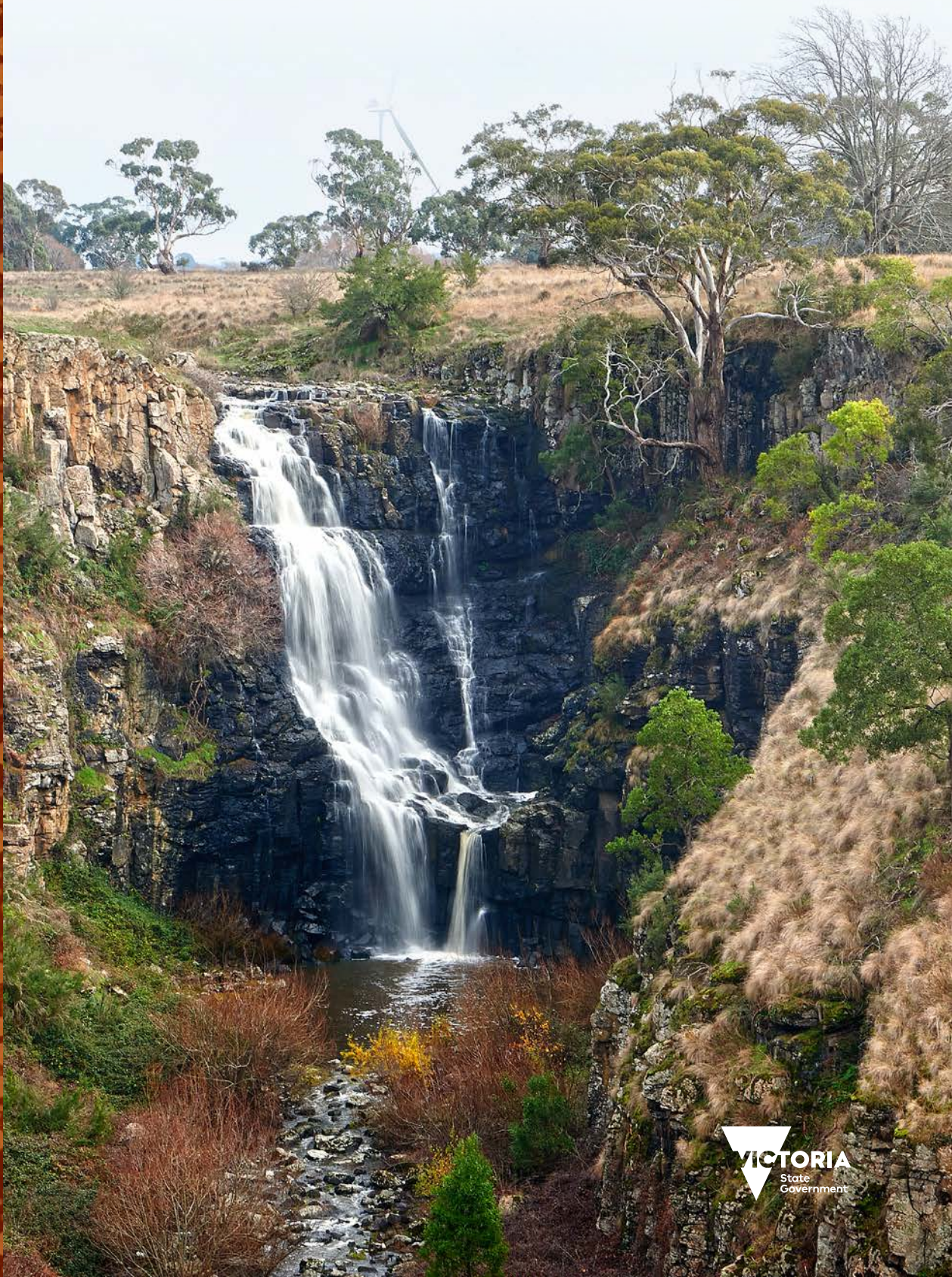


# Our living rivers of the Barwon

Barwon River Ministerial Advisory Committee's  
Community Consultation Report



Barre Warre Yulluk





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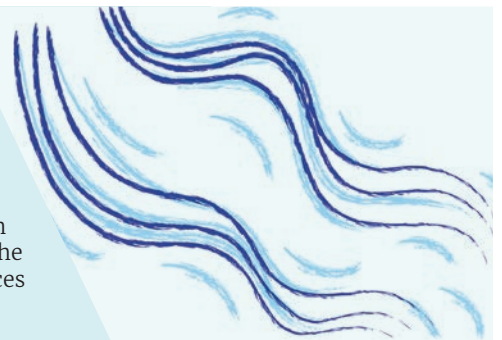
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### Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.





## Timeline



### **Project Announced**

October 2018



### **Project Commencement**

Project launch  
February 2019



### **Phase 1: Public Engagement**

Help shape the vision and future of the Barwon River and its waterways. Engagement  
14 June 2019 – 15 July 2019



### **Discussion Paper Release**

Ministerial Advisory Committee  
Discussion Paper released  
October 2019



### **Discussion Paper Submission Process opens**

4 October 2019



### **Phase 2: Public Engagement**

Consultation on Discussion Paper  
Open House Community Consultation  
Sessions 14–16 October 2019



### **Discussion Paper Submission Process Closes**

Midnight 3 November 2019

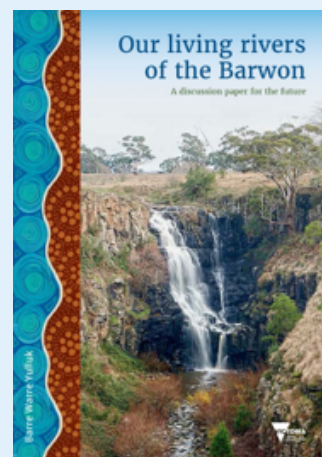


### **Development Recommendations**

Ministerial Advisory Committee  
submitted recommendations to  
Government February 2020



### **Government Consideration of Recommendations**



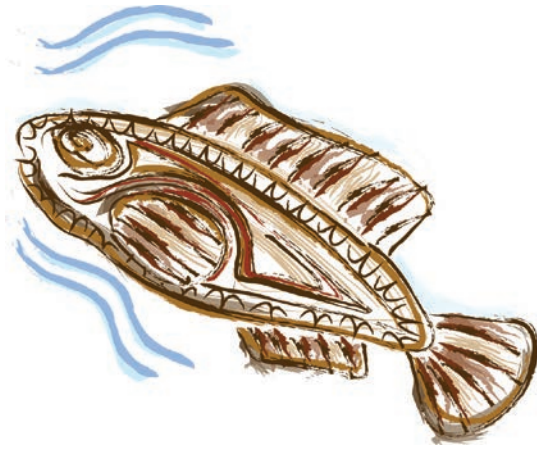


**We submitted our Final Recommendations Report to the Victorian Government in February 2020, outlining key recommendations for the management and protection of the rivers of the Barwon.**

**Our recommendations fall under four key themes:**

- Embedding Traditional Owner values
- Strengthening governance arrangements
- Planning for sustainable growth and liveability
- Supporting healthy waterways and secure water supplies.

**The Victorian Government will respond to these recommendations by developing an Action Plan for the rivers of the Barwon.**



# INTRODUCTION

We, the Barwon River Ministerial Advisory Committee (Barwon MAC), wish to thank community members, local businesses, environmental groups, schools and government agencies for their participation and enthusiasm in our process. We acknowledge their ongoing work and commitment to the protection of the Barwon River and its tributaries.

The Barwon River Ministerial Advisory Committee was established in early 2019 to seek community views on future management and protection of the rivers of the Barwon (including the Barwon, Moorabool, Yarrowee and Leigh rivers) and their tributaries. We undertook extensive community consultation across the Barwon catchment throughout 2019 to understand the issues facing the catchment and to develop recommendations and a 50-year community vision for the waterways and their landscapes.<sup>1</sup> This Community Consultation Summary Report provides a summary of what we heard, who we spoke to and how we arrived at our recommendations.

The Barwon catchment<sup>2</sup> area is 5,380 km, contains 94 tributaries and stretches from its headwaters in the Otway Ranges and Central Highlands to the estuary at Barwon. It is a connected system that includes the land and the water that flows over

that land, including rivers, streams, creeks, lakes and other wetlands. The catchment includes some of the state's most flow-stressed waterways, and significant population growth and a changing climate are expected to place increasing pressures on the health of the waterways and surrounding natural landscapes. These pressures require a long-term strategic response to meet these challenges and others that emerge.

The rivers of the Barwon mean many different things to many different people, and the feedback and submissions received during the consultation process reinforced this view. The wide variety of feedback that we received was integral to our analysis of the issues and opportunities facing the catchment, allowing us to arrive at our recommendations which we believe will enable the rivers of the Barwon to be protected and enjoyed for many generations to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Key document outputs of the Barwon MAC are *Our Living Rivers of the Barwon: A Discussion Paper for the Future*, a summary document of the Discussion Paper, the *Final Recommendations Report* and this *Community Consultation Report*.

<sup>2</sup> The Barwon catchment is a connected system that includes the land and the water that flows over that land, including rivers, streams, creeks, lakes and other wetlands. The rivers of the Barwon refers to the major rivers in the Barwon catchment (the Barwon, Moorabool, Yarrowee and Leigh rivers) and their associated river corridors and tributaries.



23

formal written submissions received

30

online survey submissions received



## Top 4 areas of comment:

1

Water management

2

Sustainable growth and liveability

3

Enhanced corridors

4

Living cultural landscape

75

responses from workshops at secondary schools

213

comments by 65 contributors on social pinpoint

more than

75

attendees at 'pressure point' workshops



more than

100

attendees at open house sessions



more than

180

attendees at local discussions across the catchment





## CONSULTATION PROCESS

To understand the issues and opportunities facing the catchment, we initially held nine local discussions across the Barwon catchment including Armstrong Creek, Bannockburn, Barwon Heads, Birregurra, Forrest, Geelong, Meredith, Mt Clear and Winchelsea in June 2019. The community was asked to consider their long-term aspirations for the rivers of the Barwon including what was important to them, what needed improving, and what was improving. On average, approximately 20 people attended each local discussion.

After the community consultations, we held three 'pressure point' workshops in Winchelsea, Bannockburn and Barwon Heads, which brought together agency staff and community members to discuss what they felt were current issues in the Barwon catchment, as well as potential solutions and improvements for the catchment. These workshops included participants from organisations that have responsibilities for decision-making and management of the rivers of the Barwon along with community members and environmental groups. Approximately 25 people attended each of the three workshops.

Concurrent with the community consultation, we invited the community to post comments on a social pinpoint webpage which was accessible via the Engage Victoria webpage for the Barwon MAC. By dragging pins to specific places, people could then record what was important to them, what needed improving, and what was improving. This gathered local knowledge about the rivers, and 213 comments were posted by 65 contributors.

The Barwon MAC Discussion Paper was released in October 2019 in order to prompt discussion about the issues and opportunities to improve the management of the Barwon catchment. The purpose of this

document was to seek community feedback on the issues and opportunities identified through the first phase of consultation, prior to the Barwon MAC developing its final recommendations report. The Discussion Paper also tested a 50-year Community Vision that was developed with the feedback received from the nine local discussions, the three pressure point workshops and the comments placed on the social pinpoint interactive map.

The Discussion Paper was widely publicised throughout the Barwon catchment, via advertisements in three regional newspapers, stories in five regional newspapers following on from a press release, A4 flyers in shopfronts and community notice boards, and summaries of the Discussion Paper available on counters in local government and community service centres (such as libraries, postal agencies).

After the Discussion Paper was released, the final stage of community engagement consisted of six 'open house' community consultation sessions held in Ballarat, Geelong and Colac. These sessions provided a chance for the community to have their say on the Barwon MAC Discussion Paper themes and directions in person and speak directly with Barwon MAC members about things that





matter most to them. The sessions were also an opportunity for participants to hear about water-related government initiatives taking place at the time, including the Long-Term Water Resource Assessment findings, the commencement of the development of a new Central Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy and a water market transparency project.

We received submissions on the Barwon MAC Discussion Paper via online survey responses, written submissions and people verbally providing feedback at the open house sessions. In total 30 online surveys and 23 written submissions were received.

In addition to reviewing feedback and written submissions, we sought further detail and understanding on the threats to the Barwon catchment; how best to manage those threats from a planning, institutional and regulatory perspective; how to enhance and protect the rivers of the Barwon for all users including the environment; and how to better incorporate Traditional Owner values and expectations of the catchment. Over a 12-month period, we invited technical specialists and subject matter experts to present to us on these topics and answer questions to assist us in arriving at our recommendations.

We also utilised other reference documents to quantify threats to the Barwon catchment and to understand competing uses for the water resource and challenges in managing the rivers of the Barwon, including the *Moorabool River FLOWS Study Update*<sup>3</sup> and the *Long-Term Water Resource Assessment for Southern Victoria: Overview Draft Report*.<sup>4</sup>

A very important element of the Barwon MAC process was ensuring Traditional Owner values were included in the recommendations. The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for Wadawurrung Country, which encompasses part of the rivers of the Barwon and surrounding land. It has statutory authority for the management of Aboriginal heritage values and culture under the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. When the Barwon MAC was developing its recommendations, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation was developing its Healthy Country Plan and the objectives of this plan were incorporated into the Barwon MAC process.

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<sup>3</sup> *Moorabool River FLOWS Study Update*, Jacobs 2015.

<sup>4</sup> *Long-Term Water Resource Assessment for Southern Victoria: Overview Report Draft*, State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2019.

In February 2020, The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council approved an application from Eastern Maar to vary its RAP boundary to include a section of the Barwon catchment (refer Figure 1 for boundary map). We strongly recommend that the Victorian Government involves all Traditional Owner groups when developing and implementing its response to

our recommendations, in line with the Victorian Government’s commitment to Aboriginal self-determination.

The Barwon MAC’s *Final Recommendations Report* was submitted to the Victorian Government in February 2020.



Figure 1 – Registered Aboriginal Party Boundaries

## Timeline of the Barwon MAC community engagement process



### June 2019

Barwon MAC hosted 9 facilitated local discussions with community members (Armstrong Creek, Bannockburn, Barwon Heads, Birregurra, Forrest, Geelong, Meredith, Mt Clear and Winchelsea)

### June 2019

3 pressure point workshops at Winchelsea, Bannockburn and Barwon Heads

### 14 June 2019 – 15 July 2019

Interactive map live on Engage Victoria website for community members to place geo-located comments relating to the Barwon catchment

### Concurrent with workshops

2 interactive school session held to capture perspectives of young people (The Geelong College, North Geelong Secondary School)

### October 2019

DELWP Facebook page, Barwon Water Facebook page

### July 2019 – October 2019

Development of Discussion Paper and 50-year vision

### 4 October 2019

Our Living Rivers of the Barwon: A Discussion Paper for the Future and summary document of the Discussion Paper released for comment

### October 2019

6 x Open House sessions (Ballarat, Colac, Geelong) for community members to speak with Barwon MAC members and provide verbal feedback on Discussion Paper

### October 2019

Discussion Paper feedback survey posted on Engage Victoria website (4 weeks)

### February 2020

Final Recommendations Report submitted to the Victorian Government

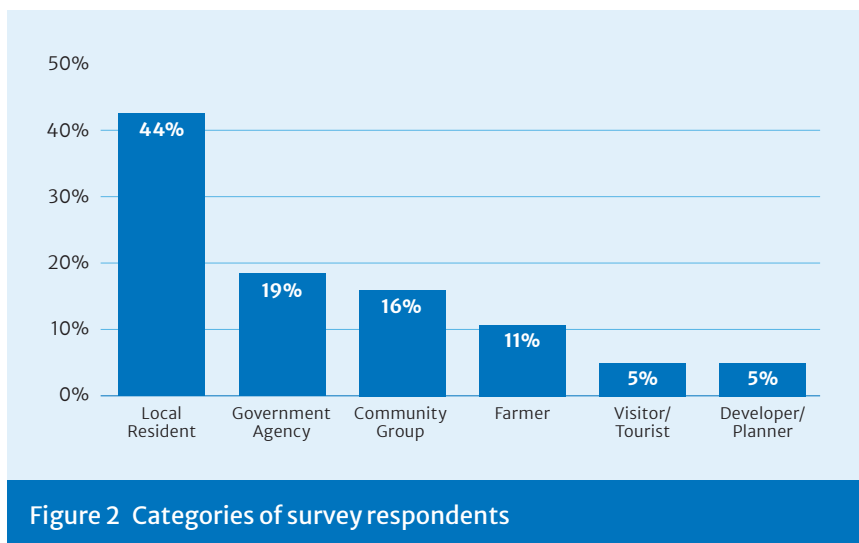






## WHO WE'VE HEARD FROM

We received feedback from a range of contributors including local residents, government agency staff, community groups, environmental groups, farmers, visitors, tourists, developers and planners. For online survey responses, Figure 2 provides an overview of the different categories of responses. Participation in the community consultation process by local residents was strong, followed by interest by agencies, community groups and farmers.



We felt that it was particularly important to specifically capture the perspective of young people who will be the future beneficiaries of the catchment. As such, we also reached out to secondary schools in Geelong and held workshops at The Geelong College and North Geelong Secondary College. A further 75 responses were gathered from those sessions.

To capture the perspectives of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the Discussion Paper was also presented to members of the Geelong Ethnic Communities Council.

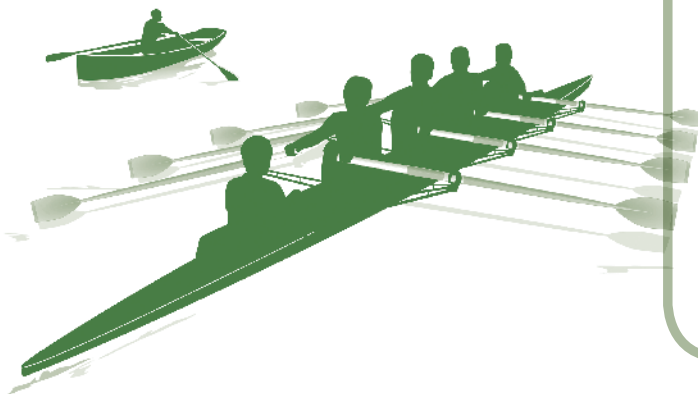


## WHAT WE'VE HEARD

The Discussion Paper summarises what we heard in the earlier stages of our consultation and was used to test some of the directions that we were exploring as part of our recommendations. The Discussion Paper identified issues and opportunities facing the catchment, as well as six themes that were of particularly high interest to the community:

- A living cultural landscape
- Water management for a secure future
- Targeted and integrated management for a healthy catchment
- Enhanced waterway corridors for community connection, access and use
- Planning for sustainable growth and liveability
- An effective governance model for the catchment

Survey responses and submissions told us that for most community members, the Discussion Paper addressed the things that matter most to them. Of all six themes, two of the themes received significantly more comment than the four other themes: *water management for a secure future* and *planning for sustainable growth and liveability*.









**After considering the significant amount of feedback on the Discussion Paper during the consultation process, we consolidated and distilled our directions to arrive at the following four recommendation themes:**

- **Embedding Traditional Owner values**
- **Strengthening governance arrangements**
- **Planning for sustainable growth and liveability**
- **Supporting healthy waterways and secure water supplies.**



**Table 1 What we heard**

The following table summarises, at a high level, what we heard from the community on each of the six themes tested in the Discussion Paper.

DISCUSSION PAPER THEME	WHAT WE HEARD	
<p><b>A living cultural landscape</b></p>	<p>Traditional Owners have an intrinsic connection with waterways and a cultural responsibility for the life of rivers. The community feels that we can learn from their extensive knowledge about caring for Country and apply this to the way that waterways are managed. Traditional Owners should be an integral part of decision-making for the catchment, and they need adequate resourcing to fulfil this role.</p>	
<p><b>Water management for a secure future</b></p>		<p>The community raised significant concerns about decreasing water availability in the catchment. They want more water secured for the environment and greater security for environmental water entitlements, and a timeline for improvements to river health.</p> <p>The community sees an urgent need to develop alternative water supplies, and for urban water users to understand where their water comes from to encourage households to use less water.</p>
<p><b>Targeted and integrated management for a healthy catchment</b></p>	<p>The community wants to see waterway restoration efforts to be prioritised where they have whole-of-catchment benefits. This is particularly the case in the upper catchment, where waterway management activities can deliver multiple benefits downstream.</p>	
<p><b>Enhanced waterway corridors for community connection, access and use</b></p>		<p>The community wants improved access to high-amenity sections of waterways, but without compromising river health. People want to see the health of vegetation along rivers improved.</p>
<p><b>Planning for sustainable growth and liveability</b></p>	<p>The community wants to see regional-scale planning that strikes a balance between human and environmental needs. Regional planning should set priorities for master planning in growth areas and planning controls along waterways. Integrated Water Management is strongly supported.</p>	
<p><b>An effective governance model for the catchment</b></p>		<p>The community wants to see improvements to existing decision-making frameworks, not a new framework. Collaboration is already occurring across the different government agencies, but there are areas that can be strengthened with responsibilities made clearer within legislation. Government agencies need to be adequately resourced to protect the catchment.</p>

# What we've heard

## Mt Clear – Ballarat

*“The Yarrowee cycle and walking path! What a joy this is and a hidden gem in Ballarat’s crown. Appreciated by young and old, dogs, wildlife. Continue funding and maintaining this asset and take it out even further!”*

*“This area is important to me because of becoming involved with the local landcare group, and helping and watching the regeneration of this area has been both fascinating and satisfying (and hard work!), but proud to be part of it.”*

## Bannockburn and Inverleigh

*“My vision for the Barwon River is to maintain a healthy flow of water supporting viable aquatic life, and the river is supporting farming properties that border onto it.”*

*“The Barwon is messy where I live, the riparian zone in most places impenetrable, it is difficult and expensive to manage and to maintain fences after flooding ... but it is what it should be like ... natural and with such a diverse ecosystem.”*

## Birregurra

*“The Barwon River is a beautiful ecosystem full of many different species ranging from large to small, it’s also full of amazing plants to create homes for animals. More plants and trees should be planted here and they should clean up the sides of the river to make sure the river has lots of clean water flow and to make sure nothing is harming the river.”*

## Winchelsea

*“I want to see a flowing river and healthy tributaries, with wide riparian zones of native vegetation, weed free, alive with fish, birds, platypus and insects.”*

*“We want a river that is in the best possible condition to respond to a changing climate.”*



## Meredith

*“Fauna surveys have found Brush Tailed Phascogales to occur within this area near the Moorabool River. The protection of native vegetation along the Moorabool River is important (especially of any large old trees) as these are important for habitat.”*

*(Regarding the Moorabool) “This section of the river is important for both recreational and environmental values. The river is used for paddling activities as well as environmental education projects. Powerful Owls, Phascogales, Sugar Gliders among others have been observed here along with numerous suspected platypus sightings.”*

## Geelong

*“I love going down to the Barwon River because it’s close to my house. I go down to the Barwon River twice a week to row. I’ve got a lot of friends down at the Barwon River, and I make friends when I’m rowing.”*

*“The Barwon River is a great place to ride my bike, walk my dogs and it’s a really peaceful place to go on runs.”*

*“I love the freeness of the bike trail along the Barwon River. I have ridden it lots of times and love it.”*


*“This place is such a great place to take your dog for a walk. It is also a great place to ride your bike or even go for a run. This place is filled with nice tall trees and a great walking track. I would really recommend going and visiting this great place.”*

## Barwon Heads

*“The estuary is a unique and diverse range of ecosystem services for both human enjoyment and biodiversity values. The species that are residents here rely on the system for part of their life cycle – which should be embraced and understood by all.”*

*“The Barwon River is clean, it’s running well and it has been maintained well with only a few sites of rubbish. It’s also a nice place to launch and drive a boat.”*

*“The riverbank in Barwon Heads is a great, nice and quiet place...for now. The growing population is a concern but at this point of time I can say that this place is a calm area to do your exercise, like riding bikes and walking. The river is a great place to go fishing although pollution is increasing a lot with a growing population.”*



After careful deliberation of input received from stakeholders and the community, we recommended legislative amendments to recognise the Barwon catchment as a living, natural entity in need of protection.

## Further commentary on other themes we heard

A summary of some of the more frequently mentioned topics that arose during consultation, which were of demonstrated interest to the community or may not have been within the scope of the Terms of Reference, are addressed briefly below.

### Legislative reform

We explored a range of legislative options to achieve these six objectives including the introduction of new place-based primary legislation similar to the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*. We determined that a new place-based primary legislation was not required, and instead an amending Act is an appropriate and cost-effective vehicle to achieve the legislative reform required in the Barwon catchment.

After careful deliberation of input received from stakeholders and the community, we recommended legislative amendments to recognise the Barwon catchment as a living, natural entity in need of protection. It is important that any legislative amendments include obligations to ensure the system's ecological integrity is protected, along with adequate resourcing for the organisations that undertake this work. We have identified in its recommendations six objectives to be achieved through both legislative and non-legislative reform (refer Recommendation 1.1).

An amending Act can make changes to multiple pieces of legislation simultaneously and can affect a few words or even entire sections of existing legislation. A recent example of this is the *Water and Catchment Legislation Amendment Act 2019*, which changed multiple pieces of legislation to provide greater recognition and involvement of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians in the management and planning of waterways and catchments.

## Governance

A range of governance models were explored to drive the implementation of Barwon MAC recommendations, including a centralised one-agency model and the establishment of a statutory voice for the river, similar to the Birrarung Council which was established to protect the Yarra River.

After considering all feedback received, we determined that a flexible governance model is required, which can be adapted over time to meet the challenges that arise. This governance model must also ensure strong accountabilities for the agencies that are tasked with protecting the Barwon catchment.

We recommended the establishment of a taskforce and a community reference group (refer Recommendation 2.3) to ensure clear accountabilities whilst still remaining flexible to adapt to future challenges. Together, these groups can champion the delivery of the Action Plan and integrate the 50-year community vision into decision-making in the Barwon catchment.

## Developments that impact on waterway health

With increasing urban and non-urban land use and development growth pressures, we identified a need to strengthen the links between land use planning and waterway management. We wish to acknowledge community concerns that were raised about a number of legacy issues that exist across the catchment including acid sulphate soils associated with the Barwon Downs borefield (see Boundary Creek remediation section below) and the impacts of historical goldmining on water quality in the upper catchment.

Whilst we did not specifically propose any recommendations for these place-based issues as it was outside our terms-of-reference, we instead proposed a suite of planning, governance and waterway health recommendations that will collectively ensure better management in the face of rapid urban growth pressures.

## Boundary Creek remediation

In mid-2016 a significant fish kill occurred in the Barwon catchment above Winchelsea, which was ultimately determined to be as a result of high acid levels in Boundary Creek below Big Swamp (Yeodene peat swamp). The source of the damage was identified as acid sulphate soils in the swamp, which had dried out from excessive groundwater pumping. During the Barwon MAC consultation process community members expressed serious concerns over the damage to Boundary Creek and the Barwon River caused by pumping from the Barwon Downs borefield. It should be noted that this issue was specifically excluded from the Barwon MAC Terms of Reference given that a process was already established for government to deal with the matter (refer Appendix 2 for a summary of the Barwon MAC Terms of Reference).

In 2017 Barwon Water declared its commitment to the remediation of Boundary Creek. Furthermore, Barwon Water advised that borefield pumping would cease until remediation was complete, and only recommence gradually and as a last resort. A Community Reference Group (CRG) was appointed to oversee the remediation process. The Minister for Water issued a notice under section 78 under the *Water Act 1989*, legally enforcing those declared intentions.

In December 2018 Barwon Water submitted a groundwater licence renewal application for the Barwon Downs borefield. In March 2019 Barwon water announced that it had withdrawn the groundwater licence application and that they would focus fully on remediation activities in Boundary Creek and Big Swamp to address impacts of historical groundwater extraction.

The CRG continued to monitor the remediation plan development prior to its submission to Southern Rural Water in December 2019. On 28 February 2020 the remediation plan was accepted by Southern Rural Water and implementation of the adaptive management approach outlined in the plan has commenced. The adaptive management approach includes provision of supplementary flows to Boundary Creek, increased monitoring of Boundary Creek, and supplemental investigations to assess if any surrounding areas have been adversely impacted by historical groundwater extraction.

## Water for the environment

We heard strong advocacy from the community for more water for the environment as well as more security for environmental water entitlements. The *Long-Term Water Resource Assessment for Southern Victoria: Overview Report Draft*<sup>5</sup> released for consultation in 2019 showed that there has been a decline in water availability in the Barwon catchment and that there has been a greater impact on environmental water flows than on other consumptive water uses.

A new Sustainable Water Strategy is currently being developed for the Central and Gippsland region, which includes the Barwon catchment. Sustainable Water Strategies are one of the key statutory processes for planning Victoria's water resources; they identify threats to the supply and quality of the state's water resources and find ways to increase the volume of water for the environment. The Barwon MAC recommended that this is the appropriate vehicle to look at the quantity and security of future environmental water entitlements for the Barwon catchment. Additionally, we also recommended that the new Sustainable Water Strategy considers a range of other water challenges that have been identified, including the impacts of stock and domestic dams on regional water security, and options to increase uptake of alternative water sources such as recycled water and stormwater.

## Little River

We wish to acknowledge the community members that expressed concern about the current health of Little River and a desire for more water flows to protect the environment. Given the scope of the Barwon MAC's Terms of Reference, which allowed for a total of three to four recommendations, we focused on catchment-wide opportunities for improved water security and waterway health outcomes rather than localised waterway health issues. In a future with less water and more people it will be vital that these institutional arrangements allocate our precious water resources where they are needed the most.

## Duck shooting

Some community members submitted comments on the social pinpoint interactive map expressing concern that duck shooting at Lake Connewarre State Game Reserve poses a safety risk and disturbs surrounding urban areas. We wish to acknowledge this feedback and we determined that this is a state-wide matter that is not unique to the Barwon catchment. As such there is no specific recommendation addressing their concerns about duck shooting but this feedback has been referred for consideration in the development of the Action Plan.

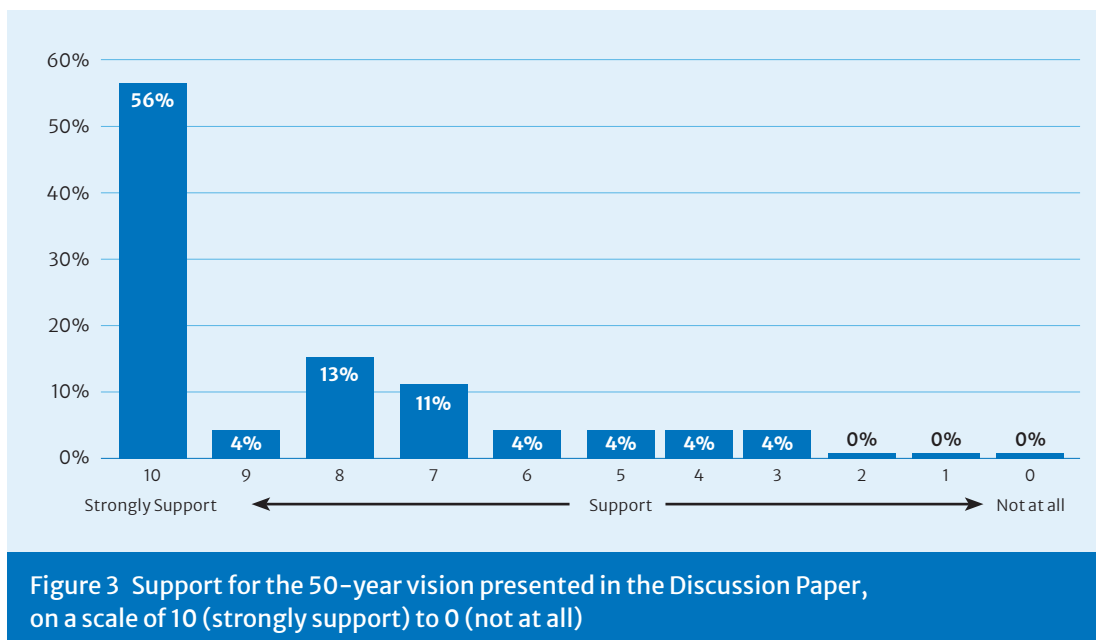


<sup>5</sup> *Long-Term Water Resource Assessment for Southern Victoria: Overview Report Draft*, State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2019.



# DEVELOPING A 50-YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

In accordance with our Terms of Reference we've developed a 50-year Community Vision which is a direct reflection of feedback from communities across the catchment. When the Community Vision was tested in the Discussion Paper, most survey respondents felt that the Community Vision addressed the things that mattered most to them (refer Figure 3 below). Following the input received from the Discussion Paper, we then consolidated the issues and distilled the key messages to refine the Community Vision, a copy of which is in our Recommendations Report.







# Appendix 1

## Written submissions received by the Barwon Ministerial Advisory Committee

We greatly appreciate the time and effort taken from all individuals, groups and organisations who prepared a written submission. We carefully considered all feedback received throughout the process when developing our recommendations. Some of these issues were able to be addressed within the recommendations, and some were determined to be out of scope with the Terms of Reference. Table 2 provides an explanation of the ways in which we addressed your feedback.

Additionally, some of the feedback and submissions could be used to inform other processes, such as the Action Plan and the next Sustainable Water Strategy. Submissions and feedback were assessed and directed to one or more of the following:

- Addressed through the Final Recommendations Report
- Referred for consideration in the next Sustainable Water Strategy
- Referred for consideration in Action Plan development
- Referred to relevant government agency.



**Table 2 List of written submissions received by the Barwon MAC**

Submission	Response from the Barwon MAC
<b>Corangamite Catchment Management Authority</b>	How we addressed your feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Two and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Sustainable Water Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Barwon Water</b>	How we addressed your feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Victorian Environmental Water Holder</b>	How we addressed your feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>National Trust of Australia (Vic)</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Barwon MAC noted that the National Trust holds data and information on landscape values within the region and would be happy to share information during the development of the Action Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Tract Consultants</b>	How we addressed your feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations One, Two, Three and Four</li> <li>• Submissions referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Friends of the Barwon &amp; Environmental Justice Australia</b>	How we addressed your feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations One, Two, Three and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Colac Otway Shire</b>	How we addressed your feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendation Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Balyang Consulting</b>	How we addressed your feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendation One</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Friends of Canadian Corridor</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Three and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Land and Water Resources Otway Catchment Landcare Group</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendation Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Sustainable Water Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Hugh Stewart Consulting</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Two and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Winchelsea Land and Rivercare</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support noted</li> </ul>

Submission	Response from the Barwon MAC
<b>City of Greater Geelong</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Two and Three</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Central Highlands Water</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Three and Four</li> <li>• Submissions referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Barwon Heads Association</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Three and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Sustainable Water Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Roads Victoria</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support noted</li> </ul>
<b>Dr Trevor J P Hodson</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Two and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Sustainable Water Strategy</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Jennifer Morrow</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Two, Three and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Nellie Shalley</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendation Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Sustainable Water Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Debra Chant</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Three and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Dr Marina Lewis</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations One, Two and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Roslyn Gibson</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed through Recommendations Two and Four</li> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Dr Nasser Kotb</b>	How we addressed your feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission referred for consideration in Action Plan development</li> </ul>

# Appendix 2

## Summary of Barwon River Ministerial Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

### ESTABLISHMENT OF MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Minister for Planning in accordance Section 151(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, with prior consultation with the Minister for Water establishes the Barwon River Ministerial Advisory Committee from the date of these Terms of Reference.

### FUNCTIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

The functions of the Committee are to:

- initially establish and sign off a process to develop a Community Vision and identify priority areas that require early technical assessment or have specific opportunities that require further investigation;
- produce a written discussion paper for public comment on the Key Issues and Opportunities;
- assist the Department in engaging with Traditional Owners, relevant agencies, councils, Members of the community and other partners and stakeholders on the discussion paper;
- following engagement and feedback from the release of the discussion paper, refine areas of interest within the catchments for future action;
- oversee the collation of evidence and data from relevant persons and organisations on the Key Issues and Opportunities, as needed, for the discussion paper and report to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Water; and
- provide to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Water a report with three to four key recommendations, and any other recommendations the MAC sees relevant to the Key Issues and Opportunities, to be considered in an Action Plan for the Barwon River Catchment. The Action Plan will be developed by the Department and will include a vision for the Barwon River, specific actions for the protection of the River and opportunities to improve the connection of the community to the Barwon River, in the immediate and longer term, and for the enhancement of community and Traditional Owner connection to the River;
- provide advice on any other matters the Minister for Planning, in prior consultation with the Minister for Water, requests in writing or that the Committee thinks fit to include;
- continue to engage with the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Water throughout the development of the government response.

## KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee is required to consider the following matters:

### Defining the Vision

- What is the community's vision for the Barwon River Catchment?

### Defining the Issues

- What are the current and emerging issues for the Barwon River Catchment that are impacting on its environmental, cultural, social and economic values?

### Institutional and regulatory arrangements

In relation to the statutory bodies with powers and functions affecting or relevant to the Barwon River Catchment:

- What are the existing powers and functions of these statutory bodies?
- Are they being used effectively to promote, protect and enhance the Barwon River Catchment?
- What opportunities are there to improve these powers and functions to address the issues for Barwon River Catchment?

What are the optimal institutional, legislative and regulatory arrangements to contribute to the management, promotion and protection of the Barwon River Catchment?

Are additional arrangements required to ensure that Traditional Owners and the community participate in management decisions? For example, preparation of accessible assessments of the achievement of the Community Vision.

### Land use planning and development

In relation to the referral of planning applications and strategic planning policy-

- Are the current functions and powers of referral authorities sufficient to address development pressures that affect the Barwon River Catchment, including consideration of land development controls, planning controls, building regulations and standards?
- Are there other matters of concern or other statutory bodies that should be included in the referral process?
- What other changes to land development or planning controls and standards would mitigate risk to the Barwon River Catchment and provide net benefits for the communities of the region?

Are there any interim planning arrangements that could be put in place?

### Broader opportunities

Are there additional opportunities to manage the current and emerging issues for the Barwon River Catchment that are impacting on its environmental, cultural, social and economic values?

What opportunities are there to improve connection to the Barwon River Catchment?

## General Recommendations

The Committee will provide three to four key recommendations to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Water that best address the key issues and opportunities with regard to the following:

- What planning response is required to support the values of the Barwon River Catchment?
- Which of the additional issues and opportunities are of greatest priority and, if addressed, would achieve the greatest net economic, social and environmental benefits for the community today and for future generations?
- What other strategies and measures are needed to protect current and future values and realise the benefits and opportunities for the Barwon River Catchment that can be achieved in a cost-effective manner?

## NOT IN SCOPE

The Committee is not required to include in the vision, discussion paper, undertake stakeholder consultation or prepare advice for the following issues or areas:

- the regulation of commercial boat operations, berths and related services;
- the regulation and promotion of on-water activities.

Matters that relate to the extraction of groundwater in the Gerangamete Groundwater Management Area may intersect with the considerations of the Barwon MAC. However, the Barwon River MAC will not duplicate work that is being undertaken as part of the processes underway for the renewal of the Barwon Downs groundwater licence or remediation of the Boundary Creek, Big Swamp and the surrounding environment.

Future water recovery in these priority systems may be required, especially from climate change, and this will be investigated through sustainable water strategies, which rely on evidence-based principles, priorities and community input. The Barwon MAC may provide recommendations that would be an input into this process.



## Cover artwork – Billy-Jay O’Toole

### My Country

*My Country* tells a story of our waterways and our rivers; the rivers that have many resources for Aboriginal people.

**Billy-Jay O’Toole** is a proud Wadawurrung boy, residing on Country in Torquay. Billy-Jay works for the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation, in the field of cultural heritage. He has a passion for art and says his biggest achievement was designing Geelong’s AFL Indigenous jumper in 2014–2015.



## Illustrations – Stephanie Skinner

**Stephanie Skinner** is a Wadawurrung digital artist and illustrator. For the Wadawurrung people, the rivers of the Barwon and their tributaries are places of special cultural and spiritual significance.

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