WATER CHAMPIONS CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Victorians can continue enjoying healthy waterways across the state thanks to the hard work of Waterwatch volunteers who form part of the citizen scientist program, funded by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Water and Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville today congratulated the citizen scientists as they celebrate 25 years of the program.

Over the past 25 years, citizen scientists have recorded 173,991 observations from Victoria’s waterways, collecting important ecological information on waterways such as the Moorabool River and Williamsons Creek in the Barwon region.

These observations are key to guide waterway management decisions, provide early warnings signs of natural events such as algae blooms, flood, fish deaths, pollution and low pH events.

Active community participation in these programs is crucial to supporting healthy waterways into the future. The hard-working volunteers of the Waterwatch program put in a whopping 8,808 hours into the program in 2016 alone.

A new initiative, River Detectives, provides hand on training that gets students heading outdoors, monitoring and discovering more about their local waterway – and learning crucial environment skills.

The program is active in nine out of the ten Catchment Management Authority (CMA) regions: Mallee, Wimmera, North Central, Port Phillip and Western Port, Corangamite, East Gippsland, West Gippsland Goulburn Broken and North East.

These initiatives are a priority in the Labor Government’s Water for Victoria policy, backed by $222 million investment over four years to improve the health of waterways and catchments.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water and Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

“Thank you to Waterwatch volunteers across Victoria who put in countless hours of their own time to support the health of our environment and waterways.”

“This is a great example of initiatives funded by the government that are run by the community and support the community.”

“The 25-year milestone exemplifies the long-term commitment of the community to protect and enhance the health of their waterways – so that they will remain healthy for generations to come.”