

# Catchment Management Authorities

## Fact Sheet 2

March 2016

### Catchment Management Framework

Victoria's integrated catchment management framework consists of 10 catchment and land protection regions – Corangamite, East Gippsland, Glenelg Hopkins, Goulburn Broken, Mallee, North Central, North East, Port Phillip and Westernport, West Gippsland and Wimmera.

In each region, a Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is responsible for the integrated planning and coordination of land, water and biodiversity management.



### Key Legislation

#### **Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994**

CMAs are established under *the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act).

Their main functions, powers and duties include:

- preparing a Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) for the region and coordinating and monitoring its implementation
- preparing Special Area Plans, and coordinating and monitoring their implementation
- promoting the co-operation of those involved in the management of land and water resources in

preparing and implementing the RCS and Special Area Plans

- advising Ministers, including on regional priorities for activities and resource allocation; catchment management and land protection; and the condition of land and water resources
- promoting community awareness and understanding of the importance of land and water resources, their sustainable use, conservation and rehabilitation
- making recommendations to the Minister about funding the implementation of the RCS and any Special Area Plan
- making recommendations to the Minister and the Secretary about actions on Crown land managed by the Secretary to prevent land degradation.

CMAs must comply with a range of other Acts, including the *Public Administration Act 2004*, which includes governance principles and the duties of Chairs and members of public bodies in the public sector, and the *Financial Management Act 1994*.

#### **Water Act 1989**

Under the *Water Act 1989* (Water Act), the designated waterway management authorities are the CMAs, except in the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment region where it is Melbourne Water. These 10 authorities have the lead role in developing and delivering regional programs for waterway management. The Act outlines their functions and powers in relation to waterway management, floodplain management and regional drainage.

CMAs prepare regional waterway strategies for the Minister and seasonal watering proposals for the Victorian Environmental Water Holder.

### Structure

#### **The Board**

CMAs are governed by a Board that consists of a Chair and five to eight other members appointed by the

Minister under the CaLP Act for up to four years. The CMA Board reports directly to the Minister through its Chair. It is responsible for the strategic planning and policies of the CMA; and the oversight of the management of the CMA, including the performance of its functions and duties.

Membership of Boards is based on of the following statutory criteria:

- More than 50 percent of Board members are to be people whose principal occupation is primary production (except for the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA). Primary production means agriculture, apiculture, aquaculture, forestry or horticulture.
- Each member must have knowledge and experience of at least one of the following: land management, water resource management and the water industry, waterway management, primary industry, environment or natural resources management, strategic or business planning, and financial management.

## Committees

The Boards can establish committees and define their functions and membership. The role of committees varies within and between CMAs. Most committees:

- provide advice on resource management objectives, targets, activities, priorities, budgeting and investment
- plan, develop and implement plans for specific issues
- act as a communication link with key groups and the local community.

## Staff

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and staff oversee the development and implementation of CMA programs. In particular, they play a crucial role in liaising with regional communities, government departments and agencies, local government and Water Corporations. The CEO is appointed by the Board for up to five years.

## Accountability Instruments and Processes

### Statement of Obligations

The Minister can issue Statements of Obligations (SoOs) to CMAs to specify their obligations in performing their functions under the CaLP Act and the Water Act.

The SoOs issued under the CaLP Act and the Water Act includes provisions relating to performance standards and requirements for community consultation. The Water Act SoO also include requirements for the management of the environmental water reserve.

### Corporate plans

Corporate plans are the forward planning and management tool for each CMA to set business directions and priorities, and monitor business activities. They are also an accountability tool to assess CMA operations with respect to their legislative requirements under the Water Act, the CaLP Act and the Financial Management Act.

Under the CaLP Act, CMAs submit an annual corporate plan to the responsible Minister. It sets out the investment and program priorities for the forthcoming financial year to which the plan relates. It also includes a business plan, financial statements (for a three-year period) and a statement of corporate intent (for a five-year period). Corporate plans must follow the guidelines issued by the Minister.

### Annual reporting

Under the CaLP Act, CMAs must provide an annual report to the Minister on the condition and management of land and water resources in their region and the carrying out of their functions. CMAs are also required to demonstrate compliance with the Financial Management Act by reporting on their operations after each financial year, including their audited financial statements. The annual report is tabled in the Victorian Parliament by the Minister.

Annual reporting on project delivery is normally governed under the relevant funding agreement.

Annual reports are also an important opportunity for CMAs to communicate their activities and collective achievements with catchment partners to the broader community.

### Regional Catchment Strategies

RCSs are the primary integrated strategic planning mechanism for the management of land, water and biodiversity resources in each catchment region.

RCSs are prepared by CMAs in consultation with catchment communities and partners and are approved by the Minister. The RCSs must meet the content requirements of the CaLP Act and be developed in accordance with guidelines established by the Victorian Catchment Management Council.

The RCSs identify:

- the region's land, water and biodiversity resources and how they are used
- the nature, causes, extent and severity of land degradation of catchments
- a long-term vision for the region
- regionally significant land, water and biodiversity assets and landscapes
- 20-year condition objectives
- a program of management measures for the life of the strategy (six years).

RCSs seek to integrate community values and regional priorities with State and Federal legislation and policies.

CMAs are responsible for the coordination of the RCSs, including the ongoing review and monitoring of implementation, and identification of priority activities and work programs. RCSs are often implemented through regional sub-strategies and action plans that are thematic, issue and/or landscape based, such as the Regional Waterway Strategies.

## Special Area Plans

Under the CaLP Act, land can be declared a special area either as a special water supply area or for any other purpose identified by a CMA. A Special Area Plan is a statutory planning management tool approved by the Minister to deal with specific land management issues in a special area.

## Regional Operating Agreements

The purpose of Regional Operating Agreements (ROAs) is to facilitate the delivery of regional natural resource management operations as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Nine ROAs exist covering all 10 CMA regions, and are signed by the CMAs, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Regional Services) and Parks Victoria.

Goulburn Broken CMA and North East CMA signed a joint agreement for the DELWP Hume Region, while Melbourne Water is an additional signatory to the Port Phillip and Westernport ROA.

The agreements clarify roles and responsibilities for service delivery, eliminate duplication of effort, promote efficiencies for program delivery, clarify at the customer interface who is doing what, and provide an integrated front and consistent messaging to the community.

The performance of the organisations involved in these agreements is reviewed annually to ensure optimum coordination and cooperation. The agreements are fully reviewed at least every three years.

## Investment and Funding

CMAs are funded from multiple sources, with most funding received from the Australian and Victorian Governments.

### Australian Government funding

#### *National Landcare Programme (2014/15 – 2017/18)*

The Australian Government National Landcare Programme (NLP) helps drive sustainable agriculture and supports the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of Australia's natural environment.

The NLP has national and regional funding streams. The national stream is delivered directly by the Australian Government. A service level agreement between DELWP and CMAs governs the delivery of the regional stream by CMAs.

### State funding

#### *CMA corporate funding*

Each CMA receives an annual distribution in the form of a corporate grant from DELWP to deliver their corporate and statutory functions under the CaLP Act.

#### *Victorian Landcare Program*

The Victorian Landcare Program supports Landcare groups and networks through the Victorian Landcare Program Support; the Victorian Landcare Grants; and the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program.

The program funds on-ground work delivered by community groups and networks to address local environmental priorities. Maintenance grants to existing groups and start-up grants to new groups support a stable base for Landcare across Victoria.

Ten Regional Landcare Coordinators and a statewide Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator are funded to develop and implement regional Landcare support plans, undertake capacity building, facilitate access to grants and other funding, and provide regional reporting on Landcare funding outcomes.

## **Victorian Water Programs Investment Framework**

The framework supports an integrated approach to water investment that includes:

- Victorian Waterway Management Program – to maintain or improve the environmental condition of waterways
- Sustainable Irrigation Program – for a productive, efficient and sustainable irrigation industry through improved irrigation infrastructure
- Water Act statutory functions – to meet the obligations CMAAs must fulfil
- Environmental Water Reserve Officers
- Other special water-related initiatives.

## **Environmental Water: Technical Investigations, Works and Measures Program**

This program is led by DELWP and delivered by CMAAs in their role as waterway managers. It supports on-ground projects that support environmental water outcomes, such as:

- projects to identify, prioritise and address in-stream fish barriers
- assessing existing water delivery infrastructure to design necessary modifications
- technical investigations to increase aquatic ecology knowledge and refine environmental water flow recommendations and/or objectives.

## **Floodplain Management**

The program aims to promote strategic planning for floodplain management activities by developing regional floodplain management strategies and strengthening CMA resources for floodplain management statutory functions.

## **Threatened Species Protection Initiative**

The Threatened Species Protection Initiative supports immediate action on threatened species and habitat protection through two grant schemes.

The Community Volunteer Action grants are provided to small-scale, local threatened species projects that build community connections to the local environment. CMAAs can participate in a sponsor capacity.

The Strategic Action and Critical Partnerships grants provide environmental agencies and organisations, as experts in threatened species management, to undertake work that reduces threats and secures important sites for threatened species.

## **Victorian Environmental Partnerships Program (VEPP) – Landscape-scale native vegetation management**

This program has lapsed and projects are being finalised. Projects under this stream are coordinated and led by CMAAs. The investment funds on-ground efforts to protect and enhance high priority native vegetation on private land using market-based approaches where possible.

## **Additional funding**

### **Disaster response and recovery funding**

Following a natural disaster (such as a bushfire, flood or drought), CMAAs are able to apply for State and Australian Government funding to coordinate eligible on-ground disaster response and recovery programs.

### **Murray–Darling Basin**

The Australian Government invests in improved irrigation efficiency in Australia, particularly in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB). CMAAs in the MDB may bid for funding under some of these investment programs. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority also provides funding.