



Our Catchments Our Communities

*Integrated Catchment
Management in Victoria
2016-19*

Acknowledgement of Victoria's Aboriginal communities

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture, and pays its 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 broader catchment management.

We support the need for genuine and lasting partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities to understand culture and connections to Country in the way we plan for and manage our catchments.

We have distinct legislative obligations to Traditional Owner groups that are paramount in our responsibilities in managing Victoria's resources.

Catchment Management Authorities



EAST GIPPSLAND
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY



Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

Customer Service Centre
T. 136 186



Victorian Catchment Management Council



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Minister's foreword



Catchment management has a long and successful history in Victoria. The framework for integrated catchment management is community based, regionally focused, collaborative and very active on the ground.

The *Our Catchments, Our Communities* strategy builds on this history and confirms the Victorian Government's commitment to integrated catchment management. It not only responds to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office audit recommendations for Catchment Management Authorities, it outlines improvements that will support and enhance our environment, our community and economy. It complements Victoria's new directions for water, biodiversity and climate change.

The strategy commits to the continuation of the community's important role and puts it at the centre of how we plan and deliver catchment management in Victoria. It strengthens how catchment partners work together to achieve healthy catchments and waterways.

Our Catchments, Our Communities reinforces the role of Regional Catchment Strategies across Victoria and supports monitoring and reporting arrangements to better track progress and guide our future decision making. Together we can better deliver far-sighted, integrated, and practical improvements to Victoria's natural resources.

The key actions in the strategy will support the development of the next *Victorian Catchment Condition and Management Report*, the next *Victorian State of the Environment Report*, and the next round of *Regional Catchment Strategies* that will continue to identify what is important to Victorian communities.

I would like to thank our catchment management partners and the community representatives who contributed to the development of this strategy. Together we can ensure Victoria's catchments are ready for future environmental and economic challenges and opportunities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Neville', written over a horizontal line.

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Environment,
Climate Change and Water

Victoria's environment is one of our greatest assets. It underpins our economy and provides social and recreational values that benefit our communities. Maintaining the health of our catchments is essential to sustain our environment and our liveability into the future.



*Photograph -
Mountain ash forest
Port Phillip and
Westernport CMA*

Introduction

People have long recognised that Victoria is a great place to live, work and visit. Its land and water support a significant economy, a rich and biodiverse environment and a long history of spiritual, cultural and recreational interests.

Victoria comprises 240,000 square kilometres of landscapes that include world-recognised wetlands, estuaries and waterways and significant biodiversity. It has the city of Melbourne, as well as significant regional economies. The northern half of the state is a major part of the Murray-Darling Basin, featuring important natural values and significant agricultural production. Victoria's southern edge has more than 2,000 kilometres of coastline with sandy beaches, rocky shores and outstanding marine environments including mangroves, salt marshes, kelp forests and seagrass meadows.

There are 7.9 million hectares of Crown land covering 35 per cent of the state, and our parks system is a mainstay of how we collectively value our country. The management and use of Victoria's natural resources and catchments has always required a good understanding of how we interact with our land and water.

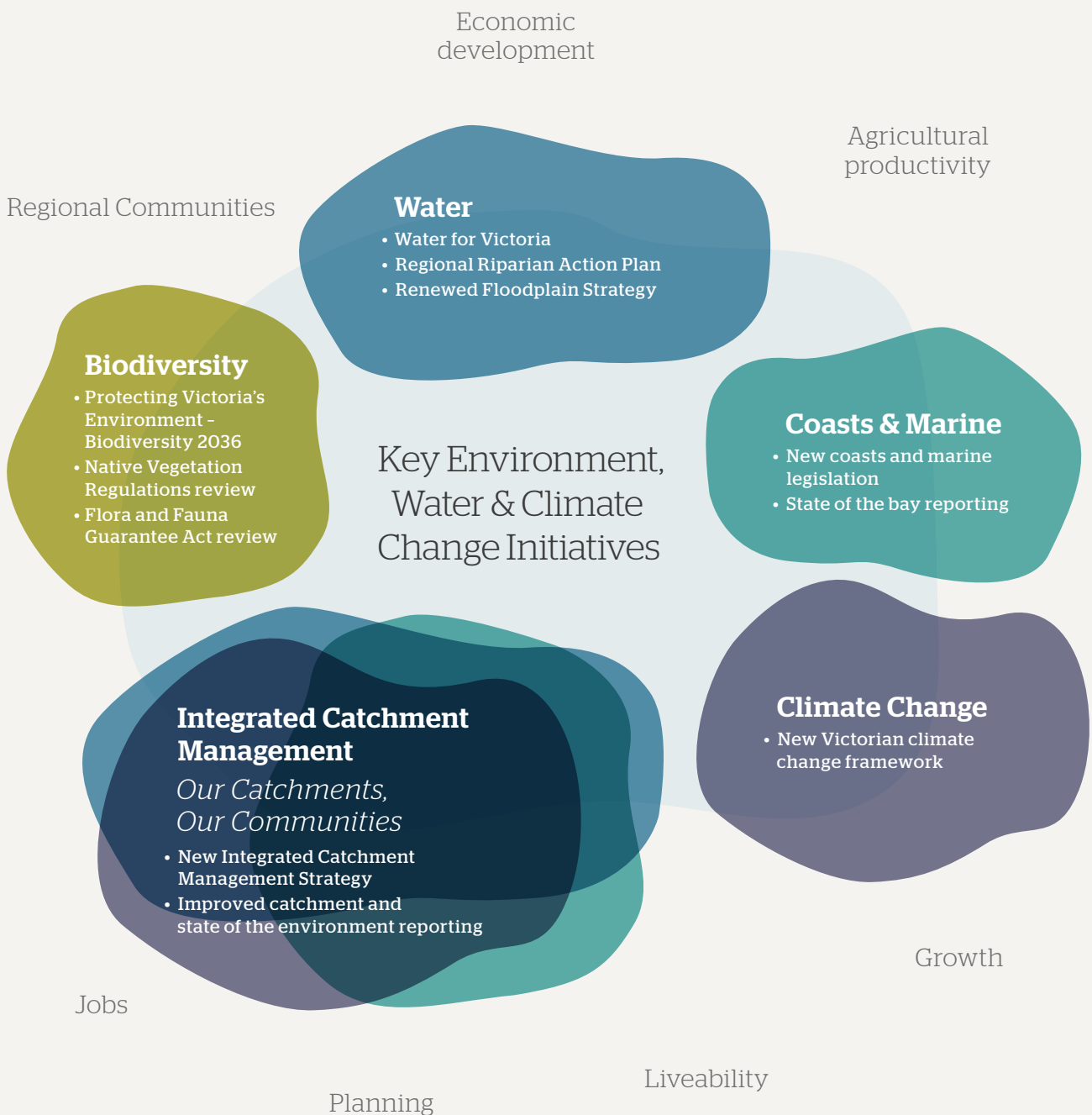
The health and sustainability of our land and water underpin our environment and economy. Recently, catchment management practices have shifted towards improving the integration and connection of economic and ecological systems, and using catchments as one of the logical ways to plan and manage the landscape in an integrated way. This approach recognises that land, water and biodiversity are all part of connected systems, from the top of the catchment, down through receiving waters and landscapes, to the coast and marine environments. It emphasises the value of joined-up planning and management.

Our Catchments, Our Communities is the first state-level strategy for integrated catchment management in Victoria that focuses on how catchment management partners can work together more effectively. It provides the framework for other policy documents to set the goals and priorities for elements such as land, water, biodiversity and climate change.



8 New policy settings for Victoria

Our Catchments, Our Communities is part of a range of initiatives to enhance and protect our environment.



Catchment communities and partners

People are integral to the effective management of our catchments. Many individuals, groups and organisations have important roles and, when they work well together, can improve the health and productivity of our varied landscapes.

In managing their own land, many thousands of individuals and land owners across Victoria make significant contributions to protecting and improving the health of natural assets, ecosystems and important places. In addition, there is a significant contribution made by volunteers and organised community groups such as Landcare, conservation management networks, friends groups, committees of management, and others.

For tens of thousands of years, there has been a strong and continuing connection that Aboriginal people have with the land through fishing, hunting and gathering, and eel farming in Victoria. Traditional Owners have important cultural obligations to manage traditional lands and waterways. Increasingly, their knowledge, experience and practices are being incorporated into planning and managing for our sustainable future.

Primary producers and industry groups, non-government organisations, resource managers and the tourism and recreation sector make significant contributions. Their knowledge supports healthy catchments and sustainable, productive land and water resources for agriculture, fishing, forestry, tourism and the protection of special interests.

Governments at all levels across a range of agencies (including statewide statutory bodies such as Parks Victoria and Trust for Nature) implement important policies and

programs for our catchments and their resources. They are often significant land owners or resource managers, and provide investment to deliver and support on-ground action. Community and agency members of advisory bodies provide valuable advice and direction, and monitor our achievements in catchment management. Partnerships between government and local communities are vital to achieve efficient and effective land, water and biodiversity outcomes.

Universities and other institutions such as the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Arthur Rylah Institute undertake research and produce information and tools to improve our understanding of natural systems and support decisions. They provide evidence for how we are tracking towards our goals, and support adaptive management approaches so we can continue to improve.

The roles of key catchment management partners are described in greater detail in Appendix 1.

The breadth of people and organisations involved in catchment management means a collaborative approach to managing the landscape is vital. By integrating our work, we can help to sustain Victoria's environment, underpin our economy and provide a range of social and recreational benefits for our local communities.

Strengths of our framework

Victoria's well-established approach to integrated catchment management is founded on the work of preceding organisations including the Soil Conservation Authority, the Lands Department, Regional River Improvement Trusts and Catchment and Land Protection Boards.

Governance arrangements established by the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* include the Victorian Catchment Management Council and community-based Catchment Management Authority boards.

The 10 Catchment Management Authorities provide a structured and strategic approach to working with local and regional communities and partners in integrated planning, priority setting and coordinated on-ground delivery across public and private land.

In Victoria, Regional Catchment Strategies are key documents identifying and describing regional values and the key risks to land, water and biodiversity. Planning undertaken at this level is based on a good understanding of the local areas, immediate threats and longer term challenges.

Regional Catchment Strategies bring together and align state policies and strategies with local community values across both public and private land. They are developed and implemented in collaboration with partners and communities.

CASE STUDY

Empowering women in sustainable agriculture

The Corangamite Rural Women's Network brings women from diverse backgrounds together to strengthen rural networks and enhance community resilience.

During the past 18 months, 107 women have participated in five farming and rural enterprise workshops and field days at Moriac, Warrambeen, St Leonards, Inverleigh and Simpson. More than 50 per cent of these women were new to Landcare, coming from a wide range of backgrounds including commercial farmers, lifestyle property owners, agribusiness consultants and rural community members.

The events' discussions addressed dairy farming and sustainability, developing communication skills for farm succession, wine making, rural health and farmer nutrition.

The Network is supported by Corangamite Catchment Management Authority's Regional Landcare Facilitator and the Corangamite Landcare Coordinator, funded through the National Landcare Programme and the Victorian Landcare Programs respectively.



*Photograph -
First gathering
of the Rural
Women's Network
at Warrambeen
Corangamite CMA*

12 Our achievements

Victoria's catchment management framework has been in place for 20 years. It has guided the investment of hundreds of millions of dollars to protect and enhance the environmental assets we value and benefit from most.

Our Catchment Management Authorities have built significant regional and local support, acting with and on behalf of communities. They have always played a strong, innovative role in leveraging involvement and investment from a range of sources into their regions.

In 2014–15, Catchment Management Authorities attracted \$60 million in Victorian Government investment, \$51 million in Commonwealth Government investment, and \$5 million in additional investment from other sources. Additionally, regional communities co-contributed an estimated \$173 million.

As a result, significant outputs were achieved in 2014–15 to engage communities and protect and enhance environmental assets including:

- over 55,000 participants in events
- over 1,600 landholder agreements and partnerships
- improvements to over 5,000 hectares of irrigation infrastructure
- over 430,000 hectares of pest plant and animal control
- over 5,000 hectares of revegetation
- over 600 kilometres of fencing.

Victoria's catchment management framework focuses on cooperation and coordination between the many people and organisations in a region to achieve optimum outcomes for regional and local environments and economies. This ranges from helping to manage environmental improvements in Victoria's alpine national parks and flow-on benefits for tourism, through to aligning weed and pest control to improved production and water quality going on and off the farm.

The strong history of integrated catchment management has provided holistic, innovative approaches undertaken by trusted, committed and skilled personnel who network with partner organisations and the community to coordinate and integrate on-ground action.

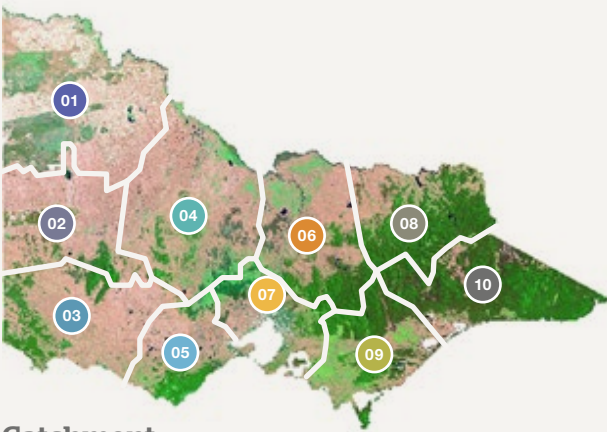
*Photograph -
Snowy River, Jarrahmond in
2008 (above) and 2014 (right)
after revegetation
East Gippsland CMA*



Integrated catchment management in Victoria

Land, water and biodiversity are all part of connected systems that span from the top of the catchment, down to the coast and related marine environments.

Our Catchments, Our Communities focuses on people working better together to coordinate planning, investment and on-ground activities as a more effective and efficient way to achieve a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes.



Catchment management regions

- 01 Mallee
- 02 Wimmera
- 03 Glenelg Hopkins
- 04 North Central
- 05 Corangamite
- 06 Goulburn Broken
- 07 Port Phillip & Westernport
- 08 North East
- 09 West Gippsland
- 10 East Gippsland





Improved services and benefits from integrated management

Improved coordination can provide multiple benefits and services across the whole catchment at different scales on private and public land. The effective management of parks and forest reserves and other native vegetation improves biodiversity and provides access to timber for production and to nature for tourism, recreation and cultural and spiritual activities. Vegetation and waterway management contributes to greenhouse gas emission offsets through carbon storage. Good forest management also produces clean air

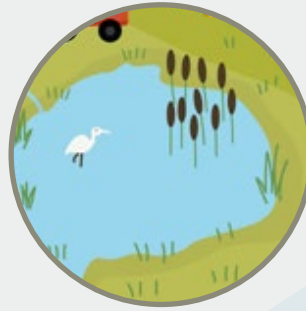
and water supplies that support the environment and protects human health. In turn, clean water provides for drinking, irrigation and other industries. Private landholders access land and water resources for agriculture and other production, and for urban living. Sustainable agriculture and integrated land, water and biodiversity management improves productivity, reduces emissions and off-site impacts, and enhances values in the catchment and for coasts and receiving waters in the marine environment.

16 Values of catchment management



Urban and regional centres

- Alignment between land use planning and Regional Catchment Strategies
- Peri-urban areas and green wedge areas provide biodiversity, agricultural and recreational values
- Cultural values.



Rivers, wetlands & estuaries

- Water supply and water quality protection
- 775,000 ha of wetlands for terrestrial and aquatic species in Victoria
- River and estuary habitats valued at \$2.5 billion per year
- Recreational fishing is worth \$7.1 billion to the State's economy
- There are 838,000 recreational fishers
- Cultural values.



Coasts and marine

- 2,512 km of coastline, 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries
- Coasts worth approximately \$9.8 billion annually for recreation, tourism and business
- Non-commercial ecosystem values worth around \$8.4 billion per year
- Cultural values.



Biodiversity

- Intrinsic value of native plants and animals
- Provide services that underpin Victoria's economy and our way of life
- Cultural values.



Parks and forests

- Biodiversity protection and conservation, and recreation, tourism and community wellbeing
- 7.9 million ha of Crown Land covering 35 per cent of Victoria
- Water filtration provides water for drinking, food production and other uses, and is valued at \$83 million annually
- Cultural values.



Productive lands

- Gross annual value of agricultural commodities over \$11 billion, of which nearly \$4 billion is irrigated agriculture
- Gross value of wood products around \$450 million per year.



Leveraging opportunities

- \$50–60 million annual investment leveraged, including from the Commonwealth Government
- About \$5 contribution from landholders and community for every \$1 invested via Catchment Management Authorities
- Philanthropic contributions offset market opportunities.



Jobs creation

- Employment of specialist jobs in the catchment management sector
- Direct program employment e.g. Victorian Landcare Program – over 80 Landcare Facilitators and Coordinators
- Indirect regional employment e.g. over 400 indirect jobs per annum from waterway health investment
- Skills development through community groups and volunteering – over 100,000 people
- Recreational fishing supports close to 34,000 full time jobs.



Climate change

- Carbon storage
- Emission reduction
- Renewables
- Adaptation and resilience
- Climate change mitigation.

Drivers of change

Catchment management faces significant challenges to enhance and maintain long term productivity while also conserving the environment. There are ongoing and new pressures on our native plants and animals, water quality, waterway health and sustainable agricultural production and, in turn to our community wellbeing and local economies.

The key drivers include:

- a global economy
- intensifying land management and use
- rapid urban expansion and population growth
- weeds and pests
- more frequent and extreme events such as bushfires, floods and drought.

Our framework needs to continue to respond to these drivers in the years ahead.

Climate change is increasing the complexity of managing these issues. The global influence of many of these drivers highlights the need for appropriate responses at a range of scales. Policy and strategy need to reflect global issues, while action on the ground needs to be locally relevant.

The Victorian Government is building on national and international policies and strategies for improving sustainable development and managing climate change, and other specific agreements related to key environmental issues. We are developing a range of policies and programs to enhance economic development, jobs, our social fabric and our environment. These will influence and support our regional catchment management in the coming years.

Additional considerations regarding biosecurity, food security, sustainable and productive agriculture, integrated land use planning and soil health are important factors that complement integrated catchment management.

We must continue to ensure our communities play a vital role in the planning and decision making for their local areas.



CASE STUDY

Natural resource management plans for climate change

The impacts of climate change are likely to compound existing challenges facing catchment management. In response, Victoria's 10 Catchment Management Authorities will complete natural resource management plans for climate change in 2016.

These plans provide guidance on developing adaptation and mitigation responses to the likely impacts of climate change on natural assets in each region. They identify priorities and opportunities for biodiverse carbon plantings to build landscape resilience, and use the latest scientific information to identify priority actions and manage trade-offs.

Funded by the Commonwealth Government, the three-year project has involved Catchment Management Authorities coordinating their planning to build on and learn from each other to develop the plans.

The plans have been developed in collaboration with regional communities, government and other stakeholders, and will be fully integrated into Victoria's climate change framework. The plans are a sub-strategy of the Regional Catchment Strategies.

*Photograph -
Revegetation at
Salt Water Creek
Geoff Russell*

Meeting the challenge

The effectiveness of our catchment management system has been restricted in recent years due to the lack of an overarching, state-wide strategy. This has led to inconsistent monitoring, evaluation and reporting, disjointed funding for Regional Catchment Strategy priorities, some unclear responsibilities amongst key organisations and challenges with data and information needs.

Our catchment management framework is therefore being improved so it can work through these issues, deal with competing interests where they occur and continue to protect our land, water and biodiversity for the future.

It is increasingly important that catchment management partners have a shared vision to help guide and coordinate decisions within our control, and promote better decisions beyond our control. We need to ensure we are clear about our roles and that our collective efforts deliver efficient and effective outcomes.

An aerial photograph showing a lush green landscape with a winding river or stream, a road, and various agricultural fields. The image is partially obscured by a large, light-colored, curved graphic element on the right side of the page.

Photograph -
Productive landscapes
Port Phillip and
Westernport CMA



The success of this strategy will be assessed and reported upon in 2019 by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and the strategy will be reviewed at that time.

Improving the catchment management framework

Our vision:

Healthy, sustainable and productive land, water and biodiversity maintained through integrated catchment management that is strongly community based, regionally focused and collaborative.

Our goals:

The following goals and actions will address the current challenges in our catchment management framework.

Goal 1

Effective community engagement in catchment management

Action 1.1.

Strengthen the diversity and equity of community representation in the catchment and land protection advisory system.

Action 1.2.

Strengthen community engagement in regional planning and implementation.

Goal 2

Better connections between state, regional and local planning

Action 2.1.

Ensure alignment between state, regional and local plans that impact on land, water, biodiversity and Regional Catchment Strategies.

Action 2.2.

Incorporate key improvements for integrated catchment management in the next round of Regional Catchment Strategies.

Goal 3

Strengthened implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies

Action 3.1.

Implement an investment framework that supports coordination and accountability for the delivery of Regional Catchment Strategy priorities.

Action 3.2.

Improve regional investment processes to strengthen the engagement of regional partners in priority setting, allocation of funds and leveraging.

Goal 4

Clearer roles, strengthened accountability and coordination

Action 4.1.

Improve accountability of catchment management partners.

Action 4.2.

Strengthen coordination between key catchment management partners.

Goal 5

Improved monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Action 5.1.

Improve state and regional catchment reporting.

Action 5.2.

Ensure the evidence base, including research and development, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting, supports and informs planning and adaptive management.

Goal 1.

Effective community engagement in catchment management

Communities know the issues and solutions for their landscapes. Effective engagement is crucial to understand communities, share knowledge and achieve the most practical place-based planning, priority setting and delivery.

Community engagement occurs at many levels, including on the Victorian Catchment Management Council and boards of the Catchment Management Authorities, comprising community members with experience and knowledge in land, water and natural resource

management, environment protection and conservation, primary industry, local government, business planning and financial management.

Catchment Management Authorities engage with regional communities to build capacity, to support partnerships and ensure ownership for integrated catchment management. This includes developing Regional Catchment Strategies and other plans, convening implementation committees, supporting the significant efforts of Landcare and community networks and groups, and bringing many diverse partners together to develop and deliver

on-ground programs. Local government, Landcare, community groups, Aboriginal groups (including Traditional Owner Corporations) and many other partners also provide leadership in engaging communities.

To achieve effective community engagement, the *Community Engagement and Partnerships Framework for Victoria's Catchment Management Authorities* (2012) was developed. It includes principles and common engagement and partnership approaches. It recognises that to achieve sustained practice change, engagement should be planned, tailored, targeted and inclusive.

What success looks like

Victoria has the most advanced catchment and land protection advisory system. Our Victorian Catchment Management Council and Catchment Management Authority boards have gender balance and wider diversity including representation from Aboriginal people, as well as relevant merit and skills appointees. Appointment processes consider geographic representation and knowledge of marine and coastal environments and climate change to better reflect emerging issues.

Strengthened engagement leaves a lasting legacy of informed, involved and confident communities who understand the value of good natural resource management, and appreciate that their contribution improves the health of our catchments.

Extensive community engagement involves diverse communities. It is effective and consistent across Catchment Management Authorities, with well-planned and targeted approaches that are evaluated.

Engagement with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities is strengthened, and agreed approaches enable increased participation in regional planning and implementation with stronger links to cultural values.

There is increased capacity for diverse communities to participate in catchment management due to improved support of investment programs and participation in leadership development opportunities.

Action 1.1: Strengthen the diversity and equity of community representation in the catchment and land protection advisory system.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Strengthen the gender equity and diversity of Catchment Management Authority boards and the Victorian Catchment Management Council.	Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	No less than 50 per cent of new appointments across the catchment management sector are women.	2016–19
		Increased representation from Aboriginal people on the council, boards, and committees.	2017–19
Investigate opportunities to broaden community representation and skills in the catchment and land protection advisory system.	DELWP	Gaps in community representation and skills are identified, and targeted engagement occurs during selection processes.	2016–19

Action 1.2: Strengthen community engagement in regional planning and implementation.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Maintain extensive, effective and consistent approaches to community engagement and partnerships in regional planning and implementation.	CMAs	The <i>Community Engagement and Partnerships Framework for Victoria's Catchment Management Authorities</i> (2012) is implemented and reviewed.	2016–19
Strengthen engagement with Traditional Owner and Aboriginal community groups.	DELWP CMAs	The <i>DELWP Aboriginal Inclusion Plan</i> annual priorities involving Catchment Management Authorities are implemented.	2016–19
	CMAs	The <i>Aboriginal Participation Guidelines for Victorian Catchment Management Authorities</i> are implemented.	2016–19
	DELWP CMAs	Groups with recognised native title rights or formal agreements with the state are engaged with to an agreed level as a minimum to meet obligations.	2016–19
Work collaboratively with various organisations and communities to strengthen engagement approaches and capacity.	CMAs	Increased number and diversity of organisations and communities involved in regional planning processes and implementation activities.	2016–19
	CMAs DELWP	Leadership development opportunities for regional communities identified and supported.	2016–19

Helping communities help our catchments

Landcare and community action has a long and proud history across Victoria. Many motivated communities have established groups to address their local catchment management issues.

The Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority has a strong relationship with these groups built on the knowledge that working together achieves more than working alone. There are now 84 Landcare groups and hundreds of other environmental community groups active in the region.

The authority understands that engaging with Landcare and community groups is one of the most effective approaches to delivering works with landholders.

For 10 years, an annual grants process has helped to maintain these relationships and deliver on-ground work.

Funds from multiple sources are channelled through a single process to provide a one-stop shop for the groups. This helps align local project ideas with the priorities of the Regional Catchment Strategy, and ensures there is no duplication or overlap of projects.

In 2014–15, the grants process delivered over \$430,000 to important local projects led by Landcare and community groups.

Strengthening community links in the Mallee

Improved community advice to the Mallee Catchment Management Authority is a clear outcome from establishing the Land and Water Advisory Committee – but the bonus has been strengthening two-way information flow.

The committee was established in 2013 to enhance engagement and to provide the Catchment Management Authority board with a deeper community foundation for decision making. Geographically based members are appointed for a three-year rolling term, with four representatives from each of the north, south, east and west of the region.

‘Activities, access to information and people they meet are providing a more informed perspective on many issues and decisions we face as a region,’ Mallee Catchment Management Authority Chair Sharyon Peart said.

‘They are now seeing their own local areas in a Mallee-wide context. The information and understanding is now being passed back into local communities.’

The committee meets up to six times a year, alternately in the office and out in the field. Office-based meetings often involve presentations and discussions with experts on complex issues or activities.

‘The field trips have been fantastic in giving committee members a first-hand look at the issues discussed at information sessions, or to broaden our understanding of the region,’ Committee Chair Bill Nicol said.

‘The diversity of the group reflects the Mallee. Members have backgrounds in dryland management, environment and planning or industry. They come from broad-acre farming districts, urban areas, the Murray River irrigation districts and areas that have horticultural industries based on centre-pivot bores.’



*Photograph -
Planning in partnership
Port Phillip and Westernport CMA*



*Photograph -
Loddon River
North Central CMA*

CASE STUDY

29

Loddon Stressed River project

The benefits of the North Central Catchment Management Authority's 10-year, \$10 million Loddon Stressed River project are as far reaching as the river itself.

Significant works have been completed with funding from the Victorian Waterway Management Program including 390 kilometres, or 56 per cent, of river frontage now protected by fencing. In the last five years of the project, 600 hectares of riparian vegetation was protected and improved, eight erosion control structures installed and 74 hectares of riparian vegetation protected by willow and other woody weed removal.

The project worked closely with landholders and was an outstanding community engagement success, providing the pioneering model for community capacity building.

Community engagement events were held on average every two and a half months. More than 1,150 people took part in more than 50 events including field days, community meetings, information sessions, celebration events and environmental festivals.

Results of a 2009 Charles Sturt University survey proved beyond doubt that the community will continue to protect and enhance the Loddon River for generations.

One landholder said, 'The project has provided me with much greater knowledge of the Loddon River. From my experience I really enjoyed meeting out on the farm and along the river with Catchment Management Authority staff and getting to know what you can do, and what can happen.'



Goal 2.

Better connections between state, regional and local planning

Planning for land, water and biodiversity management occurs at the national, state, regional and local levels by governments and agencies in consultation with partners and communities.

State-level planning establishes government policies, goals and various levels of funding delivered across Victoria to meet state, national and international obligations. In Victoria, planning at this level occurs for each component of catchment management, such as waterway health, soil health, climate change, Landcare, coasts, biodiversity and fire.

Setting aligned objectives and targets needs to occur during planning and implementation so that investment is used on activities that clearly contribute to outcomes.

Regional Catchment Strategies are prepared by each Catchment Management Authority in partnership with regional communities.

Regional Catchment Strategies respond to the planning and priorities of local communities, regional partners, state planning and national and international obligations. They are tenure blind. Objectives and priorities also include themes and issues where state-level planning is limited. They seek to integrate themes and issues to achieve place-based outcomes.

The strategies are often implemented through regional action plans based on themes, issues or landscapes.

Working across scales with different boundaries is challenging for Catchment Management Authorities and for partners having interests within and across regions including government departments, Parks Victoria, Traditional Owner Corporations, local government, Trust for Nature and non-government organisations.

Catchment partnerships improve the alignment of natural resource management and environmental outcomes, which directly supports the strong economic development and liveability drivers of Victoria's Regional Statement.

At a local level, many municipal councils have developed natural resource management plans and priorities with their communities.

Local government also has important land use planning functions that affect catchment outcomes.

Healthy, sustainable and productive land, water and biodiversity rely on strong connections and alignment between all levels of planning for the effective delivery of catchment outcomes.

What success looks like

Regional values and priorities described in Regional Catchment Strategies are recognised in relevant state-level plans that influence land, water, biodiversity and broader catchment management.

Regional Catchment Strategies are important in representing regional community views and are incorporated into state-level planning processes. The fourth iteration of Regional Catchment

Strategies captures local and regional values, reflects national and international agreements and aligns current directions from state plans.

Regional Catchment Strategies support and consolidate the catchment management sector and local planning by delivering outcomes from strengthened links across different scales and boundaries.



*Photograph -
Coastal connections
Glenelg Hopkins CMA*

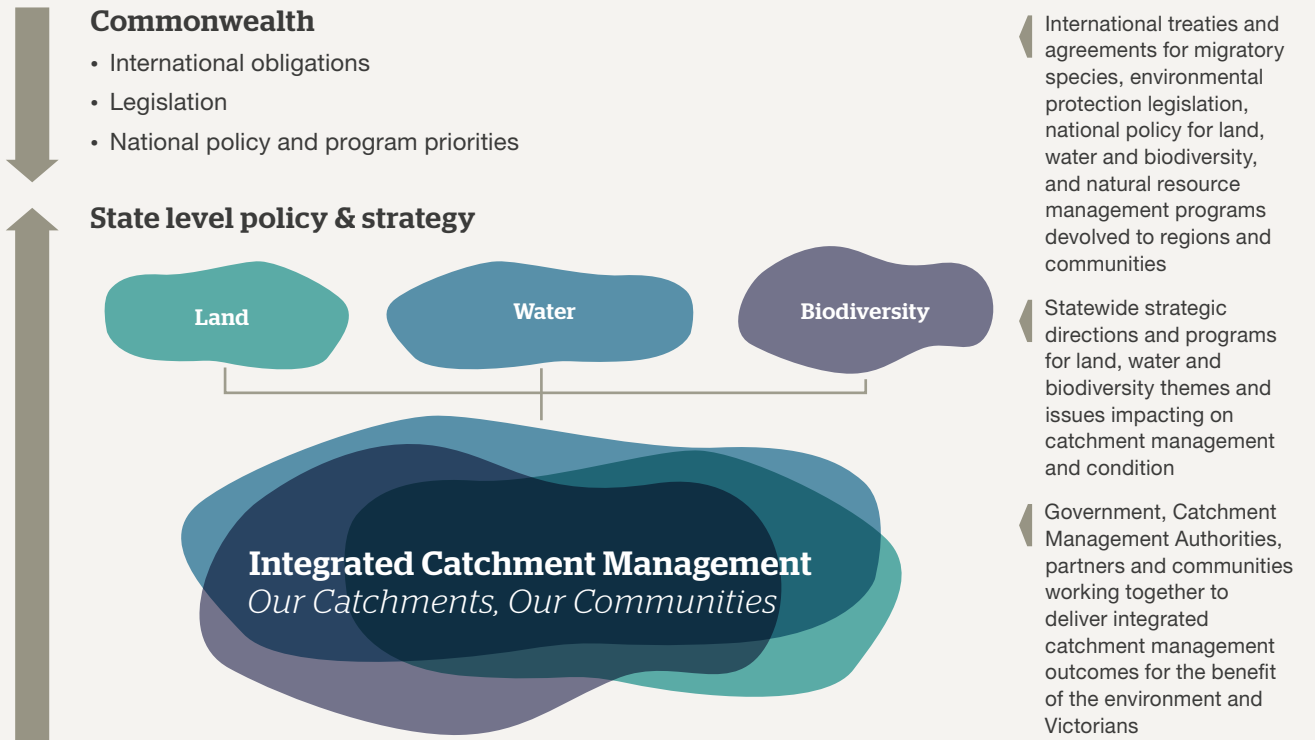
Action 2.1: Ensure alignment between state, regional and local plans that impact on land, water and biodiversity, and Regional Catchment Strategies.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
State-level planning will incorporate Regional Catchment Strategy priorities.	DELWP Other government departments	Catchment Management Authorities are actively engaged in state-level planning processes.	2016–19
Scope and develop a target-setting framework for Victorian land, water and biodiversity.	VCMC OCES DELWP CMAs	A published framework describing how land, water and biodiversity goals, objectives and targets are set, aligned and delivered in Victoria.	2016–17
Participate in decision-making processes that deliver regional policy outcomes.	CMAs	Regional Catchment Strategies describe natural resource management priorities for the nine regional partnerships in Victoria's Regional Statement.	2017
Catchment Management Authorities ensure that community knowledge and local planning processes influence Regional Catchment Strategy development and implementation.	CMAs	Local views and knowledge are incorporated into Regional Catchment Strategies and their implementation.	2016–19

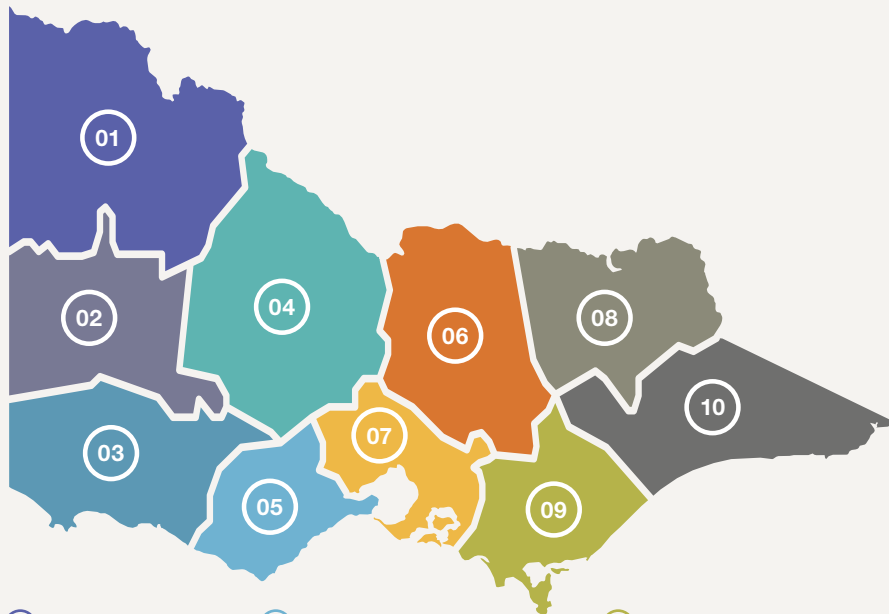
Action 2.2: Incorporate key improvements for integrated catchment management in the next round of Regional Catchment Strategies.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Develop the Regional Catchment Strategy guidelines to incorporate key directions from <i>Our Catchments</i> , <i>Our Communities</i> .	VCMC CMAs	New Regional Catchment Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are based on strengthened community engagement are aligned to new and updated state-level plans focus further effort to integrate local and regional priorities and values improve cross-boundary planning. 	2019

Connected planning



Regional integration & cross boundary linkages



- 01 Mallee
- 02 Wimmera
- 03 Glenelg Hopkins
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- 09 West Gippsland
- 10 East Gippsland

Ten Regional Catchment Strategies developed in consultation with regional communities outlining the local catchment and environmental assets, objectives and the priorities that best address a range of needs within and across regions

Sub-strategies, local & place-based planning

Thematic and issue or place-based sub-strategies and management plans, Country Plans and planning schemes.

Examples of connected planning are provided in Appendix 2.

A variety of Regional Catchment Strategies implementation sub-strategies, local land use policies and controls, and local land, resource or place-based strategies and management plans



CASE STUDY

Corangamite Natural Resource Management Planning Portal

The Corangamite Natural Resource Management Planning Portal promotes sharing of multi-scaled spatial natural resource management information to inform the priorities of key stakeholder groups within each of the 15 landscape zones identified in the 2013 *Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy*.

To attract investment it is important to document both the community's priorities as well as regionally based state and national priorities. This project provides a process that enables community priorities to be considered alongside regional, state and national strategies. This process filters information according to particular geographic areas or topics, and improves project delivery, partnerships and project outcomes.

By maximising community ownership in the development of local and regional planning, the portal provides a sound basis for the development of strategic priorities and actions for the next *Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy*. It will also help develop more targeted funding bids and support the implementation of on-ground activities.

This initial pilot stage of the project was delivered through the Catchment Management Authority's own resources. Phase 2 will be supported through funding from the Commonwealth Government's National Landcare Programme and the Victorian Waterway Management Program.



*Photograph -
King River planning
North East CMA,
Jodie Schutte*

Goal 3.

Strengthened implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies

Regional Catchment Strategies are developed by the Catchment Management Authorities using a strong model of regional and local community and partner agency engagement.

However, implementing Regional Catchment Strategies is challenging given a high proportion of funding is short-term and tied to specific activities. There is no dedicated multi-year funding stream for Catchment Management Authorities to coordinate the implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies.

Strengthening the implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies through dedicated funding will result in:

- **greater community ownership and stewardship of their natural assets.** As well as enabling the delivery of priority on-ground works, Catchment Management Authorities will have greater capacity to sustain partnerships and ongoing engagement with communities and regional partners
- **healthier and more productive land and water assets.** This will be achieved through increased delivery of high-priority on-ground works identified in Regional Catchment Strategies

- **better value for money from government investment in natural resource management.** Every dollar invested by Catchment Management Authorities leverages an additional dollar through a range of government sources, as well as establishing significant cost-sharing arrangements with landholders through services and market-based instruments. On average, every dollar of direct investment through Catchment Management Authorities results in more than five dollars of investment from the community.

Under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, Catchment Management Authorities are also responsible for advising ministers on regional priorities and resource allocation. Their capacity to plan for and deliver long-term improvements with catchment management partners is made very complex by short-term funding agreements and differing investment program priorities.

In order to achieve improved coordination and shared investment, it is essential that key catchment partners are engaged through regular and formalised processes (called 'roundtables') to support Regional Catchment Strategy implementation.

What success looks like

There is dedicated Victorian Government multi-year funding to implement Regional Catchment Strategies across Victoria.

Regional Catchment Strategy implementation is maximised through coordinated investment among catchment partners.

Catchment Management Authorities are supported to deliver their statutory obligations.

Action 3.1: Implement an investment framework that supports coordination and accountability for the delivery of Regional Catchment Strategy priorities.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Provide initial funding for coordination and delivery of Regional Catchment Strategies across Victoria.	Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water DELWP CMAs	At least 10 integrated catchment management projects delivering Regional Catchment Strategy priorities.	2016–19
Provide funding to ensure the statutory obligations of Catchment Management Authorities are met (including Regional Catchment Strategy coordination and regional monitoring and reporting).	Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water DELWP CMAs	There is funding for delivery of Catchment Management Authority statutory obligations.	2017–19
Better align government investment to priorities and actions in Regional Catchment Strategies.	DELWP	Guidelines published outlining requirements for relevant government investment to align with regional priorities.	2016
	DELWP	Relevant Victorian Government investment streams clearly aligned to Regional Catchment Strategy priorities.	2017–19
	DELWP CMAs	Catchment management sector is actively involved in state processes for budget and investment planning to support the implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies.	2016–19

Action 3.2: Improve regional investment processes to strengthen the engagement of regional partners in priority setting, allocation of funds and leveraging.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Establish a regional investment roundtable process in each catchment management region, building on similar approaches currently used by Catchment Management Authorities.	CMAs	Regional investment processes ('roundtables') operate in each catchment management region across Victoria.	2016–19
Actively engage key catchment partners in the regional investment processes.	CMAs	Key catchment partners actively participating in regional investment 'roundtables' including relevant government agencies and authorities, local government, Traditional Owners, Landcare and other community sectors.	2016–19

38 CASE STUDIES

From little things big things grow

Catchment management can help lots of small projects come together to achieve something big across regional landscapes.

With funds from the Victorian Environmental Partnerships Program 2013–15, Catchment Management Authorities are working together to reward efforts to protect and enhance high-value native vegetation on private land using market-based approaches.

Across the north and east of Victoria, the North Central, Goulburn Broken and North East Catchment Management Authorities have partnered with community groups, councils and landholders to start the \$4.6 million Northern Eco Connections project. This project invites landholders to apply for funding to undertake environmental works including weed control, revegetation and fencing of environmentally sensitive areas. More than 70 bids have been supported for work on 1,683 hectares.

Links between the forests of south-west Victoria and the Mallee country have also been enhanced with Habitat Tender Agreements now protecting 992 hectares of high-value native vegetation. Delivered in a partnership between Glenelg Hopkins and Wimmera Catchment Management Authorities, the \$2.5 million project funds works such as grazing stock exclusion, pest plant and animal control, and supplementary planting of indigenous vegetation alongside remnants.

Coastal connections

Coordinated by the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, the Coastal Connections project works with community groups, Aboriginal trainees and private land managers to protect and restore high-value coastal, estuarine and wetland habitat in south-west Victoria.

Funded by the Commonwealth Government's National Landcare Programme, the five-year project protects coastal habitat through conservation management agreements with private landholders, permanent protection under conservation covenants, and management activities for endangered coastal plants including stock exclusion, weed and pest control.

Currently in its third year, Coastal Connections has funded activities on 285 hectares of private land and established conservation covenants on 83 hectares. Importantly, endangered coastal plants are benefitting from specific management activities.

The project supports the employment of Aboriginal trainees, providing an opportunity to share knowledge and build skills in natural resource management. A great working relationship has been established with Worn Gundidj, resulting in training and further employment of an Aboriginal person.

Community groups are supported through grants for activities that protect and rehabilitate coastal habitat, and engage and educate local communities. To date, 10 community groups have successfully run field days, working bees, tours and fox drives, with another 12 groups to receive funding.





Goal 4.

Clearer roles, strengthened accountability and coordination

Regional Catchment Strategies set priorities for the management of land, water and biodiversity resources in each region. Catchment Management Authorities lead and coordinate the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategies with key catchment management partners, including government departments, Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, local government, agricultural industry groups, water corporations, Traditional Owners and community groups.

Clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of partners are critical to determine and deliver regional priorities. All partners have different roles in delivering catchment outcomes. These need to be clearly defined to avoid confusion and to minimise duplication or inaction.

There are nine regional operating agreements covering the whole of Victoria. They are signed by the Catchment Management Authorities, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Parks Victoria, and Melbourne Water in the Port Phillip and Westernport region. Their purpose is to facilitate the delivery of regional natural resource management operations as effectively and efficiently as possible. Reviewing and extending these partnerships will improve accountability and ownership of Regional Catchment Strategies.

Catchment management partners implement Regional Catchment Strategies with significant cooperation and goodwill. However, there is a need to formalise our shared commitment to ensure delivery of planning and investment priorities. In addition, it is challenging for some catchment partners operating at a state level or across catchment boundaries to participate in 10 regional planning processes across the state. Opportunities to increase cooperation and partnerships will be provided for state-level partners.



What success looks like

A new set of Statements of Obligations for Catchment Management Authorities provides improved specification of the obligations and the performance standards expected of the authorities as they deliver their statutory functions under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and the *Water Act 1989*. New state government policy directions are regularly communicated. The governance instruments of other key catchment management partners at state level are reviewed to examine how their accountability for the implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies might be strengthened.

Regionally developed catchment partnership agreements improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability for implementing Regional Catchment Strategies, and clarify roles and responsibilities. Partners include (but are not limited to) relevant government departments, water corporations, Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, local government, Traditional Owner Corporations, Regional Coastal Boards, Committees of Management, and landholders through Landcare groups and networks. These agreements complement Victoria's Regional Statement.

A state-level catchments summit brings together key state partners who meet as required to help address issues regarding coordination, planning alignment and investment priorities, and to improve sharing of knowledge across partners.

Catchment Management Authorities establish and maintain partnerships as a result of secured funding for coordinating and implementing Regional Catchment Strategies.

Action 4.1: Improve accountability of catchment management partners.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Amend the Statements of Obligations for Catchment Management Authorities to clarify obligations and performance standards in relation to their functions under the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> and the <i>Water Act 1989</i> , and articulate new state government policy directions.	Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water DELWP	New Statements of Obligations for Catchment Management Authorities are developed.	2017
	Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water DELWP	State priority matters are communicated to Catchment Management Authorities.	2017
The Victorian Catchment Management Council and Catchment Management Authority boards will assess and report on their performance.	VCMC CMAs	Performance assessments against the key functions and obligations of boards and council are completed and reported on annually.	2016–19
Assess the obligations/expectations of relevant government bodies and their accountability for the implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies.	DELWP	Propose options to the minister/government to enhance relevant governance instruments of key partners to incorporate expectations for the implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies.	2017

Action 4.2: Strengthen coordination between key catchment management partners.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Convert regional operating agreements into new catchment partnership agreements outlining roles and responsibilities of key organisations and how they plan to work together.	CMA DELWP DEDJTR PV	The existing regional operating agreements are reviewed with improvements identified in the framing of catchment partnership agreements.	2016–17
	CMA DELWP DEDJTR PV Water corporations Local government Others	Catchment partnership agreements are developed in each region (replacing the regional operating agreements) involving relevant key catchment partners.	2017–18
Provide more opportunity for coordination and partnerships among state-level partners.	DELWP CMA	A state-level catchments summit is established with key partners meeting occasionally for knowledge sharing, increased coordination and alignment of investment and implementation priorities.	2017–19
Strengthen the capacity of Catchment Management Authorities to foster and sustain partnerships to deliver natural resource management activities.	CMA	300 partnerships established and/or maintained.	2016–19



*Photograph -
Smoking ceremony
at Knob Reserve
for signing of the
Memorandum
of Understanding
West Gippsland CMA*

CASE STUDY

West Gippsland and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

Catchment regions include a number of values held by Victorian Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal community. The lands, waters and biodiversity form traditional Aboriginal landscapes that are maintained by various natural resource managers.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation have developed a partnership model designed to support the aspirations of Traditional Owners as land managers and rights holders, and to build the capacity of the Catchment Management Authority to become a culturally competent organisation.

The model is based on a three-year conversation that has built mutual trust and respect, and a shared commitment to a strong, ongoing relationship. The model comprises a range of principles, governance arrangements, strategies and information products including:

- a Memorandum of Understanding and a joint body responsible for its implementation
- support for development of the Gunaikurnai Country Plan and incorporation of Traditional Owner values and goals into regional planning and programs
- Aboriginal policies and procedures, and guidance material for the Catchment Management Authority's board and management
- an ongoing board and staff cultural heritage training program that includes overnight training on Country
- events to acknowledge NAIDOC week and the Closing the Gap initiative
- a commitment to working with all recognised Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal people in the region.

44 CASE STUDY

Coordination and partnership deliver better results

The Heart Morass is a 1,800 hectare wetland at the confluence of the Thomson and Latrobe Rivers near Sale.

The wetland has a history of excessive drainage, grazing, increasing salinisation and acidification. However, a partnership between the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Field and Game Australia, Watermark Inc. and the Hugh Williamson Foundation is turning back time.

Together, the partners purchased over 1,000 hectares of the wetland to undertake one of the largest wetland restoration projects on private land in Australia. This will have flow-on benefits for the Gippsland Lakes.

The work at Heart Morass is approaching its 10th year and the results are remarkable. Good seasonal conditions recently have sped up the rehabilitation process and the wetland is enjoying its best ecological condition in decades.

Recent surveys have recorded over 30,000 waterbirds with a range of species returning to the wetland in great numbers including Glossy Ibis, Freckled Duck, Intermediate Egret, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Plumed Whistling Duck.

A population of the threatened Green and Golden Bell Frog has also been recorded during monitoring work.

The Heart Morass restoration is an excellent example of the benefits that can be gained when regional organisations get together and share their project visions and ideas.





Photograph -
Heart Morass wetland
restoration
West Gippsland CMA

Goal 5.

Improved monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Consistent and targeted monitoring, evaluation and reporting is essential for effective adaptive management of Victoria's catchments.

It is also essential to properly account for the investment of public funds and to ensure that the community is informed about the work of catchment agencies and the state of our catchments.

The evidence base generated by monitoring, evaluation and reporting needs to be targeted to influence decision making so we can improve strategies, plans and programs to achieve healthier land, water and biodiversity.

To aggregate and share this information with the community and other agencies, we need a consistent language and consistent data. This is especially important because responsibilities for reporting on the condition and management of catchments is spread across a number of agencies.

Catchment Management Authorities, for instance, report annually on the implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies and the condition and management of catchments. The Victorian Catchment Management Council reports every five years on the condition and management of catchments and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability reports every five years on the state of the broader environment.

This reporting has historically suffered from gaps in the quality, consistency and continuity of data across agencies and across regions. The challenge is for catchment partners to work together to reach agreement on a more consistent approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting.



Catchment indicators

Catchment indicators give a high-level picture of the condition and management of Victoria's catchments. Other indicators may provide finer information on progress toward objectives or the status of threats and tell a comprehensive story of the whole catchment.

Themes	Catchment indicators
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land managed for conservation (Covenants, agreements, management plans and parks and reserves)
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of waterways Water quality in major lakes and bays
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent and quality of native vegetation Health of native species
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community participation in environment programs Community use of parks Traditional Owners participation
Coasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of coastal and marine environments (Size of coastal and marine areas protected by parks and reserves)

What success looks like

Reporting on catchment condition and management focuses on a proposed set of consistent catchment indicators.

The indicators are developed and gradually improved to help provide a high-level assessment of the condition and management of Victoria's catchments. Other indicators can then be used to provide more detailed information on progress toward objectives or the status of threats to tell a more comprehensive story of Victoria's catchments.

The development of consistent language and indicators enable us to make more and better information available to the public through a shift to online reporting.

The catchment indicators are also used to underpin the development of improved environmental accounting. A comprehensive suite of environmental accounts extends the capacity of catchment partners to inform the community about the value of the environment and benefits of their actions.

The Catchment Management Authorities annual *Actions and Achievements Report* is converted into an annual Regional Catchment Strategy achievements report with input from key catchment partners including the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Parks Victoria, water corporations, local government and community natural resource management groups.

Catchment partners will collaborate on research and development programs that provide a better understanding of the long-term impact of our on-ground works and inform planning and adaptive management.

Local communities will be involved in monitoring, evaluation and reporting through citizen science opportunities such as Waterwatch. These activities create valuable opportunities for engagement, data collection, knowledge sharing, participation and ownership.



Photograph -
Catchment management
supports biodiversity
Port Phillip and
Westernport CMA

Action 5.1: Improve state and regional catchment reporting.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Enable cooperative and consistent data collection and sharing.	DELWP	The <i>Framework for Catchment Condition and Management Reporting</i> (2015) establishes a new approach to reporting in Victoria and is adopted by all partners.	2016–19
Develop consistent indicators and measures to be used across catchment management partners' reports.	CMAAs	A more consistent approach to annual reporting based on the framework is tested through the trial of a set of consistent catchment indicators.	2016
	DELWP	The proposed catchment indicators are further refined to support a range of reporting needs and detailed guidelines are published.	2017–19
	DELWP CMAAs VCMC OCES	Key catchment partners apply the new catchment indicators in their reporting.	2016–19
Improve and align reporting processes.	CMAAs Key catchment partners	Catchment Management Authorities publish annual regional actions and achievements reports with input from key catchment partners.	2016–19
	VCMC	The <i>Catchment Condition and Management Report</i> is published and is consistent with Catchment Management Authorities' annual reporting and the <i>Victorian State of the Environment Report</i> .	2017
	OCES	The <i>State of the Bay Report</i> is published and trials improved approaches to online access.	2017
Improve access to information to partners and the community.	VCMC	The <i>Catchment Condition and Management Report</i> is published and trials improvements in online access.	2017
	DELWP CMAAs	Improved online access to information.	2016–19

Action 5.2: Ensure the evidence base, including research and development and monitoring, evaluation and reporting, supports and informs planning and adaptive management.

How	Lead partners	Success measures	When
Develop collaborative, strategic approaches to research and development.	DELWP CMAAs	Catchment partners support ongoing state and regional research and development programs.	2016–19
Incorporate volunteer effort in monitoring, evaluation and reporting.	DELWP CMAAs	Provide ongoing support for citizen science programs such as Waterwatch, EstuaryWatch and Coastcare.	2016–19



*Photograph -
Glenelg River
ecosystem monitoring
Glenelg Hopkins CMA*

CASE STUDIES

Victorian Environmental Flows Monitoring and Assessment Program

The Victorian Environmental Flows Monitoring and Assessment Program evaluates ecosystem responses to environmental flows in eight regulated rivers across the state. It monitors water quality, native fish and riparian vegetation to determine the ecological importance of environmental water to the health of the river systems in Victoria.

This is a collaborative program involving five Catchment Management Authorities, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the University of Melbourne.

Surveys on the Glenelg River started in 2009 and coincided with significant environmental flow releases between 2011 and 2015.

They reveal a positive response from native fish to flow, with fish moving into new areas and successfully recruiting to re-establish stocks after the prolonged drought period. Additionally, environmental flows reduce salinity and contribute to improved water conditions.

Fish surveys have indicated increased numbers of recreational and rare fish species coinciding with the delivery of environmental flows. Upstream migration of estuary-dependent native fish such as estuary perch and tupong have also increased. Tupong has been recorded migrating over 300 kilometres from the Glenelg River estuary mouth to Balmoral historically a stronghold for this species.

The monitoring helps Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority make informed decisions about the timing and volume of environmental flow releases to the Glenelg River.

Telling the story better, regularly and consistently

In recent years, output data standards have been developed and are used by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the 10 Catchment Management Authorities to report consistently on the actions they have undertaken to manage Victoria's catchments.

This has enabled the production of an annual *Actions and Achievements Report*, a collective report from Catchment Management Authorities that outlines what has been done in each region and across the state. The report lists actions in various aspects of catchment management such as the area of land treated for weed control and pest animal control, length of fencing constructed to protect rivers and native vegetation, area of new vegetation established, environmental flows released, waterway structures installed such as fish ladders, statutory approvals or advice provided, publications developed and the number of community people participating in events such as field days, seminars and training programs.

This approach provides a model to build on to develop consistent monitoring and reporting across the state using a set of catchment indicators.



Appendix 1

Roles of catchment management partners

Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal people have deep cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connections to Country, including land and waterways and its resources. The significant rights and interests of Aboriginal people to Country according to their traditional laws are recognised through federal native title legislation and Victorian Traditional Owner settlement agreements.

Aboriginal communities contribute to catchment management through land management, statements of aspirations and priorities in Country Plans developed by Traditional Owner Corporations, input into planning, programs and projects, sharing of traditional knowledge, and identification and protection of cultural values.

Traditional Owner Corporations hold significant rights to the land and have cultural obligations to manage traditional lands and waters. They are equal partners in ensuring catchment health. In many cases, Traditional Owners rights over Crown land and waterways are recognised in settlement agreements (covering over 40 parks and reserves) and governance arrangements to ensure their perspectives, knowledge and interests are valued.

Traditional Owner Land Management Boards set the strategic direction and develop joint management plans for 'appointed' Crown land, parks and reserves in a Traditional Owner group's recognised Country. Management plans are developed in partnership with the Secretary of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and implemented with the land manager (usually Parks Victoria). In some cases, these parks and reserves have been transferred in 'Aboriginal title' to the Traditional Owner group on the condition that they are jointly managed with the state through the Traditional Owner Land Management Boards.

Agricultural industry groups

Agricultural industry groups provide information and support to extensive networks of land managers on best practice management techniques through research, development and extension activities. Group examples include Mallee Sustainable Farming, Birchip Cropping Group, GippsDairy and Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria.

Catchment Management Authorities

Catchment Management Authorities are established for each of the ten catchment and land protection regions under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

Board members have experience and knowledge in land and water management, water resources and the water industry, environment or natural resource management, primary industry, strategic or business planning, and financial management. More than 50 per cent of board members must be primary producers (except for the Port Phillip and Westernport region).

They are responsible for the development, coordination and monitoring of Regional Catchment Strategies; advising ministers on regional priorities and resource allocation, and the condition of land and water resources; coordinating works to protect and enhance land and water resources; and encouraging participation of land managers in integrated catchment management. They have stewardship roles for Landcare, biodiversity, pest and salinity management.

Catchment Management Authorities have specific responsibilities for waterway management under the *Water Act 1989*, except for Port Phillip and Westernport region where Melbourne Water has the waterway management responsibilities. Collectively, the nine Catchment Management Authorities and Melbourne Water are referred to as the waterway managers. The waterway managers have the lead role in developing and delivering regional programs for waterway management, in particular developing Regional Waterway Strategies and associated action plans. They develop and coordinate implementation of floodplain management plans, have drainage management responsibilities, and respond to natural disasters, incidents and emergencies.

Catchment Management Authorities are referral authorities for land use planning and building approvals, and provide advice in relation to land management, waterways and flooding. They also provide advice on planning scheme amendments for consistency with Regional Catchment Strategies, Regional Waterway Strategies and drainage programs.

Coastcare groups

Coastcare groups undertake voluntary work to protect and enhance Victoria's 2,000 kilometres of coastline. Activities include revegetating coastal areas, building boardwalks and tracks, fencing, monitoring native shorebirds and animals, education and awareness raising, plantings, landscaping coastal areas and protecting cultural sites.

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria

The Commissioner's role is to report on the condition of Victoria's natural environment, encourage decision making that facilitates ecologically sustainable development, enhance knowledge and understanding of issues relating to ecologically sustainable development and the environment, and encourage Victorian and local governments to adopt sound environmental practices and procedures.

The Commissioner prepares the five-yearly *State of the Environment Report* for Victoria, undertakes annual strategic audits of the environmental management systems of Victorian Government agencies and public authorities, and works and consults with all sectors of the Victorian community.

Committees of management

Appointed under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, committees of management manage, improve and control allocated Crown land reserves. In Victoria, approximately 1,500 reserves are managed by 1,200 voluntary committees of management and 2,800 reserves are managed by municipal councils as committees of management.

Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder

Established by the *Water Act 2007*, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder manages Commonwealth environmental water holdings to protect or restore environmental assets of the Murray-Darling Basin and meet international agreements.

Commonwealth Government

The Department of the Environment designs and implements the Commonwealth Government's policies and programs to protect and conserve the environment, water and heritage and promote climate action.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources develops and implements policies and programs to ensure Australia's agricultural, fisheries, food and forestry industries remain competitive, profitable and sustainable.

Conservation management networks

Conservation management networks focus on the protection and restoration of a local ecological community across a network of sites with native vegetation. Members work on public and private land to protect threatened species, assist landholders and land managers to protect, restore and link sites, work with Landcare, government agencies and non-government organisations, and undertake community education.

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources aims to sustainably grow Victoria's economy and employment by working with the private and public sectors to foster innovation, productivity, investment and trade.

The department includes the agriculture, fisheries, biosecurity, forest industries, regional development and tourism portfolios.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

The department manages Victoria's natural and built environments to create and maintain liveable, inclusive and sustainable communities.

It assists ministers of the environment, climate change and water, planning and local infrastructure portfolios to manage their responsibilities under legislation through policies and programs, investment and regulation, governance, administration of government agencies including Catchment Management Authorities, and integrated place-based service delivery in regions.

In partnership with government agencies, the department manages public land, forests, water resources, catchments and waterways, and infrastructure; responds to the impacts of climate change; undertakes fire, flood and emergency management; provides biodiversity research; and works closely with local communities, land managers and groups such as Landcare.

Environment Protection Authority Victoria

The Environment Protection Authority's main role is to protect air, water and land from pollution, control industrial noise and minimise waste generation through the administration of environmental protection policies. Its functions include conducting environmental impact assessments, preparing statutory policies for environmental protection, publishing guidelines for managing environmental impacts, and providing strategic advice to the ministers.

Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations is the peak representative body for most Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations. Membership is made up of organisations that hold and manage native title or Traditional Owner rights and interests in Victoria including Prescribed Bodies Corporate and Traditional Owner Group Entities. The Federation focuses on shared interests of broadening political engagement, increasing economic opportunities and caring for Country.

Friends groups and environment groups

Friends groups and environment groups provide voluntary practical assistance to a particular park, conservation reserve, or a species of native plant or animal. There are hundreds of friends groups helping to maintain and protect Victoria's parks.

Interest groups

Specific interest groups, such as the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and Birdlife Mildura, contribute to catchment management through education, participation in monitoring, and knowledge sharing.

Landcare

Landcare is community-based leadership in action working to protect, restore and manage catchments. In Victoria, there are approximately 630 Landcare groups and 63 Landcare networks that facilitate and coordinate actions on private and public land to achieve sustainable land management and environmental outcomes.

They develop local priorities, organise community activities, and source support and funding from federal, state and local governments, Catchment Management Authorities, private businesses, non-profit organisations, and individuals. Their key activities include planning, on-ground projects, monitoring, building partnerships, community capacity building and engagement, sharing stories and skills, and celebrating success.

Local communities

Local communities make a significant contribution to catchment management. Individual landholders are required to manage their land in line with the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, with many going well beyond and sustainably managing their land for environmental and productivity outcomes.

Other community members volunteer their time to participate in activities such as planting days, clean up days and monitoring programs such as Waterwatch and EstuaryWatch, without necessarily being in groups.

Local government

Victoria's 79 local councils are significant contributors to catchment management through the regulation of land use and development, public land management, strategic planning including environmental strategies and urban stormwater plans, and support to landholders and community groups in the form of incentives, rebates, grants and community capacity building and education opportunities.

Melbourne Water

Melbourne Water provides a range of services including water supply, supply and treatment of drinking and recycled water, and sewage disposal and treatment. Under the *Water Act 1989*, Melbourne Water is the waterway manager with waterway, floodplain, drainage and environmental water reserve management functions for the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

Murray-Darling Basin Authority

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority is an independent expertise-based statutory agency responsible for planning and management of both surface water and groundwater across the basin. Its role includes preparing, implementing and reviewing the integrated *Murray-Darling Basin Plan*; measuring, monitoring and recording the quality and quantity of water resources; supporting, encouraging and conducting research and investigations; developing equitable and sustainable use of water resources; operating the Murray River system and delivering water to users in a fair and efficient way; disseminating information; and engaging and educating the community.

Non-government organisations

A range of non-government, not-for-profit and philanthropic organisations contribute significantly to catchment management through advocacy, community engagement, planning, monitoring, on-ground works, education and management. Examples include Victorian National Parks Association, Greening Australia, Environment Victoria, Conservation Volunteers Australia and Bush Heritage Australia.

Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria is a statutory authority created by the *Parks Victoria Act 1998* that reports to the minister. It manages the state's network of national, state, regional and metropolitan parks, other conservation reserves, and many significant cultural assets.

Parks Victoria provides services for the management of waterways and land for the purposes of conservation, recreation, leisure, tourism or water transport, and for the management of land used for public purposes.

Recreational groups

Recreational groups are interested in the health of catchments for pursuits such as fishing, boating, walking, hiking, cycling, picnics, viewing native plants and animals and gaming. Numerous groups are involved in natural resource management such as protecting rare fish species and controlling weeds on waterways.

Regional Coastal Boards

The Western, Central and Gippsland Coastal Boards develop coastal action plans, provide advice on coastal development, prepare guidelines for coastal planning and management, facilitate the implementation of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy*, coastal action plans and guidelines, facilitate awareness and involvement in strategies, plans and guidelines, and encourage the cooperation of those involved in planning and management. Board members have experience and knowledge of conservation, tourism, business, recreation, commerce, issues relating to indigenous peoples, community affairs, town planning, local government and coastal engineering.

Trust for Nature

Trust for Nature was established under the *Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972* to provide statewide private land conservation services to the community, government and landowners. These services include land protection through conservation covenants, engagement, education, stewardship and environmental markets, conservation reserves, and the Revolving Fund.

Universities and research institutions

Universities and research institutions provide assistance in filling information gaps and guidance on the most appropriate natural resource management tools, methods or approaches to use. They also provide scientific evidence about the condition of natural assets.

Victorian Catchment Management Council

Appointed under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, the Victorian Catchment Management Council is the state government's key advisory body on catchment management and the condition of land and water resources. Members reflect the major land and water uses in Victoria including rural, urban, private and public uses, and have experience and knowledge of land protection, water resource management, primary industry, environment protection and conservation and local government.

The council is responsible for advising the minister on catchment management priorities, condition of land and water resources and research and investigation priorities; encouraging the cooperation of those involved in the management of land and water resources; promoting community awareness and understanding of issues; reporting annually on the operation

of the Act; and reporting every five years on the condition and management of land and water resources, through the *Catchment Condition and Management Report*. They also advise the minister on the declaration or revocation of pest species, and establish guidelines for the development and review of Regional Catchment Strategies prepared by Catchment Management Authorities.

Under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the council may provide comment on final recommendations of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Scientific Advisory Committee for listing a species and provide advice on action statements.

Victorian Coastal Council

The Victorian Coastal Council is appointed under the *Coastal Management Act 1995* as the peak body for the strategic planning and management of the Victorian coast. Members have experience and knowledge of conservation, tourism, business, recreation, commerce, issues relating to Aboriginal peoples, community affairs, town planning, local government and coastal engineering. The council's responsibilities include preparing and coordinating the implementation of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy*; facilitating the operation of Regional Coastal Boards; monitoring the development and implementation of coastal action plans; publishing guidelines for the planning and management of the coast; and encouraging the cooperation of those involved in the planning, management and use of the coast.

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council is established under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*. Members have experience, skills

and knowledge in environment protection and conservation, natural resources management, tourism and recreation, economics and business management, rural and regional affairs, issues relating to Aboriginal peoples, local government, social and community affairs, and community consultation and participation. Its role is to conduct investigations requested by the government relating to the protection and ecologically sustainable management of the environment and natural resources of public land.

Victorian Environmental Water Holder

The Victorian Environmental Water Holder is an independent statutory authority appointed under the *Water Act 1989* to manage Victoria's environmental water entitlements. It works with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, Catchment Management Authorities and water corporations to ensure water entitlements are used to achieve the most efficient and effective environmental outcomes.

Victorian Farmers Federation

The Victorian Farmers Federation is a lobby group dedicated to the interests of farmers. It represents 10,000 members who live and work on more than 6,000 farm businesses.

The federation consists of seven commodity groups: Dairy (United Dairy Farmers of Victoria), Livestock, Grains, Horticulture (incorporating Flowers Victoria), Chicken Meat, Eggs and Pigs, as well as Water, Land Management, Farm Business and Rural Development and Farm Security. It seeks to influence all levels of government on the wide range of issues that affect modern farming.

Water corporations

Victoria's state-owned water sector is made up of 19 water corporations constituted under the *Water Act 1989*. They provide a range of services to customers comprising urban and rural water supply, sewerage and trade waste disposal and treatment, recycled water and drainage services. Four of the water corporations provide rural water services, which include water delivery for irrigation and domestic and stock purposes, drainage, and salinity mitigation services.

As storage and resource managers, they are responsible for delivering water to entitlement holders. They work with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder and Catchment Management Authorities to deliver environmental water according to agreed regional watering proposals.

Appendix 2

Connected planning

Commonwealth legislation, policy & strategy

For example:

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- International Agreements and Conventions e.g. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971)
- National Landcare Programme (2015–18)
- Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2010–30)
- Murray-Darling Basin Plan (2012)
- Threatened Species Strategy (2015)

State level policy & strategy

For example:

- Water for Victoria*
- Victorian Soil Health Strategy (2012)
- Victorian Waterway Management Strategy (2013)
- Victoria's Regional Statement (2015)
- Regional Growth Plans (2013, 2014)
- Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036*
- Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land (2012)
- Victorian Landcare Program Strategic Plan (2012)
- Sustainable Water Strategies (2006, 2009, 2011)
- Climate Change Framework*
- State Environment Protection Policy Waters of Victoria*

Regional integration & cross boundary linkages

Regional Catchment Strategies:

- Corangamite (2013–19)
- East Gippsland (2013–19)
- Glenelg Hopkins (2013–19)
- Goulburn Broken (2013–19)
- Mallee (2013–19)
- North Central (2013–19)
- North East (2013–19)
- Port Phillip & Westernport (2014–20)
- West Gippsland (2013–19)
- Wimmera (2013–19)

Regional, local & place-based planning

For example:

- Regional Waterway Strategies, Regional Watering Plans, Regional NRM Plans for Climate Change etc.
- Traditional Owner Country Plans
- Parks Victoria Park Management Plans
- Local government planning schemes
- Local management plans

*Policies and plans under development/review

Appendix 3

Abbreviations

CMAs

Catchment Management Authorities

DEDJTR

Department of Economic
Development, Jobs, Transport
and Resources

DELWP

Department of Environment,
Land, Water and Planning

NAIDOC

National Aboriginal and Islander
Day Observance Committee

NRM

Natural Resource Management

OCES

Office of the Commissioner for
Environmental Sustainability

PV

Parks Victoria

VCMC

Victorian Catchment
Management Council

*Photograph -
Landscape connections
Port Phillip and
Westernport CMA*





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