Victoria continues to deliver the Basin Plan



Our focus is on improving environmental outcomes through practical projects, targeted investment and continued collaboration with Basin communities.

The Murray-Darling Basin is the lifeblood of northern Victorian communities

The Murray-Darling Basin supports diverse landscapes, strong regional communities and enduring cultural connections to Country, while underpinning economic activity across northern Victoria.

As Australia's food bowl, northern Victoria is home to the nation's largest irrigation area, producing more than $3 billion worth of agricultural produce every year and employing over 38,000 people in farming and flow-on industries.

Victoria's upper Murray catchments play a critical role in supporting Basin health, contributing around 38% of Murray River flows from only 2% of the Basin's land area.

Significant volumes of water have already been recovered for the environment under the Basin Plan. The next challenge is ensuring it delivers tangible environmental outcomes. Achieving this requires targeted, place-based investment in rivers, wetlands and floodplains across connected waterways, including in the catchments where water has been recovered.



Delivering the Basin Plan

Victoria's focus is now on building on the successes and lessons learnt over the past 14 years to maximise environmental outcomes from water already recovered, while continuing to deliver on our Basin Plan commitments.

Achieving environmental outcomes requires more than recovering water alone, particularly in a highly regulated river system that continues to provide essential services for northern Victorian communities. Success depends on delivering water to the right places, at the right time and for the right duration, supported by complementary measures such as fish passage, habitat restoration, invasive species management, improved connectivity and smarter river operations.

This integrated approach is especially important in Victoria, where waterways are deeply connected to the communities they support. Healthy rivers underpin environmental health, cultural values and connections to Country, while also providing recreational opportunities and supporting regional economies.

Victoria's experience has shown that practical, place-based solutions are most effective when they are informed by robust environmental assessment, local knowledge and strong community support. We also need to focus investment on actions that remain effective in a changing climate and deliver lasting environmental benefits.

The *Planning our Basin future together* prospectus identifies opportunities to improve environmental outcomes while supporting communities and regional industries to adapt to a future with less water. Victoria is also progressing significant environmental works projects that help restore water to high-value Murray River floodplains, sustain nationally significant ecosystems and support native species.

VICTORIA
State Government

Five actions Victoria is taking

Action 1: Delivering major projects with broad benefits for communities, Traditional Owners, industries and the environment

We are working with the Australian Government to deliver community supported projects developed through the *Planning our Basin future together* prospectus to contribute to Basin Plan objectives, building on the success of previous projects like the $2 billion Goulburn-Murray Water Connections Project, including:

- The Broken Reconfiguration Project – to build the resilience of water management and boost environmental outcomes in the Broken River catchment.
- The Coliban Rural Water Efficiency Project – to rationalise and modernise infrastructure supplying rural customers with water in the Bendigo region.

Case Study Coliban Rural Water Efficiency Project

The Coliban Rural Water Efficiency Project will modernise and improve the long-term resilience of the Coliban rural supply system. It will transition parts of the network from legacy open channels and ageing assets to a contemporary closed-pipeline delivery system, improving efficiency and enhancing supply reliability for rural customers.

The project is expected to recover 5.05 GL through licence relinquishment and reduced operational losses. Water recovery will strengthen urban water security and enable water to be returned to the environment and Traditional Owners. The project is being funded through the Australian Government's Resilient Rivers Water Infrastructure Program (RRWIP) and co-contribution from Coliban Water.

Further information:
Coliban Rural Water Efficiency Project

Action 2: Delivering ambitious environmental projects that integrate riverine landscapes, river operations and community values

We are continuing to deliver a common-sense approach and co-investment with the Australian Government in complex environmental projects that are critical for the health of our waterways and floodplains and require deep, genuine engagement with local and regional communities, including projects that:

- improve the environmental condition of the Murray and Goulburn rivers in support of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap
- ensure the protection of culturally and environmentally significant sites on Victoria's Murray River floodplain.



Case Study Hattah North

Hattah Lakes North is one of eight sites identified for priority conservation as part of the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project, one of the largest coordinated environmental improvement programs delivered along the Murray River.

The new works will build on the benefits of the southern Hattah Lakes site delivered under the successful The Living Murray program extending environmental benefits to the north and completing the original vision for a more connected system of lakes and floodplains.

Traditional Owners have shared their knowledge, stories and perspectives about Country and cultural heritage through the project's planning and approvals stages, and their involvement continues through construction and into future operations.

Further information: Hattah Lakes North

Action 3: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of the Basin Plan

We have maintained a strong position that open tender water purchase programs are causing significant socio-economic impacts to northern Victorian communities and missing the opportunity to maximise environmental outcomes for Basin waterways and floodplains.

We continue to take a proactive approach to supporting our regions, industries and businesses to respond to the impacts of ongoing water purchases. We are working with stakeholders to develop responses that will make a real difference on the ground and have commenced negotiations with the Australian Government to access funding that will deliver targeted programs where the impacts are most being experienced.

Case Study
Regional planning for reduced water availability

With Victorian Government funding, Lower Murray Water has released its Rural Masterplan 2050, *Strategic Pathways*. Community and stakeholder input will inform implementation of the Masterplan, which aims to secure the long-term viability of rural water services and irrigation infrastructure.

The Masterplan explores responses to reduced water availability, population growth, urban development, ageing irrigation infrastructure and climate variability.

As further Australian Government open tender water purchases remain possible, strong regional planning is essential. Communities must have a genuine voice in decisions about irrigation infrastructure and the industries it supports.

Further information:
Rural Masterplan 2050 – Strategic Pathways

Action 4: Working beyond the Basin Plan to deliver water for communities, industries and the environment

We are taking a proactive approach with our communities to make the most of environmental water recovered – through innovative river operations and new environmental water management trials delivered in partnership with other states and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

This includes the North South Environmental Water Trial, which has put in place water accounting, rules and frameworks to deliver environmental water recovered and used in the northern Basin through the Menindee Lakes and into the Lower Darling and Murray rivers.



Case Study
North South Environmental Water Trial

The North South Environmental Water Trial (in place from 2025–2028) is enabling an estimated 150 GL of additional environmental water to be delivered through the Menindee Lakes, and into the Lower Darling-Baaka and Murray River per year on average.

These flows – enabled by collaboration across Basin governments – deliver on key environmental objectives, supporting healthier rivers, improving water quality, enhancing habitat for native fish and water-dependent species, and benefiting floodplain vegetation across connected landscapes.

Victoria is seeking that this trial be explicitly recognised as contributing towards the targets and objectives of the Basin Plan.

Further information:
North-south environmental water trial

Action 5: Delivering on Victorian priorities that underpin resilient communities and enhance environmental outcomes

Victorian integrated catchment management and support for sustainable irrigation continues through our established programs. We are working with communities, farmers and water managers to prepare for hotter, drier conditions and more extreme events, and to understand future impacts on the environment, communities and regional economies, including:

- Delivering over $240 million to Victorian Catchment Management Authorities over four years (2024–28) to maintain the health, resilience and enjoyment of Victoria's waterways, catchments and Country through on-ground works, environmental water management, catchment stewardship and new policy and climate adaptation planning.
- Delivering $57.80 million over four years (2024–28) in water wise and resilient communities – delivering a resilient, sustainable water future for irrigation communities while promoting a healthy environment.

Case Study
Regional Waterway Strategies

Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) manage waterway values in partnership with Traditional Owners, communities, landholders and relevant agencies. In Victoria's highly modified catchments this means setting objectives that balance values and uses of waterways.

CMAs are currently developing new regional waterway strategies and engaging with regional communities about climate change impacts on waterways to inform prioritisation of management actions. We are committed to planning for adaptation with people most affected by change.

Some actions will be targeted to improving resilience of waterway values, while others will support transition of values in response to large-scale changes. This adaptation approach is being guided by statewide policy in the draft Victorian Waterway Management Strategy.

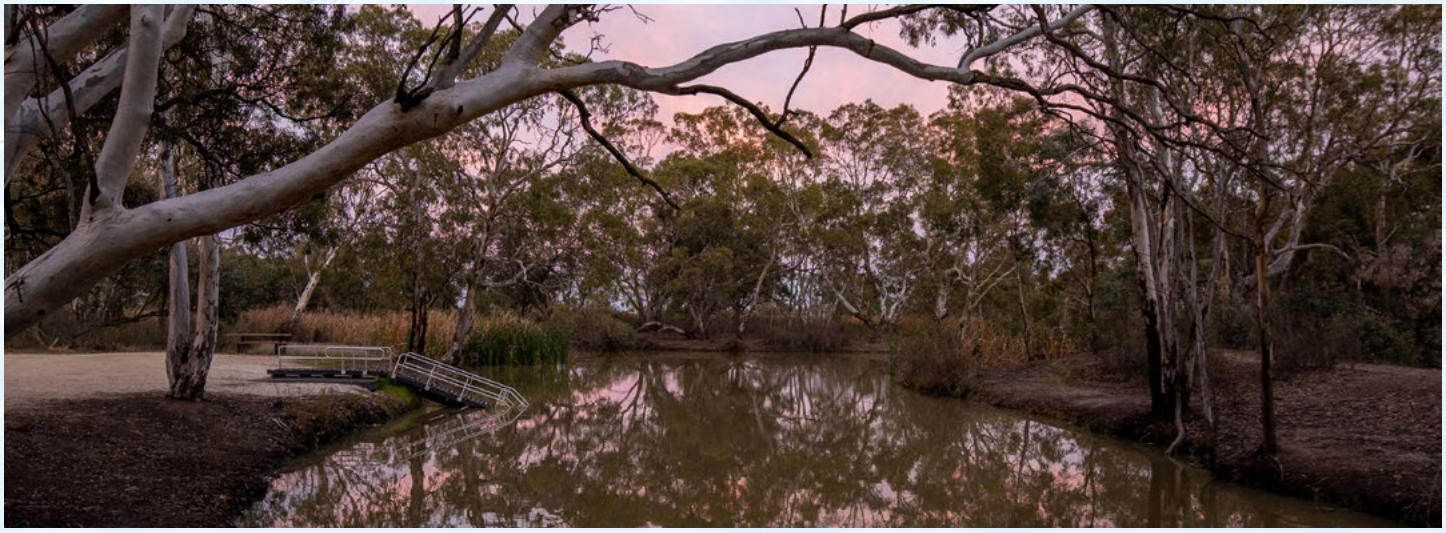
Further information:
Victorian Waterway Management Strategy.

Further information

For further information on how Victoria is undertaking these actions, please visit the following:

Victoria's Planning our Basin future together prospectus

Victoria's Submission to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Review 2026



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