

Gippsland Environmental Agencies 2024-25 members

2024-25 GEA members

Ag Vic: Bruce Weston
Regional Leader South East

DEECA: Darrin McKenzie
Regional Director Gippsland

DEECA: Sam Quigley
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Gippsland

EGCMA: Bec Hemming
CEO

EGW: Michael Wandmaker
Managing Director

EPA: Jessica Bandiera
Regional Manager
Gippsland

GW: Sarah Cumming
Managing Director

GLaWAC:
Daniel Miller/ Charee Smith
CEO

GKTOLMB: Craig Parker
EO

MLRA: Dr Jennifer Brereton
CEO

Parks Vic: Kerri Villiers
Regional Director Eastern

SGW: Robert Murphy
Managing Director

SRW: Cameron FitzGerald
Managing Director

TfN: Catherine Crowden
Area Manager Gippsland

WGCMA: Martin Fuller
CEO

GEA: Belinda Brennan
Executive Officer



Gippsland Environmental
Agencies



Annual Report 2024-25

Committed to working together to improve the management of land, water and biodiversity resources across Gippsland.

Gippsland Environmental Agencies (GEA) is a forum for the Managing Directors/Regional Director/CEO of **fourteen environmental agencies** in Gippsland to meet to strengthen coordination, collaboration, and accountability, reduce duplication, and provide clarity on roles and responsibilities between key partners.

The GEA Strategic Plan developed in 2023 identified five key areas of common focus. GEA members work together to share knowledge, develop and deliver partnership projects and work collaboratively on policy development.

Key Areas of Common Focus (2023- 2028)

PEOPLE

Foster innovation and empower people.

PARTNERS

Work together for innovative solutions to issues challenging communities.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Empower Traditional Owners on their journey towards self determination.

ENVIRONMENT

Protect, enhance and restore the Gippsland region.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Maintain high standard of partner and community engagement whilst meeting legislative responsibilities.

Gippsland Environmental Agencies Annual Report 2024-25

PEOPLE

Foster innovation and empower people.

GEA aims to be a regional leader in Diversity and Inclusion.

Women in Leadership

GEA Women in Leadership (WLT) group was revamped this year, updating the secondment agreement and holding four networking sessions across Gippsland in April – May 2025. The sessions focused on reconnecting women across the region and relaunching GEA WLT, close to 80 women attended. The group is working on a mentoring program to be rolled out in 2025-26, exploring training and webinars that will be conducted and cultural awareness training with GLaWAC.

GEA members participated in a **"Leading for Gender Equity Workshop"** delivered by Gippsland Women's Health, building awareness of gender equity and supporting the development of leadership skills to foster gender equitable workplaces.

Support for C.R.A.P presentation as part of Authorised Officer Forum: GEA and GEA WLT supported the



presentation by Tanya Heany-Vooght: *Navigating the C.R.A.P. Embracing and Growing through Change.* (Change, Respond, Adapt, Pivot). Over 140 staff attended the presentation.

Neurodiversity Briefing

Over 150 staff across all agencies joined the Neurodiversity briefing in November 2024, to listen to Brad Missen talking about his journey with Tourette syndrome and Jessica Kaaden about on neuro-inclusive leadership approaches and how organisations can be autism inclusive.

Encourage and support secondment agreements

The GEA secondment agreement has been developed to support secondments for staff between Agencies. The key aspect is encouraging agencies to use secondments as a way of supporting professional development, filling short term resource gaps.

ENVIRONMENT

Protect, enhance and restore the Gippsland region.

Each agency has a role in the protection, enhancement and restoration of Gippsland's natural resources. For details on each agencies work, please refer to their individual annual reports.

The meetings and briefings allow GEA members to be informed of priority issues across the region, contribute to policy development and identify key areas for collaboration and action.

Briefings on key regional and State policy, input on strategy development, updates on key programs ensure agencies have the latest information.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Maintain high standard of partner and community engagement whilst meeting legislative responsibilities.

Presentations to help inform included:

- Overarching approach to mine rehabilitation and key aspects of mine closure planning that the declared mines will have to undertake.
- Macalister Fresh – region building water strategy that will deliver a vision and plan to drive future investment in Victoria.
- Seasonal outlook and fire management.
- How to act for nature in a rapidly changing climate: applying the Resist-Accept-Direct (RAD) Framework.

PARTNERS

Work together for innovative solutions to issues challenging communities.

In November 2024, GEA members met with John Bradley, DEECA Secretary. Topics discussed included joint advocacy, collective decision making, the importance of GEA collective knowledge, sharing information and the need to reduce inter-departmental "green" tape. Following the meeting, GEA convened a collective advocacy and collaboration workshop.

Key points from the discussion and workshop:

- Collaborative nature of GEA: refining and utilising what we already have.
- Honour diversity in people and projects.
- Supporting individual agencies to achieving key priorities is important.
- Expanding strategic partnerships, identifying where GEA overlaps with other regional committee/groups and initiate discussion to support actions and reduce duplication.



Image: WGCMA Board hosted GEA members along with DEECA executive – Kirsten Shelly - Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments and Melinda Knapp Executive Director, Catchments and Communities.

A joint meeting with Gippsland Executive Group helped to identify opportunities for cross organisational cooperation.

As resources are scarce, it is important to collaborate and understand priorities so that we are better able to support each other.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Empower Traditional Owners on their journey towards self determination.

- Actively participating and supporting strategies to improve Aboriginal employment in Gippsland.
- Partnership GLaWAC, GW and Victorian Government to deliver drinking fountains and water mains to The Knob Reserve in Stratford.
- Powlett/ Kugerungmome Cultural Heritage Management program with BLCAC and other partner.
- Supporting GLaWAC in major projects in line with "Pathways to Partnerships".
- Engaging GLaWAC and BLCAC works crew in environmental protection and enhancement works.
- Joint Management arrangements – GLaWAC, GKTOLMB, PV and DEECA.



CONTACT GEA

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