

WEST GIPPSLAND CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Annual Report

2024-25



*We collaborate and support each other
and our partners by acting with integrity,
empathy and passion to protect and
enhance the region's catchments.*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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 responsibility of First Peoples to care for Country and pay respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

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Photo credits:

Cover: Wirn wirndook
Yeerung (Macalister River),
Gunaikurnai Country.

Inset: Gunaikurnai Smoking
Ceremony

This page: Lower Latrobe
Wetlands - Gunaikurnai
Country.



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Report overview

Responsible Body Declaration

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2025.

Mikaela Power

Chairperson

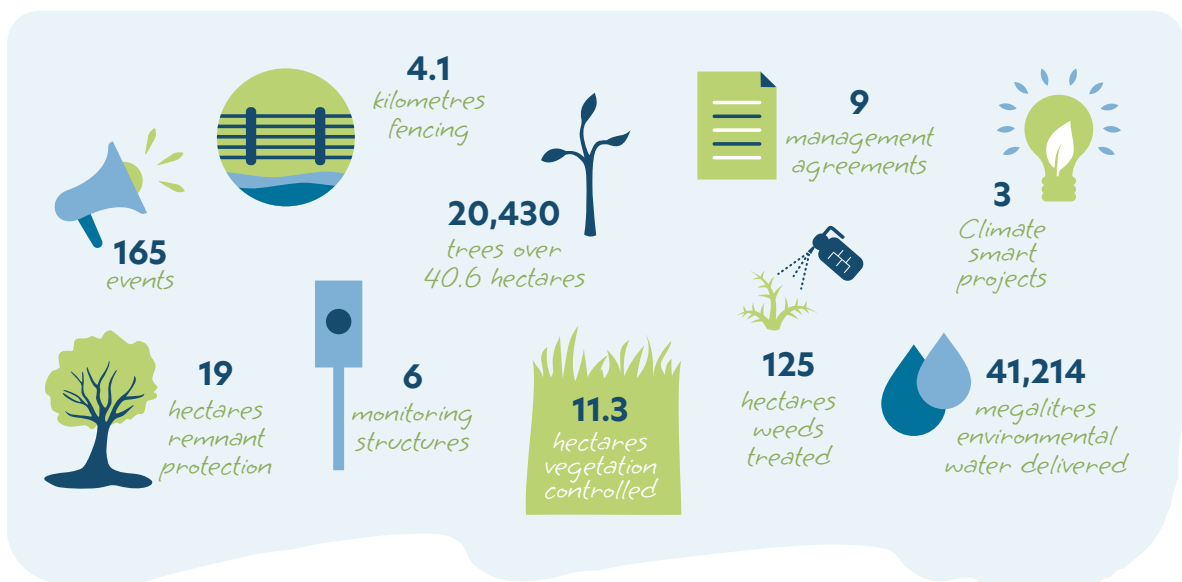
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

25 August 2025

2024-25 Highlights

Delivering Water for Victoria priorities

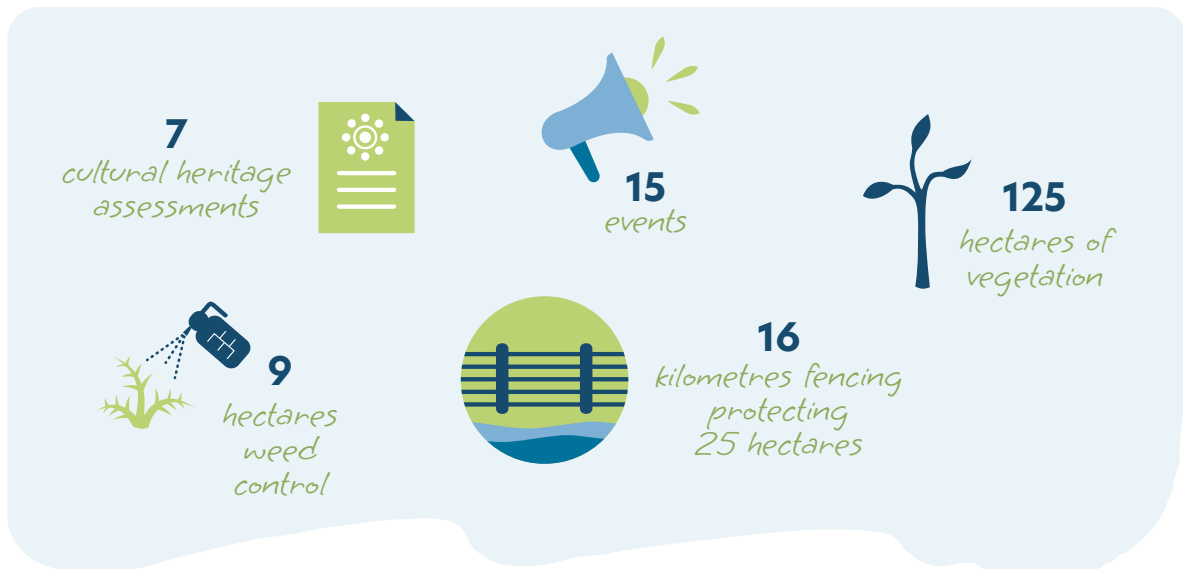
We are extremely proud of our work to deliver on the priorities in Water for Victoria. We have made significant progress again this year:



This work will help reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients entering rivers and streams. In addition, we have continued our partnerships with Landcare groups, Traditional Owners and other community groups.

Regional Landcare and community events

As part of the Victorian Landcare Grants, successful Landcare and community events were held throughout the year focusing on different projects and audiences.



Sustainable Irrigation Program

The Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan was finalised in 2019 and provides a 10 year vision for sustainable irrigation and water management in the Lake Wellington catchment.

This year was the first of the new four-year EC6 Sustainable Irrigation Program. The program provides extension, education and technical support to the MID irrigation farming community, implements the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines, implements the irrigation efficiency incentives program and ensures the priority actions of the Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan (finalised in 2019) are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

The main focus this year was on planning and establishing the governance arrangements for the program which has resulted in a reduced on-ground output delivery. That said, the SIP program delivered 134 irrigation efficiency projects (spray irrigation, reuse dams and improved surface irrigation) covering an area of 375 hectares, providing estimated water savings of over 730 megalitres and Phosphorous load reductions of approximately 190 kilograms per year.

More information about the success of the four-year SIP program can be found on page 34 of this report.

Panel of Regional Delivery Partners

West Gippsland CMA was appointed to Australian Government's Panel of Regional Delivery Partners of Environmental Protection, Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Services.

As a result, the CMA was contracted to deliver a number of projects including:

- Corner Inlet Connections
- Toward Zero Extinctions: targeted effort to protect the Eastern Hooded Plover in West Gippsland
- Climate Smart Farmers in West Gippsland.

In addition to these projects, the program supports the Sustainable Agricultural Facilitator (SAF) position and our Indigenous Partnership Program.

In 2024-25, these projects delivered:



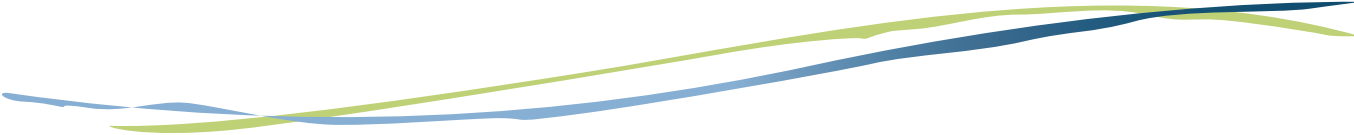
Through this program, we continue the important partnership with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and support involvement in the projects.

Water for the environment

Water for the environment plays an important role in improving the health of rivers and wetlands in Gippsland. This year, a total of just over 41,000 megalitres of water for the environment was released into the Carran Carran (Thomson) and Wiron Wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) rivers. Due to favourable conditions, no water was delivered to Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River). This water is critical for native plants, fish, and other animals. These flows can move sediment and nutrients through rivers, connect habitats and improve water quality.

Kugerungmome/Powlett River Partnerships Project

During 2024-25 the Kugerungmome/Powlett River Partnerships Project continued. In partnership with Bass Coast Landcare Network, Trust for Nature, Parks Victoria, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and BirdLife Australia, we undertook fox control and riparian vegetation protection and enhancement. This was the first year of the new four-year program and therefore focused on planning the new program, with limited on-ground deliverables.



Challenges

Climate change

Climate change and variability is having clear and ongoing impact on our catchments and natural systems. It is a key challenge and one that will drive and influence our organisation's priorities and activities. We will continue to embed and consolidate planning and impact scenario thinking into the work we do. This will be particularly relevant to coastal inundation, extreme events and water availability.

To help understand and better prepare for the impacts of climate change on the natural environment, we have developed a Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Climate Change Strategy. We also undertook planning to understand the risk and potential impact of extreme weather events on Threatened Species and Communities, Ramsar sites and agriculture assets in collaboration with our partner organisations through funding from the Australian Government. The Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator role (funded by the Australian Government) continued with an increasing focus on climate smart approaches to agriculture including drought in partnership with Food and Fibre Gippsland.

At statewide level, the Victorian CMAs continued to collectively invest in a joint Climate Change Coordinator to provide support for CMAs, facilitate joint projects, enhance knowledge exchange, and provide coordinated input into policy and program design. The role focused on collaboration, stakeholder engagement, advocacy, project support, and research.

Four climate change forums were held, enabling CMAs to share updates on key projects and engage with experts from a range of organisations including CSIRO, VicWater, RMIT, Parks Victoria, UTAS, and DEECA. Learning and development were supported through bi-monthly updates, guest presentations, and dissemination of opportunities.

Submissions were made on behalf of the CMAs to DEECA on the Water Sector Emissions Transition Consultation paper and Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2026-2030 and information was provided to numerous groups interested in CMA activity relating to climate change.

Victorian CMAs were represented on various Communities of Practice and contributions were made to strategic initiatives. Research collaborations included work with ANU, La Trobe University, CSIRO, UTAS and RMIT.

The Water Cycle Adaptation Action Program (WCAAP), funded by DEECA with \$1.95 million, was launched to advance climate adaptation. A program coordinator was appointed and following a gap analysis five priority projects were funded totalling \$1.15 million.

Changing demographics and visitation

Demographics in the region continue to change with an increase in absentee farmers, ageing landowners and urban-based farmers. The impact of COVID-19 on demographics is still being played out with anecdotal evidence that it may be driving an increase in tree- and sea-changers. This means we need to continue to evolve our approaches to engage landholders and support best practices to protect and improve the region's land and water resources. This also creates opportunities to recruit new people to assist in protecting, enhancing and acting as advocates for the region's natural assets.



Rural land use

Increased population growth and urbanisation of rural land continues as people move away from the city to the coast and countryside. This not only changes the demographics of the area but also shows increasing changes in rural land use.

Volunteer uncertainty

The changing demographics of an ageing population may produce more, or fewer, volunteers and the region will need to meet these recruitment and retention challenges in the coming years. The role of Landcare and WaterWatch needs to be understood in this context as they offer the potential to evolve to meet contemporary and innovative approaches to participating in NRM. The impact of COVID-19 on volunteerism needs to be understood and may influence future participation rates.

Increased expectations

There continues to be an increase in demand and expectations from individuals and communities wanting to undertake catchment improvement works. Whilst this enthusiasm and willingness is positive, having sufficient resources to support this demand is a challenge.

Industry transition

Industry transition continues to gain momentum. The closure of the Hazelwood power station, along with an evolving timber, gas and renewables industry, will present unique challenges in relation to land and water management in the coming years. The region is also experiencing an increase in large scale corporate-owned agricultural enterprises (e.g. horticultural and dairy sectors). Whilst there has been an upturn in milk production, farmers are taking a conservative approach to operating their businesses and prioritising stability over expansion as labour and weather challenges continue. This may affect some landholders' ability to engage in environmental restoration activities. Through established relationships and linkages, the West Gippsland CMA is well-positioned to assist in this transition.

Initiatives and projects

We plan and implement initiatives around two key planning and delivery frameworks; our strategic focus is guided by a Board-endorsed five-year Strategic Plan. Supporting and activating this is our Corporate Plan that provides an annual depiction of programs, initiatives, and projects developed and funded by both the Victorian and Australian governments. These all contribute to the Corporate Plan objectives specifically relating to Natural Resource Management - to manage the region under a 'whole of catchment' model and improve the region's priority landscapes. Key documents such as the Regional Catchment Strategy and the Regional Waterway Strategy support government policy and legislation and help guide funding.

All of these documents are available on our website at wgcm.vic.gov.au

Table 1 is a summary of the key initiatives and projects delivered in 2024-25.

This year, we commenced the first year of the Victorian Water Program Investment (EC6) funding agreement. The percentage complete for these projects is based upon the annual progress toward the overall four-year program.

EC6 delivers state and regional priorities such as Water for Victoria, the Regional Catchment Strategy, Regional Waterway Strategy and Our Catchments, Our Communities.

This was the second year of the suite of regional delivery projects funded by the Australian Government's under the Regional Delivery Partners Panel (RDP). Three key projects include the Corner Inlet Connections, Toward Zero Extinctions: Eastern Hooded Plover protection and the Sustainable Agriculture Project. In addition to these projects, the funding also supported the Sustainable Agricultural Facilitator position, our Indigenous Partnership Program as part of Regional Capacity Services.

Table 1: Key projects delivered in 2024-25

Funding source	Project Name	Percentage complete
Australian Government funding	Corner Inlet Connections (5-year project)	40
	Toward Zero Extinctions: targeted effort to protect the Eastern Hooded Plover in West Gippsland (5-year project)	40
	Sustainable Agriculture (5-year project)	40
	Regional Capacity Services (5-year project)	40
	Sustainable Agricultural Facilitator (5-year project)	40
Victorian Water Program Investment Framework (EC6)	WGCMA Statutory Functions – Floodplain and waterway protection	25
	Caretaker of Waterway Health	25
	Flagship Waterway – Corner Inlet	25
	Flagship Waterway – Mid Thomson River	25
	Protecting Pristine Headwaters of the Victorian Alps and Strzelecki Ranges	25
	WGCMA Strategic Floodplain Management Implementation	25
	Estuaries and Inlets of the Bunurong to the Mullungdung Coast	25
	Corner Inlet Ramsar Coordination	25
	West Gippsland Our Catchments, Our Communities	25
	Managing Environmental Water – Delivery and Community Engagement	25
Other state-based funding	Sustainable Irrigation in WGCMA	25
	Regional Landcare Coordination in West Gippsland	100
	Victorian Landcare Grants in West Gippsland 2023-24	100

Table 2: Outputs achieved in 2024-25

Category	Output	Unit of Measure	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Structural works	Water storage	Number	11	14	12	-	14	39	29	29
	Irrigation infrastructure	Hectares	142	767	47.83	27.16	604	236	552	638
	Waterway structure	Number	3	7	5	5	2	2	-	1
	Terrestrial structure	Number	-	0	0	-	-	0	-	3
	Monitoring structure	Number	6	14	155	43	11	13	13	13
	Road	Kilometres	-	4	0	1	4	-	-	-
	Fence	Kilometres	20.78	73	54.71	27.18	23	42	69	91
Environmental works	Vegetation	Hectares	204.13	305.24	170.33	55.19	103	151	198	292
	Weed control	Hectares	1,194	1,404	2,160	1,247	732	2,442	1,444	1,334
	Pest animal control	Hectares	31,084	691	1,221	42,784	43,461	74,797	6,869	17,445
	Earthworks	Hectares	6.41	22.4	9.36	32.19	1	72	72	2
Management services	Agricultural Practices	Number	-	1	30	1	-	-	-	-
	Grazing	Number	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Water regimes	Number	15	11	8	8	12	20	21	21
Planning and regulation	Approval and advice	Number	1,130	1,507	1,266	1,585	1,312	1,639	1,345	872
	Management agreement	Number	12	96	73	75	10	63	53	55
	Assessment	Number	536	751	756	751	581	691	568	474
	Engagement event	Participants	2,330	1,291	2,401	2,182	2,762	3,639	5,169	2,360
	Information management system	Number	2	2	2	-	3	3	3	-
	Partnership	Number	44	48	44	43	37	56	53	36
	Plan	Number	11	56	78	76	50	89	149	129
	Publication	Number	173	144	175	171	125	117	118	122

Summary of financial results

The financial performance for the 2024-25 financial year was a net surplus of \$382k.

At \$10.8M, total income from transactions was \$1.742M lower than 2023-24. This is largely attributed to a decrease in government contribution income due to the beginning of a new State Government funding cycle. This income figure is lower than the Corporate Plan budgeted revenue of \$15.2M for 2024-25 which is attributable to the application of AASB15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers to a large-scale project, requiring the deferral of income received in advance.

At \$10.5M, total expenses from transactions were lower than the previous year by \$2.745M, and below the Corporate Plan budgeted expenditure of \$16.197M. This is largely due to delays in project works, with works scheduled for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years.

Total assets increased by \$3.8M, from \$26.7M at 30 June 2023 to \$30.5M at 30 June 2024, due to an increase in cash and deposits held as a result of funding received in advance.

Total liabilities increased by \$3.4M over this period, due to an increase in contract liabilities relating to funding received in advance.

Table 3: Five-year financial summary

Five-year financial summary	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income from government	8,612	10,158	10,316	15,559	9,323
Total income from transactions	10,839	12,581	12,255	16,680	10,898
Total expenses from transactions	10,539	13,334	13,118	11,428	10,515
Net result from transactions	300	(753)	(862)	5,252	383
Net result for the period	382	(672)	(639)	5,411	430
Net cash flow from operating activities	4,684	2,856	4,333	5,938	867
Total assets	30,517	26,708	24,567	20,102	15,194
Total liabilities	13,689	10,263	7,488	2,383	2,886

Chair and CEO report

The past year has been a busy and fulfilling time for the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA).

Our strong connections with partners, a diverse and skills-based Board and capable staff enable us to address challenges and seize opportunities in an operating environment that continues to require a strategic and regional focus.

This year saw our work to improve and protect the region's wonderful natural assets through the delivery of Environmental Contribution Levy Tranche Six (EC6) programs and Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) projects well underway.

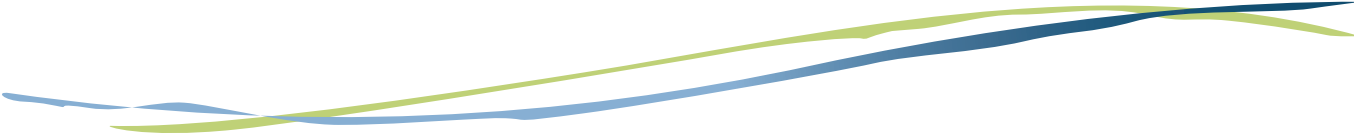
Our planning and delivery capability is well understood and trusted by the community and our partners in the region. This has enabled us to act promptly to deliver on regional priorities in alignment with those of the Australian and Victorian governments. We have continued to focus on Corner Inlet and the Gippsland Lakes, and considerable progress has been made in protecting and restoring these iconic assets.

"Reflecting on the progress made to protect and enhance the region's natural environment, the predominant feeling is one of gratitude and satisfaction underpinned by a deep desire to amplify our efforts into the future."

We are thankful for the opportunity to invest government funding into the work we and our regional partners undertake to make West Gippsland a better place. As the vision for West Gippsland's Regional Catchment Strategy succinctly states: Catchment Health – Gippsland's Wealth.



Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River) Gunaikurnai Country, by Kylie Jackson.



We are conscious of, and acknowledge, the financial contribution that urban-based citizens make in paying the levy through their water bills. We will continue to maximise the value of this contribution by protecting and rehabilitating West Gippsland's waterways for all Victorians to enjoy.

During 2024-25 we focused our efforts on delivering initiatives supported by both the Victorian and Australian Governments such as works in Corner Inlet, on the flagship Agnes and Carran Carran (Thomson) rivers, partnering for Alpine Peatlands and delivering sustainable irrigation programs.

West Gippsland CMA completed its 28th year as a mature, effective, and efficient organisation in one of Australia's most diverse natural resource regions. Together with our partners, we continued to achieve meaningful results for the environment. An efficient and adaptive approach has allowed us to quickly plan and implement programs that improve and protect the region's wonderful natural assets.

Governance and support

A key to success as an organisation has been a commitment to our organisational objectives which are regularly reviewed and used annually to set directions and monitor our progress. This year we were able to deliver 98% of the activities approved in the annual operational action plan.

During the year we continued to expand and build sector collaboration through Vic Catchments, which works across all CMAs and Melbourne Water. Vic Catchments has worked hard to hone our collective strengths and make the most of the opportunities this provides. We will continue this work across 2025-26.

In Gippsland, this collaborative approach is exemplified by the Gippsland Environmental Agencies (GEA) forum of leaders from [fourteen environmental agencies](#). GEA works to improve the management of land, water and biodiversity resources across Gippsland. Its member agencies employ close to 1,200 people across the region, and include DEECA, water authorities, CMAs, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), Traditional Owners, Southern Rural Water, Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature and the Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority (MLRA).

Chaired by the CEO of West Gippsland CMA, this forum enables close and supportive connections between all agencies and builds strong, ongoing connections to our local communities, which are particularly important in changing and challenging times.

A consequence of having worked in the region for over 28 years is the establishment of strong and trusted relationships with local people and organisations. This approach helps ensure future generations and the environment benefit from the region's many natural resources. While not a new concept, the need for integrated catchment management remains important, particularly in the face of climate change, disaster, and regional transition. It is our charter, and we are determined to facilitate and coordinate our efforts well into the future.

We are committed to nurturing a partnership-focused culture to achieve lasting results and remain conscious of the need to be nimble and adaptive. Partnerships this year have again increased and include community groups and government agencies through to industry and commercial partners.



Leading our efforts is a diverse, skills-based and experienced Board with extensive links to the community. This ensures we are in touch with regional and local community needs, while meeting our statutory obligations and helping government to deliver its policies and programs.

We are now three years into the term of the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) that was endorsed in 2022. This is a web-based 'living' strategy and this has amplified our ability to collaborate on its use with partners and community. Its strong, locality focus has been well received and ensures it continues to be effective in guiding efforts to protect and improve the region's wonderful natural resources and features.

westgippsland.rcs.vic.gov.au

Operating environment

Thankfully we progressed through the year without any catastrophic events and were able to complete our extensive flood recovery program resulting from the 2021 flood event in the region. Subsequent rain events in 2023 underline the likelihood that variable and impactful climatic events are an ongoing item that we will need to plan for and respond to.

Our experience from the aggregation of ongoing high rainfall events continues to underline the importance of planning and flood overlays. We are committed to working with Local Government to update these critical planning instruments.

While variable climatic conditions are challenging, we continue to work with the community and individual landholders to create options to ensure that the environmental benefits wet years bring are realised and the natural systems are resilient and protected during drier times.

Transition focus

The West Gippsland region is undergoing a considerable shift in the energy industry. Where we can, we are assisting and providing advice on the water and catchment element. Given the potential impact on the region's natural assets, we continue to work with government to understand the consequences as well as manage any changes as these may impact waterways and coasts.

Delivering results

This year, Victorian Government funding helped to deliver a range of important projects. We also embraced opportunities to deliver programs for the Australian Government as Regional Delivery Partners. These programs augment our long-term focus on Corner Inlet, the Alpine Peatlands and Aboriginal partnerships. Central to these projects, and demonstrating our partnership commitment culture, is the delivery of many activities by Landcare and other partner organisations.

Progress in delivering the Regional Waterway Strategy is also well advanced. We are proud of our role in delivering on this statewide commitment of \$222 million over four years for waterway health and integrated catchment management. We are now ramping up efforts to help with the delivery of funds committed through the Environmental Contribution Level Tranche 6 (EC6).

Notable outputs delivered throughout the year include:



A key function for the CMA is supplying statutory services and advice. In the last financial year, we processed 938 planning permit referrals and requests for flood advice. In addition, we provide support and assistance to ensure appropriate permitting and planning is undertaken to protect waterways and floodplains in the region.

Mature partnerships

At the core of our successes are the well established partnerships we enjoy with key groups that manage, protect and enhance the region's precious natural resource base.

The GEA forum continued to meet and work together in the region as a formal and peak coordinating and knowledge exchange entity. This forum enables agencies to discuss opportunities for strategic collaboration and priority setting.

Areas of focus include progressing women in leadership roles, coordinating delivery of initiatives, as well as nurturing First Peoples partnerships.

We were proud to complete our second year in chairing the forum and coordinating the support of a shared Executive Officer. The establishment of the role is evidence of an incredibly strong suite of relationships across the environmental agencies and supports the "pick up the phone" culture that exists amongst the organisations' senior leaders. Supported by Working Groups represented by all partners, we remain committed to working towards shared objectives and mutual opportunities that meet our goals.



Partner workshop at Kugerungmome/Powlett River on Bunurong Country.

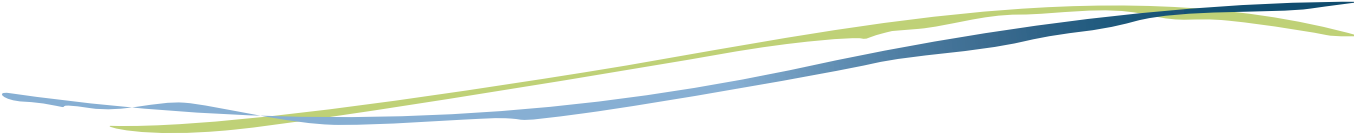
First Peoples have a deep obligation to care for and heal Country, and have traditional ecological knowledge and customs built over thousands of years of practice. We offer our commitment to First Peoples in the region to support them, to the extent that they desire, in their steps to self-determination, and through that, to shape a region that better supports its people once more.

During the year we were pleased to be able to support the Victorian Government's Road Map for Traditional Owner Access to Water - Water Is Life. With strong regional partnerships in place with Traditional Owners and a history of working together, Water Is Life will add further support for the journey we are on.

Board diversity is crucial. Through the appointment process and initiatives championed by government, we are in a better position to understand local needs and diverse perspectives. Collectively it helps us to be well positioned to assist government to deliver its programs.

In 2024, our Board welcomed an Aboriginal Delegate and a Youth Associate director who have added new perspectives and a questioning approach to our Board process and engagement. As we look toward a new round of appointments to the Board in late 2025, their input, together with the more experienced directors remaining, will help ensure a smooth transition for new members.

At a state level, it is satisfying to work effectively with all other CMAs. Having nine CMAs and Melbourne Water working together in a coordinated and focused manner continues to drive many efficiencies through shared knowledge and action. In addition, it creates staff and Board



development opportunities that are adding to a mature, stable and action orientated industry. A highlight is working collectively under the banner of Vic Catchments. During the year the fruits of this partnership were further enhanced, continuing to showcase the partnership as winners of the Nature Positive category in the 35th National Banksia Sustainability Awards 2024. The awards celebrate trailblazers in environmental and social sustainability.

Looking forward

The next 12 months will be exciting and productive. As we approach the milestone of 30 years of operation, we set our future focus on delivering our updated West Gippsland CMA Strategic Plan, delivering the Regional Catchment Strategy mid-term review and renewing our Regional Waterway Strategy.

Our sustained effort sees us celebrating some key milestones including 20 years of delivering water for the environment in Carran Carran (Thomson) and 25 years of the Sustainable Irrigation Program in the Macalister Irrigation District.

As a consequence of ongoing and united effort, we will build resilience into the natural systems which is vital given the impacts of climate variability and regional change.

We remain energised by continuing to review and roll out the Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) and delivering key state policies related to catchment management, water and biodiversity.

Efforts to improve waterway connectivity are a strong focus in the region. With fishways at Horseshoe Bend, modern environmental watering infrastructure in the Lower Latrobe Wetlands and a fishway scheduled for construction, the future is bright.

The Carran Carran (Thomson) and Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) rivers, Lower Latrobe Wetlands and the Gippsland Lakes all benefit from these environmental infrastructure projects.

They optimise the Environmental Water Entitlements and drive partnerships to improve these iconic waterways for everyone. We are passionate about extending these efforts throughout the region to better connect the systems. We look forward to working with government to act on this ambition.

We remain committed to helping the government deliver on policy while maintaining our high standards in project delivery and sound governance at all levels of the organisation.

Finally, we would like to thank all those we work with, including Traditional Owners, community, partner organisations, staff and Board for their dedication in delivering the many positive outcomes we have achieved over the past twelve months. We look forward to working with you all on the challenges and opportunities ahead.



Mikaela Power

Chair

25 August 2025



Martin Fuller

CEO

25 August 2025



About the West Gippsland region

THE REGION AT A GLANCE

Total land area	19,639 km ²
Population	200,000 approx.
Tenure	46% Public land and 54% Private land
River Basins	Latrobe, Thomson and South Gippsland
Traditional Owners	Gunaikurnai, Bunurong, Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri Peoples
Largest contributors to the regional economy	Construction, mining, manufacturing, forestry, agriculture, fishing, food-related and utilities sectors ¹
Largest employment sectors	Healthcare, social assistance and retail trade ²
Wetlands of international importance	Gippsland Lakes and Corner Inlet Ramsar Sites
The region provides	• 23% of Australia's milk production • significant beef and sheep products • most of Victoria's electricity and gas (offshore) • about 27% of Melbourne's water

Bass Hills overlooking Kilcunda, Bunurong Country

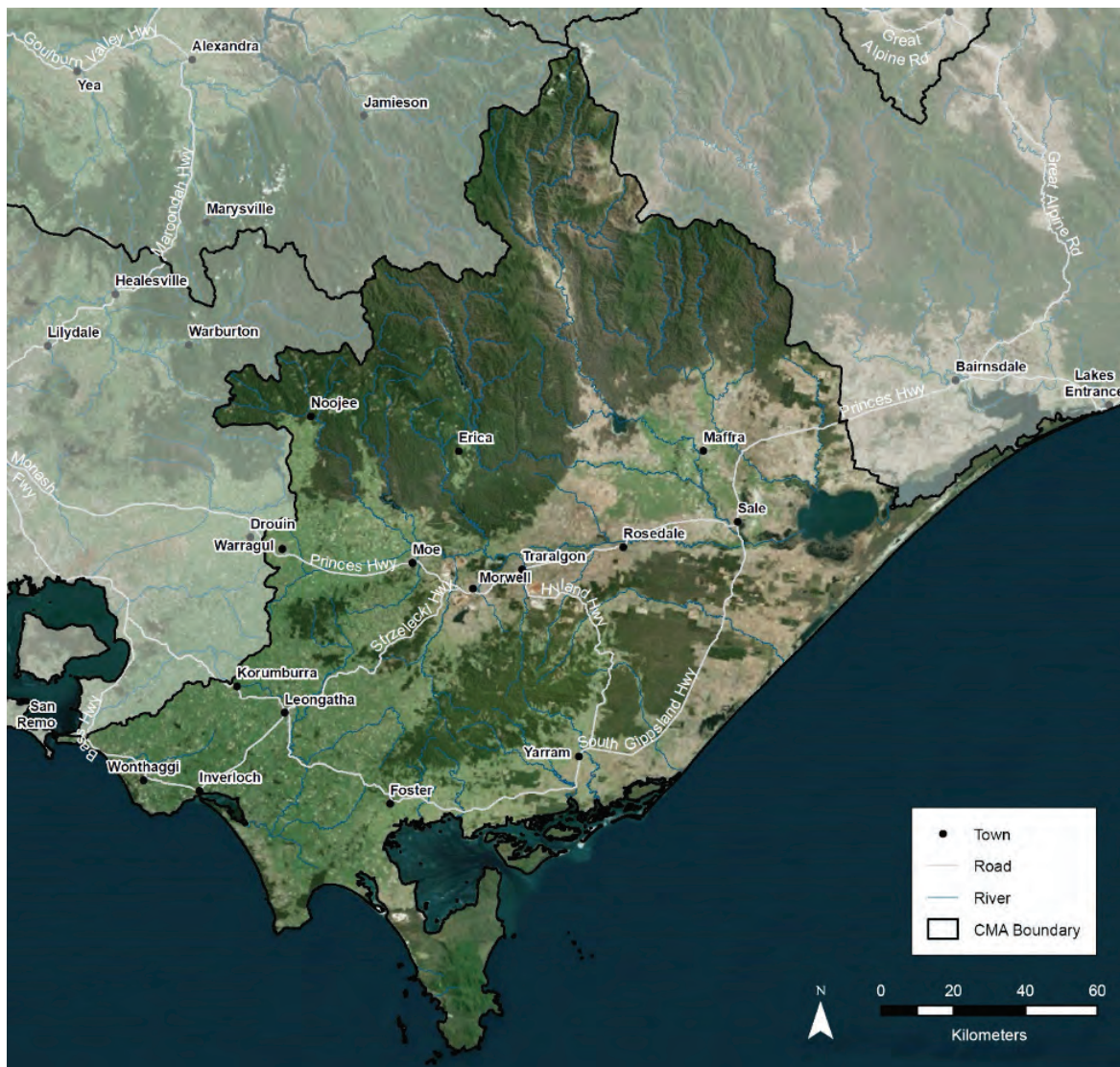


Figure 1: West Gippsland region

The West Gippsland region and the environment we work in

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority region extends across west, south and central Gippsland, from Warragul and San Remo in the west to the Gippsland Lakes in the east, and from the Great Dividing Range in the north to Wilsons Promontory in the south. The region extends into marine waters out to three nautical miles, which marks the state of Victoria's jurisdictional limit.

The region covers an area of 19,639 square kilometres (including marine environment) and accounts for almost eight percent of Victoria's total land area with a population of more than 200,000 people. Unlike regions with a single major city, the West Gippsland population is dispersed between several regional centres in the vicinity of the Princes, South Gippsland, Strzelecki, Hyland and Bass Highways. The region includes parts of seven municipalities: all of Latrobe City; substantial parts of Wellington, Baw Baw and South Gippsland shires; a well-populated portion of Bass Coast shire; and sparsely populated areas of Mansfield and East Gippsland shires.

The region is expected to experience population growth of approximately 20% by 2036, particularly the western part of the region with its proximity to the peri urban fringe of Melbourne. However, the population is also expected to continue to age and decline in most rural areas of the catchment. This is being accompanied by a continuing shift of services into the larger regional centres.

The Gunaikurnai peoples and the Kulin peoples are the traditional custodians of the Country covered by this region. Gunaikurnai Country extends east from the coast near Wilson's Promontory, up to Mount Baw Baw and across a large part of East Gippsland. Tribes of the Gunaikurnai include the Brataualung in South Gippsland, the Brabralung and Brayakaulung in Central Gippsland, and the Tatungalung around the Gippsland Lakes. Kulin Country extends westwards from Gunaikurnai Country and includes Bunurong in the southwest and the Wurundjeri and Taungurung in the hills to the north.

The West Gippsland region is rich in natural resources and supplies water, electricity, gas, oil, saw logs, pulpwood, agricultural products, and tourism opportunities to people both within and beyond the region's boundaries.

The estimated Gross Regional product of the region is more than \$2.5 billion and Total Regional Output, including production of intermediate goods and services, is estimated at over \$9 billion. Major sectors, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, include manufacturing, electricity, gas and water, agriculture, forestry and fishing, and property and business services. The agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors and the electricity, gas and water sectors are important employers in our region.

Dairying accounts for half of the agricultural production and beef another quarter. Wool, lamb, horticultural produce, and a variety of other enterprises make up the remainder. The region provides a significant proportion of the state's electricity and gas, including water for Melbourne, and has provided two thirds of Australia's total oil production. Private plantation and public forestry industries and tourism are also significant.

A major long-term industry transition is also underway in the Latrobe Valley with the closure of the Hazelwood mine and power plant, and the potential closure of the coal-fired power stations Yallourn in 2028 and Loy Yang in 2048. This transition is expected to have a large impact on the local economy affecting local jobs and businesses.



Campers on Carran Carran (Thomson River) Gunaikurnai Country.



Annual catchment condition and management reporting

This section of the Annual Report provides an assessment of the condition and management of the region's catchment health and a reflection on the likely impact of annual actions, events, and observed change within the previous year, and over the previous six years. A key purpose of monitoring changes in the operating context is to help identify opportunities to better manage the environment.

The report is structured in line with the statewide outcome framework that links the regional outcomes sought by catchment communities, to the high-level policy outcomes of the Victorian and Australian Governments. These are outlined in each Regional Catchment Strategy (rca.vic.gov.au).

In 2024-25 reporting has a focus on assessing the CMA's contribution to the management of land and water resources. Reporting on condition indicators will be undertaken as part of the mid-term and final reviews of the Regional Catchment Strategies.

How to interpret this report

The assessment is based on a set of statewide indicators outlined in the RCS outcomes framework, augmented with regionally specific indicators that have been selected based on criteria including availability and quality of data, and the linkages back to regional and policy outcomes.

Three types of indicators make up catchment condition and management reporting, these are: contextual, management, and condition.

- **Contextual** indicators help to identify how external environmental factors may have influenced program delivery.
- The **management** assessment for each theme assesses the delivery of CMA programs and activities. Reporting on management and contextual indicators is undertaken annually.
- Reporting on **condition** indicators is undertaken less frequently, reflecting the timeframes to observe changes in the natural environment and the availability of the supporting data. The 2024-25 Annual Report includes a summary rating for catchment condition building on previous years' assessments.

As much as possible the reporting format attempts to provide a transparent path between the evidence and the assessment. It is not a definitive assessment but an assessment at a point in time, based on the best available information.

Data supporting the Catchment Condition ratings can be found in Appendix 2.

Management rating	Description
Above expectations	Delivery of activities and programs associated with this indicator is assessed as above expectations for the 12-month period (i.e. majority of activities delivered /targets met or exceeded).
Satisfactory	Delivery of activities and programs associated with this indicator is assessed as satisfactory for the 12-month period (i.e. targets for some activities were not achieved or the majority were almost achieved).
Below expectations	Delivery of activities and programs associated with this indicator is assessed as below expectations for the 12-month period (i.e. some critical activities/targets not delivered, or the majority of activities/targets not delivered).
Not applicable	A management rating is not applicable for this indicator.
Unknown	The rating for this indicator is not known and or assessable.

**Management - where appropriate, a management rating is provided that is based on the delivery of planned activities and targets relevant to the theme.*

Condition rating	Description
Good	The condition is classified as good
Moderate	The condition is classified as moderate
Poor	The condition is classified as poor
Not applicable	A condition rating is not applicable for this indicator

**Condition - where appropriate, a condition rating is provided that is based on the is the current state of the theme. A condition rating is based on assessments of the assets and pressures represented by the theme. The assessment is based on available science and expert advice as well as evidence gained during the preceding year.*

6 Year Condition Trend	Description
 Positive	The condition is moving in a positive direction over the short to medium term pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.
 Neutral	The condition is in a neutral state over the short to medium term and is considered stable pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.
 Concerned	The condition is cause for concern over the short to medium term and will continue to decline pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.

#The 6 Year trend reflects change in condition over the short to medium term. The trend is assessed against the direction required to contribute to the achievement of regional outcomes.

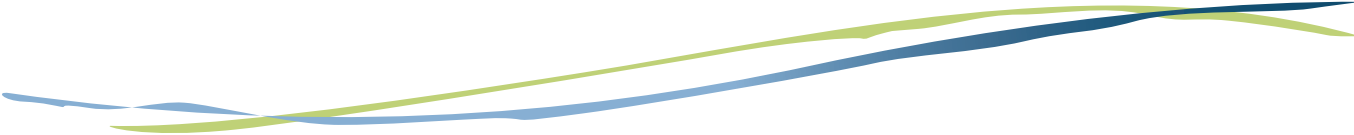
Table 4: 2024-25 Regional catchment condition and management summary

(Data supporting the Catchment Condition ratings can be found in Appendix 2). Management activities linked to these assessments are presented in the program highlights below).

Theme	Condition 2022-23 Rating	Trend	Management Rating 2024-25	Summary Comment
Water	Good		Satisfactory	In 2024-25, the region experienced variable rainfall across the region with some parts receiving average rainfall (Thomson, Macalister and Latrobe) and other parts below average rainfall (South and West Gippsland). There have been variable climatic conditions over the past five years and the region has experienced no major fire or drought events in 2024-25. There was a key focus on flood recovery works carrying on from 2023. Drier conditions in the second half of the year led to good progress with new riparian protection works and commencement of the EC6 Program.
Land	Moderate		Satisfactory	This year was variable across the region with some areas experiencing an average year whilst parts of the region (South Gippsland) experiencing drier conditions leading to drought being declared, however there were no major fires or pest outbreaks. The region has experienced variable climatic conditions over the past five years. An increase in area covered by landholder agreements and management plans. Anecdotal evidence of increased population and range of pest animals (particularly deer) across the region. The continuing trend of changes in land use towards large scale horticulture and urban expansion (increased runoff). Major EC6 Programs focused on land outcomes – Sustainable Irrigation Program and Our Catchments Our Communities commenced.
Biodiversity	Moderate		Satisfactory	Overall, the condition of biodiversity in the region has been assessed as moderate. Small gains were made due to revegetation and vegetation protection programs. Small losses due to urban development, primarily around regional centres. No major fires, drought or pest outbreaks during 2024-25. Implementation of targeted pest, plant and animal programs by a range of partners. Anecdotal evidence of increasing numbers and range of pest animals, such as deer. Anecdotal evidence of climate change impacts such as species composition changes and geographic spread. Aquatic fauna surveys conducted in 2021-22 recorded the presence of threatened species in the east of the region. Landscape-scale initiatives focused on the Bunurong Coast, and Alpine Peatland communities continue.

Table 4: 2024-25 Regional catchment condition and management summary *continued*

Theme	Condition 2022-23 Rating	Trend	Management Rating 2024-25	Summary Comment
Coast & Marine	Moderate		Satisfactory	Overall, the condition of coasts and marine environments in the West Gippsland region have been assessed as moderate. No major fire events impacting the coast throughout the year. Programs aimed at protecting and enhancing the coast and marine environments such as Corner Inlet Connections, Lake Wellington Integrated NRM project, and Spartina control program continue. Improved estuary closure management resulting in no coastal urban inundation, however, continuing urban expansion and increasing runoff, particularly in coastal areas. The ongoing dynamic coastline at Inverloch has been experiencing significant erosion in recent years, impacting on public access, amenity, and built assets. Designation of the Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park along 40 kilometres of coastline, from San Remo to Inverloch, will improve the connectivity and management of existing protected areas.
Community	Moderate		Satisfactory	Overall, condition within the community theme in the West Gippsland region has been assessed as moderate. There is a strong regional partnership between West Gippsland CMA and Landcare networks and well organised and coordinated Landcare network and groups. We ran Cultural Heritage training to improve cultural competency and to further positive partnerships with Traditional Owner groups. In person engagement post COVID has seen an increase to pre-covid numbers at events and the community reconnecting to deliver NRM outcomes.
Integrated Catchment Management	N/A	N/A	N/A	Incorporated into the Community theme.



Management of land and water resources

Climate

Climate change can impact on the natural environment in many ways and intensify existing threatening processes. Less average annual rainfall, higher rates of evaporation, and reduced surface water runoff will result in rivers, estuaries, and wetlands receiving less water and changes in river flow regimes. More frequent intense rainfall events can cause increased flooding, soil erosion, and reduced water quality. Coastal environments can become inundated or more saline as the result of sea level rise. Storm surge can erode coastal areas and damage vegetation communities.

The impact of climate change on plants and animals is difficult to predict with any certainty, as changes will occur from individuals to ecosystems. Existing threats to native vegetation and habitat will be amplified, including weed invasion, fragmentation, drought, and intense bushfires. Therefore, it is useful to consider the region's climatic conditions and the occurrence of any extreme events when providing an analysis of catchment condition.

Information presented in this report has been sourced from Australia's Environment Explorer, developed by the Australian National University (<http://www.ausenv.online>) and is provided in Appendix 2. The appendix provides a summary of the climatic conditions in West Gippsland during 2024-25.

Rainfall

The average precipitation recorded for the region from 2000-2023 is 846 millimetres per year. Research conducted by the Australian National University indicates that the total annual rainfall observed in the West Gippsland region in 2024 was just under 800 millimetres, which is below the long-term recorded average, however regionwide annual rainfall has been highly variable as seen in the decile ranges.

Maximum temperature and number of hot days

The maximum temperature observed since the year 2000 was below the average in 2024 and the number of days above 35°C was about average in 2024.

Frost and snow

An above average number of frost days (below zero) and slightly lower than average percentage snow cover was observed in 2024.

The Victorian CMAs continued to collectively fund a Climate Change Coordinator to provide support for CMAs, facilitate joint projects, enhance knowledge exchange, and provide coordinated input into policy and program design at State and Federal levels.

Victorian CMA Climate Change forums were held quarterly. They provided an opportunity for updates and presentations on relevant projects to ensure CMAs were across current climate change information and to facilitate networking opportunities across the CMAs and with other relevant organisations.

\$1.8 million was secured from DEECA for a Victorian CMA Water Cycle Adaptation Action Program. A program coordinator was appointed and the program will run for 2.5 years, creating an exciting opportunity for CMAs to re-focus on climate change adaptation and build capacity and capability.

Further progress was made to improve the understanding of opportunities and challenges of co-benefits and co-investments related to carbon offsets in the water sector.



Exploring Natural Capital Approaches for Victorian CMAs

This project was initiated to explore future roles and opportunities for Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) in natural capital, natural capital accounting, and nature markets. Funding was provided by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and the project aims to support preparedness and foster a more unified approach to future possibilities. Background work is underway including a workshop with CMAs and DEECA. The final report will be completed in August 2025 with recommended next steps for CMAs.

Water theme

The condition of rivers, wetlands, estuaries and groundwater

Waterways in the West Gippsland region are of high environmental, social, economic, and cultural value. They provide important habitat for a range of plants and animals including places of refuge in times of drought. Our waterways support community values which include the supply of water for industrial, agricultural and domestic use, and recreational pursuits such as kayaking, bird watching, and fishing. The Gunaikurnai, Bunurong and Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Peoples have a strong cultural connection to waterways across the region.

Over 1,500 wetlands larger than one hectare are in our region. Together they total more than 44,000 hectares. We have several significant wetlands and wetland complexes, including two internationally important Ramsar sites (Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes) and 11 sites listed as nationally important under the Directory of Important Wetlands Australia.

Estuaries located along the region's coastline include brackish mouths of rivers and streams that flow into the ocean or a large embayment (Corner Inlet), coastal barrier lagoons (Jack Smith Lake, Gippsland Lakes), and inlets (Anderson and Shallow inlets).

The environmental condition of waterways is dependent upon a range of factors and to help inform the regional condition assessment included:

- Index of Stream Condition
- Index of Wetland Condition
- Index of Estuary Condition
- Extent of riparian land protected
- River inflow
- Inundation
- Wetland extent
- Groundwater.

2024-25 Program highlights

A range of activities delivered by the community and agencies contribute to habitat improvement and long-term improvements in the condition of waterways. Activities such as fencing and troughs for off-stream watering, revegetation and weed control, all support improved riparian and aquatic habitat and waterway condition. The table below provides a summary of waterway and habitat improvement activities that were supported by West Gippsland CMA in partnership with community and other stakeholders, between 2016-17 and 2024-25 in riparian areas and waterways.

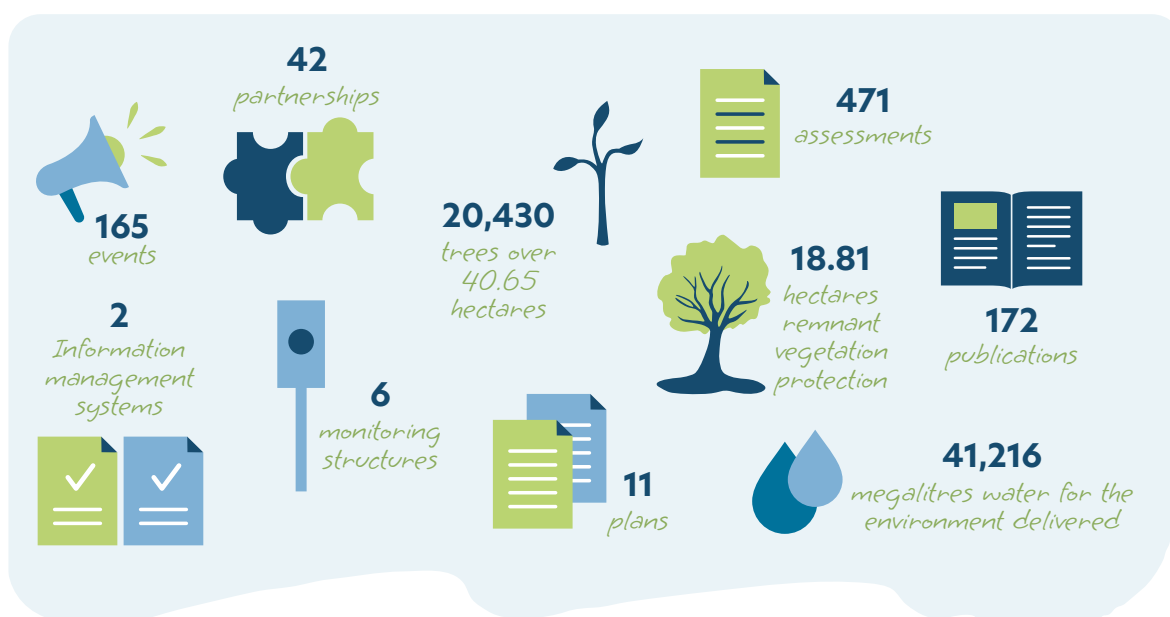
Table 5: Waterway and habitat improvement activities summary*

Output	2024 -25	2023 -24	2022 -23	2021 -22	2020 -21	2019 -20	2018 -19	2017 -18	2016 -17
1. Structural works									
1.2 Water storage	0	7	5	0	0	11	17	21	8
1.9 Fence (km)	2.1	51	34	25	4	21	46	43	37
2. Environmental works									
2.1 Vegetation (hectares)	40.7	152	104	44	69	76	255	160	242
2.2 Weed control (hectares) Area treated	124.7	993	230	59	81	123	149	230	436
2.2 Weed control (hectares) Area controlled	6,178	77,981*	7,193	548	3,888	3,414	4,070	726	1,094
2.8 Earth works (no)	0	46	71	46	1	22	11	2	5
4. Planning and regulation									
4.2 Management agreements (no.)	9	96	64	70	10	60	47	54	36

*Figure includes the *Spartina* control program in Corner, Shallow and Andersons inlets which previous years have not. Control technique involves the use of a helicopter and covers large areas across these landscapes.

Delivering Water for Victoria priorities

This year's annual regional waterway program, our core waterway health program, delivered key programs aligned to the Water for Victoria priorities in waterways across the catchment. A summary of these is listed below.



Community partnership projects

We delivered a suite of community-led partnership projects including:

- In partnership with South Gippsland Landcare Network, the CMA helped plan and establish 4 landholder agreements in the Tarwin River Catchment to remove large woody weeds, fence and revegetate along the Tarwin River.
- In partnership with Wellington Shire Council and Maffra and District Landcare Network to help protect and enhance a 7.87 hectare wetland along Flooding Creek and plant 3,000 plants.
- In partnership with South Gippsland Landcare Network supplied and planted 2,000 plants along Berry's Creek, help control weeds and plant 500 native species along Stockyard Creek and provide support and advice to the Agnes River Landcare Group.

We also completed maintenance and enhancement of community partnership projects from previous years. This included weed control and/or supplementary revegetation. The partners and projects involved were: Maffra & District Landcare Network (Newry Creek and associated wetlands); Fish Creek Landcare Group (Fish Creek); Bass Coast Landcare Network (Foster Creek); Yarram Yarram Landcare Network (Golden and Reedy creeks); Corner Inlet Landcare Group (Stockyard Creek); Mardian-Mirboo North Landcare Group (Berrys Creek) and Latrobe City Council/Latrobe Landcare Network (Sandbanks Reserve).

Flagship waterways - Corner Inlet and Thomson/Rainbow Creek

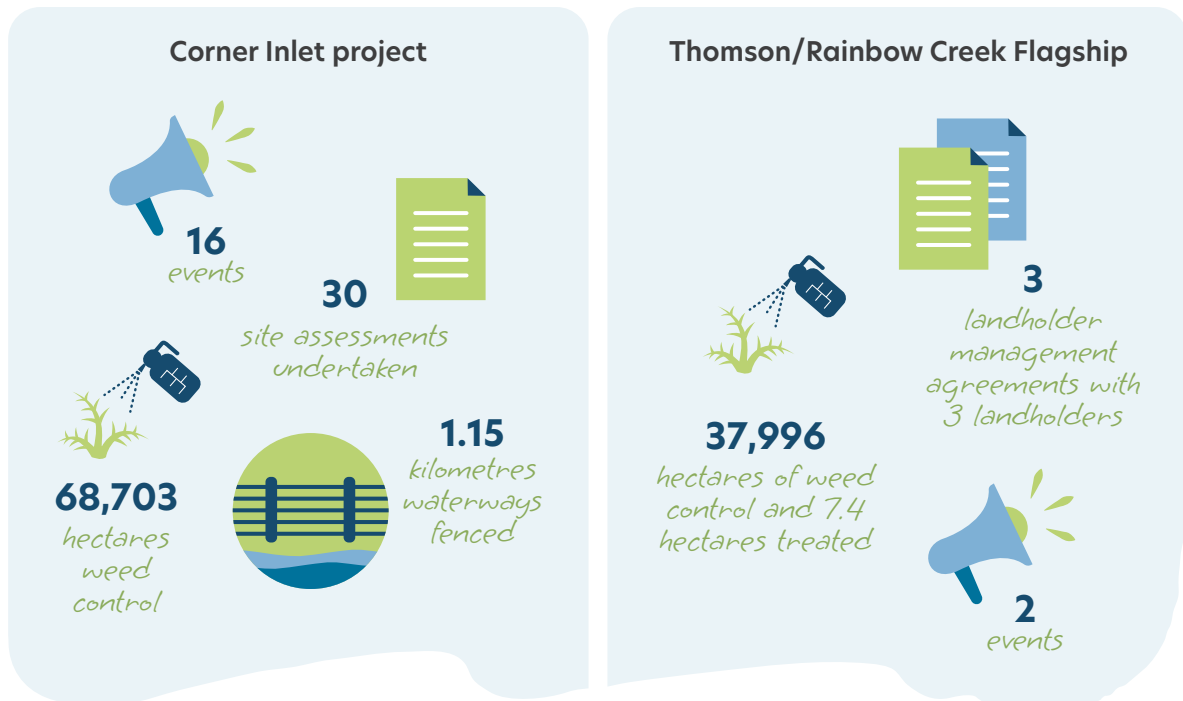
West Gippsland has two Flagship Waterways - Corner Inlet (Agnes) and Carran Carran (Thomson)/Rainbow Creek between Cowwarr Weir and Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister River) confluence.

The Corner Inlet project's initial focus aimed to fence off and revegetate 100% of the main stem of the Agnes River which is close to 100% achieved. The Corner Inlet project has now expended to focus on fencing off and revegetating other waterways with the focus on the western tributaries (Old Hat, Poor Fellow Me, Dead Horse and Golden Creek). The Thomson/Rainbow Creek project aims to complete two key objectives: a natural riparian corridor from the Gippsland Lakes to the Alps and address future avulsion risks of Rainbow Creek.



Carran Carran (Thomson River) Gunaikurnai Country.

In 2024-25 the Corner Inlet project and Thomson/Rainbow Creek Flagship projects delivered:



Headwater willow control

Across the year the upper reaches of the Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister), Avon, Carran Carran (Thomson) and Corner Inlet catchments have been targeted as part of a four-year program to tackle willow infestations.

Over 165 hectares of weed control was completed to achieve the program's aim to remove willows in the headwaters to protect riverbanks downstream from reinfestation.

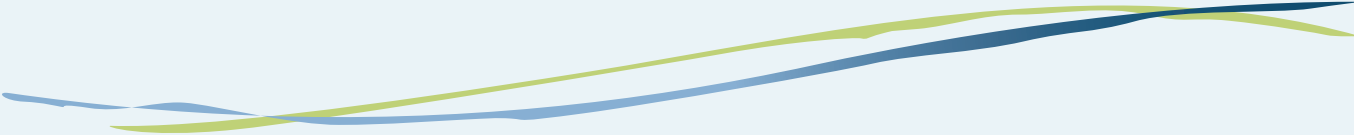
Flexible approach to water for the environment

Water for the environment is an important part of improving the health of rivers and wetlands in Gippsland. This year, just over 41,000 megalitres of water for the environment was released into the Carran Carran (Thomson) and Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) rivers. Due to favourable conditions no water was delivered to the Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River). This water is critical for native plants, fish, and other animals.

These flows can move sediment and nutrients through rivers, connect habitats and improve water quality. To complement and enhance the water for the environment releases, the constructed Thomson River Fishway, allowing for low flows around the Horseshoe Bend Tunnel, continues to demonstrate its success and the detailed designs were completed for the new fishway to be constructed at the Maffra Weir by 2027.



"This work in the past year brings us one step towards our shared vision of managing this flagship waterway."



WATER CASE STUDY

Taking action for the Thomson

It takes action to heal West Gippsland's rivers, building on each success, day by day, year by year. For over eight years, the mid-Thomson River Flagship project has been improving the health and flow of over 85 kilometres of the Thomson River (Carran Carran) and Rainbow Creek.

The Thomson and Rainbow Management Plan was developed along with community and partners to achieve our shared hopes for the river's future - to manage the balance of its flow and reduce the risk of 'avulsions' developing (where a waterway creates a new path in times of flood).

"We are in the 'taking action' phase of this long term project and are excited to be building on the success of the past eight years to improve the river's health " said David Stork, Waterways Project Officer for the CMA.

Across 2024-25, the team took action to restore the river by delivering targeted habitat restoration and weed control along both the Thomson and Rainbow. A highlight was collaborating with three neighbouring landholders to restore a continuous stretch of river running through the adjoining properties.

Dense willows were cleared across 6.67 hectares of river, ensuring both sides of the river were treated along the entire length. Stock-proof fencing was installed along 2.19 kilometres on one property with planned fencing to be completed and all sites planted with native revegetation in 2025-26.

"This coordinated effort highlights the project's strategic approach to getting the job done and we are delighted and thankful to the landholders for this cross-property collaboration," David said.

In addition, 31 hectares of previous river restoration works were monitored for maintenance weed control, with 0.77 hectares requiring follow-up treatment. This highlights the value of ongoing checks and follow up to ensure long-term restoration outcomes.

Works in 2024-25 contribute to creating a continuous corridor of native vegetation along the waterways and improving conditions for priority native fish such as the endangered Australian Grayling to migrate and breed.

Since the program began in 2016, 66 hectares of woody weeds (mostly willows) have been removed, 76,000 local native trees have been planted 22 kilometres of fencing has been created to protect the river on 16 properties and two high risk avulsion sites have been treated.

"This work in the past year brings us one step towards our shared vision of managing this flagship waterway to reduce the risk of an avulsion in future flood events and improving waterway health so the environment, agriculture, the community and the Gippsland Lakes can thrive," David concluded.

Biodiversity

The condition of native habitat and the health of native species

A range of challenges can impact the condition of biodiversity within the West Gippsland region. The condition of biodiversity is impacted on a range of factors and to help inform the condition assessment including:

- Strategic Biodiversity Score
- Percentage Tree Cover
- Extent of Native Vegetation
- Area of pest herbivore and predator control
- Area of weed control
- Area of permanent protection.

Pest animals are a threat to biodiversity, as they compete with native species for resources, prey on native fauna, cause erosion and other physical disturbances, and can affect the functioning of ecosystems. Established terrestrial pest animals in the region include foxes, pigs, wild dogs, rabbits and hares. Overabundant native wildlife can also impact on the region's biodiversity. Deer are an increasing problem and are being seen in parts of the region where they have not been seen before.

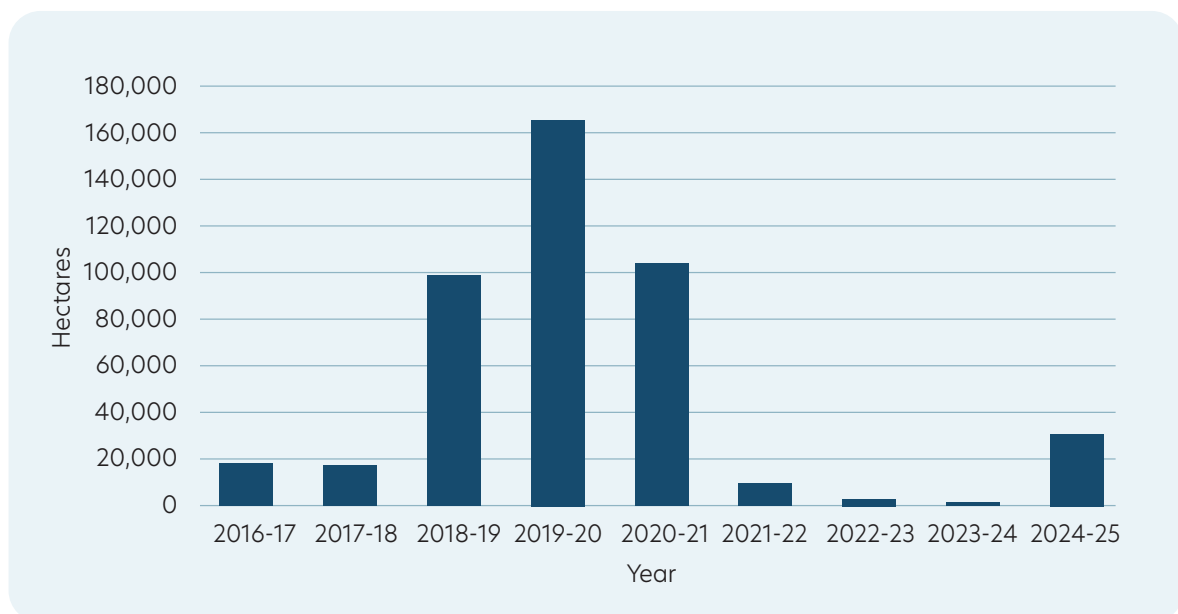


Figure 2: Area of pest animal control West Gippsland Region

Program highlights

Protecting biodiversity in Corner Inlet

This is the second year of the five-year Corner Inlet Connections project, funded by the Australian Government. It builds on over 15 years of delivery through this approach and is delivered in partnership with Parks Victoria, GLaWAC, Trust for Nature and BirdLife Australia. The focus of on-ground works has been to protect the Ramsar values of the area including treating spartina, controlling foxes, improving water quality, and protecting saltmarsh. The main activities this financial year included 68,703 hectares of weeds treated and 696,704 hectares of pest animal control.

Toward Zero Extinctions: targeted effort to protect the Eastern Hooded Plover

This is second year of the five-year Eastern Hooded Plover Project, funded by the Australian Government. The project aims to reduce threats to priority Eastern Hooded Plover breeding sites along the Bunurong and South Gippsland coastline. The partnership project includes WGCMA, Parks Victoria, Bass Coast Landcare Network, South Gippsland Landcare Network, Birdlife Australia, Bunurong Land Council and Aboriginal Corporation, DEECA and the Australian Government.

In 2024-25 the project delivered the following activities:



Victorian Landcare Grants and Farm Fencing Grants

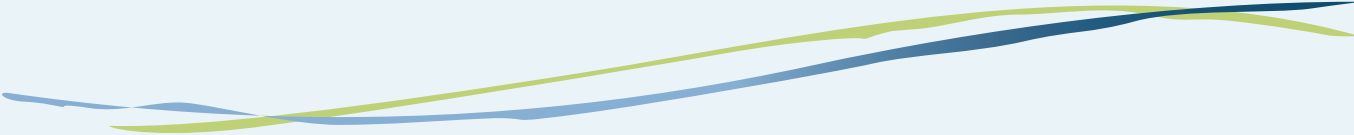
Across the year, the CMA ran a small grants process that included the Victorian Landcare Grants and the Farm Fencing Grants to support landholders to undertake a range of activities to protect and enhance biodiversity.

This year Landcare volunteer groups across West Gippsland received \$337,250 in funding to protect and restore the region's environment, in the 2024 Victorian Landcare Grants. A total of 21 project grants and 22 support grants were awarded to Landcare and environmental volunteer groups across West Gippsland for projects such as:

- safeguarding remnant forests
- restoring swampy woodland to protect threatened species
- developing a community nursery
- inspiring the next generation of Landcarers
- Farm Fencing Grants included 34 successful recipients to fund projects that will deliver over 80 hectares of remnant vegetation to be protected.

"By reducing fox numbers, we can help increase the chance of survival for eggs and fledglings and help boost the population of Hoodies overall."





BIODIVERSITY CASE STUDY

Partnership to save plovers from extinction

Eastern Hooded Plovers — affectionally known as ‘Hoodies’ — are tiny shorebirds that nest along the Victorian coastline. The adults, their eggs and chicks are highly vulnerable to disturbance by humans, coastal weeds, rough weather, off-lead dogs and their number one predator – foxes.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (the CMA) is excited to be delivering the new Toward Zero Extinctions: Protect the Eastern Hooded Plover project aimed at saving one of our region’s much-loved native birds from extinction.

The four-year project will be delivered in partnership with BirdLife Australia, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Bass Coast Landcare Network, South Gippsland Landcare, Parks Victoria and the community. It will involve protecting nests during breeding season, controlling foxes and other introduced pests, and engaging the community about the plight of the plover – and how they can help its survival.

“There are only around 3,000 Hoodies remaining in south-eastern Australian and less than 2.5% of Hooded Plover eggs make it to adult stage,” said Martin Fuller, CEO of West Gippsland CMA.

“The coastline between San Remo and Inverloch is home to the second largest population of Hooded Plovers in Victoria so it’s vital that we work together to protect these vulnerable native species whose survival depends on having safe, protected breeding sites,” Martin said.

During breeding season, Hoodies face many threats to survival, from people accidentally trampling their nests to off-lead dogs scaring the birds and eating their eggs. Even if the eggs successfully hatch, Hoodie chicks can’t fly for the first five weeks of their life, making them

highly vulnerable to predators, particularly foxes. To reduce this threat, the CMA and partners will undertake a coordinated approach to fox control across public and private land, conducted in partnership with landholders and Parks Victoria.

“By reducing fox numbers, we can help increase the chance of survival for eggs and fledglings and help boost the population of Hoodies overall.”

Enclosing vulnerable breeding sites to protect nests and chicks and signage at beaches are also key activities of the program, supported by BirdLife Australia’s monitoring program and population counts.

In 2024-25 the project delivered the following activities: over 30,388 ha of fox control works, over 40 Hooded Plover breeding sites protected; and over 50 volunteers engaged.

“This partnership project is an exciting next step in the protection and recovery of plover populations in West Gippsland. The CMA is thrilled to be involved in this important work as part of our role in catchment health and protecting the region’s unique biodiversity.”

This project is funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by West Gippsland CMA, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.



Land theme

Soils are moderately well-structured across the West Gippsland region and support a range of natural ecosystems and agricultural enterprises. A large proportion of private land within the region is used for agricultural, industrial and residential purposes, with fertile soils dedicated to grazing, cropping and irrigated seasonal horticulture.

Government, conservation, and community groups are working together to protect the region's soil and land while also maintaining long term agricultural productivity, opportunities for recreation and protection of important cultural values. Formal conservation parks and reserves, covenants, landholder agreements and management plans are all key tools used to help improve or conserve the condition of public and private land within the West Gippsland region.

There are a range of indicators to inform the condition of land within West Gippsland the following have been used to do this:

- Land cover
- Soil moisture
- Agricultural commodities
- Land-use change.

Program highlights

Sustainable Irrigation Program

The Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan was finalised in 2019 and provides a 10 year vision for sustainable irrigation and water management in the Lake Wellington catchment.

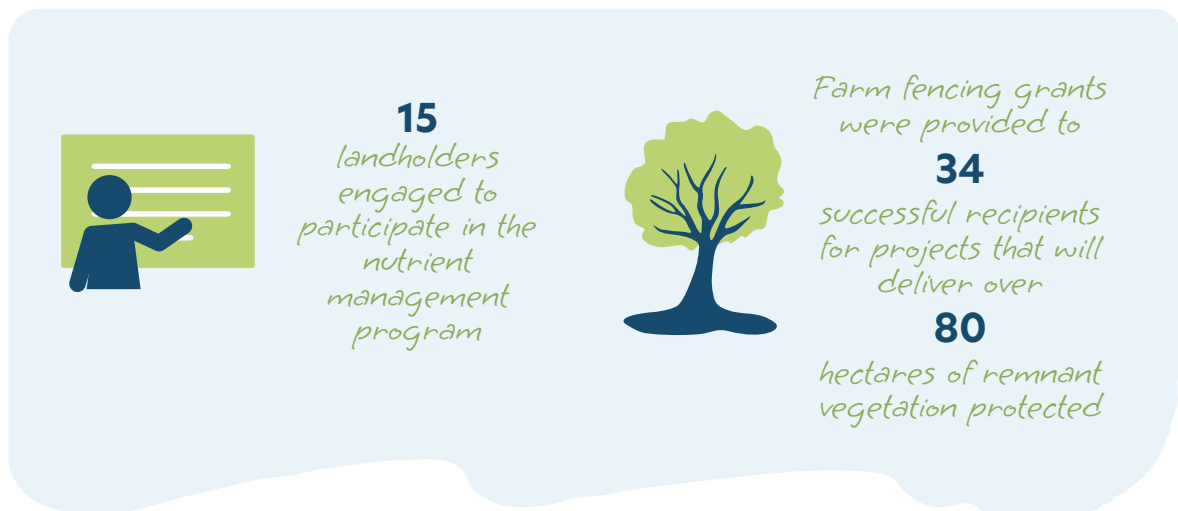
This year was the first of the new four-year EC6 Sustainable Irrigation Program. The program provides extension, education and technical support to the MID irrigation farming community, implements the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines, implements the irrigation efficiency incentives program and ensures the priority actions of the Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan (renewed during 2018-19) are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

The main focus in 2024-25 was on planning and establishing the governance arrangements for the program which has resulted in a reduced on-ground output delivery. That said, the SIP program delivered 14 irrigation efficiency projects (spray irrigation, reuse dams and improved surface irrigation) covering an area of 375 hectares, providing estimated water savings of over 730 megalitres and phosphorous load reductions of approximately 190 kilograms per year.

Climate Smart Agriculture Project

In 2024-25 the WGCMA commenced a five-year Climate Smart Agriculture Project funded by the Australian Government. This project will support farmers to utilise on-farm nutrients from dairy effluent and protect and improve native habitat while improving livestock production and management.

This project complements workshops and field days delivered through our Climate-Smart Capacity Building project and the Carbon Farming Outreach Program. The project commenced this year and delivered the following:



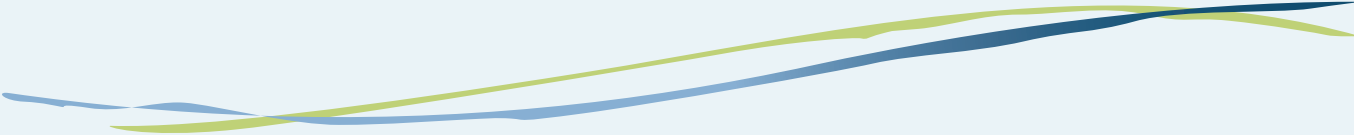
Landcare – Sustainable Agriculture

Gippsland Sustainable Agriculture Network (GSAN) is an informal network of professionals working to improve the sustainability and productivity of agriculture in the Gippsland, Port Phillip, and Westernport regions. GSAN resumed in person meetings this year to share updates on Agriculture projects with the aim of improving coordination of activities across the region, reducing duplication of effort, developing networks and forming partnerships.

We have also partnered with Food and Fibre Gippsland to host the West Gippsland Drought Resilience and Innovation Adoption Officer. The Adoption Officer works with farmers and their communities to pick up innovative tools and practices to build drought resilient businesses.

"Our vision is to reach a point where we can proudly say that the irrigation community is having zero impact on waterways and is actually benefiting waterways and catchment health. That will be a fantastic day."





LAND CASE STUDY

Celebrating a 25-year pivot towards sustainable farming future

This year, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its sustainable irrigation program and the long-term partnerships that have been central to its success.

The joint initiative between the CMA, Agriculture Victoria and local farmers has resulted in a remarkable transformation of irrigated land and water use across central Gippsland.

Since launching in 2000, the successful program has delivered over 1,200 irrigation improvement projects in the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) and across the Lake Wellington Catchment - home to important river systems like Durt'Yowan (Latrobe), Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) and Avon rivers.

"The CMA is incredibly proud to celebrate over two decades of effort to reduce the environmental impact of irrigation by keeping water and nutrients on farm and out of local waterways that flow into the Gippsland Lakes," said CEO of West Gippsland CMA, Martin Fuller.

"Thanks to the sustained, collective efforts of farmers, agencies and local irrigation communities, we're now seeing a total of 47 gigalitres of water worth \$85 million dollars being saved every year. That's a huge financial benefit for irrigators and a boost to water security for the region's agricultural industry."

Encouraging irrigators to embrace sustainable irrigation practices has been key to the program's success and over the years attitudes have shifted.

"Twenty-five years ago, environmental outcomes weren't necessarily a priority on the farm, explained Anthony Goode, the CMA's Sustainable Irrigation Program Coordinator who's worked on the program for 14 years.

"It's a huge credit to those farmers who put their hands up in the early days to get involved and trial new irrigation methods and systems for the benefit of the wider irrigation community."

"It's not an exaggeration to say we've now partnered with nearly all landholders in the MID, achieving 94% coverage of the district with farm irrigation plans. Combined with the 179 spray conversions, 299 reuses systems and 70 best practice surface irrigation projects it adds up to a remarkable, long-term transformation of irrigated farmland."

And the results speak for themselves, with over 46 gigalitres of nutrient rich water carrying an estimated 23 tonnes of phosphorus being retained on farm every year for the benefit of soil health and pasture productivity. This reduces the need to buy-in synthetic fertilisers all while protecting surrounding waterways from run-off. "A classic win-win" Anthony points out.

During 2024-25, 14 irrigation projects covering an area of 375 hectares were delivered, providing estimated water savings of over 730 megalitres and reducing phosphorous load by approximately 190 kilograms per year.

Following the success of the last 25 years, the program is forging into the future. Now, even more irrigators are set to benefit as it expands beyond the MID for the first time, with producers in Thorpdale coming on board as well as farmers along Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River) and in the upper reaches of the Lake Wellington catchment.

Looking ahead to the next 25 years, Anthony is excited to continue working with partners and farmers to keep land and waterways healthy and in good shape for future generations.

Coasts and marine

The condition of coastal and marine environments

West Gippsland's coastal and marine environment extends from San Remo in the west to opposite Lakes Entrance in the east. It includes the Ramsar-listed wetlands of Corner Inlet, Nooramunga, the Gippsland Lakes, several marine protected areas and over 20 estuaries.

A range of indicators inform the condition of Coast and Marine environments within West Gippsland and the following have been used to do this:

- Extent of coastal vegetation
- Water

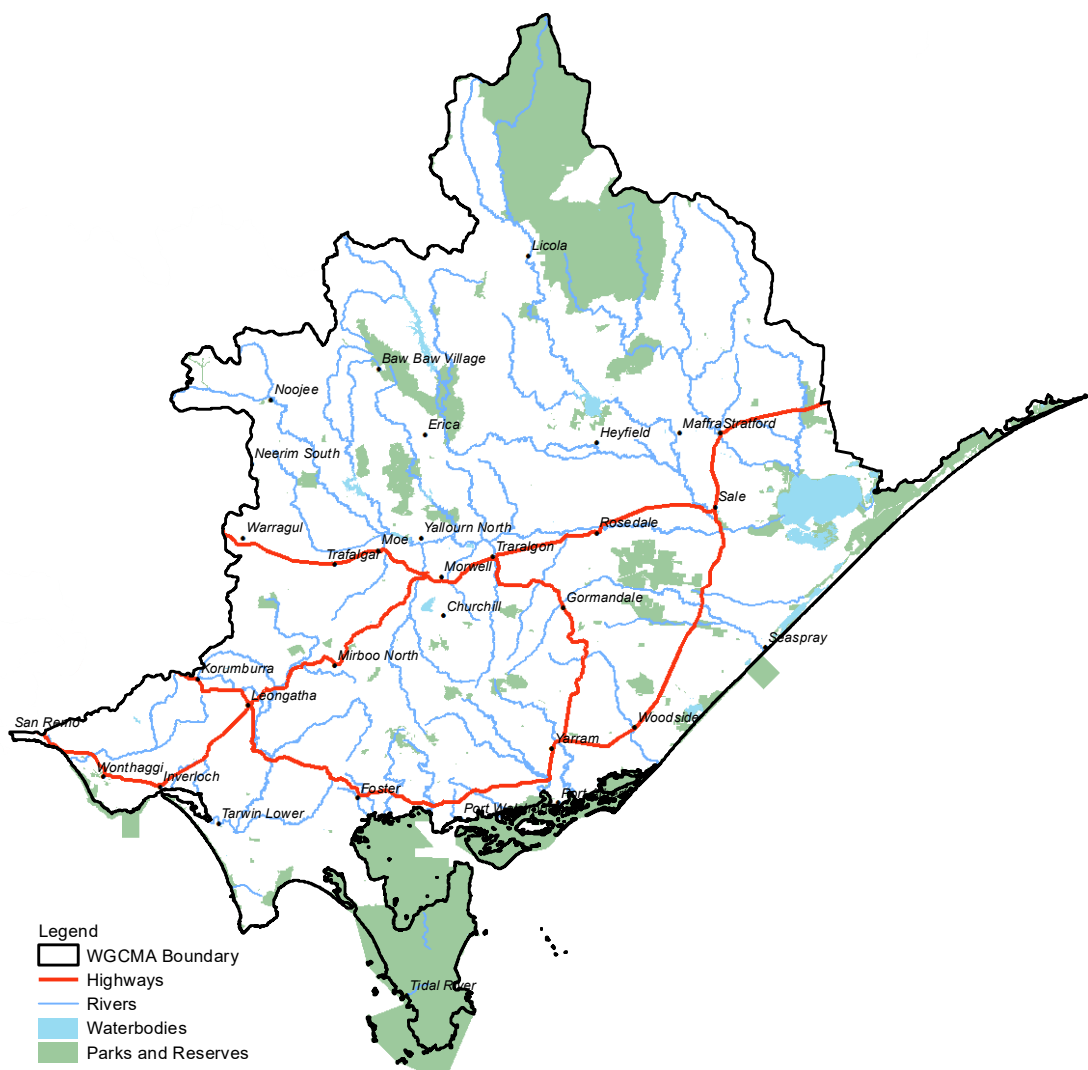


Figure 3: Area of land and water managed for coastal and marine protection including terrestrial and marine parks and reserves

Program highlights

Corner Inlet

This is the second year of the five-year Corner Inlet Connections project, funded by the Australian Government. It builds on over 15 years of delivery through this approach and is delivered in partnership with Parks Victoria, GLaWAC, Trust for Nature and BirdLife Australia.

The focus of on-ground works has been to protect the Ramsar values of the area including treating spartina, controlling foxes, improving water quality, and protecting saltmarsh. The main activities this financial year included:



Spartina control

In partnership with Parks Victoria, we coordinated a strategic approach to Spartina control which is a key threat in Corner Inlet, Shallow Inlet, and Andersons Inlet. In 2024-25, highlights included the implementation of the Spartina Control Management Plan which included 73,877 hectares of actual Spartina treatment.

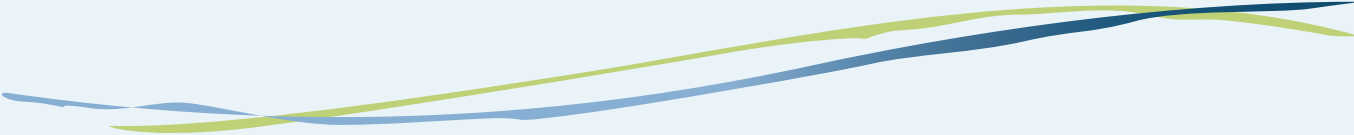
Estuary management

In 2024-25, we undertook a range of projects to help protect, enhance and improve the management and understanding of estuaries. Key activities included:

- In partnership with Bass Coast Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Department of Transport and Planning and DEECA reviewed and updated the management protocols for Bourne Creek and Wreck Creek estuaries.
- Collaborating with stakeholders to identify a Powlett Estuary Alternative Land Management opportunity, including the potential to expand the newly created Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park.
- Working with stakeholders in Seaspray around the long-term management of the Merriman Creek estuary.

"We are all in this together and ask everyone who uses the inlet to play their part in creating a healthy future."





COAST AND MARINE CASE STUDY

Chasing Dreams at Corner Inlet

Capturing an elusive fox on Dream Island, tackling weed infestations and keeping watch over threatened beach nesting birds are just some events in the compelling story of the past year in Corner Inlet.

"It's been another successful year of dedicated work in the Corner Inlet Ramsar site where, for nearly two decades, we've been working with partners and community to protect the inlet's significant natural values," said Tanya Cowell, Waterways Officer for West Gippsland CMA.

This year the focus was on protecting the Ramsar values of the area including treating the weed spartina, controlling foxes, improving water quality and protecting saltmarsh in partnership with Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, Birdlife Australia and specialist contractors.

"Every effort is an important step towards our shared goal of a healthy and resilient inlet that we can all enjoy – whether you are a fisher, farmer, birdwatcher, walker or boater. We all love the inlet in our own special way and want it cared for."

A huge effort was in tackling 68,703 hectares of Spartina infestations across the entire Ramsar site to protect habitat. The weed was treated in summer and autumn by ground and air. The coordinated approach with Parks Victoria saw remote and previously inaccessible areas that flow into the Marine Park treated. Long term monitoring shows this consistent annual treatment is significantly reducing this threat – a major win for the environment and wildlife.

Protecting an additional 20 hectares of habitat was another great win with Trust for Nature leading a program to protect saltmarsh through weed control and fencing from stock on private properties.

Foxes are the number one predator for the Inlet's beach nesting birds including Hooded Plovers and Small Terns. Partners at BirdLife Australia monitored for foxes on the Inlet's four barrier islands (Dream, Box bank, Clonmel and Snake).

An elusive resident fox on Dream Island was caught thanks to a determined contractor. The (approximately) 500 hectare Island is critical habitat for vulnerable beach nesting bird species to breed, and the removal of this fox will increase the likelihood of breeding success. Remote sensing cameras will continue to detect for foxes.

Summer and winter monitoring of beach nesting birds by BirdLife Australia and a team of highly skilled and dedicated volunteers showed generally low success in chicks fledging despite the birds putting in their best efforts. These failures are largely due to predators, high tides and people.

"Disappointingly, human impacts to these remote islands are also a key factor. We have frequently seen off leash dogs, illegal campfires and dumped rubbish. We will work on further management actions to limit threats to future breeding seasons. We are all in this together and ask everyone who uses the inlet to play their part in creating a healthy future."

Community

The benefits that flow from community participation

Gippsland communities are very resilient as they continue to have a positive outlook despite the environmental and economic challenges of recent years. Some of the challenges include changing demographics (an ageing farming population and influx of sea and tree-changers), changing land use (increasing urban development and smaller lots on agricultural land), challenging commodity prices and a changing climate. The transition of the Latrobe Valley resulting from mine closures will impact the region in some form.

Despite these challenges, local communities and groups throughout Gippsland are actively working together to enhance, restore and protect the environment. Landcare has affirmed itself as a major NRM service deliverer through five robust, sophisticated, and well-run Landcare networks that operate at a landscape scale. They remain a vital driver of NRM activity, working directly with private landholders and government agencies to address a wide range of NRM issues.

Landholders are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of soil health. Soil experts conduct industry workshops and field days throughout the region which are extremely well attended.

A network of WaterWatch and EstuaryWatch volunteers provide a vital role by regularly monitoring sites throughout the region and collecting ongoing data about the health of the West Gippsland waterways.

Community theme benchmark - Community participation

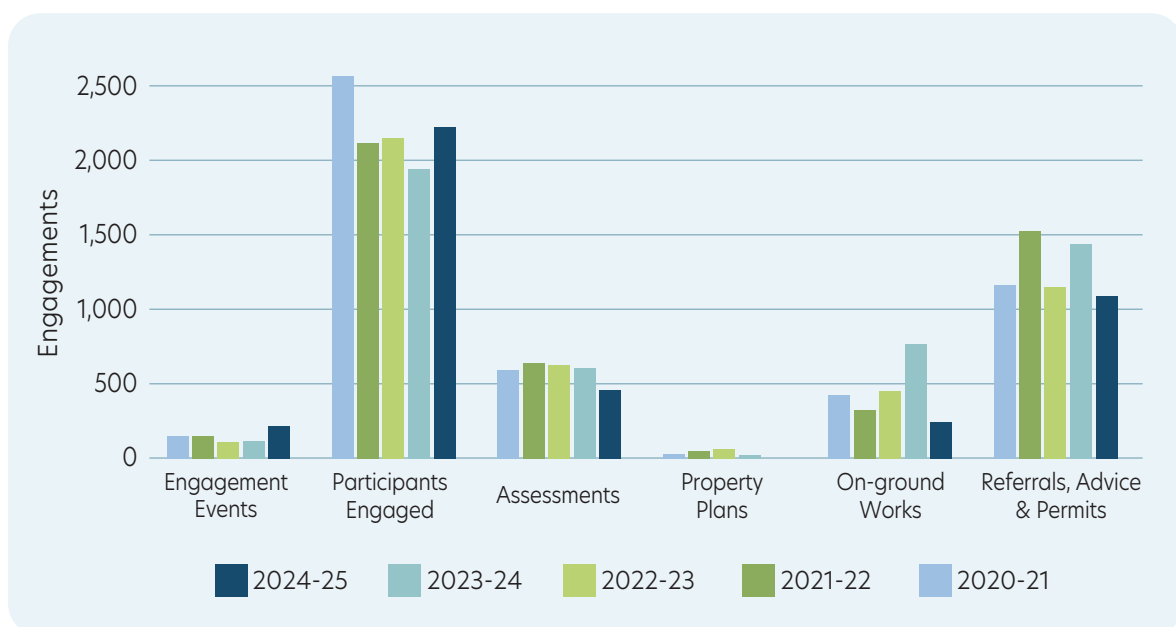


Figure 4: Community participation 2020-25

Community theme benchmark - Community participation

Table 6: Active partners

Category	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Traditional Owner	5	5	5	4	4
Agency/Research	49	44	51	44	39
Community Groups	41	80	91	75	58
Industry/Corporate	15	15	16	13	10
Totals	111	144	163	136	111

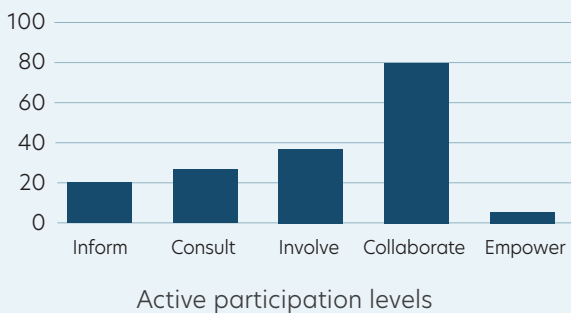


Figure 5: 2024-25 Annual community condition assessment

Community theme benchmark - Farm businesses engaged in works

Table 7: Farm businesses involved in on ground works 2024-25

Property type	Number
Agistment	3
Beef	40
Biodiversity	3
Cropping	2
Dairy	31
Other	4
Public Land	4
Sheep	6
Unknown	115
Total	197



Project Delivery Team members ready to revegetate Old Hat Creek that runs into Corner Inlet.

Program highlights

Landcare and community volunteering legacy is strong

Landcare has a long and proud history in West Gippsland made up of a committed and motivated grassroots community that have delivered best practice natural resource management for more than 30 years. Five Landcare networks support over 70 Landcare groups. There are also approximately 55 community NRM groups who do not sit within the Landcare network structure, such as friends of groups or foreshore committees of management. All these groups and networks drive projects that address local and landscape-scale issues through on ground works such as revegetation, pest plant and animal management, soil health and riparian management. They also build skills and social connections in the community through training and events.

Landcare and community NRM groups have been instrumental in the region with an ongoing commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable development in Victoria. Their current important role is in enhancing the West Gippsland environment and its ability to adapt to meet emerging challenges. Partnerships between agencies and community NRM groups are one of the best ways to achieve great on ground outcomes for the West Gippsland region.

Landcare group health scores have shown some variation year to year but on average it is positive with groups in the West Gippsland region 'moving forward.'

The five networks came together for two days to share the projects and priorities of each network and to collectively identify the challenges volunteers were facing in West Gippsland and explore collaborative opportunities to address these in the region. We also renewed our Landcare Support plan, which will guide how we can continue to ensure community led NRM work continues to thrive in the region.

Table 8: Landcare group health scores

Category	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
5 = Trail blazing	7	6	5	5	1	6	4	5	4
4 = Rolling along	23	11	15	13	21	11	15	9	17
3 = Moving forward	9	22	21	16	5	19	23	17	14
2 = Struggling	9	5	9	11	11	8	9	8	2
1 = Just hanging on	3	8	4	4	2	1	9	0	1
Total groups	51	52	54	49	40	45	60	38	38
Average group health score	3.43	3.04	3.15	3.08	3.2	3.29	2.93	3.28	3.55



Above: On Country partnership day for National Reconciliation Week at Rhyll with Bunurong Land Council and Community, Milawul (Phillip Island) on Bunurong Country.

Partnerships with Traditional Owners

Cultural competency

Our journey to cultural competency across the organisation is ongoing. The program is aimed at building a culturally safe environment in readiness to partner with the Traditional Owners in our region to support self-determination.

Highlights across 2024-25 included cultural competency training delivered for our new staff and key partners (including Landcare) by our Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer. We also hosted a staff forum to learn about Treaty and what it means for how we work in the region. We also engaged Jillian West through Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, to deliver impactful Cultural Awareness Training to 40 staff, landholders and key partners with further workshops planned in 2025-26.

This year has also seen our commitment to the process of cultural competency continue to gain momentum in all levels of projects and programs. There has been an increase in Traditional Owners working On Country, co-designing project implementation and two-way sharing of knowledge, communication, and engagement. This has seen our partnerships strengthen under our Memorandums of Understanding (with both GLaWAC and BLCAC).

Partnerships with Traditional Owner groups

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)

We continue to work under the guidance of our MoU with GLaWAC. Further opportunities for involvement have been encouraged from the beginning of all projects undertaken during this time.

Highlights this year include co-hosting an on-Country event with GLaWAC to share knowledge between our agencies. This session, held at the Heart Morass, was designed to reflect on the significant works undertaken over decades with partners such as Field and Game members and Trust for Nature to reinstate over 3,000 hectares of wetlands.

The session also provided the opportunity to share more about the work of the CMA and how we work as partners with GLaWAC, as well as giving our staff the chance to learn from Gunaikurnai people on Country.

Partnership meetings are held regularly, focused on co-designing future projects and identifying opportunities for aligning with GLaWAC priorities. Two significant outcomes from planning this year have been:

- The co-design of a Yarns on Farms project with the Cultural Hub Team. This program will engage local farmers across the region and bring together farmers, landholders, land managers, Gunaikurnai Elders and West Gippsland CMA staff to share stories about land use and management across the Gunaikurnai Landscape. The first on Country sessions will be run later in 2025.
- Working together to design a program to support GLaWAC Katung (water) rangers. The rangers will work with West Gippsland CMA to learn about river health and catchment management from a CMA perspective.

We look forward to implementing these programs and learning over the next 12 months.



Heart Morass on Gunaikurnai Country. Image by Colin Cook.



Eastern Hooded Plover.

Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC)

We continue to work under the guidance of our MoU with BLCAC. Further opportunities for involvement have been encouraged from the beginning of all projects undertaken during this time.

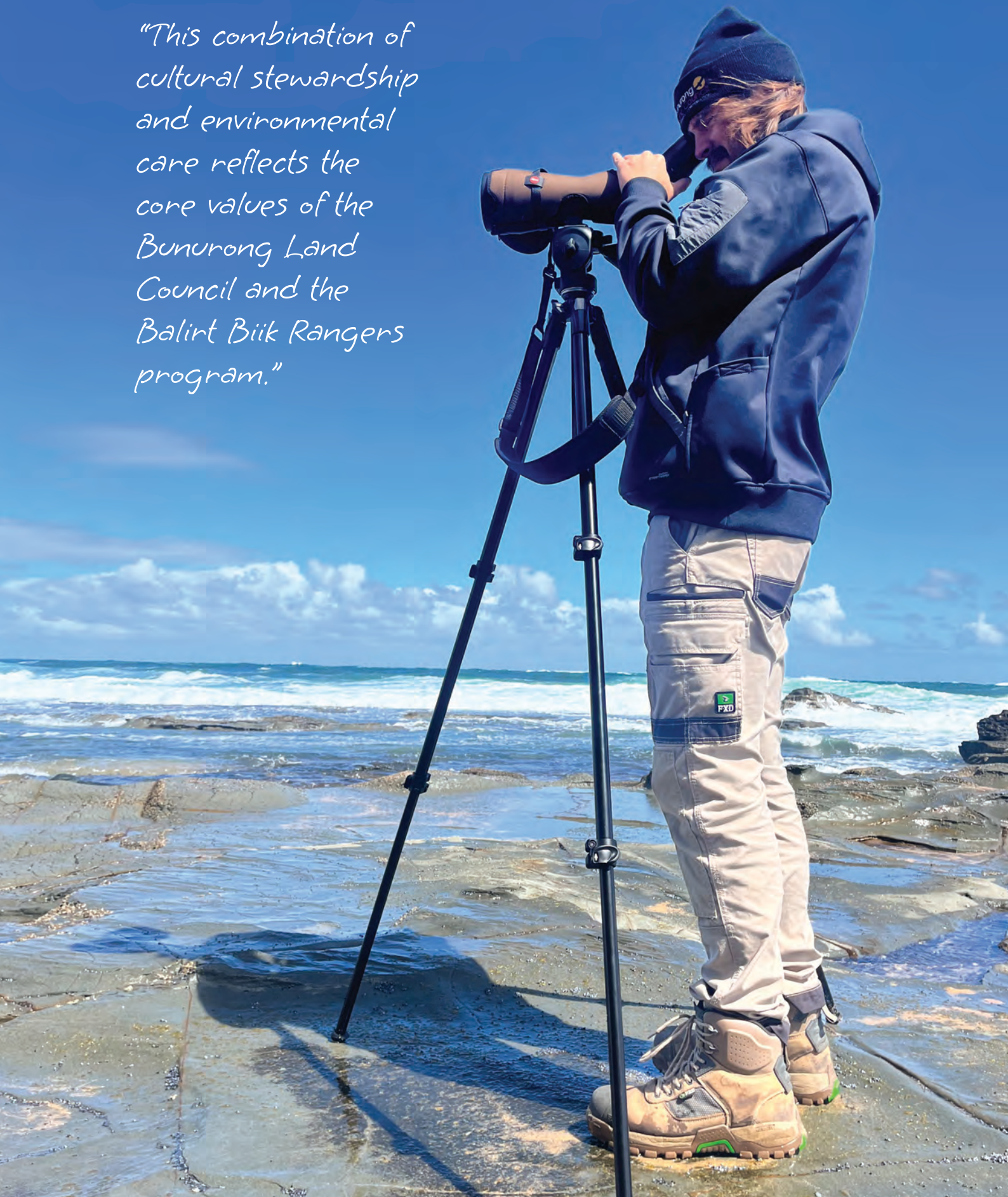
The highlight this year has been supporting self- determined priorities and increasing the amount of on-country work for the Strong Country Team. These have included:

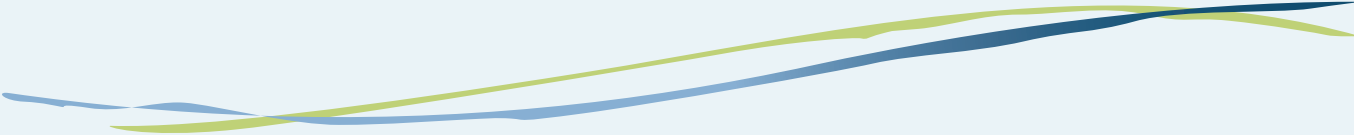
- Supporting the BLCAC led development of a three-year program in the Kugerungmome/ Powlett Catchment to protect Cultural Values. On Country activities will be led by BLCAC Strong Country team and be self-determined across the life of the project (and supported by the CMA as requested).
- Enabling the Strong Country team to build capacity to complete Hooded Plover (barriytbarriyt) monitoring on their Country.
- Co-hosting a partnership session at the Land Council's property in Rhyll during National Reconciliation Week.

With both Traditional Owner groups we also foster opportunities for mentoring and knowledge building and sharing including:

- cultural knowledge
- technical advice
- site recognition
- historical knowledge
- project planning
- project implementation
- reporting
- environmental water knowledge.

"This combination of cultural stewardship and environmental care reflects the core values of the Bunurong Land Council and the Balint Biik Rangers program."





TRADITIONAL OWNER SELF DETERMINATION CASE STUDY

Balirt Biik Rangers protecting barriytbarriyt - Eastern Hooded Plovers

Over the 2024-25 breeding season, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation's Balirt Biik Rangers monitored and cared for barriytbarriyt, the Boonwurrung name for Hooded Plovers, at nine key coastal sites between Powlett River and Inverloch on Bunurong Country.

The experience has cemented the team's passion and commitment to species protection on Bunurong Country.

"At the beginning of the season, many team members had never encountered a Hooded Plover and were unfamiliar with its life cycle," said Luke Phillips, Balirt Biik Eastern Team Leader with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

This was soon to change as the rangers attended training sessions led by BirdLife Australia. The sessions built both technical confidence and ecological awareness, and the team is enthusiastic about continuing this learning into the next breeding season.

"They are particularly keen to deepen their skills in nest protection strategies, threat identification, and habitat management to ensure they are delivering the best outcomes for the species."

Over the months, the rangers developed a strong understanding of the plovers, affectionately known as Hoodie's and their behaviour, such as how they feed, shelter, nest and use displays such as broken-wing to distract threats.

Each fortnight, between two to four rangers undertook monitoring across sites including Kugerungmome Powlett River, Williamsons Beach, Wilsons Road, Harmers Haven, and Inverloch beaches. They recorded observations such as bird numbers,

behaviours, nesting activity, chick presence, signs of fledging and predator activity and entered data into the 'My Beach Bird Portal'.

The team also protected the plovers by fencing off active nests to protect them from public disturbance, talking to beachgoers about the Hoodies, and working alongside committed local volunteers.

"A major part of the program's success has been the learning journey of the rangers themselves. One of the proudest moments this season was witnessing the full life cycle of the barriytbarriyt from parent birds preparing a site for mating to a tiny chick becoming a fully-fledged bird. Seeing these birds grow and survive in such challenging conditions, especially with the pressures of a long, hot summer and busy tourist beaches, has been humbling and deeply rewarding," said Luke.

The Balirt Biik Rangers plan to expand their monitoring capacity to cover additional sites along the Bass Coast. Future work will also involve collaboration with the Bunurong Cultural Values and Heritage team to ensure that conservation activities are aligned with cultural responsibilities, and that work is being carried out respectfully in culturally significant areas.

"This combination of cultural stewardship and environmental care reflects the core values of the Bunurong Land Council and the Balirt Biik Rangers program," Luke concluded.

Our Catchments, Our Communities

Kugerungmome/Powlett River Partnerships Project

The Our Catchments, Our Communities Kugerungmome/Powlett River Partnerships Project continued, however, 2024-25 was a planning year to guide the program delivery in the next three-years. In partnership with Bass Coast Landcare Network, Trust for Nature, Parks Victoria, Bunurong Land Council, BirdLife Australia and a range of other stakeholders (Bass Coast Shire Council, South Gippsland Water, Threatened Species Network) we undertook a collaborative planning process to prioritize projects and activities to be delivered in the coming three years.

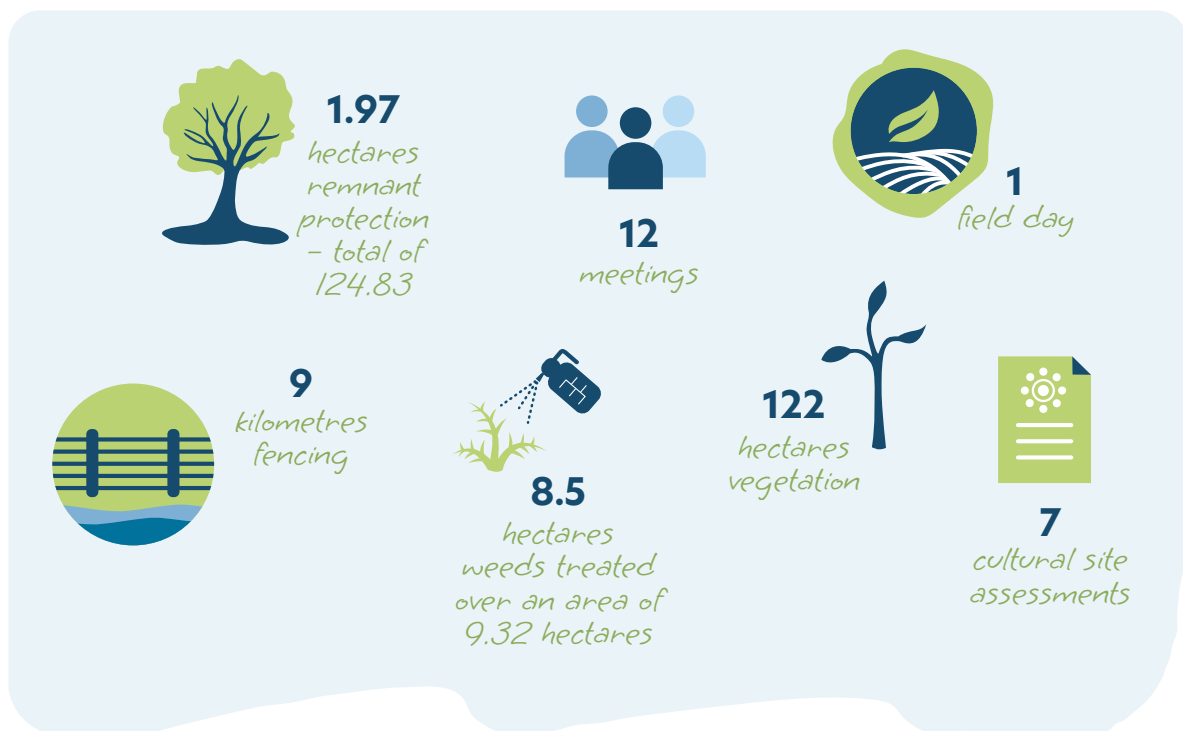
Our Catchments, Our Communities - Regional Partnerships

We continued to support the GEA Forum including the implementation planning for the Regional Catchment Partnership Agreement. Strategic discussions at the regional level across East and West Gippsland have strengthened partnerships between agencies.

The GEA Executive Team finalised a Strategic Plan for this forum which will guide collaboration, effort and advocacy for the region over the next five years.

Regional Landcare

A range of successful Landcare and community events were held throughout the year focusing on different projects and audiences. In 2024-25 this included:





CEN members visiting Merriman Creek, Gunaikurnai Country.

Community Engagement Network

The CEN plays an important role of information exchange with the community as they bring community issues to us, and we share information on CMA projects and initiatives that members can take back to their communities.

During 2024-25, the CEN had 16 members and they met on 3 different occasions. The CEN participated in field trips to Merriman Creek and Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River) to learn and discuss our programs and a session on the WGCMA's role in flood advice and recovery.

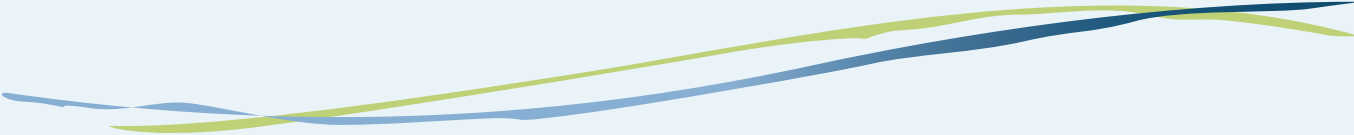
Irrigator Reference Group and Environmental Water Advisory Groups

The IRG group has an advisory role on programs like those offered through our Sustainable Irrigation Program and the Macalister Irrigation District Incentives Program. The group is made up of 15 irrigators from the MID and they met on five occasions throughout 2024-25, including a field trip.

We also established and renewed Environmental Water Advisory Groups for the Carran Carran (Thomson), Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) and Durt'Yowan (Latrobe) rivers to help inform the Seasonal Watering and Management Plans for these environmental water entitlements.

"When you bring everyone together it creates a groundswell of possibility and the large task of taking action becomes bite size and manageable – supported by each other. That's how integrated catchment management works."





COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

Kugerungmome, a river with heart

Empowering each other to tackle the challenge of healing rivers is at the heart of the Our Catchments Our Communities program, but what does this actually look like? Take a trip to the picturesque Kugerungmome/Powlett River in South Gippsland and you will see what river loving looks like first hand.

Flowing across Bunurong Country, Kugerungmome enters Bass Strait at Kilcunda. It is a much loved river alive with biodiversity, stories and cultural heritage. Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation are the Traditional Owners of the river and keepers and cultural authority of its story. The Land Council gifted the name, Kugerungmome, along with a painting of its story and are leading the process to tell the river's story and guide the project design.

As it snakes along its course it passes farms, small townships – even schools. It faces many challenges and supports plants, small pockets of rainforest, productive farmland and endangered species from the Giant Gippsland Earthworm to Hooded Plovers.

West Gippsland CMA sees everyone along the way as part of the river's future with opportunities for them to act as stewards to play a small or large role in caring for it.

“When you bring everyone together it creates a groundswell of possibility and the large task of taking action becomes bite size and manageable – supported by each other. That's how integrated catchment management works,” explained Deb Archer, Manager Catchment and Communities at the West Gippsland CMA.

The project began in 2022, stemming from the passion and collective efforts driven by Landcare for over 30 years. After a successful three years in motion, no one wanted the momentum they'd built to fade – they wanted it to grow.

In 2024-25, the project continued and a series of facilitated workshops brought everyone into one room to put their piece of the puzzle on the table, share learnings and build on success.

Together, they created a matrix of works to prioritise the projects and activities to be delivered in the coming four years.

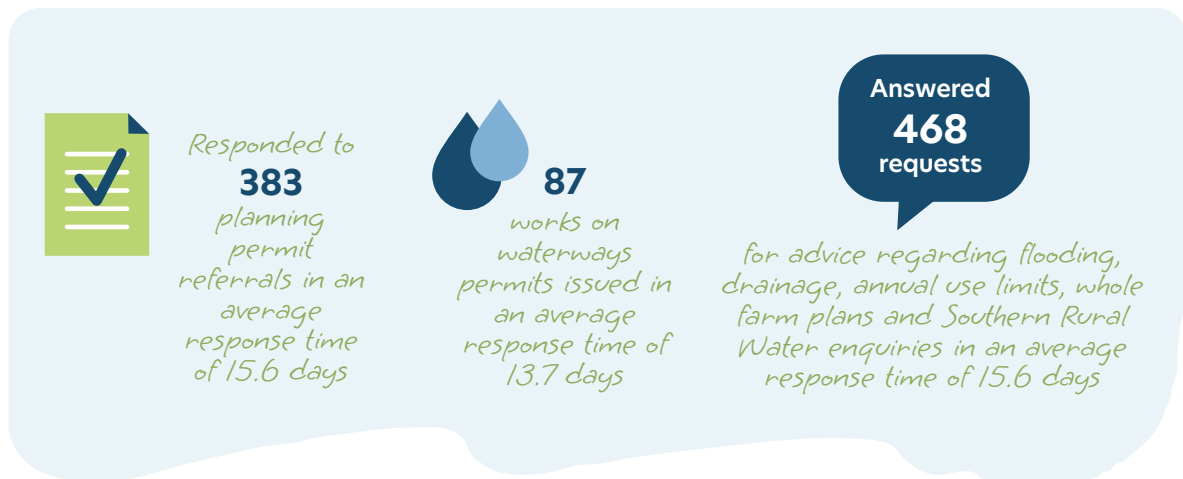
Projects led by Bunurong Land Council, Bass Coast Landcare Network, Trust for Nature, Parks Victoria, and BirdLife Australia will bring landholders and community together to expand the reach and possibilities of works.

“We're super excited about what we can achieve together and the legacy we will leave. Caring for catchments isn't something that can be done alone, we need everyone,” Deb said.

The Kugerungmome/Powlett Partnerships project is led by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and delivered in partnership with Bass Coast Landcare Network, Trust for Nature, Parks Victoria, BirdLife Australia, community, landholders and stakeholders Bass Coast Shire Council, South Gippsland Water, Threatened Species Network.

Regulatory services

We are responsible for regulatory activities for waterways, floodplains and rural drainage. We also contribute to strategic planning across the region including participating in planning scheme amendments and improving the understanding of flood behaviour by developing flood studies.



During 2024-25, we:

We continued to provide floodplain management and works on waterways services on a contractual basis to East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. On behalf of East Gippsland CMA, we responded to 94 planning permit referrals and a further 130 flood advice and Southern Rural Water enquiries. We also issued 50 works on waterways permits.

We continued to support DEECA in the ongoing development and refinement of the FloodZoom planning system. We assisted DEECA with expert user input to improve usability to the system. Significant and ongoing work was also done updating the flood intelligence data that drives both the planning and the emergency management modules.

We collaborated with DEECA and councils through the Gippsland Integrated Water Management Forum. We actively participated in the Inverloch Regional and Strategic Partnership which developed the draft Cape to Cape Resilience Plan to address the erosion occurring along Inverloch Surf Beach.

Significant progress was made during 2024-25 to produce and update flood information for our region. We partnered with Latrobe City to progress the flood studies for Waterhole Creek in Morwell and Narracan Creek in Moe. We provided opportunities for University students to complete their industry placement requirements and progressed flood mapping for the Morwell River and Middle Creek in Latrobe City and the Tarra River in Wellington Shire. These studies provide valuable information which is used in flood preparedness and response, flood mitigation, planning scheme amendments, and for insurance purposes.

The West Gippsland Floodplain Management Strategy was completed in 2017. We developed the strategy on behalf of key local stakeholders such as the SES, local government, and the community. The strategy identified the significant flood risks across the region, analysed the mitigation options, and determined priority actions to be implemented over the lifetime of the strategy. Implementation of the strategy continued during 2024-25, with 15 actions completed and another 21 of the 60 current actions underway. The remaining actions are scheduled to commence in coming years or are awaiting suitable funding opportunities.



Our organisation

Our purpose and vision

We coordinate the integrated management of land and water resources within the region. We aim to achieve ecologically and economically sustainable development of natural resource-based industries, protection of land and water resources, and conservation of natural and cultural heritage. We have done this since 1997 by working with communities, industries, and government agencies to protect and enhance the condition of the region's natural resource assets.

We exist to implement integrated catchment management to improve the region and its catchments.

What we do makes a difference.

Our vision

A healthy catchment, valued and cared for by the community, that underpins the environmental, social, cultural and economic wealth of the region.

Strategic areas of focus

To achieve our vision, we have selected four strategic areas of focus. This platform will guide the scope of our work to protect and improve our priority landscapes. Our approach to this work is guided by our values.



Partnerships and relationships

Working together



First Peoples self-determination

Change together



Communicating for the catchment

Inspiring action



Organisational capacity

The best we can be

Our work

We work with our partners and stakeholders to protect and repair the health and extent of the natural resources that remain in our catchment. We do this through meaningful partnerships and relationships with agencies and the community, founded on trust, respect, and common goals.

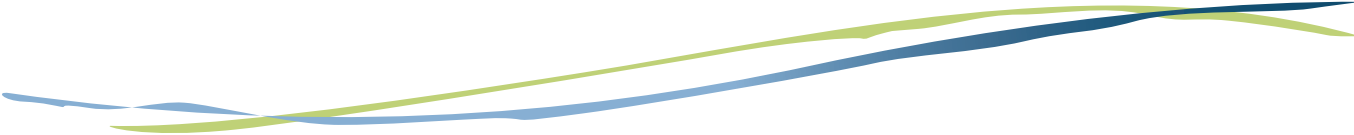
We achieve these outcomes through positive, highly energised staff that are appropriately supported by Board, management, policies, procedures and systems. We ensure our investors are satisfied by responsibly managing risks and challenges.

Our principles and values

- We collaborate and support each other and our partners by acting with integrity, empathy and passion to protect and enhance the region's catchments.
- We ensure all activities we undertake are relevant, transparent, accountable, and reliable. In undertaking our activities, we will act with integrity, fairness, and credibility. We will share knowledge and information, be prepared to accept change, and seek to continuously improve the activities in which we are involved.
- We value and encourage participation of the community and other key stakeholders.
- We are committed to integrated catchment management and targeted investment that is focused on long-term outcomes for our region.
- Our partners and alliances are of the utmost importance to our operation and the development and implementation of the integrated catchment management priorities and plans.
- We look to operate in an environment that is based on mutual respect, open communication, sharing of success, and the acknowledgement of achievements.



Lyrebird Award winners 2024.



Our organisation and Board

We were established to provide integrated management of land and water resources within the region. The state government established ten CMAs on 1 July 1997 following a state-wide review of catchment management structures.

The Board

We are governed by a skills-based Board appointed by the Minister/s who administer the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act). Our responsibilities include strategic and policy direction for the integrated management of land, biodiversity, and water through south, central, and west Gippsland. We operate under the legislative base of many Acts.

The main Acts are the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP), *Water Act 1989*, *Financial Management Act 1994*, *Audit Act 1994*, *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2012*, and the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

The *CaLP Act 1994* and the *Water Act 1989* define our main purposes as follows:

- To set up a framework for the integrated management and protection of the catchment.
- To encourage community participation in the management of land and water resources.
- To set up a system of controls on noxious weeds and pest animals.

The Board also has a Charter which is in line with DEECA's Governance Guidelines for Statutory Authorities which was formally adopted in June 2005. Details of our Board members are available on pages 59-62.

The relevant Ministers have issued us with a Statement of Obligations under the *CaLP Act 1994* and *Water Act 1989*. The Minister for Water has also issued a Letter of Expectation on which we are delivering. These documents are a key part of the framework that guides the function and activity of our organisation.

Within this framework, one of our primary roles is engaging with the community to develop and implement the Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS). The RCS is a framework for integrated land and water management in the region. It outlines the priority issues for the region through broad consultation with our community and other stakeholders.

The RCS is the overarching strategy for the development, management, and conservation of land and water resources in the region and is formally reviewed every six years.

Within this context, we are responsible for developing annual regional investment priorities within the Department's Victorian Water Program Investment Framework. The board sets priorities in consultation with state and Australian government investors, with regional agency stakeholders, and through our community engagement and partnerships framework. The annual investment package is endorsed by the relevant Ministers. Funds then become available for all successful projects.

Community Engagement Network (CEN) charter

The CEN charter outlines the purpose of the CEN as a forum to:

- Exchange NRM information.
- Identify community NRM needs, issues and barriers to participation.
- Provide community perspective into strategies, plans and projects.
- Strengthen our profile and reputation in the community through advocacy of NRM issues, solutions, and our activities.

The 16 members of the CEN were chosen by a Board appointed panel, based on diversity, geographic spread and strong links to the community.

Community Engagement Network members

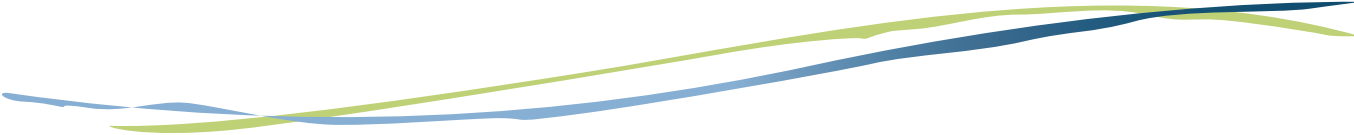
Fiona Pfeil, Sale	Barry Rogers, Warragul	Chris Gittins, Fish Creek
David Sutton, Inverloch	Evan De Gooyer, Korumburra	Ellen Peters, Drouin
Graham Ross, Warragul	James Stranger, Traralgon	Dale Yeats, Traralgon
Jessica Obersby, Churchill	Emilie Lafrank, Tynong	Jessica Tong, Woolamai
Callum Reynolds, Coongulla	Nicki Jennings, Sale	Nicole Creaser, Korumburra
Deanne Smith, Nilma North	Phoebe Hicks, Trafalgar	

The CEN plays an important role of information exchange with the community as they bring community issues to us, and we share information on CMA projects and initiatives that members can take back to their communities.

During 2024-25, the CEN has 16 members and they met on three different occasions. The CEN participated in field trips to Merriman's Creek and Durt'Yowan (Latrobe River) to learn and discuss our programs and a session on the WGCMA's role in flood advice and recovery.

We have further involved our CEN members by:

- Inviting them to various workshops and webinars.
- Sharing information via email including Victorian Environmental Water Holder update and our Gippslandscapes podcasts.
- Supporting the sharing of information between members such as the Landcare Network newsletters, and the West Gippsland CMA Catchment Snapshot e-newsletter.



Board members

Mikaela Power (Chair)

Mikaela was appointed to the Board on 27 October 2015. In the last financial year, she attended all 8 Board meetings.

Mikaela holds qualifications in arts, education, business and company directorship. She has worked in the public and private sectors in Gippsland, Melbourne and internationally and now works at Federation University. Mikaela was a Baw Baw Shire Councillor from 2012-2022, serving as Mayor and Deputy Mayor during this time. She was Deputy Chair of the Periurban Group of Rural Councils and chaired the West Gippsland Library Board for four years. Her community involvement includes Landcare, education, sport and the arts.

Belinda Nave (Deputy Chair)

Belinda was appointed to the Board on 1 October 2017. In the last financial year, she attended all 8 Board meetings.

Belinda is a primary producer involved in the family's wagyu beef enterprise. She holds qualifications in environmental and marine science and has extensive experience in NRM including managing on-ground environmental projects, strategic coastal projects, heritage projects and complex environmental assessments.

Belinda has worked in the public and private sectors in Gippsland and Melbourne. She has proven experience in engaging with stakeholders at the state, local government and community levels.

Belinda is passionate about improving the family farm through revegetation and protecting waterways and is an active volunteer in her local community.

Susan Anderson

Susan was appointed to the Board on 1 October 2021. In the last financial year, she attended all 8 Board meetings.

Susan is a primary producer of beef cattle in Bunyip and has conservation qualifications and experience in beef and dairy farm renovation and management.

From 2015 to 2021 Susan was a Board member of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority and was deputy chair from 2018. She has extensive Landcare and community contacts in the Westernport catchment and is a life member and president of the Bunyip Landcare Group.

Susan is a member of Landcare Victoria's Members' Council and of the Longwarry-Koo Wee Rup Flood Protection District Advisory Committee and a committee member of the Cardinia Environment Coalition.



Jodie Mason

Jodie was appointed to the Board on 1 October 2017. In the last financial year, she attended 3 of the 8 Board meetings.

Jodie has qualifications in forest science, business management and company directorship, and over 30 years' professional experience in forest management, environmental auditing, research program management and industry engagement. She has worked in operational and consulting roles across the public and private sectors throughout Australia and internationally.

Jodie is a past Board member of Australian Forestry Standard Ltd, a current Board member of the Tasmanian Forest Practices Authority and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

Jenny O'Sullivan

Jenny was appointed to the Board on 1 October 2023. In the last financial year, she attended 7 of the 8 Board meetings.

Jenny and her husband run a 664 hectare (1,500 Dry Sheep Equivalent beef and sheep property in South Gippsland. She has worked with rural communities and industries to build the capacity of people, build resilience and enhance wellbeing and embrace innovation and best practice in agriculture and natural resource management.

Jenny is passionate about sustainable agriculture, rural communities, the environment and the red meat industry. Jenny is a member of The Australian Beef Sustainability Steering Group.

Jenny's contribution to agriculture, the environment and community has been recognised with numerous awards over the years including the West Gippsland CMA Lyrebird award.

Nicholas Murray

Nick was appointed to the Board on 1 October 2019. In the last financial year, he attended 6 of the 8 Board meetings.

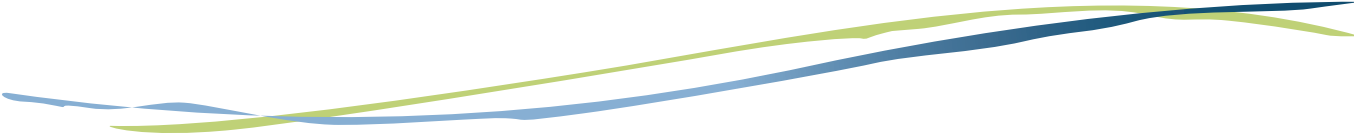
Nick holds an undergraduate degree in education, post graduate qualifications in Management and Occupational Health and Safety, and is a graduate of the AICD.

Nick has worked in the public and private sectors and has extensive Board experience with for-profit, not-for-profit, and member-based entities.

He is currently a member of the Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee and former member of the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee.

Nick is an experienced Chief Executive Officer and prior to retirement from full time work was CEO of Gippsland Ports from 2008 to 2018. Nick is currently principal of a boutique consultancy practice providing services to a range of public and private sector clients.

He has a strong belief that positive conservation outcomes can be achieved through, and in conjunction with, sustainable regional development.



Shelley McGuiness

Shelley was appointed to the Board on 1 October 2019. In the last financial year, she attended 7 of the 8 Board meetings.

Shelley has over 25 years' experience in the land and water management sector including roles in research, extension, and policy.

Shelley holds a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours) and is a Sessional Member of Planning Panels Victoria. Previously, she was a Director of Coliban Water and a member of the AICD.

Brian Stevens

Brian was appointed to the Board on 1 October 2021. In the last financial year, he attended 5 of the 8 Board meetings.

Brian is a proud Gunai man, originating from East Gippsland with a deep understanding and strong connection to his cultural heritage, identity and community. He has worked to support Aboriginal people and communities by leading and shaping government policy and strategies that focus on Aboriginal health, leadership and economic development.

With over 30 years' experience in various Aboriginal leadership roles, Brian has contributed to the development of government policy and systems as well as corporate and business planning, change management, program design, evaluation and reporting.

Brian is an experienced Board member, he has led the development of community organisations and is a Board member of the Centre of Excellence for Aboriginal Health in East Gippsland and a member of the Bass Coast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advisory Committee. He is an Alumni of the Melbourne Business School, MURRA Indigenous Business program, a qualified and accredited coach and facilitator, trained in conflict management, adult education and training and completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors Training.

Russell Dow (Independent Aboriginal Delegate)

Russell was appointed to the Board on 1 June 2024. In the last financial year, he attended 5 of the 8 Board meetings.

Russell Dow, GunaiKurnai, lives in West Gippsland and has 20 years of experience across various industries.

He started his career at 19, spending nine years in facilities management, followed by four years in transport and logistics. For the past seven years, Russell has been with GLaWAC, where he focuses on joint management. His diverse background equips Russell with a unique perspective and a strong skill set to drive effective operational strategies.

Russell is passionate about continuous improvement and delivering results that benefit our community and organisation.



Abbey Argus-Smith (Youth Associate Director)

Abbey was appointed to the Board in October 2024. In the last financial year, she attended 6 of the 6 Board meetings she was eligible to attend.

Abbey grew up in both dairy and beef farms throughout Gippsland and developed a passion for sustainability and conservation so went on to complete her studies in Environmental Science and Environment and Society. She now works in the Ecological consulting industry and is committed to using her professional skills and knowledge to achieve positive environmental outcomes in conjunction with supporting community needs.

Abbey has advocated for her local community through tackling wicked problems such as sand bank erosion and aquatic habitat loss. She plans on using her background and skill set to represent today's youth and inspire a sustainable future.

Board membership of committees

During 2024-25, Board members participated on the following committees:

Audit and Risk Committee

Shelley McGuinness, Belinda Nave and Jenny O'Sullivan.

Remuneration Committee

Mikaela Power (Chair), Brian Stevens and Susan Anderson.

Corporate Committee

Jodie Mason (Chair), Belinda Nave and Nick Murray.

Landcare

Susan Anderson (Chair), Shelley McGuinness and Jenny O'Sullivan.

Regional Catchment Management Strategy Steering Committee

Shelley McGuinness, Susan Anderson.

Audit and Risk Committee

The main responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee are to:

- Review and report independently to the Board on the annual report and all other financial information and reports.
- Help the Board review the effectiveness of the organisation's internal control environment covering:
 - effectiveness and efficiency of operations
 - reliability of financial reporting
 - compliance with applicable laws and regulations and
 - determine the scope of the internal audit function and ensure its resources are adequate and used effectively, including coordination with the external auditors.
- Maintain effective communication with external auditors.
- Consider recommendations made by internal and external auditors and review the implementation of actions to resolve issues raised.
- Oversee the effective operation of the risk management framework.

Independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee over the 2024-25 financial year were Andrea Buckland, Ian Gibson (to 2 March 2025) and Sarah Heath (from 3 March 2025).

Table 9: Audit and Risk Committee membership and meeting attendance 2024-25

Name	Term	Attended	Eligible to Attend
Ian Gibson*	1 July 2024 to 9 September 2024	2	2
Chairperson	10 September to 2 March 2025		
Andrea Buckland*	1 July 2024 to 9 September 2024	5	5
Chairperson	10 September 2024 to 30 June 2025		
Sarah Heath*	3 March 2025 to 30 June 2025	3	3
Belinda Nave	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025	5	5
Jenny O'Sullivan	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025	4	5
Shelley McGuinness	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025	3	5

* independent member

Internal audit plan

Audits have been undertaken in accordance with the internal audit plan. This plan was developed in consultation with the internal auditor and the risk and audit committee. Reviews carried out this year were:

- Management of Privacy Responsibilities
- OH&S
- Review of Accounts Payable Financial Controls

Organisational structure

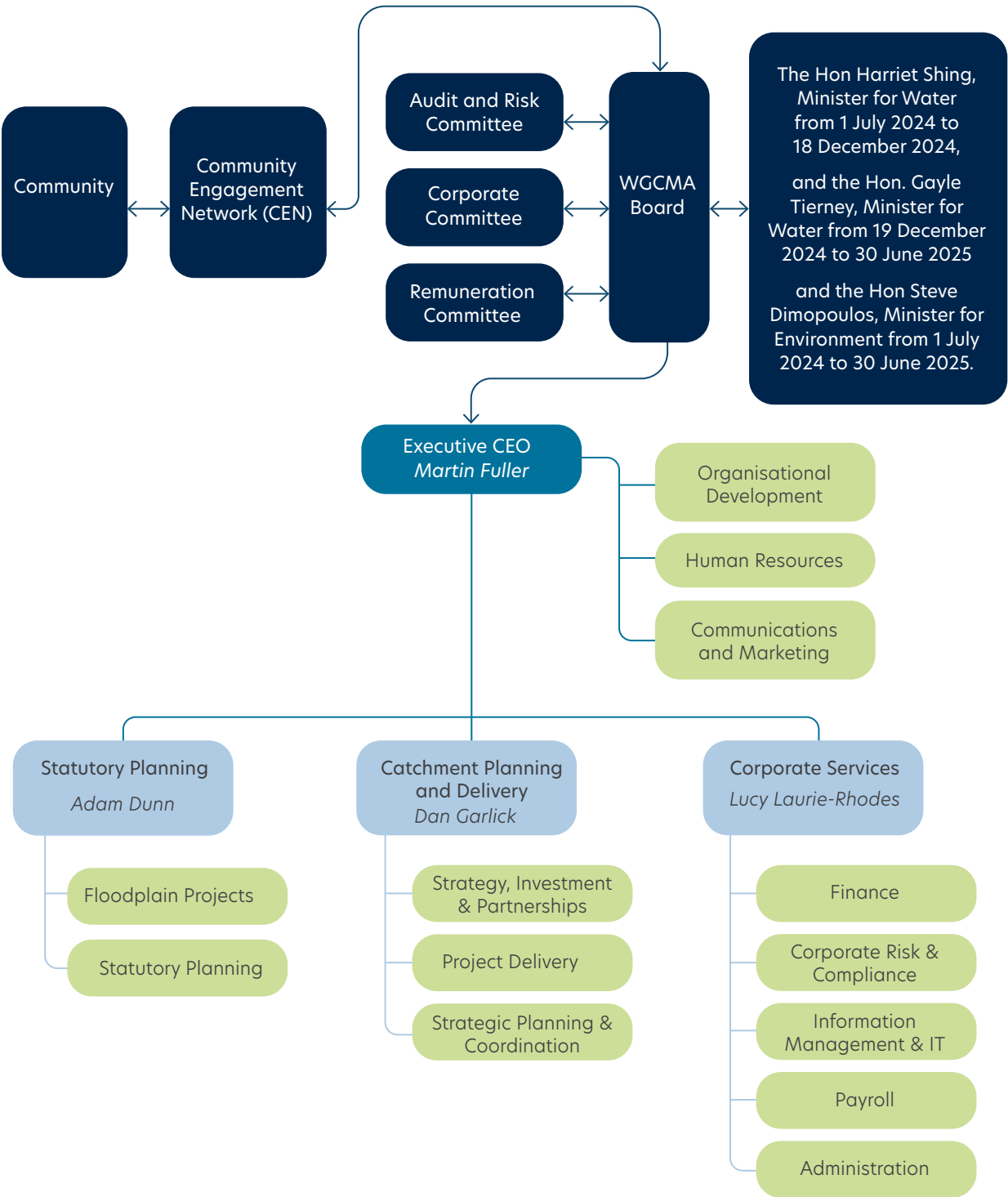


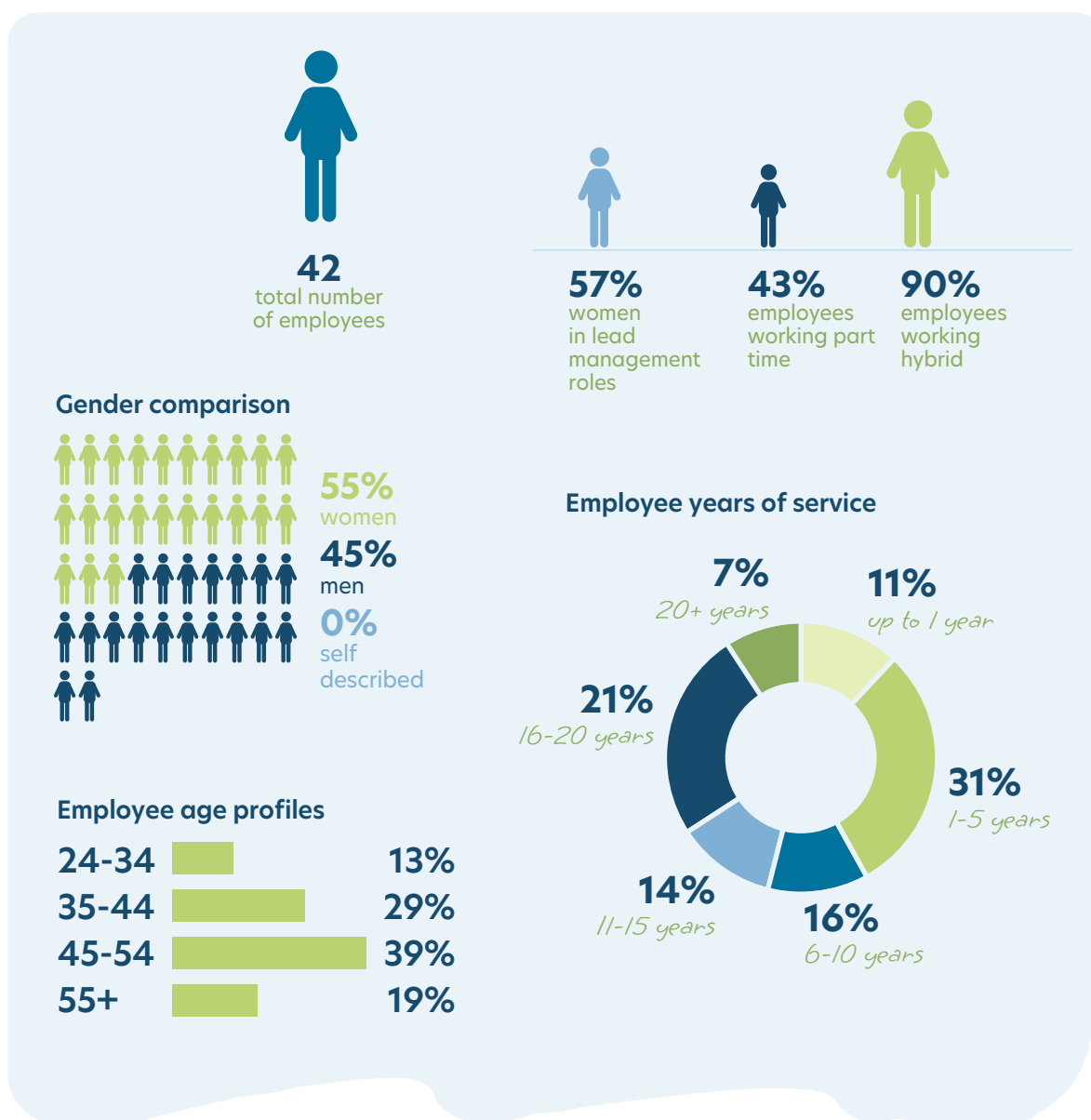
Figure 6: West Gippsland CMA's organisational structure 2024-25

Our people

Supporting our people to be their best

A high-functioning, well-supported and appropriately resourced staff group is a critical component of our campaign to improve the resilience and adaptability of our region. We commit to nurturing a workplace culture that provides a stimulating and fulfilling employee experience, securing and retaining the best people at all levels of leadership and governance in order to achieve our goals.

Current snapshot of our workforce



Health, safety & wellbeing

We are committed to providing and maintaining a safe work environment that does not pose health and safety risks to our employees, contractors, visitors, and volunteers. We recognise that work health and safety is extremely important and minimising risks to health and safety is the joint responsibility of the Board, management, and employees. The OH&S Committee meets quarterly to focus and review key topics including prioritising the safety of our workforce, enhancing safety leadership capabilities, improving our safety culture and improving safety data collection, compliance, and reporting.

- During 2024-25, our priority has been exploring how we support our people's psychological health and safety, and its root causes. This included looking at the shift to hybrid working and our current ways of working.

Table 10: OH&S five-year summary

	2024 -25	2023 -24	2022 -23	2021 -22	2020 -21
Reported hazards/incidents (i) (ii)	13	14	5	6	7
Lost time standard claims	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Average cost per claim	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Training events	4	2	2	2	4

(i) Reported internally.

(ii) Includes general incidents, motor vehicle incidents.

(iii) There were no notifiable incidents that were required to be reported to the Victorian Workcover Authority for the reporting period.

(iv) There were **zero (0)** formal reportable incidents received by HR of psychological risks/incidents, bullying, harassment or gendered violence.



Plants ready on Rainbow Creek on Gunaikurnai Country.



West Gippsland CMA team.

Learning and Development

As we navigate increasingly complex and dynamic landscapes, the need for future-ready skills and capabilities has never been more important. We are committed to building a resilient and adaptable workforce to achieve our strategic vision. Through targeted initiatives and a development program, we are equipping our people with the tools they need to thrive in their roles and drive our organisation towards sustained success.

- This year we optimised our online learning management system to improve end user experience, achieving almost 90% completion rate for employee compliance training which includes information and cyber-security, health and safety, risk management and psychological safety in the workplace meeting our legal, ethical and governance requirements.
- We also explored and offered numerous bespoke individual development and leadership opportunities throughout the year.

Leadership

We continue to build leadership capability by empowering our leaders to create an environment where all our people can thrive, innovate and contribute to our collective success. We build leadership capability and capacity throughout the organisation by developing empowered leaders and managers who model people leadership, management and supervision skills and behaviours.

- This year we strengthened our leadership capability by launching our Leadership Program for 2024-25.



West Gippsland CMA Water Team out on Gunaikurnai Country.

Diversity and inclusion

We are committed to providing an environment that enables our people to bring their true selves to work and is inherently more inclusive. This is integral to creating a great employee experience, growing our capability, and supporting our communities.

- This year we launched our Diversity & Inclusion Plan 2024-2029. We also continued to celebrate the most significant days of each of our diverse groups and conduct events on nominated celebration/commemoration days to promote understanding, acceptance, and as a means of celebrating diversity in all its forms.

Workforce data

Table 11: Headcount and FTE during the last pay period in June of each year.

	2024-25	2024-25	2023-24	2023-24
Classification	Number (headcount)	FTE	Number (headcount)	FTE
Executives	1	1	1	1
Senior Managers	3	3	3	3
Administration and Operational Staff	38	30.8	42	34.9
Total	42	34.8	46	38.9

Note: Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.



Good governance

Report against Corporate Plan targets

Projects we undertake are developed through the Victorian Water Program Investment Framework and National Landcare Program processes and lodged with the Victorian and Australian governments. Once endorsed by government, our staff and Board develop an Annual Action Plan which is actively monitored throughout the year by the Executive and Board.

To ensure we can report to the Minister against governance requirements, key performance indicators have been included in this report that will complement the outcomes required in our investment plans. These are detailed below.

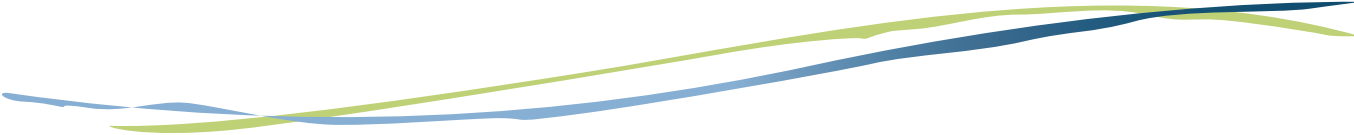
Table 12: Corporate Plan targets and achievements

Performance area	Performance target	Achievement
Business management and governance	Submit annually, a Board performance assessment report according to any guidelines issued.	Compliant with guidelines issued.
	A risk management strategy/plan approved by the Board and being implemented.	Plan is approved by the Board and is being implemented.
	100% of the CMA's policies reviewed and approved by the Board every three financial years.	100% of relevant policies reviewed.
	Full compliance with all applicable Standing Directions under the Financial Management Compliance Framework Checklist.	Full compliance was achieved.
Regional planning and coordination	A regional catchment strategy (RCS) approved by the Minister.	Approved and being implemented.
	A regional waterways strategy (RWS) approved by the Minister.	Approved and being implemented.
	A regional floodplain strategy (RFS) approved by the Board.	Approved and being implemented.
	Land and water management plans (LWMP) in designated irrigation areas (or equivalent) approved by the Board.	Approved and being implemented.
	A stakeholder and community engagement framework/plan approved by the Board.	Approved and being implemented.
	A regional Landcare support plan approved by the Board.	Approved and being implemented.

Table 12: Corporate Plan targets and achievements *continued*

Performance area	Performance target	Achievement
Regional delivery	Progress with implementation of the RCS and any major sub-strategies is reviewed by the Board annually.	RCS program reviewed and reported to Board.
	Projects/activities to implement the RCS are delivered and reported according to associated funding agreements.	Approved projects and activities are being delivered and reported according to associated funding agreements.
	Projects/activities to implement the regional floodplain management strategy delivered and reported according to associated funding agreements.	Approved projects and activities are being delivered and reported according to associated funding agreements.
	Projects/activities to implement LWMP are delivered and reported according to associated funding agreements.	Approved projects and activities are being delivered and reported according to associated funding agreements.
Statutory functions under part 10 of the Water Act	90% of statutory requirements (permits, referrals, advice and licences) associated with waterway and floodplain management are responded to within the prescribed period.	Achieved 99%
Statutory functions under part 11 of the Water Act	90% of statutory requirements (permits, referrals, advice and licences) associated irrigation management are responded to within the prescribed period.	>90% achieved

In addition to the performance areas and indicators outlined above, we monitor our progress against our five-year Corporate Strategic Plan and the Key Areas of Focus outlined on pages 55. This is done through an annually approved Action Plan which cascades down through staff work plans and is reported quarterly to the Board. For 2024-25, a 98% delivery was achieved for the Action Plan.



Community inclusion

Multicultural Victoria Act 2004

Our support for cultural diversity and the involvement of women, youth, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities took a variety of forms this year.

We have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with both GLaWAC) and BLCAC. This MoU outlines how we will work with each group, with the focus of the MoU ensuring that each corporation is involved from the beginning of all projects in their relevant Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) areas. The MoU has remained a priority in all projects and programs within their areas. The GLaWAC RAP area covers approximately 80% of the West Gippsland region. The BLCAC RAP area covers approximately 7.5% of the area.

We meet bi-monthly with each corporation to develop and plan projects as well as monitor their implementation. The Traditional Owner section of our Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-2027 guides our work together.

Working with youth

Throughout the year we have been involved in mentoring GLaWAC Cultural Water staff, GLaWAC Rangers and Aboriginal trainees in other NRM agencies. This work is now a target in our plan for the coming five years. To date training/mentoring has taken place in:

- Project planning
- Water quality monitoring
- Blackfish habits and habitats
- Data collection.

An Associate Director (Youth) was appointed in 2024-25.

Involving women

- Seven members of our Board identify as female.
- Eleven of the 16 CEN members identify as female.
- Of our 42 employees, 55% identify as female.
- In our team, 57% of lead management roles are held by women.

Workforce Inclusion policy

We are working towards creating a balanced working environment, where equal opportunity and diversity are valued and reflects the communities we serve, consistent with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. We developed a Diversity and Inclusion Plan in 2024-2028 with actions continuing to be implemented.

A focus for this year has been to promote the availability of flexible work arrangements with staff. Flexible work arrangements include options to work part-time, work from home, and to be able to purchase additional leave.

Table 13: Inclusion measures and progress 2021-25

Diversity and Inclusion Plan Initiative	Measure	Actual progress for 2024-25	Actual progress for 2023-24	Actual progress for 2022-23
Promote the availability of flexible work arrangements	Number of staff with flexible work arrangements	100% of staff	100% of staff	100% of staff

Note: reported as a percentage against headcount figure.



Other disclosures

Manner of establishment and relevant Minister

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority is established under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. The Act is jointly and severally administered by the Minister for Water and the Minister for Environment.

The responsible Ministers were:

- the Hon Harriet Shing, Minister for Water from 1 July 2024 to 18 December 2024,
- and the Hon. Gayle Tierney, Minister for Water from 19 December 2024 to 30 June 2025 and
- the Hon Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Environment from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Local Jobs First Act 2003

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* introduced in August 2018 brings together the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) and Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy which were previously administered separately.

WGCMA is required to apply the Local Jobs First policy in all projects valued at \$3 million or more in Metropolitan Melbourne or for statewide projects, or \$1 million or more in regional Victoria.

MPSG applies to all construction projects valued at \$20 million or more.

The MPSG guidelines and VIPP guidelines will continue to apply to MPSG applicable and VIPP applicable projects respectively where contracts have been entered prior to 15 August 2018.

During 2024-25, we did not commence any contracts under which the *Local Jobs First Act 2003* would apply.

Government advertising expenditure

In 2024-25 there were no government advertising campaigns with total media spend of \$100,000 or greater (exclusive of GST).

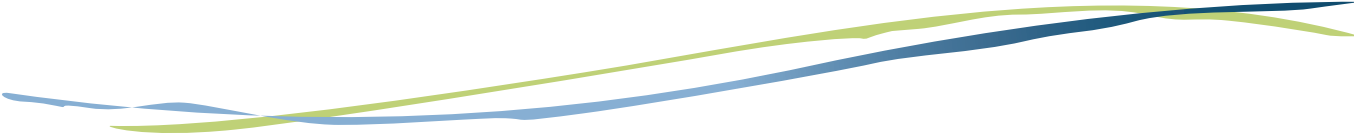
Consultancy expenditure

Details of consultancies (valued at \$10,000 or greater)

In 2024-25, there were no consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultant was \$10,000 or greater.

Details of consultancies under \$10,000

In 2024-25, there were three consultancies engaged during the year where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than \$10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2024-25 in relation to these consultancies was \$10,123 (excl. GST).



Information and Communication Technology expenditure

For the 2024-25 reporting period, the Authority had a total ICT expenditure of \$684,452 with the details shown below:

Table 14: BAU Expenditure 2024-25

All operational ICT expenditure	ICT Expenditure related to projects to create or enhance ICT capabilities		
Business As Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure (Total)	Non-Business As Usual (non-BAU) ICT expenditure (Total = Operational expenditure and Capital expenditure)	Operational expenditure	Capital expenditure
\$672,345	\$12,107	\$0	\$12,107

ICT expenditure refers to the Authority's costs in providing business enabling ICT services within the current reporting period. It comprises Business as Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure and Non-Business as Usual (non-BAU) ICT expenditure. Non-BAU ICT expenditure relates to extending or enhancing the Authority's current ICT capabilities. BAU ICT expenditure is all remaining ICT expenditure which primarily relates to ongoing activities to operate and maintain the current ICT capability.

Disclosure of major contracts

The Authority did not award any major contracts (valued at \$10 million or more) during 2024-25.

Employment and Conduct Principles

The Authority is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. The selection process ensures applications are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably on the basis of the key selection criteria and other accountabilities without discrimination.

Reviews and studies

During 2024-25, there were 2 reviews and studies undertaken which were not commercially sensitive with the total cost of \$19,575. Details of individual reviews and studies are outlined below:

Name of the review	Reasons for review/study	Terms of reference/scope	Anticipated outcomes	\$ thousand		
				Estimated cost for the year (excl. GST)	Final cost if completed (excl. GST)	Publicly available (Y/N) and URL
Internal Audit - OH&S	To assess the design and effectiveness of internal controls embedded in OH&S and wellbeing management processes	All elements of the OH&S system, policies and procedures. Staff awareness survey.	Strengthened internal control environment	\$12,150	\$12,150	No
Internal Audit - Financial Controls	To assess and evaluate the design and effectiveness of internal controls embedded in accounts payable processes	All elements of the Accounts payable process and associated controls.	Strengthened internal control environment	\$7,425	\$7,425	No

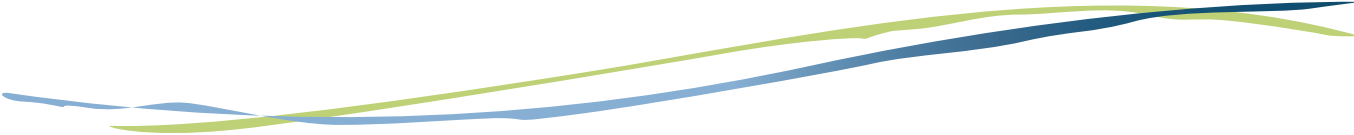
Note: Table does not include reviews or studies that may be Commercial-in-Confidence or commercially sensitive or where the release may be detrimental to Government operations (e.g. by pre-empting the finalisation of policy decisions prior to their announcement by Government).

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by us. The purpose of the Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers, and other bodies subject to the Act.

An applicant has the right to apply for access to documents held by the Authority. This comprises documents both created by the Authority or supplied to the Authority by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings, and videotapes. Information about the type of material produced by the Authority is available on the Authority's website under its Part II Information Statement.

The Act allows the Authority to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to the Authority in-confidence and information that is confidential under another Act.



Under the Act, the FOI processing time for requests received is 30 calendar days. However, when external consultation is required under s29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, a 15 day automatic extension applies. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur any number of times. However, obtaining an applicant's agreement for an extension cannot occur after the expiry of the timeframe for deciding a request.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by the Authority, under section 49A of the Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

Making a request

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests can be lodged online at www.foi.vic.gov.au. An application fee of \$32.70 applies from 1 July 2025. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material time consuming.

Access to documents can also be obtained through a written request to our FOI officer, as detailed in s17 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

When making an FOI request, applicants should ensure requests are in writing and clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought and should be accompanied by the application fee to be a valid request.

Requests for documents in possession of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) should be directed to:

Lucy Laurie-Rhodes, FOI Officer
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
PO Box 1374, Traralgon VIC 3844

Enquiries can be made to the Authority's FOI officer via email at lucyl@wgcm.vic.gov.au

FOI statistics/timeliness

During 2024-25, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority received one FOI application, which was from the general public.

The Authority made one FOI decision during the 12 months for 30 June 2025, which was made within the statutory time period and granted access to documents in full. The average time taken to finalise requests in 2024-25 was 14 days.

During 2024-25, no requests were subject to complaint/internal review by OVIC.

Further information

Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the Act, regulations made under the Act, and ovic.vic.gov.au.



Building Act 1983 compliance

The WGCMA owns two depot buildings located in Maffra and Cowwarr and each complies with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1983*.

Appropriately qualified consultants and contractors are engaged for all proposed works on land controlled by the WGCMA, and we ensure that their work and services comply with current building standards. All such consultants and contractors are expected to have appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1983*, Building Regulations 2018 and the National Construction Code.

Appropriately qualified consultants and contractors are engaged for mandatory testing of emergency and exit lighting in accordance with relevant standards for monthly, quarterly and bi-annual inspections, preventive routine maintenance of mechanical services and all fire service audits.

Competitive neutrality policy

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure that where services compete, or potentially compete, with the private sector, any net advantage arising from government ownership is accounted for if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses are required to set a competitively neutral price, which accounts for any net advantage that comes from public ownership. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service.

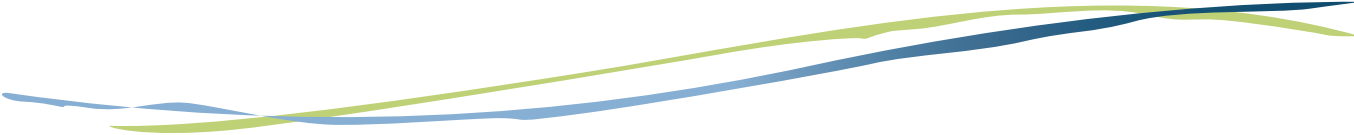
The Authority ensures that Victoria fulfils its requirements on competitive neutrality reporting principles as required under the *Competition Principles Agreement* and *Competition and Infrastructure Reform Agreement*.

Compliance with the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (the Act) enables people to make disclosures about improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act provides protection to people who make disclosures in accordance with the Act and establishes a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken.

The Authority does not tolerate improper conduct by employees, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct. It is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety of the environment.

The Authority will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making the disclosure. It will also afford natural justice to the person who is subject of the disclosure to the extent it is legally possible.



Reporting Procedures

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority is not able to receive public interest disclosures.

You can make a public interest disclosure about West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority or its Board members, officers or employees by contacting the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Level 1, North Tower
459 Collins Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

W: ibac.vic.gov.au

T: 1300 735 135

E: See the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

Further Information

The Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedures, which outline the system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the Authority or any of its employees and/or officers, are available on the Authority's website.

Table 15: Disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

	2024-25 number	2023-24 number
The number of disclosures made by an individual to the Authority and notified to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission		
Assessable disclosures	0	0

Disclosure of Emergency Procurement

Nil reports – during 2024-25, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority did not activate its Emergency Procurement Plan.

Disclosure of Procurement Complaints

Under the Governance Policy of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB), the Department must disclose any formal complaints relating to the procurement of goods and services received through its procurement complaints management system.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority received no complaints through its procurement complaints management system in 2024-25.

Reporting of Environmental Data

West Gippsland CMA is committed to reducing the environmental impact of its operations, both through the reduction of carbon emissions, as well as the implementation of sustainability practices within its operations.

Under FRD 24 Reporting of environmental data by government entities, we are required to report various environmental indicators, as illustrated in the below table. All operations and activities of the West Gippsland CMA are included within the organisational boundary for this reporting period.

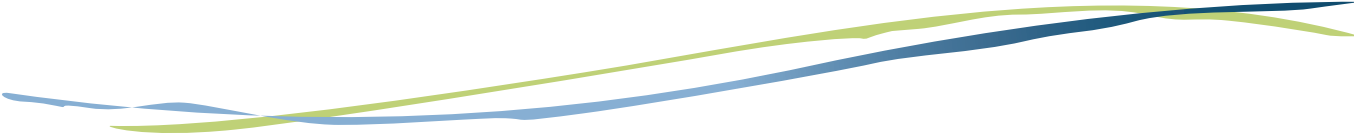
Table 16: FRD 24 Reporting of environmental data by government entities

EL1 - Total electricity consumption segmented by source:	2024-25 MW Hrs	2023-24 MW Hrs	2022-23 MW Hrs
Purchased	48.1	59.3	56.8
Not directly purchased	0.0	0.0	0.0
Self-generated	43.7	128.5	42.5
TOTAL	91.8	187.8	99.3

EL4 - Total electricity offsets segmented by offset type:	2024-25 MW Hrs	2023-24 MW Hrs	2022-23 MW Hrs
LGC's voluntarily retired by the entity	0.0	0.0	0.0
LGC's voluntarily retired on the entity's behalf	0.0	0.0	0.0
GreenPower	48.1	59.3	56.8
Renewable Power Percentage	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	48.1	59.3	56.8

T2 - Number and proportion of vehicles in the organisational boundary segmented by engine/fuel type and vehicle category	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Road Vehicles:			
Petrol - (no.)	3	1	1
Petrol - (%)	13%	5%	4%
Diesel/biodiesel - (no.)	20	21	23
Diesel/biodiesel - (%)	87%	95%	96%
TOTAL Road Vehicles - (no.)	23	22	24
TOTAL Road Vehicles - (%)	100%	100%	100%
Non-road Vehicles:			
Petrol - (no.)	0	0	0
Petrol - (%)	0	0%	0%
Diesel/biodiesel - (no.)	3	3	3
Diesel/biodiesel - (%)	100%	100%	100%
TOTAL Non-road Vehicles - (no.)	3	3	3
TOTAL Non-road Vehicles - (%)	100%	100%	100%

B3 - NABERS Energy ratings of newly completed/occupied entity-owned office buildings and substantial tenancy fit-outs	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
	N/A	N/A	N/A



Social Procurement Framework

West Gippsland CMA is fully committed to supporting the Government's directions under the Social Procurement Framework (SPF) and we recognise that we play a role in advancing social and sustainable outcomes for Victorians.

Developed in 2019 and reviewed in May 2022, the West Gippsland CMA's Social Procurement Strategy enables a strategic, agency-wide approach to how we will deliver social and sustainable outcomes through our procurement in accordance with the Social Procurement Framework and beyond.

In the strategy, the CMA prioritises three SPF objectives – detailed in the table below along with their associated reporting metrics. These SPF objectives were chosen due to their high degree of alignment with the CMA's strategic direction and values as well as being best positioned to advance our identified social procurement opportunities.

Table 17: SPF Objectives and reporting framework

Objective Prioritised	Outcome Sought	SPF Reporting Metric
Sustainable Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal business sectors	Purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses	• Number of Victorian Aboriginal Businesses engaged (2) • Total expenditure with Victorian Aboriginal Businesses, expressed both in dollar terms and as a percentage of total procurement
Opportunities for Victorians with a disability	Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Australian Disability Enterprises	• Number of disability enterprises engaged • Total expenditure with disability enterprises
Sustainable Victorian Regions	Job readiness and employment for people in regions with entrenched disadvantage	• Total expenditure with suppliers with business addresses within Deciles 1 & 2 within Victoria

The following details the Authorities 2024-25 aggregate expenditure with identified Social Benefit suppliers.

Table 18: WGCMA aggregate expenditure with identified Social Benefit suppliers – 2024-25

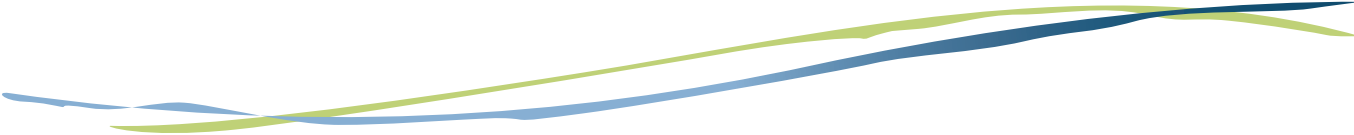
Area of Social Benefit	No.	Value (\$) (GST ex.)	% Total Spend
Total Expenditure	295	\$3,499,420	100.00%
Social benefit suppliers	6	\$30,491	0.87%
Objective: Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people Outcome: Purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses			
Aboriginal businesses engaged	1	\$26,371	0.75%
Objective: Opportunities for Victorians with disability Outcome: Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Australian Disability Enterprises			
Victorian social enterprises (led by a mission for people with disability) and Australian Disability Enterprises engaged	1	\$990	0.03%
Objective: Opportunities for Victorian Priority Jobseekers Outcome: Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises led by a mission for job readiness and employment of Victorian Priority Jobseekers			
Victorian social enterprises engaged	0	\$0	0.09%
Objective: Opportunities for disadvantaged Victorians Outcome: Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises			
Victorian social enterprises engaged	5	\$4,120	0.12%
Victorian Aboriginal businesses engaged	1	\$26,371	0.75%

Note: This data is gathered utilising the Victorian Government's ABN Wash Tool, which only includes registered social enterprises, and Aboriginal businesses registered through Supply Nation or Kinaway.

2024-25 Key Achievements – Social Procurement

During the 2024-25 financial year, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority continued to strengthen its commitment to the Victorian Government's Social Procurement Framework through the following initiatives:

- Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People**
 We engaged two Aboriginal businesses, including one not currently listed with Kinaway or Supply Nation, resulting in a total expenditure of \$106,711. This supported economic inclusion and strengthened relationships with Aboriginal communities.
- Opportunities for Victorians with a Disability**
 We maintained our partnership with a disability-inclusive organisation to deliver gardening and waste paper removal services, supporting ongoing employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Sustainable Victorian Regions**
 We commenced tracking procurement expenditure with local businesses across our region, establishing a baseline dataset to monitor and inform future social procurement activities.
- Embedding Social Procurement in Practice**
 Social procurement clauses were integrated into our general procurement framework, ensuring alignment with whole-of-government objectives.
- Leveraging State Purchase Contracts**
 We implemented procurement via State Purchase Contracts across the organisation, delivering value for money, continuity of supply and services, reduced risk, and enhanced delivery of social, economic, and environmental outcomes.



Statement of availability of other information

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions 2018 under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by the Authority and are available on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

- A statement that declarations of pecuniary interests have been duly completed by all relevant officers of the Authority.

The information is available on request from:

Lucy Laurie-Rhodes, FOI Officer
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
PO Box 1374
Traralgon VIC 3844

Enquiries can also be made to the Authority's FOI officer via email at:

lucyl@wgcma.vic.gov.au

DataVic Access policy

Consistent with the DataVic Access policy issued by the Victorian Government in 2012, the information included in this annual report will be available at data.vic.gov.au in electronic readable format.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Mikaela Power, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.



Mikaela Power

25 August 2025

Significant changes in financial position

Our financial position has had no major change to base programs compared to previous years and cash on hand committed to projects and other activities remains available into the future.

Major changes or factors affecting performance

There were no changes or factors which affected our performance during the reporting period.

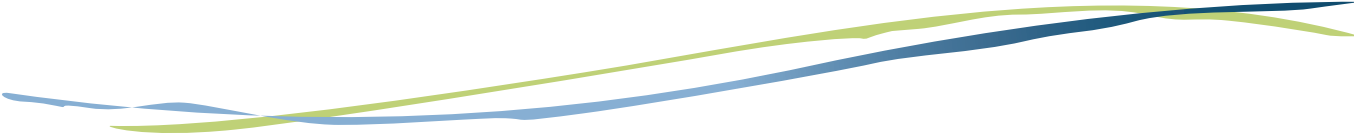
Subsequent events affecting future operations

There were no events occurring after balance date which may significantly affect our operations in subsequent reporting periods.



Financial Review





How this report is structured

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (the Authority) has presented its audited general purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2025 in the following structure to provide users with information about the Authority's stewardship of resources entrusted to it.

Financial statements

Comprehensive operating statement

Balance sheet

Cash flow statement

Statement of changes in equity

Notes to the financial statements

1. About this report

The basis on which the financial statements have been prepared and compliance with reporting regulations.

2. Funding delivery of our services

Income recognised in respect of Government contributions and other income sources

2.1 Income from transactions

3. The cost of delivering services

Operating expenses of the Authority

3.1 Employee expenses

3.2 Materials, maintenance, grants and consultancies

3.3 Other operating expenses

4. Key assets available to support output delivery

Land, buildings, works assets, equipment, and motor vehicles

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

5. Other assets and liabilities

Other key assets and liabilities

5.1 Receivables

5.2 Payables

5.3 Contract Liabilities

6. How we financed our operations

Borrowings, Cash flow information, Leases, commitments for expenditure and carry forward project funding

6.1 Borrowings

6.2 Leases

6.3 Cash flow information and balances

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

6.5 Carry forward project funding

7. Financial instruments, contingencies and valuation judgements

Financial risk management, contingent assets and liabilities as well as fair value determination

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

7.3 Fair value determination

8. Other disclosures

Additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report

8.1 Ex gratia expenses

8.2 Other economic flows included in net result

8.3 Responsible persons

8.4 Remuneration of executive officers

8.5 Related parties

8.6 Remuneration of auditors

8.7 Subsequent events

Declaration in the Financial Statements

The attached financial statements for the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (the Authority) have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement, statement of changes in equity and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2025 and financial position of the Authority at 30 June 2025.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 25 August 2025.



Mikaela Power
Chairperson



Martin Fuller
CEO and Accountable Officer



Lucy Laurie-Rhodes
Chief Finance & Accounting Officer

Comprehensive Operating Statement

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Income from transactions			
Government contributions	2.1.1	8,611,535	10,157,897
Interest		1,076,588	1,025,982
Other income	2.1.2	1,150,536	1,396,830
Total income from transactions		10,838,658	12,580,709
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses	3.1.1	5,297,907	5,356,730
Depreciation	4.1.3	746,513	700,688
Materials, maintenance, grants and consultancies	3.2	1,103,758	2,082,162
Contractors		2,613,742	4,434,654
Interest expense on lease liabilities	6.1.2	29,763	31,085
Other operating expenses	3.3	747,377	728,521
Total expenses from transactions		10,539,058	13,333,840
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		299,600	(753,131)
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets (ii)	8.2	82,740	80,822
Net result		382,340	(672,309)
Other economic flows - other comprehensive income items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Changes in physical asset revaluation surplus		-	39,019
Comprehensive result		382,340	(633,291)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Note:

- (i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.
- (ii) Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets includes unrealised and realised gains/(losses) from revaluations, impairments, and disposals of all physical assets and intangible assets, except when these are taken through the asset revaluation surplus.

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.3	27,827,660	23,655,024
Receivables	5.1	86,517	36,422
Total financial assets		27,914,178	23,691,447
Non-financial assets			
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	2,495,213	2,906,322
Other non-financial assets		107,265	110,273
Total non-financial assets		2,602,479	3,016,595
Total assets		30,516,656	26,708,042
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	551,393	393,018
Contract Liabilities	5.3	10,825,600	7,164,140
Lease liabilities	6.1	767,300	1,025,608
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	1,544,541	1,679,794
Total liabilities		13,688,834	10,262,560
Net assets		16,827,822	16,445,482
Equity			
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)		349,365	349,365
Physical asset revaluation surplus		533,128	533,128
Committed funds reserve		7,583,887	7,201,547
Contributed capital		8,361,442	8,361,442
Net worth		16,827,822	16,445,482

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Note:

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Cash Flow Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		12,400,895	13,387,249
Interest received		1,076,588	1,025,982
Goods and services tax received from the ATO (ii)		333,955	459,353
Other receipts		941,059	1,237,985
Total receipts		14,752,497	16,110,569
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(10,039,126)	(13,223,341)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(29,763)	(31,085)
Total payments		(10,068,889)	(13,254,426)
Net cash flows from / (used in) operating activities		4,683,608	2,856,143
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchases of non-financial assets		(378,220)	(535,072)
Proceeds from the sale of non-financial assets		143,452	109,288
Net cash flows from / (used in) investing activities		(234,768)	(425,784)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities			
Repayment of principal portion of lease liabilities (iii)		(276,204)	(266,344)
Net cash flows from / (used in) financing activities		(276,204)	(266,344)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		4,172,636	2,164,015
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		23,655,024	21,491,009
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	6.3	27,827,660	23,655,024

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

- (i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.
- (ii) GST received from the Australian Taxation Office is presented on a net basis.
- (iii) The Authority has recognised cash payments for the principal portion of lease payments as financing activities; cash payments for interest portion as operating activities consistent with the presentation of interest payments and short-term lease payments for leases and low-value assets as operating activities.

Statement of Changes in Equity

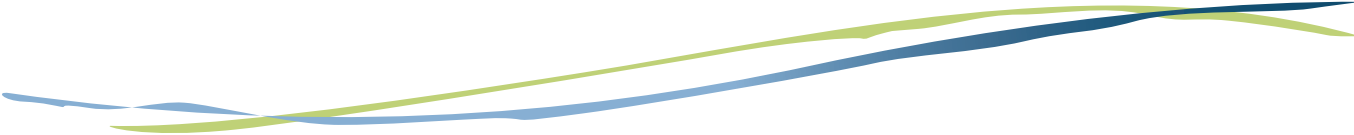
For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Accumulated surplus	Physical asset revaluation surplus	Committed funds reserve	Contributed capital	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2023	349,365	494,109	7,873,856	8,361,442	17,078,773
Net result for the year	(672,309)	-	-	-	(672,309)
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	39,019	-	-	39,019
Transfers to/(from) reserves (ii)	672,309	-	(672,309)	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	349,365	533,128	7,201,546	8,361,442	16,445,482
Net result for the year	382,340	-	-	-	382,340
Transfers to/(from) reserves (ii)	(382,340)	-	382,340	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2025	349,365	533,128	7,583,887	8,361,442	16,827,822

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Note:

- (i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.
- (ii) The amounts transferred from accumulated surplus to committed funds reserve consists of carry forward project funding that has been set aside for the purpose of funding specific projects (Note 6.5).



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2025

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority is a government authority of the State of Victoria, established on 1 July 1997 by the state government.

Its principal address is: West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
16 Hotham Street
Traralgon, VIC 3844

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities is included in the Report of Operations, which does not form part of these financial statements.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* (AASB 1060) and *Financial Reporting Direction 101 Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* (FRD 101).

The Authority is a Tier 2 entity in accordance with FRD 101. These financial statements are the first general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. The Authority's prior year financial statements were general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (Tier 1). As the Authority is not a 'significant entity' as defined in FRD 101, it was required to change from Tier 1 to Tier 2 reporting effective from 1 July 2024.

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies applied are consistent with those of the prior year.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading:

'Significant judgement or estimates', and relate to:

- determining whether the performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether the arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 or AASB 1058 (Note 2.1);
- the timing of satisfaction of performance obligations (Note 2.1);
- determining transaction price and amounts allocated to performance obligations (Note 2.1);
- employee benefit provisions (Note 3.1.2);
- contract liabilities (Note 5.3);
- determining whether the lease arrangement is in substance short-term arrangement (Note 6.2);
- lease terms (Note 6.2);
- fair value measurements of assets and liabilities (Note 7.3).

Rounding

Unless otherwise stated, amounts in the report have been rounded to the nearest dollar. Figures in the financial report may not equate due to rounding.

Compliance Information

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA) and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASs) which include Interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). In particular, they are presented in a manner consistent with the requirements of AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Where appropriate, those AASs paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

Introduction

The Authority's overall objective is for the co-ordinated control of natural resource management within the broader catchments of West Gippsland. The role of the Authority is to ensure effective implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy. Associated with this role, the Authority carries out strategic planning and advises Government.

To enable the Authority to deliver on its objectives, it receives income predominantly through State and Commonwealth Government Contributions.

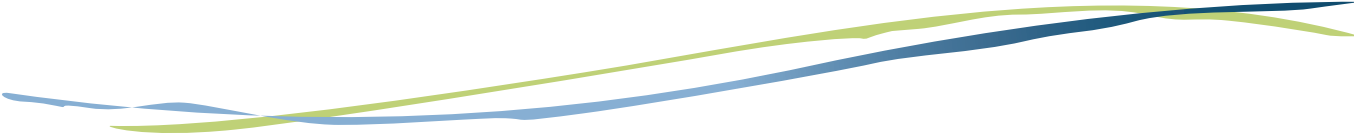
2.1 Income from transactions

Significant judgement: Grants Contributions

The Authority has determined that all grant income is recognised as income of not-for-profit entities in accordance with AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, except for grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations and accounted for as revenue in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*.

2.1.1 Government contributions

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Income recognised as income of not-for-profit entities under AASB 1058		
State Government		
Catchment Planning	3,801,262	790,751
Sustainable Irrigation	1,120,000	706,000
River Health	819,024	4,792,305
Floodplain Management	242,500	367,500
Other State Funding	1,302,259	190,717
	7,285,045	6,847,273
Commonwealth Government		
National Landcare Program	1,085,949	2,330,464
Other Commonwealth Funding	-	15,000
	1,085,949	2,345,464
Income recognised as revenue from contracts with customers under AASB 15		
State Government		
Other State Funding	240,540	965,160
	240,540	965,160
Total Government contributions	8,611,535	10,157,897



Grants recognised under AASB 1058

The Authority has determined that the grant income included in the table above under AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* has been earned under arrangements that are either not enforceable and/or linked to sufficiently specific performance obligations.

Income from grants without any sufficiently specific performance obligations, or that are not enforceable, is recognised when the Authority has an unconditional right to receive cash which usually coincides with receipt of cash. On initial recognition of the assets, the Authority recognises any increase in liabilities, decrease in assets, and revenue ('related amount') in accordance with other Australian Accounting Standards. Related amounts may take the form of:

- revenue or a contract liability arising from a contract with a customer, in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*;
- a lease liability in accordance with AASB 16 *Leases*;
- a financial instrument, in accordance with AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*; or
- a provision, in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*.

Grants recognised under AASB 15

Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations are accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers under AASB 15. Revenue is recognised when the Authority satisfies the performance obligation by providing the relevant services. This is recognised based on the consideration specified in the funding agreement and to the extent that it is highly probable a significant reversal of the revenue will not occur. The funding payments are normally received in advance or shortly after the relevant obligation is satisfied.

2.1.2 Other income

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Partnership Contributions	830,885	1,057,952
Employee Contributions	235,622	225,738
Rental Income	84,029	28,440
Ancillary Trading	-	84,700
Total other income	1,150,536	1,396,830

Partnership contributions consists of funds received from organisations as partners in major projects, and are recognised as income on receipt as they do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations, and are disclosed in the comprehensive operating statement as other income.

Employee contributions include staff contributions towards the private use of motor vehicles.

Rental Income from leasing of surplus office spaces, which are operating leases, are recognised on a straight line basis over the lease term.

All other income is recognised when the right to receive payment is established.

3. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Authority in delivering services. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the cost associated with the provision of services are recorded.

3.1 Employee expenses

3.1.1 Employee expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Salaries & wages	4,779,504	4,852,499
Defined contribution superannuation expense	504,818	491,478
Defined benefit superannuation expense	13,585	12,754
Total employee expenses	5,297,907	5,356,730

Salaries and wages include all costs related to employment including wages, salaries, payroll tax, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, termination payments and WorkCover premiums.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of both defined benefit and defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period.

3.1.2 Employee benefits in the balance sheet

Significant judgement: Employee benefit provisions

In measuring employee benefit provisions, consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using a single weighted average discount rate based on market yields of national government bonds in Australia that reflects the estimated timing and amount of benefit payment.

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave (LSL) for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Current provisions:		
Annual Leave	348,703	397,164
Time in lieu and RDO	25,726	29,951
Long service leave	932,799	953,378
Provision for on-costs	158,152	158,652
Total current provisions for employee benefits	1,465,381	1,539,145
Non-current provisions:		
Employee benefits	70,799	126,429
On-costs	8,362	14,219
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	79,161	140,649
Total provisions for employee benefits and on-costs	1,544,541	1,679,794

Wages and salaries and annual leave:

Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities, because the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability, as the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period. Annual leave balances of less than 6 weeks are measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, whilst balances above 6 weeks are measured as the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made by the entity.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, and workers compensation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

Long service leave (LSL):

Regardless of the expected timing of settlement, unconditional LSL is classified as a current liability because the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer the settlement of these liabilities.

Unconditional LSL liability amounts expected to be wholly settled within 12 months are measured at the nominal value. Unconditional LSL liability amounts that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months are measured as the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made by the Authority.

Unconditional LSL represents long service leave entitlements accrued for employees with more than 7 years of continuous service.

Conditional LSL is classified as a non-current liability and measured as the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made by the Authority.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of the non-current LSL liability is recognised as a transaction.

3.2 Materials, maintenance, grants and consultancies

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Materials	144,196	655,468
Repairs and maintenance	83,439	92,244
Grants paid	500,563	932,111
Computer software and support	365,436	367,465
Consultants	10,124	34,873
Total materials, maintenance, grants, and consultancies (i)	1,103,758	2,082,162

Note:

(i) The decrease in total expenditure on materials, maintenance, grants and consultancies in 2025 is attributable to a number of factors:

- Weather conditions have been unfavourable decreasing the amount of on-ground works undertaken; and
- Commencement of new funding cycle with projects in planning phase rather than operational phase.

Grants are recognised in the period in which they are paid or payable.

Materials and consultants are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

3.3 Other operating expenses

	Notes	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Fleet expenses		181,883	211,220
Office expenses		95,063	85,204
Audit Costs	8.6	62,378	51,134
Minor Equipment		59,101	10,747
Insurance		55,316	46,109
Fares and accommodation		48,312	54,954
Meeting expenses		47,388	46,030
Telephones and mobile data		43,896	59,579
Education, training, conferences and seminars		40,082	46,678
Lease expenses	6.2.2	21,486	22,114
Other expenses		92,470	94,753
		747,377	728,521

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations and are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

4. KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OUTPUT DELIVERY

Introduction

The Authority controls property and other assets that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. They represent the key resources that have been entrusted to the Authority to be utilised for delivery of those outputs.

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated Depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Land at fair value	462,000	462,000	-	-	462,000	462,000
Buildings at fair value	1,457,456	1,812,624	(464,060)	(535,321)	993,396	1,277,303
Works assets at fair value	151,000	151,000	(30,200)	(22,650)	120,800	128,350
Plant and equipment at fair value	264,422	262,312	(201,626)	(192,697)	62,796	69,615
Office furniture and equipment at fair value	791,960	617,474	(550,794)	(473,163)	241,166	144,311
Motor vehicles at fair value	1,309,078	1,460,725	(694,023)	(635,981)	615,055	824,743
Net carrying amount	4,435,917	4,766,135	(1,940,703)	(1,859,813)	2,495,213	2,906,322

Initial recognition

Items of property, plant and equipment are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

Items with a cost or value in excess of \$1,000, or in the case of ICT equipment in excess of \$200, and a useful life of more than one year are recognised as an asset. All other assets acquired are expensed.

Subsequent measurement

Property, plant and equipment are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Non-specialised land is valued using the market approach, whereby assets are compared to recent comparable sales or sales of comparable assets that are considered to have nominal value.

The market approach is also used for specialised land, although is adjusted for the community service obligation (CSO) to reflect the specialised nature of the land being valued. The CSO adjustment reflects the valuer's assessment of the impact of restrictions associated with an asset to the extent that the CSO adjustment is also equally applicable to market participants.

Non-specialised buildings and works assets are valued using the current replacement cost method.

Revaluation of property, plant and equipment

Non-financial physical assets are revalued at fair value every five years in accordance with the Government purpose classifications defined in Financial Reporting Direction 103 *Non-Financial Physical Assets* (FRD 103). The Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) is the Government's independent valuation agency and is used by the Authority to conduct these scheduled revaluations.

Revaluations may occur more frequently if fair value assessments indicate material changes in values. In such instances, interim managerial revaluations are undertaken in accordance with the requirements of FRD 103.

The Authority in conjunction with VGV, monitors changes in the fair value of each asset class through relevant data sources, in order to determine whether a revaluation is required.

The Authority's assets relating to land and buildings were independently valued by the VGV as at 30 June 2021.

At 30 June 2025 a fair value assessment was undertaken in accordance with FRD 103 on the Authority's building assets with no further adjustment required.

Note 7.3 includes additional information in connection with fair value determination of property, plant and equipment.

Accounting for revaluation movements - land and buildings

Fair value is determined with regard to the asset's highest and best use (considering legal or physical restrictions imposed on the asset, public announcements or commitments made in relation to the intended use of the asset).

Revaluation increases or decreases arise from differences between an asset's carrying value and its fair value.

Revaluation increases and decreases relating to individual assets in a class of PPE, are offset against other assets in that class but are not offset against assets in different classes. An asset revaluation surplus is not transferred to accumulated funds on the de-recognition of the related asset.

Revaluation increments are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve, except to the extent that an increment reverses a revaluation decrement in respect of that class of asset previously recognised as an expense, in which case the increment is recognised immediately as revenue.

Revaluation decrements are recognised immediately as an expense, except to the extent that a credit balance exists in the asset revaluation reserve applicable to the same class of assets, in which case the decrement is debited directly to the asset revaluation reserve.

4.1.1 Total right-of-use assets: buildings

This note explores right-of-use assets, a subset of the Authority's total assets, where right-of-use assets represent the Authority's right to use an underlying asset for the lease term.

	Gross Carrying Amount 2025 \$	Accumulated Depreciation 2025 \$	Net carrying Amount 2025 \$	Gross Carrying Amount 2024 \$	Accumulated Depreciation 2024 \$	Net carrying Amount 2024 \$
Buildings at Fair Value	1,176,215	(449,998)	726,218	1,531,384	(535,321)	996,062
Net Carrying Amount	1,176,215	(449,998)	726,218	1,531,384	(535,321)	996,062

	Buildings at fair value \$
Opening Balance - 1 July 2024	996,062
Additions	12,294
Right-of-use adjustment (i)	5,602
Disposals	-
Depreciation	(287,741)
Closing Balance - 30 June 2025	726,218

Note:

- (i) This adjustment relates to an increase in the value of right-of-use lease asset and liability due to a CPI increase applied under the lease contract.

Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees - Initial measurement

The Authority recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any incentive received; plus
- any indirect costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

Right-of-use asset - Subsequent measurement

The Authority depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term.

As per the requirements of FRD 103, right-of-use assets are subject to revaluation to Fair Value, whereby management undertake an assessment to determine whether the current lease payments under the contract approximate current market rentals for equivalent properties that would be paid in the current environment.

Management has completed an assessment at 30 June 2025 comparing current lease payments against current market rentals for equivalent properties and has determined that no adjustment to the right-of-use asset or liability is required.

In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any and adjusted for certain remeasurements of the lease liability.

4.1.2 Depreciation and amortisation

All buildings, plant and equipment and other non-financial physical assets that have finite useful lives are depreciated

Land, which is considered to have an indefinite life, is not depreciated. Depreciation is not recognised in respect of these assets because their service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

Asset	Useful Life
Buildings	40 years
Buildings - right-of-use	1 - 10 years
Works assets	20 years
Plant and equipment	3 - 20 years
Office furniture & equipment	3 - 10 years
Motor vehicles	4 years

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Right-of-use assets are generally depreciated over the shorter of the asset's useful life and the lease term.

Impairment

The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash-generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

4.1.3 Reconciliation of movements in carrying values of property, plant and equipment

	Land at fair value	Buildings at fair value	Works assets at fair value	Plant and equipment at fair value	Office furniture and equipment at fair value	Motor vehicles at fair value	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
2025							
Opening balance	462,000	1,277,303	128,350	69,615	144,311	824,744	2,906,322
Additions	-	12,294	-	2,110	205,815	171,419	391,638
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,487)	(60,350)	(61,836)
ROU adjustment	-	5,602	-	-	-	-	5,602
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	(301,803)	(7,550)	(8,929)	(107,473)	(320,758)	(746,513)
Closing balance	462,000	993,396	120,800	62,796	241,166	615,055	2,495,213

5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Introduction

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Authority's operations.

5.1 Receivables

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Contractual		
Trade receivables	47,797	24,714
Other receivables	<u>4,000</u>	<u>4,000</u>
	51,797	28,714
Statutory		
GST input tax credits recoverable	<u>34,720</u>	<u>7,708</u>
	34,720	7,708
Total receivables	<u>86,517</u>	<u>36,422</u>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Current Receivables	82,517	32,422
Non-Current Receivables	4,000	4,000

Receivables consist of:

- Contractual receivables, which are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised cost'. Subsequent to initial measurement they are measured at amortised cost less any impairment; and
- Statutory receivables, which do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment), but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes.

Details about the Authority's impairment policies, and the calculation of the loss allowance are set out in Note 7.1.

5.2 Payables

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Contractual		
Trade payables	291,815	59,323
Accrued expenses	<u>234,074</u>	<u>300,326</u>
	525,889	359,649
Statutory		
FBT accrual	4,810	11,996
Superannuation	11,487	12,118
Payroll Tax	<u>9,207</u>	<u>9,254</u>
	25,504	33,369
Total payables	<u>551,393</u>	<u>393,018</u>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Current Payables	551,393	393,018

Payables consist of:

- Contractual payables, classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Authority prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid; and
- Statutory payables, that are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but are not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days.

5.3 Contract liabilities

Significant judgement: Contract Liabilities

In applying AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*, the Authority has made significant judgements that affect the recognition and measurement of contract liabilities (Note 2.1).

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Contract liabilities		
Current contract liabilities	6,912,600	207,960
Non-current contract liabilities	3,913,000	6,956,180
Total contract liabilities	10,825,600	7,164,140

Contract liabilities include consideration received in advance for two projects funded by State Government contributions.

6. HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS

Introduction

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by the Authority during its operations, along with interest expenses (the cost of borrowings) and other information related to financing activities of the Authority.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments, such as cash balances. Note 7.1 provides additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

6.1 Borrowings

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current borrowings			
Lease Liabilities (i)	6.2	293,977	273,414
Total current borrowings		293,977	273,414
Non-current borrowings			
Lease Liabilities (i)	6.2	473,323	752,194
Total non-current borrowings		473,323	752,194
Total Borrowings		767,300	1,025,608

Note:

- (i) Secured by assets leased. Lease liabilities are effectively secured as the right to the lease assets revert to the lessor in the event of default.

6.1.1 Maturity Analysis of borrowings

	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Maturity dates						
		Carrying Amount \$	Nominal Amount \$	Less than 1 month \$	1 to 3 months \$	3 months to 1 year \$	1 to 5 years \$	5+ years \$
2025								
Lease Liabilities	4.6%	767,300	800,385	25,836	77,509	211,085	485,955	-
Total		767,300	800,385	25,836	77,509	211,085	485,955	-
2024								
Lease Liabilities	5.3%	1,025,608	1,090,087	25,016	75,048	203,722	786,301	-
Total		1,025,608	1,090,087	25,016	75,048	203,722	786,301	-

Borrowings' refer to interest bearing liabilities for lease liabilities.

Borrowings are classified as financial instruments. Interest bearing liabilities are classified at amortised cost and recognised at the fair value of the consideration received less directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

6.1.2 Interest Expense

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Interest expense on lease liabilities	29,763	31,085
Total Interest Expense	29,763	31,085

Interest expense is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

6.2 Leases

Significant judgement: Lease Terms

In determining the lease term, the Authority considers all facts and circumstances that create an economic incentive to exercise an extension option, or not exercise a termination option. The assessment is reviewed if a significant event or a significant change in circumstances occurs which affects this assessment.

The Authority leases various properties. Lease terms are negotiated on an individual basis and contain a wide range of different terms and conditions. Rental contracts are typically for fixed periods of between 1 to 5 years, with extension options of between 1 to 10 years typically available.

Leases with a contract term of 1 year and a value of less than \$10,000 are either short-term and/or leases of low value and are recognised on a straight-line basis. The Authority has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for these leases.

As at 30 June 2025, the Authority has committed to short term leases and the total commitment at that date was \$15,782 (Note 6.4)

Leases at significantly below-market terms and conditions

The Authority entered into a 10-year lease for the use of crown land. The lease contract specifies a lease payment of \$1. The leased land must be used by the Authority for a River Diversion Channel and Water Regulating Gates, Dowd Morass Wetland. This land accounts for a small portion of similar assets used by the Authority in delivering this project to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and therefore it does not have a significant impact on the Authority's operations.

6.2.1 Right-of-use assets

Right-of-use assets are presented in Note 4.1.1

6.2.2 Expense recognised for short-term leases

The following amounts are recognised as expense relating to short-term leases.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Expenses relating to short term leases	21,486	22,114
Total Amount recognised as an expense	21,486	22,114

The Authority has elected to account for short-term leases using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss included in "other operating expenses" (see note 3.3) on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

6.2.3 Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

For any new contracts entered into, the Authority considers whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'. To apply this definition the Authority assesses whether the contract meets three key evaluations:

- Whether the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to the Authority and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights;
- Whether the authority has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and the Authority has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use; and
- Whether the authority has the right to make decisions in respect of 'how and for what purpose' the asset is used throughout the period of use.

Lease Liability - Initial Measurement

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily determinable or the Authority's incremental borrowing rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments) less any lease incentive receivable;
- variable payments based on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- payments arising from purchase and termination options reasonably certain to be exercised.

Lease Liability - Subsequent Measurement

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes in-substance to fixed payments.

When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or net result if the right-of-use asset is already reduced to zero.

Below market /Peppercorn Leases

Right-of-use assets under leases at significantly below-market terms and conditions that are entered into principally to enable the Authority to further its objectives, are initially and subsequently measured at cost.

Presentation of right-of-use assets and lease liabilities

The authority presents right-of-use assets as 'property plant equipment' unless they meet the definition of investment property, in which case they are disclosed as 'investment property' in the balance sheet. Lease liabilities are presented as 'borrowings' in the balance sheet.

Future lease payments

	Minimum future lease payments	
	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Not longer than 1 year	314,430	303,786
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	485,955	786,301
Longer than 5 years	-	-
Minimum future lease payments (i)	800,385	1,090,087
Less future finance charges	(33,085)	(64,479)
Present value of minimum lease payments	767,300	1,025,608

Note:

(i) Minimum future lease payments include the aggregate of all base payments and any guaranteed residual.

6.3 Cash flow information and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank, deposits at call and those highly liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less, which are held for the purpose of meeting short-term cash commitments rather than for investment purposes, and which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

The authority's bank accounts are held in the Central Banking System (CBS) under the *Standing Directions 2018*.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet:		
Cash on hand	-	200
Deposits at call	27,827,660	23,654,824
Balance as per cash flow statement (i)	27,827,660	23,655,024

Note:

(i) Cash and deposits bear variable interest rate with a weighted-average interest rate of 4.33% during the 2024-25 year.

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments for future expenditure include operating commitments arising from contracts. These commitments are recorded below at their nominal value and inclusive of GST. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet.

6.4.1 Total commitments payable

	2025	2024
Operating commitments payable	\$	\$
Less than 1 year	15,782	14,844
1 to 5 years	-	-
5 years or more	-	-
Total commitments (inclusive of GST)	15,782	14,844

The 2023-24 and 2024-25 operating lease commitments relate to an office lease with a term of 12 months. The contract does not allow the Authority to purchase the facilities after the lease ends, but the Authority has the option to renew the lease at the end of the lease term. Short-term operating lease payments are recognised as an expense in the comprehensive operating statement on a straight-line basis over the lease term. The leased asset is not recognised in the balance sheet.

6.5 Carry forward project funding

Catchment Management Authorities are responsible for the facilitation and coordination of catchments in an integrated and sustainable manner. This is achieved by undertaking projects funded by Victorian and Australian Government programs. The Authority received funding for specific projects which are guided by the Regional Catchment Strategy and delivered in line with the Authority's Corporate Plan approved by the Minister for Water.

The projects funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments can be undertaken over multiple financial years and funding is received at various stages of the project life based on contractual agreements. At the end of the financial year there are some projects that have not reached completion but will be completed within the contractual terms in future financial periods. At balance date the Authority has cash and cash equivalents that will be utilised to complete these projects in future financial years.

The Committed funds reserve has been established to recognise that the Authority receives funding for programs in advance of the program works taking place. The Authority is committed to expending these funds in accordance with its Corporate Plan in succeeding years. At the end of the financial year any Accumulated Funds which represents unexpended program funding, has been transferred to the reserve.

7. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

Introduction

It is often necessary for the Authority to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Authority relate mainly to fair value determination.

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Statutory receivables and payables (FBT, GST etc) are not considered financial instruments.

Categories of financial instruments

Financial assets are measured at amortised cost if they are held by the Authority to collect contractual cash flows, the contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest, and if they are not designated as fair value through net result. These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial measurement, these financial assets are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment. The financial assets at amortised cost category includes cash and deposits, and trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables).

A financial asset is derecognised when the rights to receive cash flows from the asset have expired, the risks and rewards of the asset have been transferred, or the Authority has transferred the control of the asset.

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they originated. They are initially measured at fair value less any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. Financial instrument liabilities measured at amortised cost include all of the Authority's contractual payables (excluding statutory payables) and borrowings (including lease liabilities).

A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

Contractual receivables at amortised cost

The Authority has a low expected loss rate due to the majority of funding being sourced from State and Federal government.

The expected loss rate for the year ending 30 June 2025 has been calculated at 0%, and as such no loss allowance has been recognised.

7.1.1 Financial instruments - Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category

	Carrying Amount	Net gain/loss	Total interest income/ (expense)	Fee income/ (expense)	Impairment loss	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
2025						
Financial assets at amortised cost						
Cash and Deposits	27,827,660	-	1,076,588	-	-	
Trade receivables(i)	51,797	-	-	-	-	
Write-Offs	-	-	-	-	-	
Total financial assets at amortised cost	27,879,458	-	1,076,588	-	-	
Financial Liabilities at amortised cost						
Trade Payables(i)	525,889	-	-	-	-	
Borrowings						
Lease Liabilities	767,300	-	29,763	-	-	
Total contractual financial liabilities	1,293,189	-	29,763	-	-	

Note:

(i) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

	Carrying Amount	Net gain/loss	Total interest income/ (expense)	Fee income/ (expense)	Impairment loss	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
2024						
Financial assets at amortised cost						
Cash and Deposits	23,655,024	-	1,025,982	-	-	
Trade receivables (i)	28,714	-	-	-	-	
Write-Offs	-	-	-	-	-	
Total financial assets at amortised cost	23,683,739	-	1,025,982	-	-	
Financial Liabilities at amortised cost						
Trade Payables (i)	359,649	-	-	-	-	
Borrowings						
Lease Liabilities	1,025,608	-	31,085	-	-	
Total contractual financial liabilities	1,385,257	-	31,085	-	-	

Note:

(i) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value.

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Contingent assets		
As at 30 June 2025, the Authority has no known contingent assets.	-	-
Contingent liabilities		
Guarantees for loans to other entities (i)	26,500	26,500

- (i) The amount disclosed is the nominal amount of the underlying loan that is guaranteed by the Authority. The Authority has reviewed its financial guarantees and determined that there is no material liability to be recognised for financial guarantee contracts at 30 June 2025.

7.3 Fair value determination

Significant judgement: Fair value measurements of assets and liabilities

Fair value determination requires judgement and the use of assumptions. This section discloses the most significant assumptions used in determining fair values. Changes to assumptions could have a material impact on the results and financial position of the Authority.

The Authority's property, plant and equipment are carried at fair value.

7.3.1 Fair value hierarchy

In determining fair values, a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 – Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 – Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 – Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

The Authority determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by reassessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

7.3.2 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

Fair value measurement hierarchy

Non-specialised land is fair valued in accordance with level 2 categorisation. Specialised land, buildings, work assets, plant and equipment, office furniture and motor vehicles are fair valued as level 3.

There have been no transfers between levels during the period.

Non-specialised land & non-specialised buildings

Non-specialised land is valued using the market approach. Under this valuation method, the assets are compared to recent comparable sales or sales of comparable assets which are considered to have nominal or no added improvement value, and are classified as Level 2 fair value measurements.

For the Authority's non-specialised buildings, the current replacement cost method is used, adjusting for the associated depreciations. As depreciation adjustments are considered as significant, unobservable inputs in nature, non-specialised buildings are classified as Level 3 fair value measurements.

Right-of-use non-specialised buildings are valued as per the requirements of AASB 16 *Leases*. This is detailed further in Note 6.2.

For non-specialised land and non-specialised buildings (excluding right-of use-assets), an independent valuation was performed by the Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) to determine the fair value using the market approach. Valuation of the assets was determined by analysing comparable sales and allowing for share, size, topography, location and other relevant factors specific to the asset being valued. From the sales analysed, an appropriate rate per square metre was applied to the subject asset. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2021.

Specialised land

The market approach is also used for specialised land, although is adjusted for the community service obligation (CSO) to reflect the specialised nature of the land being valued.

The CSO adjustment is a reflection of the valuer's assessment of the impact of restrictions associated with an asset to the extent that is also equally applicable to market participants. This approach is in light of the highest and best use consideration required for fair value measurement, and takes into account the use of the asset that is physically possible, legally permissible, and financially feasible. As adjustments of CSO are considered as significant unobservable inputs in nature, specialised land is classified as Level 3 assets.

An independent valuation of the Authority's specialised land was performed by the VGV using the market approach adjusted for CSO. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2021.

Works assets

Works assets represent an owned Quarry, which is valued using the current replacement cost method.

An independent valuation of the Authority's works assets was performed by the VGV to determine the fair value using the market approach, with an effective date of 30 June 2021. Valuation of the assets was determined by analysing comparable sales and allowing for share, size, topography, location and other relevant factors specific to the asset being valued. From the sales analysed, an appropriate rate per square metre was applied to the subject asset.

Motor vehicles

Motor vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Authority acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers in the Authority who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the motor vehicles.

Plant and equipment and Office furniture and equipment

Plant and equipment and office furniture and equipment is held at fair value. When plant and equipment or office furniture and equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2025.

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

Description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

	Valuation technique	Significant unobservable inputs
Specialised land	Market approach	Community Service Obligation (CSO) adjustment
Non-specialised buildings	Current replacement cost VGV indexation factors	Direct cost per square metre Useful life of non-specialised buildings
Works assets	Current replacement cost	Direct cost per square metre Useful life of quarry
Plant and equipment	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of plant and equipment
Office furniture and equipment	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of office furniture and equipment
Motor vehicles	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of vehicles

8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

Introduction

This section provides additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

8.1 Ex gratia expenses

Ex gratia expenses are the voluntary payments of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write-off) that is not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability of or claim against the entity.

The Authority had no ex gratia expenses for the year ending 30 June 2025 (2024: \$0).

8.2 Other economic flows included in net result

Other economic flows measure the change in volume or value of assets or liabilities that do not result from transactions.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of non-financial assets		
Proceeds from sale of non-financial assets	143,452	109,242
Less written down value	(60,711)	(28,420)
Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of non-financial assets	82,740	80,822

8.3 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA), the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

The names of the persons who were responsible persons of the Authority at any time during the financial year were:

The Hon. Harriet Shing MP	Minister for Water	1 Jul 2024 to 18 Dec 2024
The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Minister for Water	19 Dec 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Minister for Environment	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Mikaela Power	Chair	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Belinda Nave	Board Member & Deputy Chair	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Martin Fuller	CEO	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Jodie Mason	Board Member	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Shelley McGuinness	Board Member	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Nicholas Murray	Board Member	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Susan Anderson	Board Member	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Brian Stevens	Board Member	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025
Jennifer O'Sullivan	Board Member	1 Jul 2024 to 30 Jun 2025

Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable from the Authority in connection with the management of the Authority during the reporting period was:

Income band	2025	2024
\$0–\$9,999	0	2
\$10,000–\$19,999	6	7
\$20,000–\$29,999	1	0
\$30,000–\$39,999	1	1
\$270,000–\$279,999	0	1
\$280,000–\$289,999	1	0
Total number of Responsible persons	9	11
Total Remuneration \$	441,014	429,114

8.4 Remuneration of executive officers

The Authority did not have any executive officers, other than the CEO, to whom the Victorian Government's Public Entity Executive Remuneration (PEER) Policy applies. The CEO is an accountable officer and therefore disclosed under Note 8.5.

8.5 Related parties

Related parties of the Authority include:

- all key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests (controlled entities, joint ventures and entities they have significant influence over);
- all cabinet ministers and their close family members; and
- all departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Significant transactions with government-related entities

The Authority is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the state of Victoria. During the 2025 financial year, the Authority received significant funding from the following government-related entities:

Entity	Nature of Transaction/s	Payments received 2025 \$	Funding Receivable at 30 June 2025 \$
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Service Level Agreements and Lease Agreement	11,204,045	-
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	Service Level Agreements and Shared Services	532,585	-
Wimmera Catchment Management Authority	Service Level Agreements and Shared Services	131,686	-

During the 2024 financial year, the Authority received significant funding from the following government-related entities:

Entity	Nature of Transaction/s	Payments received 2024 \$	Funding Receivable at 30 June 2024 \$
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Service Level Agreements and Lease Agreement	10,813,087	-
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	Service Level Agreements and Shared Services	794,152	-

During the 2025 financial year, the Authority made significant payments to the following government-related entities:

Entity	Nature of Transaction/s	Payments made 2025 \$	Payable at 30 June 2025 \$
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Reimbursement of expenditure and Service Supply Agreements	149,730	23,998
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority	Reimbursement of expenditure and Service Supply Agreements	126,337	-

During the 2024 financial year, the Authority made significant payments to the following government-related entities:

Entity	Nature of Transaction/s	Payments made 2024	Payable at 30 June 2024
		\$	\$
Trust for Nature (Victoria)	Service Supply Agreement	183,403	-
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Reimbursement of expenditure and Service Supply Agreements	241,085	-

Remuneration of key management personnel

The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Ministers receive. The Ministers' remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

Compensation of KMPs	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Total (i)	441,014	429,114

Note:

(i) Note that KMP's are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of executive officers (Note 8.3).

There were no significant related party transactions or balances that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interest.

8.6 Remuneration of auditors

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Victorian Auditor-General's Office for audit of financial statements	31,800	30,000
Internal audit costs	30,578	21,134
Total auditors' remuneration	62,378	51,134

8.7 Subsequent events

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the reporting period which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Authority, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Authority in future financial years.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (the authority) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2025 • comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended • cash flow statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policies • declaration in the financial statements. In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the authority as at 30 June 2025 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures.
Basis for opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report</i> section of my report. My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the authority in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
Board's responsibilities for the financial report	The Board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

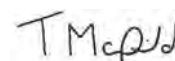
As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the authority's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
9 September 2025



Timothy Maxfield
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

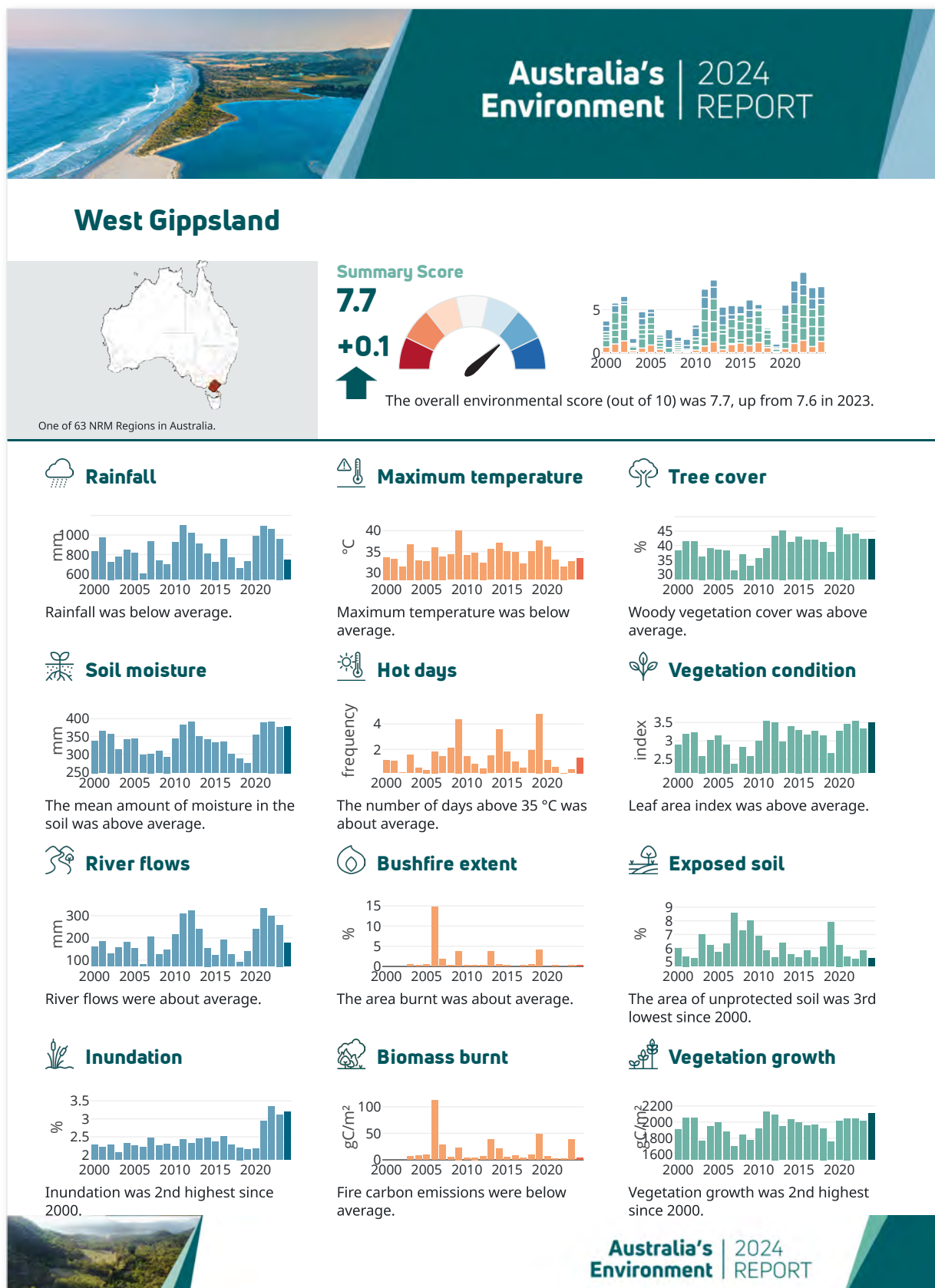
Appendix 1 – Disclosure index

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority's Annual Report 2024-25 is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation and pronouncements. This index has been prepared to help identify compliance with each of the statutory disclosure requirements.

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Appendix 2 – West Gippsland Environment Report summary





Australia's Environment | 2024 REPORT

West Gippsland

NRM Regions

Area: 20,953 km²

Climate indicators

averages for 2000-2023

Precipitation: 855 mm per year

Days over 35°C: 1.5 per year

Days with frost: 5.2 per year

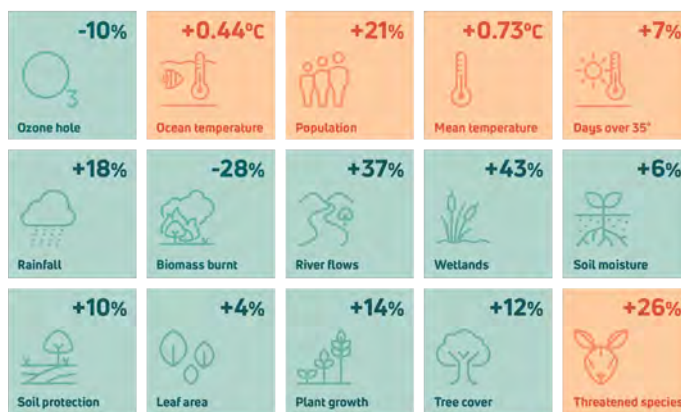
Land use: Grazing on modified pasture (39%), Production native forests (24%), Natural environments (18%), Plantation forestry (8%)

Tree cover: 0.88 Mha or 42.1% (2024)

For more information about this region follow [this link](#)

National context

Deviation from 2000-2023 average



About This Report

The annual Australia's Environment Report summarises a large number of observations on the trajectory of our natural resources and ecosystems.

On the report [website](#), you can find a national summary report, as well as report cards for different types of administrative and geographical regions. In the accompanying data explorer, the spatial data can be viewed as maps, accounts or charts by region and land use type, and downloaded for further use.

Acknowledgements: Production was possible thanks to the National Computational Infrastructure and data published by Geoscience Australia, Bureau of Meteorology, European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, NASA, Japan Meteorological Agency, US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US National Snow and Ice Data Center, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, CSIRO, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Atlas of Living Australia, and Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

About The Data

Summary score: overall environmental condition expressed between 0 and 10 relative to previous years. It is calculated as the average of the ranking of component scores (from top to bottom in the bar graph): inundation and streamflow (blue), vegetation growth, leaf area, soil protection and tree cover (green) and the number of hot days (orange).

Indicators: measures of the condition of natural resources and ecosystems summarised from several spatial data sources. Land cover, inundation, fire occurrence, burn extent, exposed soil, and vegetation leaf area are derived by automated analysis of satellite imagery. The other indicators are estimated by integrating ground- and satellite data with environmental prediction models. For full details on the methods, follow this [link](#).

National context: Selected environmental indicators as a relative change from average conditions since 2000. Such a change can be part of a long-term trend or be within normal variability. For historical context on each indicator follow this [link](#).

About Us

Australia's Environment is produced annually by the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN) and the Australian National University (ANU).

ANU's Centre for Water and Landscape Dynamics develop new methods to measure, monitor and forecast climate, water availability and landscape conditions by combining satellite and field measurements using biophysical modelling and machine learning.

TERN is Australia's land ecosystem observatory, an NCRIS-enabled National Research Infrastructure that provides long-term preservation and access to analysis-ready ecosystem data for researchers and decision-makers to help Australia prepare for the future.

To find out more, please contact:
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Australia



For further information on the environment condition of this and other parts of Australia visit www.ausenv.tern.org.au



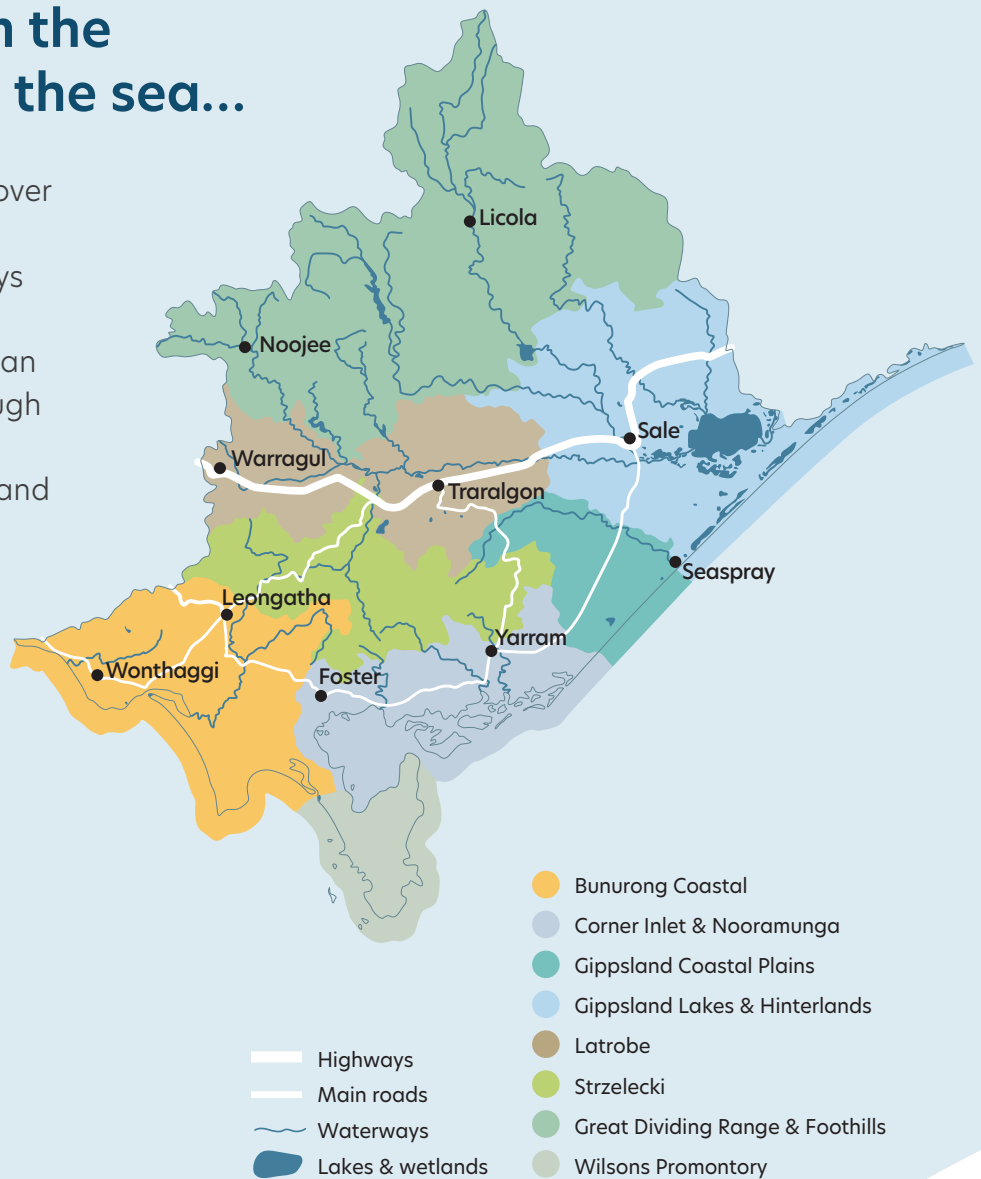
Australia's Environment is produced by the Australian National University's Centre for Water and Landscape Dynamics with support from TERN, an NCRIS-enabled National Research Infrastructure.



*Australasian Darter Ben Williams,
Wild East Gippsland, by Ben Williams.*

Working from the mountains to the sea...

We are responsible for over 40,000 kilometres of designated waterways across our region – all flowing to the Victorian coast, discharging through the Gippsland Lakes, or directly into Bass Strait and the Southern Ocean.



Our vision

Healthy and resilient catchments, valued and cared for by the community, that underpin the environmental, social, cultural and economic wealth of the region.



Reflecting on the progress made to protect and enhance the region's natural environment, the predominant feeling is one of gratitude and satisfaction underpinned by a deep desire to amplify our efforts into the future.

Mikaela Power, Board Chair



'Where Two Rivers Meet'. More than just water photo competition winning entry by Iryna MacMillan, Gunaikurnai Country.



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Follow our story wgcm.vic.gov.au



*Sustainable irrigation takes
collaboration, Gunaikurnai Country*