

# Action Status Report

WATER FOR VICTORIA

**Overall Action Status:** work is underway on all 69 actions



**17** complete and now business as usual



**9** complete



**38** in progress



**5** in progress with revised timeframe



Complete and now business as usual



Complete



In progress



In progress with revised timeframe

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Chapter 2: Climate change</b>			
Action 2.1 Achieve net-zero emissions in the water sector		Water corporations Statement of Obligation and emissions reductions pledges complete. Water corporations have begun implementing emissions reductions and the sector is on track to meet its 2020 renewable energy use target of 25% by end of year.	Ongoing
Action 2.2 Understand and apply climate science to water management		Research strategy developed, and investment has been made through funding agreements with research institutions to continue research into the impact of climate change on water availability, to prepare and provide guidance for planning Victoria's future.	2016 - 2020
Action 2.3 Lead climate change adaptation across Victoria's water system		The pilot Water Sector Climate Change Adaptation Plan was delivered in 2018, and its 20 actions are now underway.	End 2020
<b>Chapter 3: Waterway and catchment health</b>			
Action 3.1 Improving arrangements for urban waterways		<p>The draft Yarra Strategic Plan has been released for public engagement, and other priority actions from the Yarra Action Plan have been implemented, including changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions to improve management of stormwater; release of the first State of the Yarra and its Parklands Report; watering of the Bolin Bolin wetlands; and consideration of the protections required for other urban waterways.</p> <p>Two Ministerial Advisory Committees have been appointed and have delivered their recommendation to government for improved management for the Waterways of the West and Barwon Rivers.</p>	2020
Action 3.2 Protect water quality through the State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP)		The new SEPP was gazetted in October 2018 and work is now underway with stakeholders on policy implementation.	-
Action 3.3 Invest in integrated catchment management		19 projects now underway to strengthen integrated catchment management and deliver actions from <i>Our Catchments, Our Communities</i> .	2016 - 2020
Action 3.4 Provide long - term investment to improve waterway health		10 large scale Flagship waterways projects have been established, with new approaches to monitoring and reporting back to communities being trialled. Regional Riparian Action Plan 5-year targets have been achieved ahead of schedule.	2016 - 2020



Complete and now business as usual



Complete



In progress



In progress with revised timeframe

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 3.5 Improve environmental water management in a changing climate		Investment has been made in environmental works for priority waterways and project work is underway. New environmental entitlements have been established for the Thomson and Barwon Rivers.	2016-2020
Action 3.6 Better monitor and report on the benefits of environmental watering		Reporting on benefits of environmental watering published annually in the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) <i>Reflections</i> booklet. Outcomes will also be reported by the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability in 2021, in an <i>Environmental Watering Outcomes – baselines science report</i> , and in future State of the Environment reports.	Ongoing
Action 3.7 Ensure clear and transparent charging arrangements		Consultation with key stakeholders is underway.	2020
Action 3.8 Support community partnerships and citizen science		Waterway citizen science programs and Angler Riparian Partnerships Program are underway across all regions. River Detectives program has been established in 101 schools across Victoria.	2016 - 2020
Action 3.9 Improve knowledge and information about waterways and catchments		Improvements to monitoring, evaluation and reporting programs are underway. A waterway research hub has been established to support more coordinated strategic research and monitoring.	2016-2020
<b>Chapter 4: Water for agriculture</b>			
Action 4.1 Supporting regional development and change		Water corporations are continuing to work with regional stakeholders to support regional development.	Ongoing
Action 4.2 Invest in rural water infrastructure		Investment principles have been embedded in decision making, with three irrigation modernisation and domestic and stock pipeline projects complete, and four projects currently under construction throughout the state. An additional 19 feasibility studies are underway or complete, which may generate business cases for further government investment. Commonwealth co-investment in three new projects was secured in 2019.	Ongoing
Action 4.3 Help irrigation districts adapt		Delivery share review is complete, with actions now being implemented. Rural water corporations are continuing to engage with customers and other key stakeholders to ensure irrigation districts remain affordable and attractive to new businesses.	2016-2020



Complete and now business as usual



Complete



In progress



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 4.4 Reduce barriers to change and support communities in irrigation districts		Victoria's Sustainable Irrigation Program is supporting irrigators to make informed decisions through programs such as Plan 2 Farm. A pilot project is also underway in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District to reduce barriers to irrigation redevelopment.	2016-2020
Action 4.5 Improve water delivery efficiency in irrigation districts		Water savings protocol and independent technical review in place, while work in evaluating on-farm water use efficiency continues.	2016- 2020
Action 4.6 Manage salinity, waterlogging and water quality		Salinity management and monitoring programs are underway and ongoing.	Ongoing
Action: 4.7 Manage irrigation developments		Irrigation Development Guidelines are being implemented while Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) are reviewing their Land and Water Management Plans.	2016-2020
Action 4.8 Improve salinity management in the Mallee		Investment Guidelines for the Salinity Impact Charges have been drafted for implementation. An interstate comparison of salinity management in the Mallee has been completed and Victoria continues to work with interstate jurisdictions on management of salinity through the Basin Salinity Management Advisory Panel.	2016-2020
Action 4.9 Improve management of emergency water supply		The Emergency Water Supply network was reviewed and works completed in 2018. A further \$1.5 million towards improving access to supply points was announced in 2019 as part of drought support, and construction is underway.	2020
Action 4.10 Develop a rural drainage strategy		Strategy finalised in late 2018 and implementation is now underway to improve infrastructure and management arrangements for rural drainage.	-
Action 4.11 Balance water recovery for the Murray-Darling Basin		Report on the socioeconomic impacts of the Basin Plan on Victoria has been released and work continues with the Federal Government, other Basin jurisdictions and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to ensure effective governance of the process to deliver environmental offsets.  The Connections Project is on track for completion in late 2020, including achieving the targeted 429 GL long-term average annual water recovery.	Until completion



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Complete



In progress



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Chapter 5 Resilient and liveable cities and towns</b>			
Action 5.1 Use diverse water sources to protect public spaces		Through urban water strategies, water corporations have identified ways to meet future demand through diversification of water supplies. On ground opportunities for increased use of diverse water sources are being identified and progressed through the state's Integrated Water Management (IWM) Forums.	Ongoing
Action 5.2 Better urban water planning to address key challenges		All urban water strategies released in 2017, including the Melbourne System Strategy.	-
Action 5.3 Reinvigorate water efficiency programs for Melbourne and regional Victoria		Water corporations are continuing to promote T155 (metro) and Target Your Water Use (regional) programs and the Schools Water Efficiency Program has reached its 2020 target of 1200 schools registered. A Water Efficiency Strategy promoting collaboration has been supported by all urban water corporations.	Ongoing
Action 5.4 Make the most of our investment in wastewater		Melbourne Water released its Melbourne Sewerage Strategy in 2018. Opportunities for resource recovery from wastewater are being explored through the Strategy and through IWM Forums and Intelligent Water Networks. A steering committee has been established with water corporations and local government representatives to prioritise actions to improve on-site domestic wastewater management.	Ongoing
Action 5.5 Improve stormwater management for greener environments and healthier waterways		Victoria Planning Provisions have been amended to extend stormwater management requirements of most development types. Building regulation reform commenced to improve stormwater management is under consideration. Development of local place-based targets for stormwater management is underway.	2016- 2020
Action 5.6 Work across government for healthy and resilient urban landscapes		Water related benefits incorporated into key strategies, including Plan Melbourne, Metropolitan Open Space Strategy and Yarra Strategic Plan, as well as into the Metropolitan Partnerships. Urban land use planning instruments, standards and guidelines are being progressively aligned with water-related benefits that support healthy and resilient urban landscapes.	Ongoing
Action 5.7 Represent community values and local opportunities in planning		15 IWM forums established across Victoria, place-based IWM Plans are being developed and implemented with a specific focus on the development of Catchment Scale IWM Plans for Metropolitan Melbourne's five catchments, and numerous collaborative IWM projects are underway.	Ongoing



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 5.8 Put integrated water management into practice		Targeted training and development programs have been undertaken to improve capacity and participation in IWM and planning. Collaborative prioritisation process by IWM forums has led to co-investment and progress of 68 IWM projects, with another funding round currently open.	Ongoing
<b>Chapter 6 Recognising and managing for Aboriginal values</b>			
Action 6.1 Recognise Aboriginal values and objectives of water		Supporting eight Traditional Owner groups to undertake on ground projects. The projects explore cultural mapping, seasonal watering plans, water management plans, and research of cultural and environmental flows.	2016- 2020
Action 6.2 Include Aboriginal values and traditional ecological knowledge in water planning		Across Victoria, 23 Aboriginal Water Officers have now been employed. Changes have been made to the <i>Water Act 1989</i> and <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> to recognise Aboriginal cultural values and knowledge in water and catchment management and to include Traditional Owners in these processes.	2016- 2020
Action 6.3 Support Aboriginal access to water for economic development		In partnership with the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations and the Murray Lower Darling Indigenous Nations, a suite of projects with 10 Traditional Owner groups is underway.	2016-2020
Action 6.4 Build capacity to increase Aboriginal participation in water management		The Aboriginal Water Officer network has been established as an effective community of practice to build capacity and knowledge of water planning and management.	2016-2020
<b>Chapter 7 Recognising recreational values</b>			
Action 7.1 Include recreational values in water and waterway planning		Amendments have been made to the <i>Water Act 1989</i> and recreational and social values and uses are being incorporated into subordinate instruments where relevant.	2016-2020
Action 7.2 Help communities understand how to achieve their recreational objectives		Through the Boosting Recreational Water Use initiative, nine site-based projects are bringing together water authorities, local councils and community groups to improve recreational access and experience at Wimmera, Werribee, Barwon, Maribyrnong, Campaspe Rivers, Moonee Ponds Creek, Blue Rock, Eildon and Eppalock.	2016-2020
Action 7.3 Support recreation at water storages through infrastructure and better information		Water corporations continue to provide recreational management services and facilities at storages and are progressing land and recreation management plans for water storages of significant recreational value.	2016-2020



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Chapter 8 Water entitlements and planning</b>			
Action 8.1 Ensure a strong, responsive water entitlement system		Work is being undertaken to rationalise and simplify regulatory instruments for the management of water systems and to improve consistency, transparency and accountability.	2016-2021
Action 8.2 Provide greater flexibility and choice for licence-holders		Investigation has been undertaken into the merits of converting take and use licences in unregulated surface water and groundwater systems into water shares and other products.	-
Action 8.3 Investigate increased flexibility for taking water under winter-fill licences		Investigation completed, concluding that it would be a highly unreliable source of water. Guidelines are proposed to permit high flow extraction on a case-by-case basis.	-
Action 8.4 Better record and report on emerging significant uses of water		Annual Water Accounts continue to report on significant uses of water. Long-term water resource assessment (LWRWA) and Sustainable Water Strategies (SWS) will review risks to Victoria's water resources.	Ongoing
Action 8.5 Ensure a modern compliance regime that works		The majority of actions under the Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact are now complete and compliance reports continue to be published annually. A revised non-urban water metering policy has been developed and is under consideration.	Ongoing
Action 8.6 Commence the long-term water resource assessment (LWRWA) process		Draft LWRWA for southern Victoria complete. Legislation has been amended to allow for the findings of a LWRWA to be considered through SWSs and to delay the LWRWA for Northern Victoria so that it can align with and inform the Basin Plan review in 2026.	Ongoing
Action 8.7 Commence sustainable water strategy (SWS) reviews		Central Region SWS Review complete and both the Western Region and Gippsland Region 5-yearly assessments released in late 2018. Consideration of shared benefits, inclusion of climate change scenarios and consultation with Traditional Owner groups have been incorporated into the SWS review process.	Ongoing
Action 8.8 Align the sustainable water strategy (SWS) and long-term water resource assessment (LWRWA) processes		Legislation has been amended to align SWS and LWRWA processes.	-
Action 8.9 Improve rural water supply planning		Rural water corporations have improved provision of information on water resource availability through publication of annual water outlooks. Draft guidelines for the development of low flow contingency plans have been developed and consultation with water corporations is underway.	Ongoing



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 8.10 Provide clear information about water resources to the community		Annual water accounts released and daily, weekly, and fortnightly reporting has been revised and improved.	Ongoing
Action 8.11 Improve water resource information to support planning and decisions		Real-time monitoring in operation, and agreements in place with over 40 regional monitoring partners to continue state wide surface water and ground water monitoring networks.	Ongoing

## Chapter 9 Realising the potential of the grid and markets

Action 9.1 Develop a grid oversight function		A grid oversight function, the Water Grid Partnership, has been established and the first biennial statement on function and water status across the state was released in October 2018.	Ongoing
Action 9.2 Plan for future grid augmentations		Potential future grid augmentation options will be considered through biennial statements, as well as through SWSs and urban water strategies.	Ongoing
Action 9.3 Improve the effectiveness of water markets		Report on market effectiveness completed and improvements to market oversight in progress. Audits of brokers using the Broker Portal in progress. In 2020, legislation will be proposed to revise take and use provisions.	2017-2021
Action 9.4 Increase water market transparency and information sharing		Enhancements to the Victorian Water Register underway along with targeted communications, including the release of the Water Market Watch app and the Where Can I Trade interactive map.	2017-2021
Action 9.5 Develop the water market in south central Victoria		Phase 1 of the trial is nearing completion. An issues paper on water markets in the region has been developed, along with an options paper on water sharing frameworks.	2017-2021
Action 9.6 Improve trading rules in northern Victoria		Review of Goulburn to Murray trade and operational rules continuing. New assessment process implemented for works licences and extraction shares in the Lower Murray. Initial actions to bring all forms of trade under consistent trading rules are in place.	Ongoing
Action 9.7 Develop trading rules in other water systems		Work is progressing through a review of market effectiveness research, and development of an issues paper into current water markets and sharing arrangements in western Victoria. Also developing a policy for assigning unallocated water in unregulated and groundwater systems.	2019-2021





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Complete



In progress



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Chapter 10 Jobs, economy and innovation</b>			
Action 10.1 Improve engagement with customers and the broader community		A continuous program has been implemented to ensure water corporations improve interactions with all customer groups. The Essential Services Commission has implemented the new PREMO water pricing framework to review water prices and ensure water corporations deliver better value for customers. The water sector also continues to participate in regionally-based forums to inform and deliver on Regional and Metro Partnership priorities.	Ongoing
Action 10.2 Consult business on future needs and provide information to support investment		Water corporations continue to engage with businesses on future needs and are building this into strategic planning processes.	Ongoing
Action 10.3 Promote innovation in the water sector		Investment has been made in the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities to help drive innovative solutions to water problems, while all urban water corporations continue to actively participate in Intelligent Water Networks.	Ongoing
Action 10.4 Build capacity and capability in the water sector		Water corporations and CMAs are continuing to work with delivery partners to identify skills gaps and develop programs to improve skills and capacity in the sector, including traineeships, apprenticeships and Director development programs.	Ongoing
Action 10.5 Provide third party access to existing infrastructure		Framework for third party access complete and implementation is now underway.	2020
Action 10.6 Drive strong governance and performance		Ongoing engagement across the water sector has improved governance and clarified performance expectations against an outcomes framework.	Ongoing
Action 10.7 Promote gender equity in the water sector		The water sector is developing strategies and goals to increase and support gender equity, including establishment of the Insight executive leadership program for women in water. CMA and water corporation board appointments in 2017 and 2019 achieved over 50% representation by women.	Ongoing
Action 10.8 Increase Aboriginal inclusion in the water sector		The water sector is making positive change to increase Aboriginal inclusion, including the appointment of an Aboriginal Victorian as a fourth commissioner of the VEWH and a significant increase in the number of Aboriginal Victorians appointed to water authority boards, to 14.	Ongoing



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Complete



In progress



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Action 10.9 Support economic development through Aboriginal participation</b>		The water sector is working with Traditional Owner groups to support increased Victorian Aboriginal self-determination by exploring and developing opportunities for Aboriginal enterprises to supply goods and services for the water sector. Water corporations and CMAs are also developing traineeship and employment programs for Aboriginal Victorians to increase participation in the sector.	Ongoing
<b>Action 10.10 Respond to the Royal Commission into Family Violence</b>		The Essential Services Commission has worked with water corporations to amend customer policies to include training and support, secure handling of information, debt management and referral of affected customers to specialist services.	-
<b>Action 10.11 Find ways to cut red tape</b>		A review of administrative practices was undertaken and amendments have been made to relevant legislation.	Ongoing
<b>Action 10.12 Improve emergency management capability</b>		Emergency response plans have been updated and new ones developed where required. Information systems to improve risk management are under development.	Ongoing
<b>Action 10.13 Deliver Water for Victoria</b>		Project Office and Project Control Board established. Water for Victoria progress reports have been published, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes are in place for initiatives funded by the Environmental Contribution.	-

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**Cover photo:** Aspendale Gardens Primary School, participant in the Schools Water Efficiency Program.  
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