

# Action Status Report

July 2020

## WATER FOR VICTORIA

### Overall Action Status:

Work is underway on all 69 actions



**32** complete and now business as usual



**8** complete



**25** in progress



**4** in progress with revised timeframe



Complete and  
now business  
as usual



Complete



In progress



In progress with  
revised timeframe

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
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## Chapter 2: Climate change

<b>Action 2.1</b> 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
<b>Action 2.2</b> 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.	Ongoing
<b>Action 2.3</b> Lead climate change adaptation across Victoria's water system		The pilot Water Sector Climate Change Adaptation Plan was delivered in 2018, with 14 of its 20 actions now complete and the remainder underway.	End 2020

## Chapter 3: Waterway and catchment health

<b>Action 3.1</b> 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>	2021
<b>Action 3.2</b> 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.	–
<b>Action 3.3</b> Invest in integrated catchment management		<p>19 regional projects are being delivered to strengthen integrated catchment management and deliver actions from <i>Our Catchments, Our Communities</i>.</p> <p>Most of these projects are already complete, carrying stewardship legacy forward through continuing action of CMAs, sector partners and the community.</p>	2016 - 2020



Complete and  
now business  
as usual



Complete



In progress



In progress with  
revised timeframe

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Action 3.4</b> 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
<b>Action 3.5</b> Improve environmental water management in a changing climate		Investment has been made in environmental works for priority waterways and project work is underway. An additional \$17 million capital stimulus investment in environmental waterway works projects is also being undertaken in Northern Victoria.	Ongoing
<b>Action 3.6</b> 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
<b>Action 3.7</b> Ensure clear and transparent charging arrangements		Consultation with key stakeholders is underway.	2021
<b>Action 3.8</b> Support community partnerships and citizen science		Waterway citizen science programs continue to be supported across Victoria. The Angler Riparian Partnerships Program is now complete, with 56 angling clubs and community groups involved over four years, and 39 projects undertaken on 30 waterways.	Ongoing
<b>Action 3.9</b> Improve knowledge and information about waterways and catchments		Improvements to monitoring, evaluation and reporting programs have been implemented and a range of programs have been delivered, including the Riparian Intervention Monitoring Program (RIMP), Wetland Intervention Monitoring Program (WIMP), Native Fish Report Card, state-wide monitoring of benefits of water for the environment for rivers (VEFMAP) and wetlands (WetMAP), and state-wide Index of Estuary Condition. A waterway research hub was also established to support more coordinated strategic research and monitoring.	Ongoing





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#### Chapter 4: Water for agriculture

<b>Action 4.1</b> Supporting regional development and change		Water corporations are continuing to work with regional stakeholders to support regional development.	Ongoing
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<b>Action 4.2</b> Invest in rural water infrastructure		Investment principles have been embedded in decision making, with four irrigation modernisation and domestic and stock pipeline projects complete, and five projects currently underway throughout the state. An additional 12 feasibility studies have been completed, with two still underway, which may generate business cases for further government investment. Commonwealth co-investment in four new projects was secured in 2019 and 2020.	Ongoing
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<b>Action 4.3</b> Help irrigation districts adapt		Delivery share review is complete, with actions now being implemented. Rural water corporations are working with their irrigation communities to adapt through modernisation, reform and innovation projects, and continue to engage with customers and other key stakeholders to ensure irrigation districts remain affordable and attractive to new businesses.	Ongoing
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<b>Action 4.4</b> Reduce barriers to change and support communities in irrigation districts		Victoria's Sustainable Irrigation Program is being delivered in partnership with Catchment Management Authorities, Agriculture Victoria and the community, to assist irrigators through decision support, whole farm planning and a range of incentives and extension programs. A pilot project is also underway in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District to reduce barriers to change by establishing an Agricultural Redevelopment Coordinator to streamline irrigation redevelopment across the district.	2016–2020
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<b>Action 4.5</b> Improve water delivery efficiency in irrigation districts		Water savings protocol and independent technical review are in place as part of a robust process to verify water savings, while work in evaluating on-farm water use efficiency continues.	Ongoing
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<b>Action 4.6</b> Manage salinity, waterlogging and water quality		Salinity management and monitoring programs in irrigation and dryland areas are underway and ongoing.	Ongoing
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<b>Action: 4.7</b> Manage irrigation developments		The Mallee, Northern Victorian and Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines are being reviewed and updated, while Catchment Management Authorities are reviewing Land and Water Management Plans to ensure regional risks and offsite impacts of irrigation are managed.	2016–2020
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<b>Action 4.8</b> 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
<b>Action 4.9</b> 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. A total of 14 supply points are to be built or refurbished by early 2021.	2021
<b>Action 4.10</b> Develop a rural drainage strategy		Strategy finalised in late 2018 and implementation is now underway to improve infrastructure and management arrangements for rural drainage.	–
<b>Action 4.11</b> 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 works have been completed to achieve the targeted 429 GL long-term average annual water recovery.	Until completion
<b>Chapter 5 Resilient and liveable cities and towns</b>			
<b>Action 5.1</b> 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. A joint government and industry working group has reviewed, updated and consolidated the most widely used of Victoria's existing recycled water guidelines into a single, new proposed <i>Victorian Guideline for Water Recycling</i> . This work will streamline and clarify approval processes for recycled water schemes, to facilitate an increased uptake of recycled water where risk to the environment and human health is acceptable.	Ongoing
<b>Action 5.2</b> Better urban water planning to address key challenges		All urban water strategies released in 2017, including the Melbourne System Strategy.	–



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<b>Action 5.3</b> 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 been extended to 1,250 schools. A Water Efficiency Strategy promoting collaboration has been supported by all urban water corporations.	Ongoing
<b>Action 5.4</b> 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
<b>Action 5.5</b> Improve stormwater management for greener environments and healthier waterways		Victoria Planning Provisions have been amended to extend stormwater management requirements of most development types, and DELWP is exploring complementary opportunities through changes to the Building Code.	Ongoing
<b>Action 5.6</b> 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
<b>Action 5.7</b> 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
<b>Action 5.8</b> 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- government co-investment and progress of nearly 100 IWM projects, with another funding round currently open. Continued investment is being made in industry research, modelling and data analysis to support IWM outcomes and share learnings.	Ongoing



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## Chapter 6 Recognising and managing for Aboriginal values

<b>Action 6.1</b> Recognise Aboriginal values and objectives of water		Eight Traditional Owner groups have been supported 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
<b>Action 6.2</b> 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
<b>Action 6.3</b> Support Aboriginal access to water for economic development		Traditional Owner organisations are leading 10 projects that support economic development using water.	2016–2020
<b>Action 6.4</b> 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

## Chapter 7 Recognising recreational values

<b>Action 7.1</b> 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 have been incorporated into subordinate instruments where relevant. Support and guidance is being provided to water sector agencies as these changes take effect.	Ongoing
<b>Action 7.2</b> Help communities understand how to achieve their recreational objectives		Through the Boosting Recreational Water Use initiative, nine site-based projects have brought together water authorities, local councils and community groups to improve recreational access and experience at the Wimmera, Werribee, Barwon, Maribyrnong and Campaspe Rivers, Moonee Ponds Creek, Blue Rock, Eildon and Eppalock. Governance requirements and community engagement has been strengthened to ensure agencies continue to engage with recreational user groups and provide user friendly information.	Ongoing
<b>Action 7.3</b> 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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Complete



In progress



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## Chapter 8 Water entitlements and planning

<b>Action 8.1</b> 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
<b>Action 8.2</b> 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.	–
<b>Action 8.3</b> 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.	–
<b>Action 8.4</b> 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 (LTRWA) and Sustainable Water Strategies (SWS) will review risks to Victoria's water resources.	Ongoing
<b>Action 8.5</b> Ensure a modern compliance regime that works		Water corporations have finalised metering action plans and have adopted a consistent risk-based approach to managing compliance and enforcement, including regular compliance reporting.	Ongoing
<b>Action 8.6</b> Commence the long-term water resource assessment (LTWRA) process		LTWRA for southern Victoria was released in March 2020. Legislation has been amended to allow for the findings of a LTWRA to be considered through SWSs and to delay the LTWRA for Northern Victoria so that it can align with and inform the Basin Plan review in 2026.	Ongoing
<b>Action 8.7</b> 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
<b>Action 8.8</b> Align the sustainable water strategy (SWS) and long-term water resource assessment (LTWRA) processes		Legislation has been amended to align SWS and LTWRA processes.	–
<b>Action 8.9</b> 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





Complete and  
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Complete



In progress



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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Action 8.10</b> Provide clear information about water resources to the community		Annual water accounts released on a new online platform, and regular water resource reporting has been revised and improved.	Ongoing
<b>Action 8.11</b> 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 groundwater monitoring networks. Water resource assessment and modelling capabilities have been strengthened to improve understanding of water availability, use and climate change.	Ongoing

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

<b>Action 9.1</b> Develop a grid oversight function		A grid oversight function, the Water Grid Partnership, has been established and the first biennial statement on water resources status across the state was released in October 2018. Since then, further work has been completed to improve understanding of water availability, demand, risks, level of security and potential future grid augmentations.	Ongoing
<b>Action 9.2</b> 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
<b>Action 9.3</b> Improve the effectiveness of water markets		Report on market effectiveness completed and improvements to market oversight in progress. Annual audit of water broker performance using the Victorian Water Register Broker Portal.	Ongoing
<b>Action 9.4</b> Increase water market transparency and information sharing		Enhancements to the Victorian Water Register underway along with targeted communications for customers, including the release of the Water Market Watch app and the Where Can I Trade interactive map.	2017–2021
<b>Action 9.5</b> 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
<b>Action 9.6</b> 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
<b>Action 9.7</b> 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



Complete and  
now business  
as usual



Complete



In progress



In progress with  
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Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
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## Chapter 10 Jobs, economy and innovation

<b>Action 10.1</b> 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
<b>Action 10.2</b> 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
<b>Action 10.3</b> 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
<b>Action 10.4</b> 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
<b>Action 10.5</b> Provide third party access to existing infrastructure		Framework for third party access has been developed, which will enable other service providers to use existing infrastructure if required to achieve strategic objectives, such as augmenting water supply or treating wastewater.	Ongoing
<b>Action 10.6</b> Drive strong governance and performance		Ongoing engagement across the water sector has improved governance and clarified performance expectations against an outcomes framework.	Ongoing
<b>Action 10.7</b> Promote gender equity in the water sector		The water sector has developed 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
<b>Action 10.8</b> 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 commissioner of the VEWH and a significant increase in the number of Aboriginal Victorians appointed to water authority boards.	Ongoing



Complete and  
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as usual



Complete



In progress



In progress with  
revised timeframe

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
<b>Action 10.9</b> Support economic development through Aboriginal participation		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</b> Respond to the Royal Commission into Family Violence		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</b> Find ways to cut red tape		A review of administrative practices was undertaken and amendments have been made to relevant legislation. A project to improve and consolidate performance reporting for the sector is also underway.	Ongoing
<b>Action 10.12</b> Improve emergency management capability		<p>The capability and capacity of the water sector to prepare and respond to water related incidents has been significantly improved, through training and emergency exercises, as well as improved emergency management processes and systems.</p> <p>The web-based Water Intelligence Platform has been upgraded, with data on algal blooms, dam safety and other key water sector risks now readily available to key stakeholders for monitoring, analysis and reporting.</p>	Ongoing
<b>Action 10.13</b> Deliver <i>Water for Victoria</i>		Project Office and Project Control Board established. Water for Victoria progress updates continue to be published, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes are in place for all initiatives funded by the Environmental Contribution.	–

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