource management planning, led by regional bodies, is key to the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering the National Landcare Program's objectives.
- Regional bodies increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the program by delivering investment through established local and regional networks.
- The regional delivery program creates employment and training opportunities in regional communities, with a strong focus on Indigenous involvement.
- With their knowledge and community linkages, regional bodies provide the capacity for rapid response to biosecurity risks and natural disasters, thereby reducing risks to our agricultural productivity, natural ecosystems and human health. This world-leading collaborative, integrated model is improving Australia's productive landscapes and protecting our unique species and habitats.

The CMAs have welcomed the announcement from the Australian Government that the National Landcare Program will be extended for a further 5 years with an additional \$1 billion and look forward to again playing a leading role in its delivery.



TOTAL AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN VICTORIA THROUGH CMAS

SUPPORTING PRODUCTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



Andrew Palmer has improved water use efficiency on his dairy farm in the Goulburn Broken CMA region.

“THE FARM WATER PROGRAM HAS ALLOWED US TO COMPLETE OUR FARM DEVELOPMENT SO THAT WHEN COMMODITY PRICES ALLOW WE ARE PRIMED TO PUSH THE FARMS PRODUCTION TO ITS FULLEST, RATHER THAN WAITING FOR INCREASES IN CASH FLOW TO SLOWLY UNDERTAKE THE WORKS.”

Andrew Palmer, dairy farmer, Bamawm

Agriculture is a major part of Victoria's landscapes providing food and fibre, employment, social cohesion and economic growth.

CMAs work with and support agricultural industries and farmers to help them be productive, profitable and resilient. The support for private land managers leads to important public benefits including environmental, recreational, health, tourism and economic improvements for local communities.

Activities by CMAs providing direct support for productive agriculture in 2016/17 have included:

- Provision of on-farm irrigation grants to improve water use efficiency on irrigation farms including \$7.3 million provided through the Goulburn Broken CMA for 23 projects covering 3,300 hectares.
- Improved agricultural practices for over 93,000 hectares on 388 farming properties funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. This occurred mainly in the grains and grazing industries including work coordinated by the West Gippsland CMA that saw landholders develop 60 nutrient and effluent management plans, 21 irrigation plans, 14 grazing, soil and nutrient management plans and 5 soil erosion management plans.

- Conduct of events involving 9,986 participants and 1,879 farming entities to increase knowledge and application of sustainable agricultural practices, supported with funding from the National Landcare Program. Examples are a 'Grazing women's group' with 57 participants supported by the Corangamite CMA and 140 farmers in 'sustainable soils' groups accessing expert scientists to improve soil health with support from the North Central CMA.
- Management of trials testing new farming techniques under farm conditions. An example is work coordinated by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA on integrated pest management in pastures that has led to 8 farmer demonstration sites across 100 hectares, 5 insect collection sites and engagement with 10 agronomists.
- Employment of 10 Regional Landcare Facilitators funded by the National Landcare Program working directly with agribusiness and industry groups to promote sustainable agriculture. In the Port Phillip & Westernport region, this work has led to partnerships and projects with the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, Fruitgrowers Victoria, Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee, Balliang Food and Fibre Group, Farming Moorabool, Australian Organics Recycling Association, Agribusiness Yarra Valley and others.



The 'Grazing women's group' assessing crop health in the Corangamite CMA region.

ADVANCING INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION



NAIDOC Week celebration in the Barmah Forest led by the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and supported by the Goulburn Broken CMA.



Indigenous participants in a Wetland Wardens course with staff from Birdlife Australia in November 2016.

“WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT CMA, WE’VE GOT YOUNG INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WORKING ON COUNTRY LEARNING THEIR TRADITIONAL PRACTICES. THEY HAVE NEW PRIDE AND CONFIDENCE. THEY ARE LEARNING TO BE FUTURE WURUNDJERI LEADERS.”

Uncle David Wandin, Elder, Wurundjeri Tribe

With funding support and national-level leadership from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program, Victoria’s CMAs are champions for increasing Indigenous participation in natural resource management and helping to close the gap.

Examples of actions and outcomes over recent years include:

- Funding going from CMAs to Indigenous organisations and groups to undertake projects. An example is \$50,000 from the Corangamite CMA to support the Wadawarrung develop their Country Plan.
- Conduct of events to increase the community understanding of and connection to local Indigenous culture. An example is the July NAIDOC celebration organised by the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation at the Dharnya Centre in Barmah that was supported by Goulburn Broken CMA and many other groups and agencies and attracted hundreds of people of all ages.
- Coordination of training activities to increase the skills of Indigenous people. An example is four Wetland Wardens courses held in the Goulburn Broken, West Gippsland and Port Phillip & Westernport regions that have seen around 50 Indigenous people gain skills in bird identification, monitoring and wetland ecology.

- Partnership agreements and MOUs established between CMAs and Indigenous organisations. An example is the Partnership Agreement between the North Central CMA and Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners that strengthens their relationship and work towards common goals for Country.
- The direct employment within CMAs of 14 Indigenous people and support for the employment of many others. An example is the contracting by the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA of the Wurundjeri Tribe to provide Indigenous land management services involving 8 Indigenous people.
- Grants and/or planning support to help the management of Indigenous owned or managed properties and business enterprises. An example is securing whole farm planning support for the Coranderk property at Healesville as this Indigenous-owned property moves to being a self-sustaining agricultural business incorporating traditional Indigenous techniques and production of bush foods.
- Development of an Indigenous Participation Plan by each CMA outlining their commitment to supporting Indigenous culture and further actions to be taken in the years ahead.

Importantly, the growing participation of Indigenous organisations and people in natural resource management is also helping achieve social and economic benefits. CMAs are involved in activities that are improving Indigenous education, employment, health, culture, heritage, language, recognition and harmony.

PLANNING AND ACTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



“CMAS ARE FOSTERING COLLABORATION WITHIN THEIR REGIONS, ACROSS THE STATE AND THE NATION TO HELP COMMUNITIES ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE.”

Kate Brunt, Senior Project Manager – Climate Change, Goulburn Broken CMA

CMAs are assisting the rollout of Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan; helping communities build knowledge and prepare for our future climate.

An important planning process by each CMA has been the preparation of Regional NRM Climate Change Plans funded through the Australian Government and available at www.nrmclimate.vic.gov.au.

Building on this, a partnership with RMIT is further testing climate change adaptation pathways in the Goulburn Broken and Corangamite Catchments.

Deakin University supporting CMAs to better understand net carbon stocks of Victoria's inland wetlands.

The partnership continues with Deakin University to further understand Victoria's inland wetland soil carbon stocks, accretion rates, net carbon budget and the effects of rehabilitation. This latest project is supported by Wimmera and North Central CMAs.

CMAs and water corporations are also working together on a 'catchment carbon offsets' project to investigate how carbon and environmental benefits could be achieved by water corporations offsetting their carbon production in priority areas of catchment management regions. This \$150,000 project is funded through the Victorian Government's *Our Catchments Our Communities* initiative.

In order to test the Catchment Carbon Offsets concept, a "virtual" case study will be developed focused on the Gellibrand catchment in partnership with Corangamite CMA, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Wannon Water.

Every year Victoria's wetlands sequester enough CO₂ to offset the emissions from

659,129

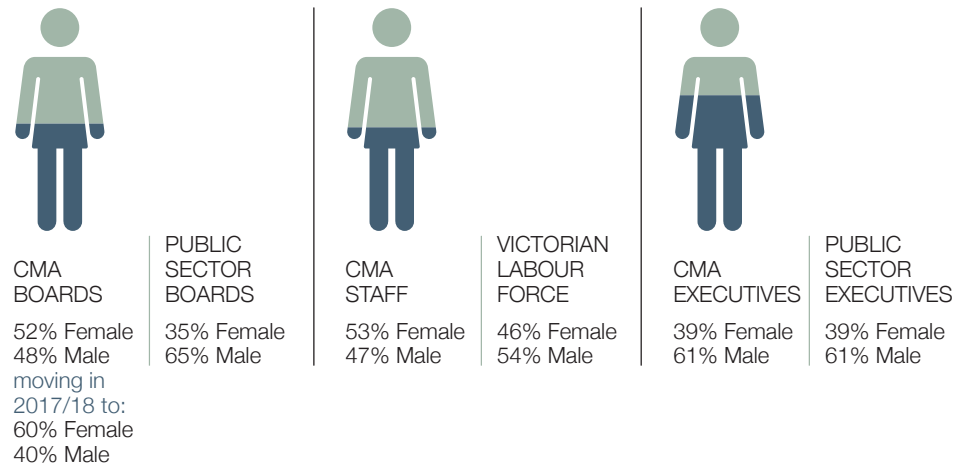


780 

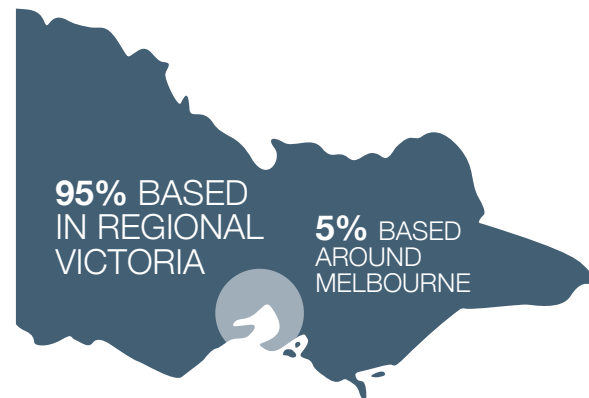
emissions are offset each year by one hectare of wetlands in Barmah National Park.

INCREASING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

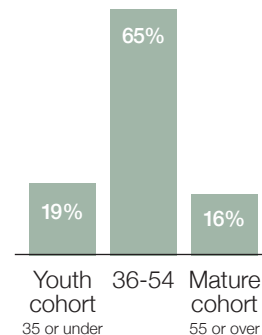
GENDER



WORK LOCATION



STAFF AGE PROFILE



Victoria's CMAs are embracing and bringing to life the Victorian Government's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

For many years, CMAs have acknowledged and welcomed the unique perspectives of all employees and fostered a culture of inclusion where everyone feels valued and respected.

CMAs have established safe and equitable workplaces, conducted cultural awareness activities, increased female representation in the workforce, introduced opportunities for flexible working arrangements and increased the representation of Indigenous people.

CMA workforce data now highlights these advances.

There is excellent gender balance in CMAs. At the Board level, there were 44 female and 40 male Board members in 2016/17 moving to 54 female and 36 male in 2017/18 including 6 female CMA Chairs.

At the staff level, a total of 412 employees are comprised of 219 females (53%) and 193 males (47%).

CMAs have 14 staff that are Indigenous which is 3% of the workforce and clearly above the 0.9% employed in the Victorian public sector. Further, in 2017/18 there will be 5 Aboriginal Victorians on CMA Boards.

CMAs have a healthy age profile amongst employees, with 19% of staff 35 years of age or younger and 16% that are 55 or older.

The healthy gender and age profiles of CMA staff are at least partly due to CMAs supporting flexible working arrangements. At least 36% of CMA employees utilise flexible working arrangements such as part time roles, study leave and 48/52 schemes or similar.

CMAs remain committed to being model employers and active leaders within regional communities for diversity and inclusion. Each CMA will have a Diversity & Inclusion Plan that sets a pathway for further improvement in the years ahead.

DIVERSITY & EDUCATION

	CMA STAFF	PUBLIC SECTOR	VICTORIAN POPULATION
Indigenous	3%	0.9%	0.7%
Born Overseas	4%	22%	31%
Tertiary Education	84%	71%	33%
Modified Work Arrangements	36%	45%	

Note: The comparative data regarding gender, diversity and education is sourced from 'The State of the public sector in Victoria 2015-16' published by the Victorian Public Sector Commission, January 2017.

A photograph of a white egret standing in a body of water, with tall reeds in the background. The egret is facing right, and its reflection is visible in the water. The reeds are tall and thin, with some yellowing at the tips. The water is calm, with gentle ripples.

REGIONAL ACTIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS

INCLUDING REGIONAL OUTPUTS, KEY EVENTS,
INSIGHTS & CASE STUDIES

This section presents outputs delivered by each CMA in 2016/2017, 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.



WIMMERA

Wimmera River near Horsham.

WIMMERA CMA

INVESTMENT

\$6.4 million Victorian Government
\$1.8 million Australian Government
\$0.2 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

While the drought broke, the Victorian Government's Drought Employment Program for Wimmera farmers and agribusinesses continued to support drought crews and natural resource management projects, providing people with employment while the businesses that employed them worked to bounce back.

The Wimmera CMA held one of our largest waterway events ever with a crowd of over 1,000 people attending the Chris Humphrey waterway wildlife show as part of the Horsham Fishing Competition.

The CMA also partnered with the Wimmera Development Association, GWM Water and local governments to instigate a socio-economic assessment of many of the Wimmera waterways. With good water levels in rivers this year, it was an ideal time to get a handle on the value that these waterways generate for the community.

The CMA continued to meet the ISO 9001:2008 certification standard and in 2017/18 will be seeking certification under the new ISO 9001:2015 standard. Through our quality management system, we continue to focus on continual improvement.

A mid-term review of the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy was conducted. This involved significant consultation with community groups, government agencies and non-government organisations.

OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.1 Channel (km)	0	1			1
1.2 Water storage (no.)	0	2			2
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	7	13			13
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	0	13			13
1.9 Fence (km)	47	125			125
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	0	42			42
1.11 Road (km)	0	630			630
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	48	449	7		456
2.2 Weed control (ha)	1,256	4,681	1,707		6,388
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	10,178	4,805	8,262		13,067
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	1	5	1		6
2.9 Rubbish removal (ha)	0	4			4
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	486	415	297		712
3.3 Water (no.)	13	12			12
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	321	268			268
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	23	65	18		83
4.3 Assessment (no.)	20	176	31		207
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	701	3,743	1,941		5,684
4.5 Partnership (no.)	37	97	28		125
4.6 Plan (no.)	4	65	14		79
4.7 Publication (no.)	23	19	8		27
4.8 Information management system (no.)	1	2			2



Wimmera CMA

DELIVERING OUR CATCHMENTS OUR COMMUNITIES

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program (Our Catchments Our Communities initiative)

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Horsham Rural City Council
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Private landholders
Property developers
Trust for Nature
Wimmera River Improvement Committee
Barengi Gadjin Land Council

OUTPUT 2016/2017

1.04 kilometres of fencing
8.5 hectares of weed control, pest animal control and grazing regime improvement
1 management agreement
16 partnerships
15 engagement events



“THE WIMMERA NRM COMMUNITY IS GENERATING OVER \$27 MILLION PER YEAR FROM THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS THAT OUR WATERWAYS GENERATE.”

Karen Douglas, Chair, Wimmera CMA

Improvement of public access along the Wimmera River in Horsham for environmental, recreational, social and cultural activities has been a vision of the local community, council and local indigenous community for over 20 years and until recently it had been put in the too hard basket. The major impediment to achieving this vision has been the many different land tenures along the 21 kilometre section of river and the inability of land managers to agree on the ongoing management arrangements.

‘Our Catchments Our Communities’ initiative has allowed Wimmera CMA to take the lead in engaging with farmers, land owners, land developers, traditional owners, council and land managers, including regional DELWP, to develop the partnerships to facilitate the creation of an iconic walking track and public access area.

Funded by the Victorian Government’s ‘Our Catchments Our Communities’ initiative, to date this integrated project has been able to protect 8.5 hectares of riparian frontage that was grazed and cropped to achieve multiple environmental outcomes including securing endangered black box ecological vegetation class.

By working closely with farmers we have been able to reduce the number of dog attacks on sheep by providing suitable fencing and reduce other urban interface problems.

At the same time enabled an increase to recreational and cultural opportunities along private land, contributing to regional tourism, whilst managing for perverse outcomes.

The flexibility of the ‘Our Catchments Our Communities’ initiative has allowed us to develop strong partnerships with a range of diverse stakeholders many with competing priorities that had previously been unresolved or thought incompatible.

Without the support, empowerment and commitment from these partners including council, private landholders, international developers, DELWP, Traditional Owners and community groups the project would not have been successful.

These partnerships, a sound vision and common understanding have allowed us to achieve significant gains for the environment and local community through the leveraging of funding.

A roundtable meeting was held with stakeholders from along the length of the Wimmera River and other priority waterways to discuss and develop project ideas aimed at continuing the momentum and success of the project.



PICTURE 1 CMA trainee Tyson Secombe inspects revegetation. **PICTURE 2** Land before restoration and recovery alongside the Wimmera River.

THREATENED VEGETATION COMMUNITIES PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT

INVESTORS

Australian Government's National Landcare Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Parks Victoria
Trust for Nature
Landholders

OUTPUT 2016/2017

288 hectares of grazing regime improvement,
weed control and pest animal control
11 management agreements

"THE WIMMERA NRM COMMUNITY, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT, CONTINUES TO CO-INVEST IN THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THREATENED VEGETATION COMMUNITIES."

David Brennan, CEO, Wimmera CMA

This project protects and enhances threatened EPBC Act listed vegetation communities on private land. The project delivers funding directly to landholders and provides training and education in conservation and land management practices to enable better management of threats to the condition these vegetation communities in the Wimmera.

Funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, the project successfully assisted landholders to protect 11 seasonally herbaceous wetlands resulting in 288 hectares of this endangered vegetation community being actively managed under 10 year management agreements. In partnership with Trust for Nature, the project secured 6.5 hectares of Buloke Woodland under permanent protection through a Trust for Nature Covenant. This brings the total area of EPBC listed vegetation communities under active management to over 670 hectares since the project commenced 3 years ago.

The project was well supported by landholders with 28 landholders expressing interest in undertaking wetland protection and enhancement works in 2016/17.

In addition to funding the on-ground management actions being undertaken the project raises the profile of these important vegetation communities and builds landholders capacity to protect these areas on their properties by providing best practise management advice and techniques during one on one site visits.

The project supported Park Victoria as the land manager to undertake targeted pest plant and animal control in priority locations to compliment the on ground being undertaken by landholders. These works provided employment and training opportunities for Traditional Owners and the local indigenous community by utilising them to undertake these on-ground works.



PICTURE 1 Wetland Protection – A family affair. Photo: Wimmera CMA. **PICTURE 2** Wetland Protection – West Wimmera. Photo: Wimmera CMA.



WEST GIPPSLAND

Thomson River.

WEST GIPPSLAND CMA

INVESTMENT

\$9.0 million Victorian Government
\$2.0 million Australian Government
\$2.4 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- Partnerships are essential to managing natural resources in the diverse Gippsland region. As part of the Victorian Government's Our Catchment, Our Communities initiative, we have completed a partnership audit showing partners that we value their relationships with the West Gippsland CMA, that the CMA is collaborative in project planning and delivery and that our staff are responsive and accessible.
- Twenty-five local Landcare individuals and groups were recognised for their outstanding contribution to the environment as part of the Landcare Green Carpet Awards. The awards are held every two years to honour and celebrate local Landcare legends who have led the way in improving Gippsland's environment. Recipients have literally changed the landscape of their local patches – transforming wastelands to wetlands, drains to creeks and bald hills to forests.
- We hosted the first ever Victorian Intrepid Landcare Retreat. Twenty environmentally-minded young people from across Gippsland congregated at Wilsons Prom for people to hike, work with the 'Friends of the Prom' and participate in activities to inspire and empower them to take further work in the Landcare space. We had a great group from across Gippsland including Yarram, Sale, the Latrobe Valley, Phillip Island, Inverloch, Mirboo North, Moe and Leongatha. There was agreement that Landcare needs to connect with young people to ensure the movement continues for years to come, and to do this we need to make sure Landcare is relevant, accessible and appealing.



OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.2 Water storage (no.)	7	9			9
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)	150	153			153
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	1	1			1
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	20	9			9
1.9 Fence (km)	60	12	61		73
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	144	40	175		215
2.2 Weed control (ha)	1,740	1,209	1,701		2,910
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	5,539		9,329		9,329
2.8 Earth works (no.)	5	3			3
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	10,125		20,265		20,265
3.3 Water (no.)	6	10			10
3.4 Fire (no.)	1		1		1
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	973	1,252			1,252
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	82	23	56		79
4.3 Assessment (no.)	199	510	11		521
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	1,066	1,822	926		2,748
4.5 Partnership (no.)	151	72	45		117
4.6 Plan (no.)	24	26	15		41
4.7 Publication (no.)	56	50	15		65
4.8 Information management system (no.)	4	4	1		5

- The Fert\$mart program, delivered in partnership with GippsDairy and Dairy Australia, expanded this year to include the Macalister Irrigation District and the Jack and Albert rivers catchment in the Corner Inlet region. Sixty landholders signed up to be a part of the project
- Rangers from the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation began work on country as part of Corner Inlet Connections project and the Alpine Peatlands project.

BLACK SPUR WETLANDS

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program
South Gippsland Shire Council

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Nerrena Landcare Group
South Gippsland Landcare Network

OUTPUT 2016/2017

13 hectares of willow control
3 partnerships

"WE WANT THE BLACK SPUR CREEK WETLANDS TO BE A PLACE EVERYONE CAN ENJOY BECAUSE IT REALLY IS SPECIAL."

Jill Vella, President, Nerrena Landcare Group

The Regional Riparian Action Plan is a five-year plan to accelerate on ground riverside vegetation works to improve the health of land alongside Victoria's rivers, estuaries and wetlands.

Works include fencing to keep stock out, replanting, removing weeds and building off-stream watering systems. In the West Gippsland CMA region, three Landcare projects were funded – one at the Powlett River near Wonthaggi, one at Merriman's Creek near Stradbroke and the third at Black Spur in South Gippsland where funding kick-started on-ground works in a great community Landcare project.

The Black Spur is a unique area of public land created by the confluence of three key parcels of public reserve: the South Gippsland Rail Trail, the South Gippsland Highway and the Tarwin River.

The area has never been cleared and remains an untouched pocket of the original South Gippsland environment, home to melaleuca swamps, rich birdlife and one of the only incidences of Strzelecki gums to be found on public land.

Nerrena Landcare Group president, Jill Vella, said a project at the site appeared to be beyond the scope of a small group of volunteers.

"We needed a plan where the heavy works were completed by contractors. We were keen to have working groups and citizen science but we knew it had to be based on an on-ground works plan" Jill said.

A grant from the South Gippsland Shire Council allowed the Nerrena Landcare Group to contract a consultant to help them produce the plan.

The Black Spur Creek Wetlands Management Plan outlines a vision of how the group intends to restore the site. Guided by the plan, the group recently started its first work on the site, removing pussy willows thanks to Regional Riparian Action Plan funding.



PICTURE 1 The Black Spur Wetlands are home to an untouched pocket of native South Gippsland plants.

PICTURE 2 Regional Riparian Action Plan funding has allowed the first works at the site to begin.

LIFE COULD BE A DREAM

INVESTORS

Australian Government's National Landcare Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Parks Victoria
Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
South Gippsland Landcare Network
Yarram Yarram Landcare Network
DEDJTR

OUTPUT 2016/2017

74.65 hectares of weed control
11.46 kilometres of fencing
62.14 hectares of revegetation
5100 hectares pest animal control
24.6 hectares of erosion controlled

"WE KNOW WE CAN MAKE DREAM ISLAND FOX-FREE. IT'S SUCH A PERFECT HABITAT FOR SHOREBIRDS AND, IF THE THREAT OF FOX ATTACK IS REMOVED, IT COULD BE EVEN BETTER."

Jonathan Stevenson, Ranger, Parks Victoria

Dream Island, off the coast of McLoughlins Beach in South Gippsland, is a dream for local nesting shorebirds and migratory waders. However, the island is close to the mainland and, at low tide, foxes have swum across and wreaked havoc amongst nests.

Now, with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program into West Gippsland CMA's Corner Inlet Connections project, Parks Victoria has been working with traditional owners from the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) to make a safer environment for these vulnerable birds.

According to West Gippsland CMA's Water Program Coordinator, Tracey Jones, Dream Island is close to being just that for local and migratory shore birds.

"Dream Island provides a near perfect habitat for shore birds. It is difficult to get to and tends not to be visited by people, so it doesn't have the same population threats that other areas experience such as dogs and beach goers. Many of these birds are notoriously shy and easy to spook and one, the Hooded Plover, is down to about 600 individuals in Victoria. However the one threat that still remains is the fox," explained Tracey.

Jonathan Stevenson, Ranger with Parks Victoria has been baiting foxes on Dream Island on and off for 20 years.

"Dream Island is an important feeding, nesting, resting and breeding area for thousands of waterbirds. We believe there are only a couple of foxes left on Dream Island and we're trying to eradicate them through baiting. We've done it before and had good success, keeping the island fox free for over five years," said Jonathan.

Jonathan has been working with the Natural Resource Management Team from the GLaWAC to place baits along the length of the Island.

GLaWAC staff member, Corey Jack, said the team enjoyed being part of the project.

"It's been great working with Parks Victoria to do the baiting. We use fat bikes to ride the length of the Island, checking the GPS coordinates and removing old baits and placing new ones," explained Corey.

The Corner Inlet area provided a varied and abundant range of wildlife, bushfoods and medicines as well as a variety of coastal foods that were gathered to sustain the lifestyles of traditional owners.

More information about the Corner Inlet Connections project is available at www.wgcm.vic.gov.au.



PICTURE 1 Parks Victoria and GLaWAC rangers after they finish a baiting trip on Dream Island. **PICTURE 2** Corey from GLaWAC lays the bait at the first station on Dream Island.

PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT

Port Phillip Bay.



PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT CMA

INVESTMENT

\$2.4 million Victorian Government
\$3.5 million Australian Government
\$3.1 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- 31 organisations are now 'signed on' partners for the Regional Catchment Strategy. The strategy was amended after Ministerial approval to include new information and priorities regarding climate change. Further amendments will now be developed to strengthen the alignment with new and emerging Government strategies including Melbourne 2030, Water for Victoria, Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037, Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan and a new Marine and Coastal Act.
- Support was provided for the Landcare movement including the conduct of 6 events held to acknowledge Landcare's 30th anniversary involving over 500 people and \$434,750 being allocated in the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA Community Grants to 65 projects led by Landcare and community groups. 45 Landcare groups and networks were also involved in 5 Catchment Action Round Table meetings across the region.
- Relationships were further strengthened with Indigenous communities including through the development of an Indigenous Participation Plan and the signing of a partnership agreement between the PPWCMA and the Wurundjeri Land Council. Our Regional Indigenous Facilitator also worked with Aboriginal elders to lead 10 cultural awareness activities for audiences in public authorities and Landcare groups.
- Community engagement was at the heart of all Port Phillip & Westernport CMA work. A feature event was a second Knowledge Banquet attended by 190 people. 610 people also participated in community engagement activities through the Ramsar Protection Program including the third Dog's Breakfast event at the Altona wetlands which had over 250 attendees.

OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.9 Fence (km)	22	1	11		12
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	327	57	737		794
2.2 Weed control (ha)	2,130	337	3,284		3,621
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	15,282	558	24,282		24,840
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	3,600		13,661		13,661
3.4 Fire (no.)	32		32		32
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	110	6	176		182
4.3 Assessment (no.)	10	15	13		28
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	4,771	1,848	8,614		10,462
4.5 Partnership (no.)	166	75	123	5	203
4.6 Plan (no.)	7	3	7		10
4.7 Publication (no.)	4	7	3	1	11

- A number of major environmental projects continued to achieve significant on-ground works. \$2 million from the Victorian Government's Our Catchments, Our Communities initiative was allocated to 4-year projects in Sunbury, Mornington Peninsula and Dandenong Creek. 48 landholders were contracted to revegetate 600 hectares in the Grow West and Greening the West projects. The 3-year, \$3 million Dandenong Ranges Wildlife Recovery, Weed Management and Fuel Reduction Program funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program was successfully completed. The 10th anniversary of the Living Links program was celebrated by securing \$1 million for work along a stretch of the Dandenong Creek.
- Supporting sustainable and profitable agriculture continued to grow as a core role. 18 events involving 475 people were held to build the capacity of farmers. A number of trials of innovative agricultural techniques were conducted and promoted. A Port Phillip & Westernport 'Women in Sustainable Agriculture' leadership group was established providing opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and confidence to initiate and promote sustainable agriculture in the region.

AGRICULTURE, INNOVATION, PROFIT, SUSTAINABILITY

INVESTORS

Australian Government's National Landcare Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association
Western Port Catchment Landcare Network
Fruitgrowers Victoria
Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee
Balliang Food and Fibre Group
Farming Moorabool
Australian Organics Recycling Association
Melbourne Water
Agribusiness Yarra Valley

OUTPUT 2016/2017

18 landholder events
452 participants in events
7 knowledge brokering activities
336 people in activities
20 industry meetings
111 people in meetings

“SURROUNDING MELBOURNE ARE MANY PRODUCTIVE AND VALUABLE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES. THE PORT PHILLIP & WESTERNPORT CMA WORKS WITH AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY GROUPS AND FARMERS TO TRIAL AND PROMOTE PRACTICES THAT ARE GOOD FOR THE BOTTOM LINE AND THE ENVIRONMENT.”

Karen Thomas, Regional Landcare Facilitator, PPWCMA

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA employs a Regional Landcare Facilitator funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program whose work includes trialling a range of farming techniques that can provide cost-saving and environmental benefits.

In partnership with the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association and the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network, the use of compost mulch from urban green waste under grape vines has been trialled at 4 vineyards over 3 years. The results have included improvements in soil bulk density, soil temperature fluctuation, water use, soil microbial biomass, herbicide use and earlier ripening. Field days and discussion sessions have been attended by over 100 farmers from the local area and across Victoria, and the practice has been introduced on at least 120 hectares of vineyards. A similar trial in partnership with Fruitgrowers Victoria using mulch in 2 pome fruit orchards in the Yarra Valley is now underway.

With support from the Regional Landcare Facilitator, a group of 12 'young croppers' farming in the Balliang area west of Melbourne are researching and trialling variable fertiliser rate applications, conducting soil assessments and improving their pest management with results

being incorporated into their businesses to make their farms more resilient and to increase their bottom lines. These passionate, enthusiastic, resourceful and innovative farmers work the land locally but have a keen eye on regional, national and international factors. The 'skilling up' of this generation of farmers is contributing to retaining food production, rural jobs, viable townships and healthy landscapes in the rural land around Melbourne for the future.

In partnership with Agribusiness Yarra Valley, trials have been established on 5 farms planting flowering native vegetation to attract an abundance and diversity of beneficial insects. Early results from these 'insectariums' are very promising, with beneficial insects moving in within weeks. Many local farmers in the area are attending the trial sites to monitor the results with more than 25 hectares on horticulture farms already set aside for insectarium plantings, and there is interest in these trials from agricultural industries across Australia.



PICTURE 1 Balliang croppers.

PICTURE 2 Insectarium trial in the Yarra Valley.



A TREEMENDOUS PARTNERSHIP

INVESTORS

Australian Government's 20 Million Trees initiative
(part of the National Landcare Program)

DELIVERY PARTNERS

LeadWest
City West Water
Brimbank City Council
Wyndham City Council
Moonee Valley City Council
Maribyrnong City Council
Hobsons Bay City Council
Melton City Council
Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek
Melbourne Water
Hume City Council
Parks Victoria
Department of Land, Water and Planning
VicRoads
Department of Justice
Conservation Volunteers Australia

OUTPUT 2016/2017

406,881 trees planted
18 community engagement events with 876
participants including 105 Indigenous participants

“THE CMA HAS LED THE PRIORITISATION OF SITES, ENGAGED LANDHOLDERS, ESTABLISHED CONTRACTS, MANAGED THE COSTS AND PAYMENTS, OVERSEEN ON-GROUND WORKS, INVOLVED COMMUNITIES AND MONITORED AND REPORTED ON THE WORK. IT'S A PARTNERSHIP WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING IN THE FUTURE.”

Craig Rowley, CEO, LeadWest

‘Greening the West’ is a multi-partner, multi-year project to plant 1 million trees and enhance liveability and health for communities in the west of Melbourne.

The project was developed by LeadWest, a not-for-profit organisation focused on advocacy for the area with membership that includes six local governments plus major companies and other organisations with substantial local operations or interests. LeadWest secured \$5 million from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program to establish the 1 million native trees and large shrub species by the end of 2018.

The Councils and other organisations involved in Greening the West agreed to provide sites for tree planting and undertake activities to contribute to the overall project. These include 14,700 trees planted by Wyndham City Council at Wyndham Vale, 2,000 trees by the Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek at Altona North and 2,160 trees by Moonee Valley City Council at Avondale Heights. Community engagement activities include National Tree Day events at multiple sites and community planting days.

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA is a major partner in on-ground works, managing the planting of 716,470 trees around Bacchus Marsh (as part of the existing Grow West program) and in parts of the Maribyrnong River valley. These are contributing to the long-term development of vegetation connections across rural landscapes identified as priorities in the Regional Catchment Strategy.

To complement Greening the West, the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA has also secured 10 Green Armies funded by the Australian Government to assist project partners undertake some of the on-ground works.

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA is also providing administrative support for Greening the West, coordinating the contracts with various delivery partners, managing payments and coordinating monitoring and reporting.

Around 400,000 trees have been planted in Greening the West so far, with the remaining 600,000 trees to be planted in late 2017 and 2018.

The large scale of Greening the West is yielding a number of benefits including reduced costs from some suppliers for weed management seedlings and planting services. The project is also creating working partnerships between various organisations that improve coordination, planning, efficiency and the opportunity for additional shared projects.

PICTURE 1 Site visit by delivery partners in Wyndham Vale where 12,500 trees were planted by Wyndham City Council.

PICTURE 2 Revegetation with 4,200 trees at the Sunbury Earth Rings area near Sunbury.





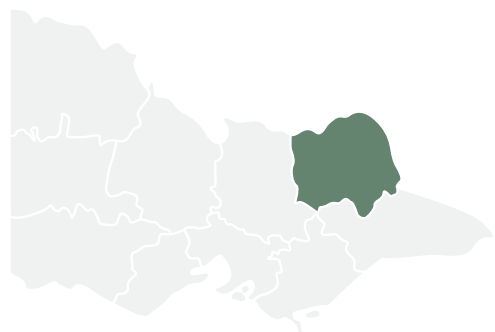
NORTH EAST

Looking out over the Alpine National Park.

NORTH EAST CMA

INVESTMENT

\$5.3 million Victorian Government
\$2.3 million Australian Government
\$0.7 million other investment



**NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY**

KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- Following October 2016 flood events, we conducted nine flood Catchment Conversations with flood affected communities. More than 350 flood impacted site assessments were undertaken and we successfully secured \$4.507 million in Australian and Victorian Government National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangement funding to assist in flood recovery. Flood recovery works commenced April 2017.
- Supported community-led solutions to riparian management of the mid King River. Worked alongside the Mid King River Action Group to complete in-stream works – removal of debris blockages, willow management and bank stabilisation – improving channel capacity and river health.
- Implemented the Environmental Works and Measures Program, resulting in completion of two fish passages at Frost Crossing and McQuades Bend in the Warby-Ovens National Park. Detailed design and contract specifications were completed for a further three priority fishway sites in North East Victoria.
- Completed a series of seven Natural Resource Management Investment Forums consulting the community and agency partners around investment priorities. Developed a detailed investment plan for the implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy.
- Successful collaborative applications secured funding under the Victorian Government's Biodiversity for On-Ground Action program at Chiltern- Mt Pilot, Warby-Ovens National Parks and Upper Murray.
- Supported 24 people to participate in an Agriculture and Environment Leadership course with Goulburn Broken CMA, Alpine Valley Community Leadership Program and Goulburn Murray Leadership.

OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.2 Water storage (no.)	1	15	6		21
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	1	116	3		119
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	0	30			30
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	1	1			1
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	17	14			14
1.9 Fence (km)	6	30	5		35
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	0	2			2
1.11 Road (km)	0	2			2
1.12 Crossing (no.)	2				0
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	22	275	22		297
2.2 Weed control (ha)	886	795	355		1,150
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	4,000	30	46,929		46,959
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	3		5		5
2.7 Soil treatment (ha)	0	75	1,000		1,075
2.8 Earth works (no.)	4	33	13		46
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	30	142	10		152
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	8,120		10,316		10,316
3.3 Water (no.)	3	3			3
3.4 Fire (no.)	2		5		5
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	412	513			513
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	55	37	6		43
4.3 Assessment (no.)	241	479	96		575
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	2,610	7,575	1,313		8,888
4.5 Partnership (no.)	41	53	13		66
4.6 Plan (no.)	8	5	3		8
4.7 Publication (no.)	121	486	74		560
4.8 Information management system (no.)	3	5			5

WANGARATTA URBAN WATERWAYS FLOOD INVESTIGATION

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Rural City of Wangaratta
Painters Island Committee of Management
Parks Victoria
Victoria Police
Vic Roads
Victoria State Emergency Services
Water Technology

OUTPUT 2016/2017

54 participants
3 engagement events

“THIS THOROUGH INVESTIGATION PROVIDES HIGH QUALITY, UP-TO-DATE FLOOD INTELLIGENCE DATA THAT INFORMS EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING WITHIN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE CITY AREA OF WANGARATTA.”

Lyn Coulston OAM, Chair, North East CMA

Four main waterways can cause flooding in Wangaratta: the Ovens River, the King River, the One Mile Creek and the Three Mile Creek (the last two are both part of the Fifteen Mile Creek system). These waterways collect rainfall from the Alpine National Park to the Warby Ranges and Springhurst Hills. Depending where rain falls, one waterway can flood with little or no impact on the others, or all waterways can be in flood at the same time.

This project was to review and improve the current flood mapping for the major waterways in and around the city of Wangaratta. The last comprehensive review of flood data and modelling was undertaken in 2000. There has since been considerable residential and commercial development throughout Wangaratta.

Previous work focussed on flood impacts in large flood events (i.e. 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)).

This project was required to expand the coverage and range of flood mapping for Wangaratta, including an assessment of a range of flood magnitudes.

It aims to provide high quality and current flood intelligence data for inclusion in the Municipal Flood Emergency Plan that informs emergency response, and provides flood data to inform planning within the present and future city area.

The project was undertaken by consultants Water Technology, with a steering committee including members of Rural City of Wangaratta, VIC SES, DELWP and North East CMA.

The project was based largely on detailed hydraulic modelling informed by historic flood data survey marks and aerial imagery. Extensive community consultation provided an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute local knowledge and observations from past events. Flooding between July and October 2016 provided an opportunity for validation and improvement of initial model runs.

A comprehensive data compilation enabled calibration of a hydrologic catchment model and 2D hydraulic model of the project area with mapping of flood extent, depth, velocity and hazard for flood events ranging from 20% AEP to 0.5% AEP. Flood intelligence outputs were produced in a form suitable for emergency response and for future community engagement.

The project included assessment of the performance of existing flood mitigation infrastructure, confirming that the major levees generally provide 1% AEP protection. However, some localised improvements are recommended to provide appropriate freeboard.



PICTURE 1 The scene of 6 drowning deaths during the 1917 Wangaratta floods. **PICTURE 2** A study commissioned by North East CMA and Rural City of Wangaratta reviewed flood mapping for Wangaratta urban waterways. North East CMA floodplain specialist Tim Loffler gathers data for the study.

HEALTHY CATCHMENTS INFORMATION KIT

INVESTORS

Australian Government's National Landcare Program
Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

North East Victorian Landcare Groups
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Agriculture Victoria
Trust for Nature

OUTPUT 2016/2017

2000 information kits produced and distributed

"THIS IS A GREAT RESOURCE FOR LAND MANAGERS WANTING TO UNDERTAKE LAND RESTORATION PROJECTS ON THEIR PROPERTIES, BUT ARE UNSURE WHERE TO BEGIN."

Kelly Behrens, Senior Project Officer, North East CMA

Farmers and other landholders play a key role in managing our natural resources. Land managers, Landcare and community groups are often looking for ways to improve land management practices to increase production and improve natural resources.

During discussions with the community, land managers advised that there was a lack of information available about how to undertake land restoration projects.

Weed and erosion management, native planting practices and maintenance, habitat for wildlife and grazing practices are often addressed in a variety of publications that may not suit the landscape or conditions. Available information was often difficult to locate and was not always appropriate for North East Victoria.

Taking into account these issues, CMA staff identified the need for a document that combined best practice information with appropriate regional guidelines.

North East CMA gathered state-wide and national best practice guidelines focusing on land restoration and management. The information gathered focused on practices suited to North East Victoria to align with community and landholder feedback. This information was then compiled, analysed and developed into a series of 10 easy-to-follow factsheets which were combined into one booklet.

The Healthy Catchments Information Kit provides landholders with tools to manage their own land improvement projects, ensuring long term resilience, relevant knowledge and skills for successful project outcomes.

The booklet was developed by North East CMA to support landholders in delivering successful on-ground projects, while following state-wide best practice guidelines. Contents of the booklet provide land managers with a series of factsheets which commence with permit and approval processes and move through to delivery of on-ground activities, maintenance and site management.

The booklet is a useful resource for land managers, Landcare and community groups who are working hard to manage our natural resources. When the kit was released in late 2016, individuals and groups from within and outside North East Victoria regularly started downloading the booklet and requesting hardcopies, demonstrating that the kit is much needed and will be a well utilised resource.

This work included funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



PICTURE 1 Greta Quinlivan and Dean Jones with the Healthy Catchments Information Kit. **PICTURE 2** The Healthy Catchments Information Kit.



NORTH CENTRAL

Landcare in the Upper Campaspe
(photo courtesy of S Scheltema).



NORTH CENTRAL CMA

INVESTMENT

\$10.6 million Victorian Government
\$5.5 million Australian Government
\$0.5 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

Drought conditions were broken by moderate and local major flooding that challenged communities and the agricultural sector.

The dairy industry faced significant challenges during the year, with reduced prices and industry changes causing significant issues for many dairy farmers.

From a project perspective, the CMA:

- Secured funding for the Plan2Farm project which aims to support 600 farming enterprises to make well-considered and positive decisions to drive and optimise agricultural competitiveness, farming resilience and regional development across the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District. Two successful trials in 2013 and 2016 enabled the CMA to secure \$2.4 million of funding to roll-out the Plan2Farm project.
- Commenced work with Dja Dja Wurrung on the Wanyarram Dhehk project, funded by the Victorian Government. Through this project the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises natural resource management team will conduct works to restore and enhance waterways in the Bendigo region that fulfil a number of Dja Dja Wurrung people's aspirations for managing Country. This two part project delivered over two years will involve the revegetation of Country, in particular the Bendigo Creek and a student's path way program.
- Completed a five year Australian Government funded project on the grassy woodlands that occur north east of Kyneton. These grassy woodlands, that were once widespread, are now considered at high risk of extinction. The project protected and enhanced 1,280 ha of remnant grassy woodland and, with good management, will increase the extent of grassy woodlands by 290 ha.

OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.2 Water storage (no.)	27	25			25
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	16	27		1	28
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	5		9		9
1.9 Fence (km)	79	91	41		132
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	1	6	1		7
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	283	1,013	1,268		2,281
2.2 Weed control (ha)	3,705	7,921	4,926		12,847
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	17,769	20	9,170		9,190
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	4				0
2.9 Rubbish removal (ha)	0	43			43
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	765	115	995		1,110
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	1,722		2,065		2,065
3.3 Water (no.)	19	47	1		48
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	2,609	2,171			2,171
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	131	15	58		73
4.3 Assessment (no.)	988	539	524	2	1,065
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	3,487	3,986	2,956	64	7,006
4.5 Partnership (no.)	50	29	4		33
4.6 Plan (no.)	49	36	5	1	42
4.7 Publication (no.)	53	49	13		62
4.8 Information management system (no.)	6	3			3



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

REACHING OUT TO HELP IN DROUGHT

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Drought Response Package

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Guildford Upper Loddon Landcare, Kara Kara CMN, Tarangower Cactus Control Group, Smeaton Cemetery Trust, Trust for Nature, Amphitheatre Landcare Group, St Arnaud Community Recreation Committee, St Arnaud Neighbourhood House, Charlton Travellers Rest Committee of Management, Charlton Landcare Group Project, Donald Primary School, Donald 2000, Charlton Pony Club, Parks Victoria, Donald Police Station, Charlton Traffic Safety Education Centre, Department of Education, Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network, Charlton Lions Club, St Arnaud Field Naturalist Club, Charlton Courthouse Committee, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Buloke Shire Council, Donald Heritage Train Park, Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, Lake Charm Landcare, Goulburn Murray Water

OUTPUT 2016/2017

2 visitor facilities maintained
51 kilometres of fencing
506 hectares of vegetation enhanced
1,094 hectares of weed control
6 hectares of pest animal control
1 assessment



“ASSISTING LOCAL FARMERS TO REMAIN EMPLOYED DURING THE DROUGHT, WHILE ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES, IS A WIN EVERY WAY YOU LOOK AT IT”

David Clark, Chair, North Central CMA

In November 2015, and following a long period of below average rainfall, the Victorian Government announced its \$27 million Drought Response Package. The package targeted farmers in the worst affected region of western Victoria.

As part of the package, the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) received two rounds of funding just short of \$1 million in total to deliver the Drought Employment Program (DEP). The program's focus was to provide off-farm income for farmers, farm workers and others severely impacted by the dry conditions. The delivery of the DEP enabled people to stay within their communities, build capacity and future employment options through training programs and exposure to different working environments. It supported participants' wellbeing and had the flow-on effect of stimulating financial benefits within drought affected communities whilst delivering on ground works that achieved positive natural resource management outcomes.

The North Central CMA worked closely with community groups, partner agencies, local governments and key Landcare groups to identify environmental works for the program. For the first time, the North Central CMA engaged three community liaison officers to scope works that would benefit local communities. Harnessing this local community knowledge

resulted in a robust and diverse work schedule for the duration of the program. The program employed 25 crew members and three community liaison officers, all with flexible employment arrangements. Work crews were established in Charlton, St Arnaud, Kerang, Maryborough and a specialised fencing crew based out of Donald.

In partnership between the North Central CMA and Agriculture Victoria a second part of the package was funding for stock containment areas. Stock containment areas enable farmers to fence off part of the farm to hold, feed and water livestock in tough farming conditions. The additional benefits of stock containment areas include minimising soil erosion, enabling faster pasture recovery, limiting the spread of weeds and allowing for good stock management. 2016-17 saw more than 170 Expressions of Interest from farmers and, subject to meeting guidelines, 141 pens built at a cost of \$2,000 per pen.



PICTURE 1 Drought Employment crew planting.

PICTURE 2 Painting tanks at St Arnaud hospital.

STUDENT SCIENTISTS FLOW ACROSS THE REGIONS

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Corangamite CMA
North East CMA
Wimmera CMA
Melbourne Water
Waterwatch Victoria
Centre for Research and Digital Innovation
Federation University.

OUTPUT 2016/2017

19 workshops
90 schools involved
167 community leaders/teachers involved
4,000 students involved
1 website developed

“TODAY’S STUDENTS ARE TOMORROW’S SCIENTISTS. THE RIVER DETECTIVES PROGRAM IS UNIQUE IN THAT IT ALLOWS STUDENTS TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY IN THEIR LOCAL WATERWAY AND COLLECT SCIENTIFIC DATA THAT HELPS INFORM THE FUTURE DECISIONS OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGERS”

Brad Drust, CEO, North Central CMA

The River Detectives program increases student knowledge of catchments, waterways and the environment. It provides an opportunity for students to explore science in an outdoor environment, whilst collecting important citizen science information and recording data in the Waterwatch Victoria web portal (a state-wide citizen science database).

In 2016, the Victorian Government provided \$250,000 over two years for North Central Waterwatch to deliver a state-wide pilot River Detectives education program across Victoria. The program aims to engage over 100 schools from four Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) in youth citizen science initiatives that address local waterway priorities.

The strength of the program is in its design. North Central, Wimmera, Corangamite and North East CMAs are delivering the program together, sharing their knowledge and resources with community leaders and school teachers. Regional workshops are accessed by facilitators to increase their knowledge of, and skills in, waterway health and monitoring techniques.

Schools and groups involved in the program also gain access to learning opportunities, water quality monitoring kits for their group to use, support from a regional coordinator, as well as an online platform for classroom activities, resources and data recording.

In the first school year of the project, over 90 schools have registered across the four CMAs, with a reach of an estimated 4000 students. River Detective students are learning, monitoring, and recording real scientific information about their local waterway helping the CMAs to achieve better outcomes for community engagement and action on priority waterways.

The River Detectives state-wide pilot program is funded to June 2018 through the Victorian Government.



PICTURE 1 Goornong Primary School student tests for phosphorus, with water from the Campaspe River.

PICTURE 2 Elmore Primary School investigates the condition of their local waterway by using waterbugs as indicators of river health.

MALLEE

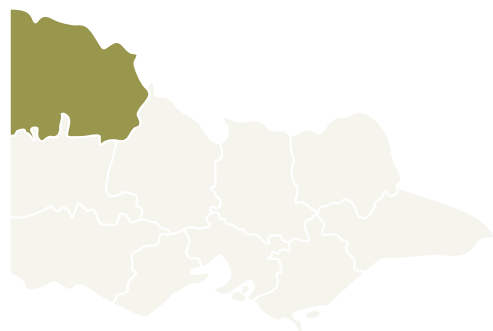
Cultural plants day, Hattah-Kulkyne National Park.



MALLEE CMA

INVESTMENT

\$3.1 million Victorian Government
\$6.3 million Australian Government
\$6.5 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- Over 150,000 ha of environmental works were undertaken in 2016-17 to protect the regions priority natural, cultural and productive landscapes. Effective partnerships with our community groups and land managers (public and private) continue to be integral to the success of these activities.
- Delivery of some activities planned for 2016-17 was deferred however as a result of the 2016 Murray River flood event. Flood waters peaked in November and access to several works sites on the floodplain was restricted for an extended period.
- Community engagement and building stakeholder capacity for natural resource management also continues to be a regional priority, with over 680 events delivered in 2016-17. Evaluation of these activities identified that 64% of surveyed participants rated their overall delivery as 'excellent', and 29% as 'good'. In regards to their primary motivations for attending, 59% cited 'learning about a topic', and a further 18% as 'maintaining/strengthening social connections or professional networks'.
- Release and subsequent implementation of the Mallee Indigenous Participation Plan is providing a comprehensive framework for increasing and enhancing the involvement of local Indigenous communities in the planning and delivery of regional natural resource management activities. This will be complemented by a Reconciliation Action Plan (currently in final draft) which helps formalise existing strategies and builds on already established partnerships between the Mallee CMA, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Community members.
- Mid-term reviews of the Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy and the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan have captured the region's performance and learnings to date in delivering against these key planning documents; while also ensuring that they remain current and continue to effectively inform implementation, evaluation and reporting processes.

OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.3 Pump (no.)	3	4			4
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)	474	104		358	462
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	12	12			12
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	6	5			5
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	3				0
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	636	45	8	604	657
1.9 Fence (km)	151	114	76		190
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	72	71			71
1.11 Road (km)	2	2			2
1.12 Crossing (no.)	1	1			1
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	384	394	310		704
2.2 Weed control (ha)	43,960	9,599	41,757		51,356
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	89,633	14,785	98,687		113,472
2.8 Earth works (no.)	21		11		11
2.9 Rubbish removal (ha)	2	6			6
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	1,046		1,046		1,046
3.3 Water (no.)	45	54			54
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	378	192		43	235
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	298	130	151	49	330
4.3 Assessment (no.)	996	462	495	17	974
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	6,769	4,456	4,348	331	9,135
4.5 Partnership (no.)	158	124	15	10	149
4.6 Plan (no.)	140	73	38	4	115
4.7 Publication (no.)	346	229	82	19	330
4.8 Information management system (no.)	22	12	1	5	18

CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

BirdLife Mildura
Eleven local schools
Parks Victoria

OUTPUT 2016/2017

321 community engagement event participants
14 publications

"I THINK WE SHOULD SAVE THE HATTAH BIRDS."

Student, Underbool Primary School

Working in partnership with BirdLife Mildura, the Mallee CMA developed a primary school education program, focusing on the importance of caring for our environment, using threatened birds of the Mallee as inspiration.

During 2016-17, the Mallee Threatened Bird program was rolled out to eleven schools, involving 320 students, from around the Mallee CMA region, with the engagement of teachers, a critical part of the overall success of the program.

The Mallee CMA hosts the program and BirdLife Mildura, as enthusiastic partners, provide experienced presenters to deliver interactive lessons. The in-school component of the program includes PowerPoint presentations and thirteen lesson plans, whilst the outdoor program is supported by activity booklets and binoculars for each student.

The highlight of the program is an excursion to the Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, where the children have the opportunity to find and identify some of the Mallee's most unique and threatened birds. Incorporated into the excursion is an onsite presentation of the how and why the Murray River functions as it does and an explanation of what water for the environment is and why it is so important to the plants and animals living within the floodplain.

The hands-on, onsite approach to this resonates with the children who get to see the benefits of environmental watering as they explore the park and spot wildlife.

By connecting with children and using interactive learning to not only showcase the Mallee environment but also to share the importance of caring for it, the Mallee CMA is helping to create a greater level of engagement and understanding and through that, we're establishing the next generation of environmental heroes.

The success of the Mallee Threatened Bird program, which has received wide support from the school community - from students and teachers, to parents and grandparents - is being used as the catalyst for the development of new programs and demonstrate the 'Our Catchments, Our Community' principles.

This project is supported by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority, through funding from the Victorian Government.



PICTURE 1 *Getting a closer look at nature.*
PICTURE 2 *Do you see what I see?*

SHARING THE BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTAL WATERING

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program
Victorian Environmental Water Holder

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Victorian Environmental Water Holder
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Parks Victoria

OUTPUT 2016/2017

129 community engagement participants
5 publications

“THE BIRDS ON THE LAKE ARE A REAL SPECTACLE, PARTICULARLY IN THE EARLY MORNING AND EVENING. THROUGH THEIR DISPLAY, THE WATERBIRDS ARE DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF ENVIRONMENTAL WATERING, NOT JUST FOR THE FLORA AND FAUNA BUT FOR THE WIDER COMMUNITY, THAT IS MADE RICHER FOR THEIR PRESENCE.”

Sharyon Peart, Chair, Mallee CMA

The environmental watering at Lake Hawthorn has not only transformed a unique ephemeral lake, it has enriched the lives of the lake community, giving people a new focus for social and educational endeavours.

Lake Hawthorn is a natural floodplain wetland that once filled when the Murray River experienced high flows and served as a drainage basin for irrigation and stormwater run-off. It has previously been noted as having a diverse fish community and during inundation it attracts an extensive array of waterbirds.

Changes in climate, river regulation and improved irrigation practices have meant that the lake, which was once a hub for water-based activities, had dried out, only to be filled in times of localised flooding. Elevated river flows in 2010 and 2011 resulted in the re-establishment of *Ruppia* beds throughout the lake, which suggested the viability of seedbanks within the wetland and revealed the potential to restore it as a shallow wading environment for shorebirds.

Historic records for the Lake Hawthorn area show it once supported an abundance of waterbird species, with expanses of *Lignum* shrub-lands providing roosting, nesting and feeding habitats. The recorded presence of large numbers of migratory waders emphasised the potential to return Lake Hawthorn to an environment for shorebirds.

The Mallee CMA has successfully engaged with local groups to highlight the shared benefits that come when a wetland receives environmental water, focusing on giving the community a sense of ownership over the project.

The Mallee CMA has supported Community Days at the lake, which encouraged people to explore the new environment, as the water attracted new life to its shores. Bird watchers, photographers and artists joined with local families to explore the area and to develop an understanding of the value of an environmental lake.

The Mallee CMA continues to engage with schools, conducting programs designed to give our younger residents an appreciation for our local flora and fauna and the connections we have made with local groups place us in a good position to maintain a unique environment, with on-ground support from the people who call the area home.

Lake Hawthorn is brimming with activity from an influx of birds and aquatic life and a community that has long felt disconnected from the lake, is once again becoming a proactive campaigner for the restoration of the area.

This project is supported by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority, through funding from the Victorian Government.



PICTURE 1 Lake Hawthorn is the perfect place for a family day out. **PICTURE 2** Migratory birds making the most of Lake Hawthorn.



GOULBURN BROKEN CMA

INVESTMENT

\$12.0 million Victorian Government
\$28.5 million Australian Government
\$1.4 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- More than 61,000 hectares of farm irrigation upgrades, generating 71 gigalitres of water savings have been achieved through the Farm Water Program to date. The program increased farm productivity (on average per hectare by 2.3 tonnes of dry-matter, generating 1.8 megalitres/hectare of water savings and \$140 in labour savings) and bolstered irrigator confidence. The program is funded through the Australian and Victorian governments.
- In a Murray Darling Basin first, flow releases in the Goulburn, Campaspe and Murray rivers were timed to coincide, with a follow-up a flow along the Loddon River. Monitoring indicated the flow achieved its aim of encouraging native fish (particularly silver and golden perch) to move between the Goulburn and the other rivers.
- Victorian and NSW natural resource management staff and hundreds of landholders have been involved in protecting more than 5,150 hectares across the catchment, either side of the Murray River, as part of the Creating Biodiverse Carbon Landscapes and Revegetation of Sand Ridge Woodlands projects. Both projects were Australian Government Biodiversity Fund projects.
- A major blackwater event occurred on the Goulburn River near Shepparton in January following heavy rainfall in a number of small tributaries. The Goulburn Broken CMA provided community updates, organised for extra water to be released to help dissipate the blackwater and worked with local anglers and agencies to collect data on the effects on native fish.
- Goulburn Broken CMA led the signing of the regional Algabonyah Employment Accord, which is designed to narrow the workforce participation gap for Aboriginal people.



OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.1 Channel (km)	6	0			0
1.2 Water storage (no.)	8	25			25
1.4 Irrigation structure (ha)	4,455		4,455		4,455
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	65	363			363
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	115	99		28	127
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	20	20			20
1.9 Fence (km)	20	41			41
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	13	12			12
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	216	144	364		508
2.2 Weed control (ha)	6,377	6,778	1,751		8,529
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	10,398	9,710	713		10,423
2.8 Earth works (no.)	1	9			9
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	426	424	649		1,073
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	11,800	130	4,076		4,206
3.3 Water (no.)	25	20			20
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	4,455	952			952
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	33	66	20		86
4.3 Assessment (no.)	1,855	1,205	37	1	1,243
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	6,547	25,173	2,959	44	28,176
4.5 Partnership (no.)	197	235	98		333
4.6 Plan (no.)	110	115	3		118
4.7 Publication (no.)	194	269	11	2	282
4.8 Information management system (no.)	2	2			2

BARMAH: KEEPING ONE OF VICTORIA'S RAMSAR-LISTED WETLANDS HEALTHY

INVESTORS

Australian Government's National Landcare Program
Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Woka Walla (Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation work crews)
Green Acres Land Management
Water Tech P/L
Biosis
Arthur Rylah Institute
Ecology Australia
Sporting Shooters Association
Parks Victoria
Benalla Rural City
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

OUTPUT 2016/2017

1,507 hectares treated for weeds
41 volunteers participating in activities



“USING ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS HAS HELPED WITH MITIGATING THE IMPACTS OF A BLACKWATER EVENT IN THE RIVER AND BARMAH FOREST THAT HAD DEVELOPED FROM THE SUBSTANTIALLY LARGER NATURAL FLOOD. ”

Murray Chapman, Chair, Goulburn Broken CMA

The Barmah-Millewa Forest is the largest river red gum wetland in the world and is listed under the Ramsar Convention. The forest provides important habitat for more than 200 species of birds, is a popular tourism site and has great cultural significance to the Yorta Yorta people. Two of the biggest threats to the forest are pest animals and the effect of Murray River regulation on the wetlands.

Fortunately we have been able to make significant in-roads on both these fronts.

Thanks to funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, we have had some terrific results in reducing fox numbers. This has involved establishing fake turtle nests, seeded with quail eggs, at four wetlands in the forest. The sites are monitored weekly for signs of predation. This information is then used to strategically place fox baits.

Bait-take by foxes has reduced to 274, down from 390 in 2015-16, 477 for 2014-15 and 662 in 2013-14 (in 100ha of high priority habitat). This annual reduction in fox numbers has benefited populations of endangered broad shell turtles as well as other native fauna including dunnarts and antechinus.

Parks Victoria staff and Yorta Yorta's Woka Wolla work crews have been heavily involved in this work on Country. The crews also carried out spot-light monitoring, pig-trapping, fencing, revegetation and pest plant controls.

These activities are complemented by environmental flows, delivered via a number of Australian and Victorian water initiatives, which mainly target the forest's threatened aquatic herbland and floodplain grassy wetland communities (particularly Moira Grass plains) and waterbird breeding sites.

2016-17 was a particularly good bird breeding year. This was due to environmental water being used to extend and build on the inundation of the forest's floodplains after natural flooding.

The wetlands had not received such a good drink since 2013-14 and a bird breeding bonanza soon followed: Eastern Great Egrets (the only know location in Victoria), Nankeen Night Herons, Little Pied Cormorants, Little Black Cormorants, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbills, Pacific Heron, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Black Swans, Swamphens, Forest Kingfishers and Australasian Bitterns were just some of the species recorded in the wake of the wetland flooding.



PICTURE 1 *Rufous Night-Heron Barmah.*
PICTURE 2 *Woka Walla work crew.*



BOGIES & BEYOND: LEADING THE WAY ON CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program (Our Catchments Our Communities initiative)

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Landholders
CSIRO
Resilience Australia
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Parks Victoria
Goulburn Murry Water
Strathbogie Shire Council
Taungurung Clans
Upper Goulburn Landcare Network
Strathbogie Conservation Management Network
Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative
Gecko CLaN
Euroa Arboretum

OUTPUT 2016/2017

4 workshops with 25 participants

"PLANNING WITHIN AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE IS COMPLEX AS THERE ARE MULTIPLE, INTERCONNECTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE, NATURE AND THE EFFECTS OF A RANGE OF POSSIBLE CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIOS. RESILIENCE THEORY CAN HELP US PLAN FOR CHANGE IN A FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE WAY AND DRIVES GOULBURN BROKEN CMA PLANNING PROCESSES. "

Chris Norman, CEO, Goulburn Broken CMA

Citizen science activities that protect, improve and monitor groundwater and the health of large paddock trees under a range of climate change scenarios are just two of the actions the Strathbogie community has identified as priorities through the first year of the Bogies and Beyond project.

The Bogies and Beyond project is funded through the Our Catchments Our Communities initiative and is trialling development of local natural resource management plans for the area between Euroa and Mansfield using the key concepts of resilience thinking and adaptation pathways.

To kick off development of a local plan for the Euroa side of the Strathbogie Ranges, an Expression of Interest call was advertised widely across the community. This led to 25 residents putting up their hands to get involved in a series of workshops to discuss what they value about the Strathbogie Ranges and what supports those values. This resulted in the identification of five "critical attributes": productive land; water quality and flows; native vegetation extent and quality; landscape diversity; and belonging.

The group then went on to discuss what is known about these attributes, how different climate change scenarios may affect them, and the tipping points at which the systems are likely to transform (positively or negatively). Finally, a set of priority actions for each of these critical attributes, that include on-ground works or monitoring to determine benchmarks and trends, were identified.

The workshop group is very keen to take local action on climate change, has great ownership of the local plan and is extremely enthusiastic about staying involved in planning and delivering these activities. This not only increases the likelihood of these actions being implemented on time and on budget, it will deliver true landscape-scale change, provide a process that can inform the next iteration of the Regional Catchment Strategy, and help continue to leverage investment and resourcing well beyond the life of this project.

Meanwhile, a development of a second local natural resource management plan, based on the same principles, is now under way for Mansfield and district.



PICTURE 1 The Strathbogie Ranges community values the area's landscape diversity.

PICTURE 2 The Bogies and Beyond Working Group at Mt. Wombat, Strathbogie.





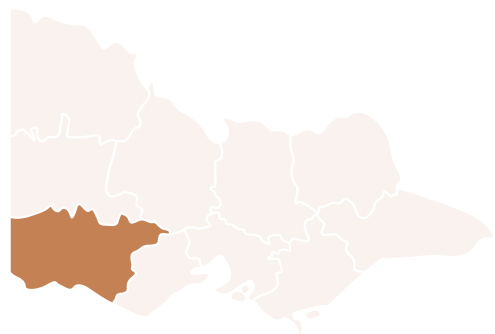
GLENELG HOPKINS

Lake Monibeong, Discovery Bay Coastal Park.

GLENELG HOPKINS CMA

INVESTMENT

\$6.7 million Victorian Government
\$2.4 million Australian Government
\$0.4 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- The Drought Employment Program funded through the Victorian Government assisted 12 participants to receive training in 2016-17. The two crews achieved 78 km of fence installation and maintenance (mostly involving the reinstatement of fences following the flood events of last spring), 70 ha of indigenous revegetation and 141 ha of weed removal. Beneficiaries of the crew's work included 61 farmers, 6 local governments, 15 community groups as well as Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning.
- The development of the Regional Floodplain Management Strategy was substantially progressed in 2016-17. The CMA conducted 10 community drop-in sessions, nine Council/SES workshops and four Indigenous engagements. Information gathered is used to inform floodplain management investment priorities and develop regional workplans over the 10-years of the strategy.
- The Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were critical to the Glenelg Hopkins region in 2016 with western Victoria experiencing some of its worst floods in 40 years. In response, the CMA undertook aerial surveys of over 260 flood damage sites for damage extent and eligibility for funding.
- In 2016-17 the Merri River Restoration Project continued with willow removal works across four sites in Warrnambool, with 1,200 metres of riverbank cleared ready for planting in Spring 2017. The Merri River Restoration Project focuses on the revitalisation of the urban waterway. Waterway health and environmental values were improved working in partnership with Warrnambool City Council, community groups, local landholders and departmental representatives.



OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.2 Water storage (no.)	10	45	24		69
1.3 Pump (no.)	4	6			6
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	1		1		1
1.6 Terrestrial structure (no.)	3	1			1
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	52	37			37
1.9 Fence (km)	79	230	43		273
1.12 Crossing (no.)	2	11			11
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	314	562	289		851
2.2 Weed control (ha)	1,887	3,470	2,062		5,532
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	225	479	625		1,104
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	0		1		1
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	1,064	512	1,209		1,721
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	5,000		7,666		7,666
3.3 Water (no.)	11	12			12
3.4 Fire (no.)	0		10		10
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	348	328			328
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	91	136	43		179
4.3 Assessment (no.)	298	194	26		220
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	2,170	2,271	3,722		5,993
4.5 Partnership (no.)	49	52	1		53
4.6 Plan (no.)	16	20	1		21
4.7 Publication (no.)	121	185	20		205
4.8 Information management system (no.)	8	7			7

GLENELG RIVER ABORIGINAL WATER VALUES

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

Barengi Gadjin Land Council

OUTPUT 2016/2017

- 1 water regime delivered
- 3 assessments
- 249 engagement event participants
- 1 publication

“THE GLENELG RIVER TOWARDS CULTURAL FLOWS PROJECT BETWEEN TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND THE GLENELG HOPKINS CMA HAS BEEN GREAT. IN FACT, ALTHOUGH THERE IS MORE WORK TO BE DONE, IT HAS BEEN A STARTING POINT FOR GIVING TRADITIONAL OWNERS A VOICE IN WATER MANAGEMENT ON GUNDITJMARA COUNTRY.”

Denis Rose, Gunditjmara Traditional Owner

In a first for Victoria, an environmental flow release into the Glenelg River supported environmental outcomes as well as Aboriginal cultural values. Supporting Aboriginal values is a key element of Victoria's 'Water for Victoria' plan.

The water released from Rocklands Reservoir between 21st February and 1st March 2017 improved river health and reduced salinity, at the same time helping to sustain the health of Country for Traditional Owners who have a continuing connection to the Glenelg River system.

Aboriginal water values for the Glenelg River are being identified as part of a two-year partnership project involving Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Glenelg Hopkins CMA. Adjusting planned environmental water releases to better protect Aboriginal values at culturally significant locations, such as Harrow, is an important outcome of the project. Some of the Aboriginal values at Harrow supported by environmental water releases include cultural heritage sites, particularly scarred trees, and native plants which are sources of traditional foods and medicines.

Some of the environmental benefits of the water release were monitored by the Arthur Rylah Institute who fitted estuary perch and tui with electronic tags to track their migration up the Glenelg River. In another first for the region, time-lapse cameras were used to record the extent of flow and environmental response.

The timing of the environmental flow coincided with the March long-weekend. The release freshened water quality for native plants and animals and improved useability and amenity for river users. This included people who attended the Johnny Mullagh Cricket Competition, an annual event held in Harrow that recognises the first all-Aboriginal cricket team which toured internationally.

The 'Towards Cultural Flows' project and this environmental water release is the beginning of what will be an exciting time for Traditional Owner participation in water management across the western region of the state.



PICTURE 1 Tyson Lovett-Murray (Gunditj Mirring) showing Aunty Helen Sultan and Aunty Heather Marks (BGLC), Steve Atkinson (MLDRIN) and Jason Walker (Gunditj Mirring) drone footage of the Glenelg River. Jane Walker, Glenelg Hopkins CMA. **PICTURE 2** Leroy Malseed (Gunditjmara Traditional Owner) and Aaron Morgan (Budj Bim Ranger) registering a scarred tree at Harrow as part of the Towards Cultural Flows project. Jane Walker, Glenelg Hopkins CMA.

SOUTH WEST BIOLINKS: RECONNECTING THE LANDSCAPE

INVESTORS

Australian Government

DELIVERY PARTNERS

New Forests
PF Olsen
Timberlands
Pallisters Reserve Committee
Greening Australia
Conservation Volunteers Australia
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
Landholders

OUTPUT 2016/2017

543 hectares of vegetation established
759 hectares of remnant vegetation protected
1,031 hectares of weed management
14 assessments
334 engagement event participants

“THIS PROJECT HAS RESULTED IN SIGNIFICANT, COST-EFFECTIVE BIODIVERSITY GAINS THROUGH THE CREATION AND PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE CORRIDORS FOR A SUITE OF THREATENED SPECIES. THE SCALE OF OUTPUTS ACHIEVED ARE SIGNIFICANT AND HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE THROUGH STRONG PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS.” Antony Ford, Chair, Glenelg Hopkins CMA

South West Victoria is one of only 15 nationally-recognised ‘Biodiversity Hotspots’ and is within Zone 1 of the Habitat 141 corridor. While there are large sections of high conservation value native vegetation secured through numerous parks and reserves, the vegetation is often fragmented or in poor quality, especially across private land. This fragmentation is a key risk for many dispersal dependent threatened species. In addition, pine wildings are a significant weed in the landscape that are a key threatening process to species such as the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

The approach to combat fragmentation required a long-term landscape approach, working predominantly on private land. Activities to address this threat included large scale revegetation, weed control to improve the quality of existing remnant patches and identification and protection of existing remnants from threats such as stock grazing. To prioritise sites for intervention, modelling was required to determine where the best gains could be made to revegetation and remnant protection.

This modelling was undertaken by Greening Australia based on work to prioritise the Habitat 141 landscape. Plantation companies own and manage a significant proportion of the private land in the target area and were a key focus for this project. Monitoring of key threatened species was another important component to help prioritise sites and to also gather data to determine the response of these species to interventions.

A number of rare and threatened species were identified in or adjacent to areas treated. These species included Heath Mouse, Swamp Antechinus, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Long Nosed Potoroo, Brolgas, Yellow-bellied Glider (suspected feed trees) and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos.

A total of 543 ha of revegetation was undertaken aiding future movement of fauna between currently fragmented landscapes. A total of 1031 ha of weed control and 759 ha of remnant vegetation protected or enhanced led to high levels of transformation in native forest which has now halted threatening processes such as weed contamination and stock grazing.



PICTURE 1 Remnant Lowland Forest that was targeted as part of the South West Biolinks project. Image provided by the Australian Government.

PICTURE 2 Glenelg Hopkins CMA staff members Jarred Obst and Adam Bester inspecting remnant Lowland Forest of the Cobboboonee National Park. Image provided by the Australian Government.



Australian Government



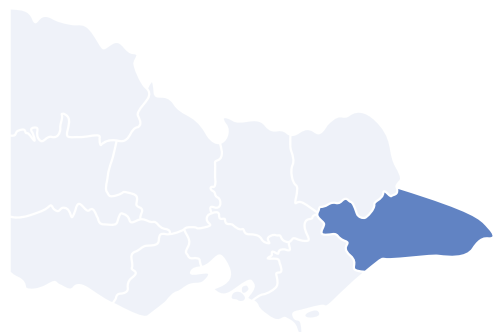
EAST GIPPSLAND

Rigby Island, Gippsland Lakes.

EAST GIPPSLAND CMA

INVESTMENT

\$9.1 million Victorian Government
\$2.5 million Australian Government
\$1.1 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- A mid-term review of the East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy was completed in December 2016.
- There are currently 22 community projects delivering environmental and social benefits across East Gippsland. These projects are funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, Water for Victoria Program or Victorian Landcare Grants.
- The Authority engaged with more than 6,000 people during 2016/17. Engagement events included meetings, field days, community events, training days, round table discussion and one on one discussions.
- The Authority has completed cultural awareness training with Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation and continues to strengthen relations and build capacity across both organisations.
- The Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee continues to oversee \$12.5 million of funding to improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes and its catchment. There are currently 27 projects totalling \$3.62 million being implemented across the lakes by Traditional Owners, land and waterway managers, regional NRM organisations and community groups. All these projects directly target the management priorities of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Management Plan and the Gippsland Lakes Priorities Plan.

OUTPUT

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.2 Water storage (no.)	4	3			3
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	0	1			1
1.7 Terrestrial feature (no.)	0	10			10
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	4	3			3
1.9 Fence (km)	17	17	7		24
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	2	1	1		2
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	144	152	134		286
2.2 Weed control (ha)	1,722	1,391	2,095		3,486
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	290,508		293,724		293,724
2.8 Earth works (no.)	1	1			1
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	6	16			16
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	16,000		31,115		31,115
3.4 Fire (no.)	1		1		1
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	342	279			279
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	9	7	1		8
4.3 Assessment (no.)	337	367	72		439
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	1,823	1,237	1,859		3,096
4.5 Partnership (no.)	99	156	2		158
4.6 Plan (no.)	11	12	13		25
4.7 Publication (no.)	29	220	6		226
4.8 Information management system (no.)	1	2			2



INTEGRATING ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE AND MANAGEMENT AROUND THE GIPPSLAND LAKES

INVESTORS

Victorian Government

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Lower Tambo Landcare Group, Tambo Bluff Landcare Coastcare Group, Romawi Landcare Group, Eastwood Landcare Group, Paynesville Landcare Group, Lake Tyers Coastcare Group Nungurner Landcare Group, East Gippsland Landcare Network Inc., Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group, Parks Victoria, Wellington Shire Council, East Gippsland Shire Council East Gippsland Water, Gippsland Plains Conservation Management Network, East Gippsland Rainforest Conservation Management Network, Eagle Point Primary School, Clive Disher Scout Group, Scouting Victoria- Clive Disher Scout Camp- Perry River, The Abbey Anglican Diocese – A'beckett Park, Lakes Entrance Landcare Group

OUTPUT 2016/2017

150 hectares of native revegetation
40,500 seedlings planted
80 hectares of woody weed control
20 hectares of non woody weed control
5 publications
3 engagement events
20 partnerships

“THE GLAWAC TEAMS HAVE BEEN PUNCTUAL, PROFESSIONAL, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND DILIGENT ON ALL THEIR WORKS ALONG THE TAMBO RIVER, IT ENABLES THE LANDCARE GROUP TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS AND KEEP OUR PART OF THE GIPPSLAND LAKES HEALTHY.”

Rob Irvine, President, Lower Tambo Landcare Group

The spirit of the “Gippsland Lakes Three People Project” is cooperation and coordination between agencies and communities surrounding the Gippsland Lakes. Traditional owners, management agencies and community groups have joined forces to share knowledge and skills for the benefit of an internationally significant Ramsar site.

This project has supported the engagement of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) to employ three members of the On Country Team, who over a twelve month period have worked with both Government agency and community to complete a multitude of works, far in excess of original planning.

“The Three People Project is fantastic as it focuses on the Lakes’ health and has GLaWAC NRM crews, agencies and community groups working together to preserve this jewel in East Gippsland’s Crown” said Andy Booth NRM Business Development Coordinator.

Examples of works completed include;

- Promoting awareness of Aboriginal culture within the community through engagement activities including traditional fishing methods, welcoming the birds and opening ceremonies.
- Pest plant control in wetlands, nature reserves and community amenities. Species controlled including Chilean Needlegrass, African Lovegrass, Boneseed, Blackberry, Hawthorn and Boxthorn.
- Revegetation within riparian zones of the Gippsland Lakes, including tubestock native seedlings and transplanted Phragmites.
- Assisting community groups with the development and maintenance of local amenities including walking tracks, fishing spot maintenance, rubbish clean up, fence removal, maintenance around plantings, ecological burns and cultural site management.

This project is supported by the East Gippsland CMA through funding from the Victorian Government for the Gippsland Lakes.

The project has enabled active sharing of knowledge, both cultural and environmental, upskilling all involved, it is a great outcome for the Gippsland Lakes” said Dr Peter Veenker, Chair of the East Gippsland CMA.

PICTURE 1 Bronson Ritchie: Tree planting at Eagle Point Bluff for East Gippsland GCMA. Photo: EGCMA

PICTURE 2 Mick Farnham and Bradley Hood: Revegetation for Parks Vic at Point Fullerton. Photo: Craig Moodie



TOPSOILS – IMPROVING SOIL CONDITION FOR PROFITABILITY

INVESTORS

Australian Government's National Landcare Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
East Gippsland Landcare Network Inc.
Far East Victoria Landcare Inc.
Snowy River Interstate Landcare Committee
Greening Australia
Southern Farming Systems

OUTPUT 2016/2017

31,115 hectares of agricultural practice change
24 engagement events
234 engagement event participants
17 publications produced

“TOPSOILS HAS SHOWN ME HOW TO TAKE A SOIL SAMPLE, UNDERSTAND THE RESULTS AND THEN APPLY A TAILORED FERTILISER BLEND TO MY PADDOCKS, THIS YEAR I TRIPLED THE NUMBER OF BALES (OF HAY) PRODUCED.” Glenn Lineham, TopSoils participant

Through five farmer driven focus groups and three demonstration sites, the TopSoils program aims to improve soil condition for farm profitability. The project is now in its fourth year with activities based upon the consolidated soil data gathered in years one and two of the project.

The TopSoils project is a joint initiative between the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, East Gippsland Landcare Network Inc., Far East Victoria Landcare Inc., Snowy River Interstate Landcare Committee, Greening Australia and Southern Farming Systems.

Together project partners aim to have 10,000 hectares of agricultural land managed under improved practices by 2018, to achieve the on ground adoption this year project partners have implemented multiple activities including;

1. Formation of farmer driven focus groups that have facilitated support with individuals assisted with training, on farm trials, technical advice, farm visits and access to demonstration sites in exchange for demonstrating adoption of learning.
2. Development of a demonstration site to investigate the impacts of multiple top applications on a paddock which has limiting productivity and ground cover characteristics.
- Development of a demonstration site to

investigate management and control of Paramatta Grass (*Sporobolus africanus*) through different treatment options including fertiliser input, grazing and chemical control.

3. Development of a demonstration site to investigate native pasture grass management to enable the ability to cope with adverse climate conditions and the potential to respond to summer rain events.

“It is great to have a program that supports farmers to improve their soil condition, as this not only assists the individual but also the greater catchment, through improved land management practices” said East Gippsland CMA Chair Dr Peter Veenker. The next 12 months of the project will see a consolidation of the learnings from the demonstrations trials, as well as individual farmers evaluating their trialled practice change with the aim of adoption across the entire enterprise where viable.

The project is supported by the East Gippsland CMA through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



PICTURE 1 Visual Soil Assessment and soil profile investigation workshop. Photo: East Gippsland Landcare Network Inc. **PICTURE 2** Investigating the results of a green manure trial. Photo: EGCMA



CORANGAMITE

Wyn-murrup Yangarramela: Fire spirit comes back.

CORANGAMITE CMA

INVESTMENT

\$7.3 million Victorian Government
\$2.6 million Australian Government
\$0.6 million other investment



KEY EVENTS & INSIGHTS

- The Our Catchments Our Communities program has engaged land owners, community members, local government, industry groups and agency stakeholders to deliver three integrated catchment projects, and has supported an innovative adaptive pathways approach to planning for climate change impacts on the Western District Lakes.
- Wiyn-murrup yangarramela (fire spirit comes back) - In partnership with Golden Plains Shire, Corangamite CMA, DELWP, Parks Victoria and the Aboriginal community, the Wadawarrung Traditional Owners completed a traditional burn of Bakers Lane Reserve in Teesdale.
- The waterway restoration program supported 37 landholders to protect 108 km of river frontage through active management.
- A Victorian Volcanic Plains seed production area at the Geelong Botanic Gardens was launched.
- Annual participation of landholders in the land health program has increased by over 400% on 2010-13 average participation rates.
- The Corangamite Floodplain Portal was launched. Developed in partnership with Federation University Ballarat Campus, the portal provides the community with easy access to the latest flood data and preliminary floodplain advice.
- The upgrade of the Cundare Barrage Fishway now allows thousands of native fish to leave the hypersaline waters of Lake Corangamite to obtain refuge in Cundare Pool and the Woody Yaloak River.
- Corangamite CMA's Waterwatch and EstuaryWatch programs have supported over 150 volunteer citizen scientists to conduct regular water quality testing to inform estuarine/catchment management.



OUTPUT	TARGET	ACTUAL			
		STATE	C'WLTH	OTHER	TOTAL
1. STRUCTURAL WORKS					
1.1 Channel (km)	73	69			69
1.2 Water storage (no.)	12	6			6
1.3 Pump (no.)	12				0
1.5 Waterway structure (no.)	7	11			11
1.8 Monitoring structure (no.)	39	52			52
1.9 Fence (km)	86	79	8		87
1.10 Visitor facility (no.)	57	60			60
1.11 Road (km)	23	23			23
1.12 Crossing (no.)	6	6			6
2. ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS					
2.1 Vegetation (ha)	2,454	176	3,285		3,461
2.2 Weed control (ha)	1,340	655	2,478		3,133
2.3 Pest animal control (initial + repeat ha)	1,692	108	1,668		1,776
2.5 Threatened species response (no.)	14	1	7		8
2.8 Earth works (no.)	1	1			1
3. MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
3.1 Grazing (ha)	1,555	141	1,601		1,742
3.2 Agricultural practices (ha)	32,500		57,301		57,301
3.3 Water (no.)	20	16			16
3.4 Fire (no.)	3		91		91
4. PLANNING AND REGULATION					
4.1 Approval and advice (no.)	1,364	1,041			1,041
4.2 Management agreement (no.)	90	52	52		104
4.3 Assessment (no.)	375	373	22		395
4.4 Engagement event (no. participants)	7,414	6,363	5,994		12,357
4.5 Partnership (no.)	564	371	18		389
4.6 Plan (no.)	94	11			11
4.7 Publication (no.)	294	37	15		52
4.8 Information management system (no.)	24	8	13		21

REEDY LAKE DRYING REGIME

INVESTORS

Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

Victorian Environmental Water Holder

Parks Victoria

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources

Geelong Field and Game

Geelong Field Naturalists Group

Geelong Environment Council

Environment Victoria

Gun and Rod Geelong

Adjoining landholders

Commercial eel operators

Southern Rural Water

Barwon Water

VR Fish

RMIT University

OUTPUT 2016/2017

3 events with 60 participants in 2016/17

40 events with 800 participants in the past 7 years

1,000 hectares of practice change

15 partnerships with various interest and user groups and government authorities



“IMPLEMENTING AN ECOLOGICAL DRYING REGIME AT REEDY LAKE AFTER SEVEN YEARS OF RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, CONSIDERING THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT IN IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF THIS INTERNATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RAMSAR LISTED WETLAND.”

Alice Knight, Chair, Corangamite CMA

Reedy Lake is a large 1000 hectare ephemeral wetland located on the door-step of Geelong. The Corangamite CMA has been working in partnership with government stakeholders and community groups for the past 7 years to develop a plan to restore the lake's ecological health. In 2016-17 a trial summer drying regime was successfully implemented.

Reedy Lake, which forms part of the Port Phillip Bay Western Shoreline and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site is renowned for its abundance and diversity of flora and fauna, including Brolga, Growling Grass Frog, and Coastal Saltmarsh communities. The wetlands flora and fauna values have been in decline for many years due to the maintenance of full water levels year-round.

The Corangamite CMA has been working in partnership with government stakeholders and community groups for the past 7 years to restore the ecological health of Reedy Lake by altering an existing water management regime that has negatively impacted the wetlands health. This has involved a number of scientific investigations, conducted in partnership with the community to determine the ecological benefits and risks of changing the environmental watering management regime.

Based on the findings of these investigations, the Corangamite CMA implemented a trial summer drying regime in 2016-17 with the support of government and key community stakeholders

such as Geelong Field and Game and the Geelong Field Naturalists Group. The summer drying regime was the first time the wetland had been naturally dried in over 10 years and was a huge environmental success.

In conjunction with the trial drying, the Corangamite CMA has commenced monitoring to evaluate the influence of the trial new water management regime on flora, fauna and surface/groundwater quality. The results of the project demonstrate significant environmental value from the drying through improved wadder habitat for migratory shorebirds and restored habitat for Coastal Saltmarsh. The monitoring also identified that the drying regime did not generate acid sulphate soils, a suspected risk factor. Local citizen scientists assisted with monitoring of the site through the Estuary Watch program, and will continue to do so over the coming summer.

It has taken many years of planning and research, and liaison with government, environmental and commercial stakeholders to put in place this new water regime. This milestone represents a significant environmental achievement in improving the health of this internationally significant Ramsar listed wetland.

PICTURE 1 Black-winged stilt at Reedy Lake, Corangamite CMA. **PICTURE 2** EstuaryWatchers monitoring water quality at Reedy Lake, Corangamite CMA.



CORANGAMITE COASTAL COUNTRY PROGRAM

INVESTORS

Australian Government's National Landcare Program
Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Program

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Australian Government
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Surfing Victoria
Trust for Nature
Private and public land managers including Parks Victoria
Community-based organisations

OUTPUT 2016/2017

16 events
591 engagement event participants
156 hectares of weed management
88 hectares of revegetation works
15 partnerships
1,135 hectares of land under Management Practice Change



“HARNESSING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY’S AND LANDHOLDER’S LOVE FOR THEIR COASTAL ENVIRONMENT HAS BEEN CRITICAL IN THE SUCCESS OF THE COASTAL COUNTRY PROGRAM’S ABILITY TO DELIVER ON GROUND NRM OUTCOMES ”

Graham Phelps, CEO, Corangamite CMA

The Coastal Country Program has been established to achieve on-ground management outcomes for high-priority coastal assets, while engaging the community and building their capacity to carry out restoration activities. The project uses both a community small grants program and a market based instrument (MBI) known as CoastalTender to select high value major project proposals .

The Coastal Country Program has used incentives coupled with engagement and capacity building activities to deliver on ground conservation outcomes for coastal biodiversity as well as the increased protection and enhancement of the Port Phillip Bay (western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site.

The project has delivered high priority on-ground activities in coastal hotspot areas and promoted community engagement and participation in coastal natural resources management. The project has achieved this through different scales of grants and related knowledge exchange and community capacity building activities.

The Coastal Small Grants program has supported community groups with grants up to the value of \$20,000 to deliver on ground works and engage with the wider community. Surfers Appreciating the Natural Environment

are one of the successful applicants, and have been involved in an ongoing cliff top revegetation project at the famous Bells Beach Recreational Surfing Reserve. The project has infilled areas where the natural re-colonisation process has stalled due to a past dhistory of informal walking tracks.

Coastal Tender has targeted larger scale projects through a competitive single bid auction. In total 1087ha of coastal vegetation has been protected through the latest third round of the tender program. Bob Swinburn, a farmer on the shoreline of the Ramsar listed Lake Connewarre, has created an oasis for plants and animals and a refuge for migratory birds.

In addition to the incentive programs, community engagement and partnership building activities have also been a feature of the Coastal County Program. A series of learning forums have been held highlighting the latest in coastal research and monitoring techniques.

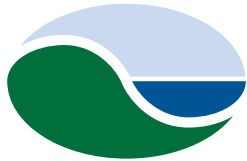
A new partnership with Surfing Victoria is supporting the surfing community to build a stronger connection their coastal environment, including involvement at the Woorangalook Koori State Surfing Titles, and sponsorship of the junior categories at the Australian Indigenous Surfing Titles.



PICTURE 1 Restored coastal wetland on the banks of Lake Connewarre. Photo: Corangamite CMA.

PICTURE 2 Coastal revegetation at the Woorangalook Victorian Koori Surf Titles. Photo: Corangamite CMA.

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