

Gippsland Environmental Agencies



Gippsland Environmental Agencies (GEA) are committed to working together to improve the management of land, water and biodiversity resources across East and West Gippsland.

Background

Gippsland Environmental Agencies (GEA) formed in 2014, when the leaders of several environment agencies agreed that collaboration could be improved. The membership of GEA has grown to incorporate 13 agencies across East and West Gippsland.

In 2018, GEA leaders developed and signed the first Catchment Partnership Agreement (CPA), which formalised our partnership and purpose across East and West Gippsland. The Catchment Partnership Agreements were reviewed in 2021 and combined into a single agreement across both regions and with signatories of the 13 environmental agencies.

Who is GEA?

GEA is a forum for the Managing Directors/ Regional Director/ CEO to meet to strengthen coordination, collaboration, and accountability, reduce duplication, and provide clarity on roles and responsibilities between key partners.

The 13 agencies employ close to 1200 staff across Gippsland. Additionally, this number fluctuates and can surge in response to seasonal demands such as fire and peak visitation and the availability of funding to deliver enhanced nature conservation, capital investment and recovery programs.

Principles for GEA operating

- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ An enduring and effective partnership
- ▶ Connection to country
- ▶ Mutual respect
- ▶ Shared decision-making
- ▶ Community focus

People, and personalities, are the foundation for why the GEA works.

Trust across all agencies and relationships that have been built are vital for ongoing delivery of projects.

A key to that strength is the partnership with our Traditional Owners and the commitment of all agencies to work with Aboriginal people to learn from each other, care for Country and deliver on their aspirations and priorities.

Area of operation

It encompasses the East and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority Regions working cooperatively across the whole of Gippsland.

Members of GEA

- Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action – Gippsland (DEECA) including Agriculture Victoria (Ag Vic)
- East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA)
- East Gippsland Water (EGW)
- Environment Protection Authority – Gippsland (EPA)
- Gippsland Regional Water Corporation (GW)
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)
- Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners Land Management Board (GKTLOMB)
- Parks Victoria – Eastern (PV)
- South Gippsland Regional Water Corporation (SGW)
- Southern Rural Regional Water Corporation (SRW)
- Trust for Nature – Gippsland (TFN)
- West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA)



Gippsland Environmental Agencies

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the region, the Gunaikurnai, the Bunurong, the Boonwurrung and the Wurundjeri Peoples, their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country. We also acknowledge the contribution and interest of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and organisations in natural resource management and pay respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.



Role of GEA Forum

- Identify regional priorities that need cross-organisational collaboration to be successfully implemented.
- Account for legislative responsibilities and describe and clarify policy implementation and regionally specific roles of the partners.
- Support development and implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategies in East and West Gippsland and monitor progress.
- Commit to collaborating with the region's Traditional Owners across all aspects of planning, strategy, and project delivery with an emphasis on two-way knowledge sharing. These arrangements are tailored to each Country and cultural landscape context.
- Identify any relevant regional issues and develop options for resolving them.
- Review new relevant government policies to identify those that will require cross-organisational cooperation and collaboration for implementation.
- Ensure that all relevant partners may be signatories and are involved in all relevant issues, decisions, and policy implementation in a timely and collaborative manner.

GEA Working Groups

GEA delegates responsibilities and decision-making to working groups, to drive and action key areas of operation, the working group reports back to the full GEA Forum at each meeting.

GEA - GLaWAC Working Group

Purpose: A partnership agreement has been signed by the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and the GEA to work towards four common objectives to benefit all partners.

- ▶ To respect Gunaikurnai as Traditional Owners and foster mutual respect.
- ▶ To support economic development opportunities.
- ▶ To support Joint Management arrangements within the 10 parks and reserves.
- ▶ To support a workforce strategy for Aboriginal people in Gippsland.

GEA - Women in Leadership Team

Purpose: To provide leadership to inspire and encourage women in the Gippsland Environment Agencies (GEA) to be great leaders at all levels, through a culture of growth and empowerment.

- ▶ To increase GEA women's capability, opportunities for growth, skills sets and confidence to be a great leader at any level they choose.
- ▶ That GEA women are collaborative, will build strong partnerships and networks; and model the public sector values.
- ▶ To create and foster an environment where at all levels women have choices and are valued.

GEA - Gippsland Regional Delivery Managers

Purpose: to bring together the senior operational manager from each of the agencies to share knowledge, identify and discuss strategic issues and opportunities and brief GEA on these matters.

- ▶ Develop an efficient reporting framework to avoid duplication of effort for agencies.
- ▶ Communicate and promote the shared GEA catchment achievements, delivered and enabled across Gippsland.
- ▶ Identify priorities within the RCS that need cross-organisational collaboration to be successfully implemented; and
- ▶ Develop an RCS prospectus of NRM projects that provide value for investment in Gippsland and align advocacy efforts across agencies.

