

Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy

Progress report on the implementation of actions



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.



© The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2019



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, the Victorian Government logo and the

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) logo. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

ISBN 978-1-76077-621-3 (pdf/online/MS word)

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136186, email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au or use the National Relay Service on 133 677 and at www.relayservice.com.au.

This document is also available on the internet at <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/planning-and-entitlements/sws>.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background.....	1
2. Approach	2
3. Progress report findings and next steps	3
3.1 Updates since the previous reporting.....	3
3.2 Actions achieved and completed.....	4
3.3 Actions achieved and ongoing.....	5
3.4 Actions being progressed through <i>Water for Victoria</i>	9
3.5 Actions partly or not yet achieved.....	10
4. What's next?	19
4.1 Future review of the Strategy.....	19

1. Introduction

This document describes the Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (GRSWS): Progress report on the implementation of actions (Progress report). It follows Recommendation 2 of the GRSWS five-yearly assessment report: for DELWP, in partnership with organisations responsible for implementing GRSWS actions, to develop an implementation plan for GRSWS actions. This Progress report aims to support and drive accountability for the implementation of actions and guide the 10-year statutory review of the Strategy, expected to start in 2021.

This Progress report updates actions status since the last reporting (2018). It considers *Water for Victoria* progress (Delivering *Water for Victoria* Progress report), and any additional progress in implementing the outstanding actions. Almost 81% of the 68 actions are now reported as achieved, with 13 outstanding actions (2 progressing through *Water for Victoria* and 11 partly or not yet achieved).

This report should be read in conjunction with the [GRSWS](#) and its five-yearly assessment report, available at: <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/planning-and-entitlements/sustainable-water-strategies>.

1.1 Background

The GRSWS was released in 2011. It included 15 policies and 68 actions to meet the region's water needs and to ensure sustainable management of the region's water resources for the next 50 years.

Water for Victoria released in 2016 required five-yearly assessments of the SWSs, beginning with the Gippsland Region and Western Region SWSs.

The five-yearly assessment of the GRSWS started in 2017 and was conducted by DELWP with consultation with key stakeholders involved in the developing and implementation of the Strategy. The assessment updated catchment inflow data, determined the status of each action, consolidated feedback about the process for development and implementation of the Strategy and made recommendations to support its 10-year statutory review, expected to start 2021. The report was released in October 2018.

Feedback from the five-yearly assessment process indicated that stakeholders supported the process to develop the Strategy as collaborative and well-communicated. However, they also mentioned that the process for implementation, and associated governance, was less transparent, which in some cases resulted in missed opportunities for engagement to deliver the best outcomes.

Recommendation 2 of the five-yearly assessment report is for DELWP, in partnership with organisations responsible for implementing GRSWS actions, to develop an implementation plan.

2. Approach

Progress on Sustainable Water Strategies actions are updated each year. A summary is provided in the DELWP Annual Report. The summary of actions on the DELWP SWS website is updated to correspond with the Annual Report.

This Progress report updates the status of each action considering the progress in *Water for Victoria* (Delivering *Water for Victoria* Progress report), and any additional progress in implementing the outstanding actions.

This report confirms that 55 of the 68 actions have been achieved (25 achieved and completed and 30 achieved and ongoing). Two actions are being progressed through *Water for Victoria* and 11 actions have been partly or not yet achieved.

A summary of the updated action status will be included in the 2019 DELWP Annual Report and the status and narratives for actions will be updated in the DELWP SWS website.

The approach used to assess actions varied according to the status of the action at the start of the process. A flowchart diagram (**Figure 1**) was used as a tool to make decisions on what was needed by each group of actions.

The updated status of the action presented in this Progress report was used to determine the starting point in the flowchart diagram explained below. For the achieved and ongoing actions, an approach to understand the likelihood that an ongoing action would be discontinued was included (see **Appendix A**).

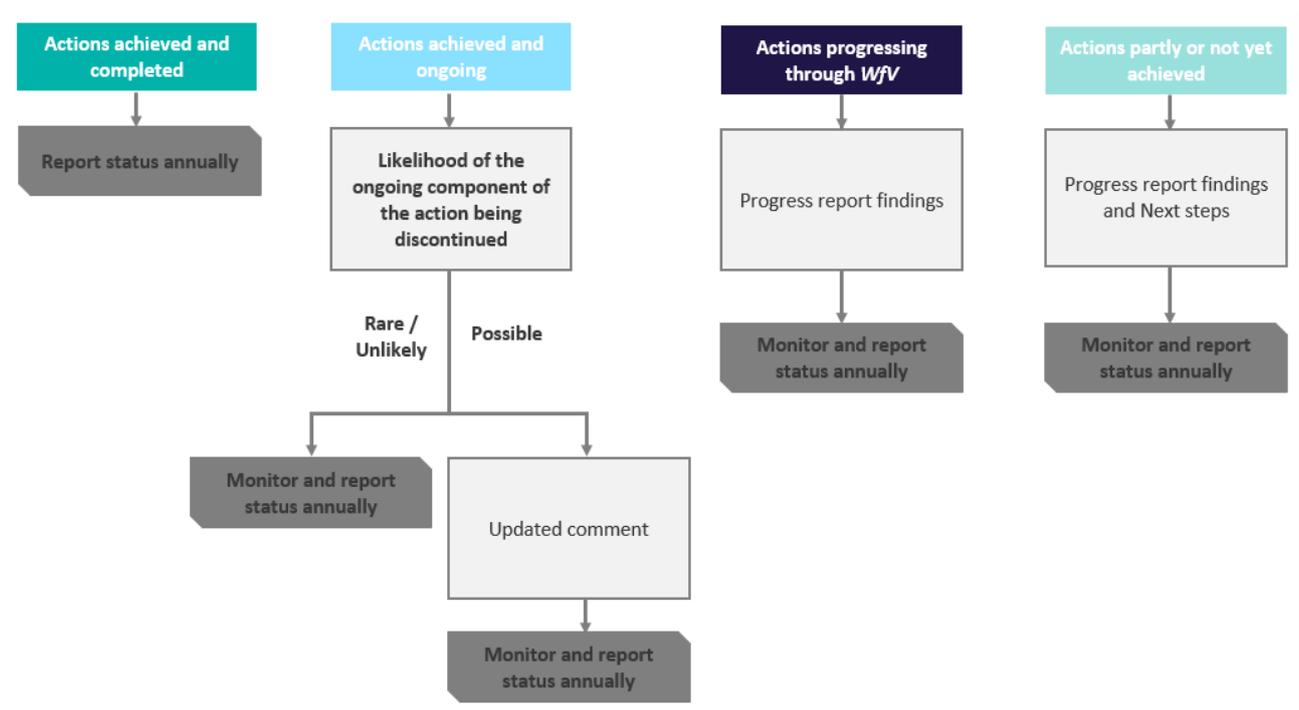


Figure 1: Flowchart diagram for assessing the GRSWS actions

The Progress report was developed by DELWP in collaboration with stakeholders and organisations responsible for delivering outstanding actions. Other organisations and stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the Strategy were kept informed and updated as the report progressed.

3. Progress report findings and next steps

3.1 Updates since the previous reporting

The GRSWS actions are classified as:

- **Achieved and completed:** the action has been completed in full
- **Achieved and ongoing:** the action has been achieved and the strategy's requirements have been met, but ongoing effort is needed to ensure the intended outcome of the action continues to be maintained
- **Being progressed through *Water for Victoria*:** part or all of the action is being undertaken, or is a priority, or its intent is being addressed, through *Water for Victoria*
- **Partly or not yet achieved:** the action has been partly achieved or has not yet been achieved

The five-yearly assessment reported actions status in 2018 (Figure 2).

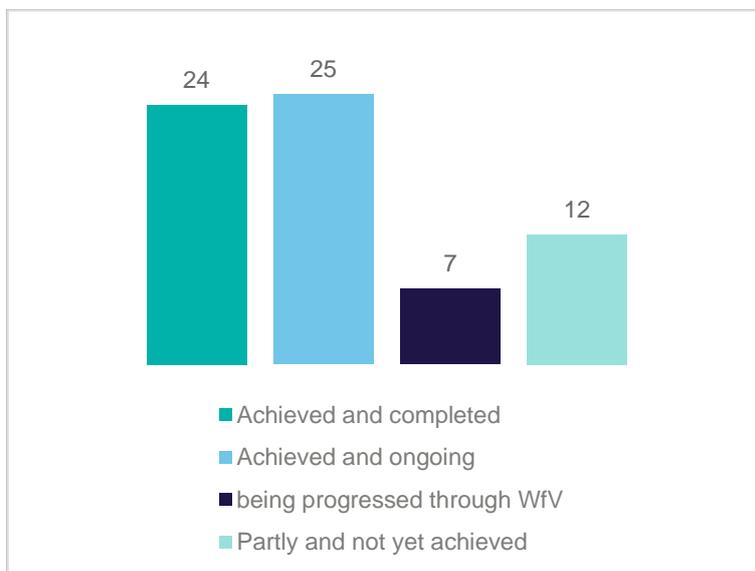


Figure 2: GRSWS actions status 2018

This Progress report updated the status of actions and Figure 3 presents a summary of the updated status, showing that 55 actions are now achieved and there are 13 outstanding actions. Further information about the action status is presented in sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

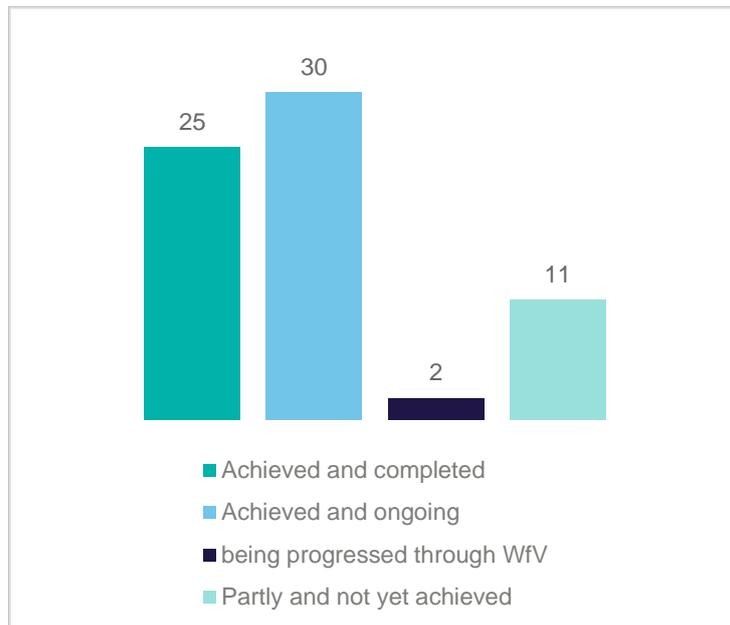


Figure 3: GRSWS actions status 2019

A table with the current status of all GRSWS actions can be found at <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/planning/sws/gipps>.

3.2 Actions achieved and completed

There were 24 GRSWS actions reported as achieved and completed in the five-yearly assessment report. Progress has been made since then, and this Progress report confirms **25** actions as achieved and completed. Table 1 presents the action that is now reported as achieved and completed.

Table 1: Updated GRSWS achieved and completed actions

Action #	Action	Five-yearly assessment status	Responsible organisations	Updated comment
4.3	Harvesting high flows	Progressing through <i>Water for Victoria</i>	DELWP, SRW, CMAs	<p>This action was to help explore more-adaptive water-extraction options through the extraction of high flows outside the winter-fill period (July – October).</p> <p>The five-yearly assessment linked this action to <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.3 Investigate increased flexibility for taking water under winter-fill licences. <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.3 is now reported as complete.</p> <p>The Water Plan represents the more recent consideration of this issue and the Progress report supports its findings: Investigation complete and concluded that it would be a highly unreliable source of water. Guidelines are proposed to permit high flow extraction on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>As a result, this action is now considered Achieved and complete.</p>

3.3 Actions achieved and ongoing

There were 25 GRSWS actions reported as achieved and ongoing in the five-yearly assessment report. Progress has been made since then, and this Progress report confirms **30** actions as achieved and ongoing. Table 2 presents the actions that are now reported as achieved and ongoing.

Table 2: Updated GRSWS achieved and ongoing actions

Action #	Action	Five-yearly assessment status	Responsible organisations	Updated comment
3.3	Staged release of unallocated water	Partly or not yet achieved	SRW	<p>This action is to provide more water to meet the needs of consumptive users in an environmentally sensitive manner. The staged release of unallocated water has been planned to give consumptive users greater access to the water in a manner informed by a better understanding of the sustainable yield of the relevant water system.</p> <p>Unallocated water is identified and there is a mechanism in place to staged release unallocated water. This occurs through the WaterBid platform (SRW), launched in 2015.</p> <p>As a result, this action is now considered Achieved and ongoing.</p>

Action #	Action	Five-yearly assessment status	Responsible organisations	Updated comment
3.16	Considering adverse impacts of existing oil and gas extractions	Partly or not yet achieved	Victorian Government	<p>This action is to enable the Victorian Government to request updates to environmental plans for offshore oil and gas extraction, if that extraction has significant impacts onshore. To date, there have been no new Environmental Plans submitted that would impact the Latrobe Aquifer. Opportunities to comment on environmental plans are ongoing.</p> <p>As a result, this action is now considered Achieved and ongoing.</p>
4.5	Encouraging fit-for-purpose use of alternative water supplies	Progressing through <i>Water for Victoria</i>	DELWP, UWCs, RWCs	<p>This action focus on exploring the use of fit-for-purpose alternative water supplies to provide benefits to communities and reduce demand on potable water supplies.</p> <p>Shortly after the GRSWS was published, water supply demand strategy guidelines to consider alternative water supply were published and such consideration continues to be a part of water corporations' most recent urban water strategies.</p> <p>Policies for the assessment and approval of local desalination systems and for brine disposal management were released in 2013.</p> <p>Stormwater allocation is being discussed across Victoria in integrated water management (IWM) forums.</p> <p>The Water Plan maintains the use of alternative water supplies to achieve secure water supplies as a priority.</p> <p>As a result, this action is now considered Achieved and ongoing.</p>

Action #	Action	Five-yearly assessment status	Responsible organisations	Updated comment
6.17	Maximising environmental benefits from investments made to manage the environmental impacts of coalmining on the Latrobe tributaries	Partly or not yet achieved	WGCMA	<p>This action intends to maximise environmental benefits from investments made to manage the environmental impacts of coalmining on the Latrobe tributaries. The lower reaches of the Morwell River, a tributary of the Latrobe River, and other waterways near the Latrobe Valley coal mines had been highly modified as a result of their proximity to the coal mines.</p> <p>The WGCMA recently approved the diversion of Sheepwash Creek which is a tributary of the Latrobe River. As part of the approved operation of the Loy Yang mine a portion of Sheepwash Creek and its catchment will be lost as mining progresses over the next few years. The loss of the waterway requires a diversion channel to be constructed to divert the remaining catchment around the mine workings. To manage the environmental impact of the diversion the mining operator contributed towards a LandCare program that is working with landholders to fence and revegetate nearby tributaries of the Latrobe River.</p> <p>As a result, this action is now considered Achieved and ongoing.</p>

Action #	Action	Five-yearly assessment status	Responsible organisations	Updated comment
7.6	Environmental flows for the Victorian reaches of the Snowy River, estuary and wetlands	Partly or not yet achieved	EGCMA, VEWH	<p>This action is to negotiate an environmental flow regime that benefits the Victorian reaches of the Snowy River, estuary and wetlands. The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage is responsible for planning environmental flow releases in the Snowy River. This action specified that the VEWH and East Gippsland CMA would inform the now disbanded Snowy Scientific Committee about the effects of environmental flow releases in Victoria. In 2018, the NSW Minister for Regional Water officially dissolved the scientific committee and appointed the Snowy Advisory Committee (SAC) to provide expert and community input to the design of environmental flows to the Snowy River and Snowy Mountain rivers. The committee brings together the local knowledge and expertise of people from Snowy River and Snowy Mountains communities and the NSW and Victorian governments. East Gippsland CMA is represented on the SAC and the VEWH attends SAC meetings as an observer.</p> <p>The Snowy Advisory Committee have endorsed the annual flow strategy for the Snowy River for 2019/20, noting that the current methodology for determining recommended flow regimes does not adequately address the needs of the lower river reaches and estuary. The committee has agreed to design a longer-term planning framework to consider flow regimes that will target objectives for the lower river reaches and estuary. East Gippsland CMA continues to evaluate the effects of flow releases on the lower river and estuary, to better understand the riverine system.</p> <p>As a result, this action is now considered Achieved and ongoing.</p>

This Progress report reinforces the importance to continue achievement of all ongoing actions. It applied an approach to understand the likelihood of discontinuity of ongoing actions (**Appendix A**). From the 30 achieved and ongoing actions:

- **8 actions** were classified as having a “rare” likelihood that the action would be discontinued, with the mechanism to deliver the action linked to a statutory requirement.
- **19 actions** were classified as having an “unlikely” likelihood that the action would be discontinued, with an established program and adequate funding in place to deliver the ongoing part of the action.
- **3 actions** were classified as having a “possible” likelihood that the action would be discontinued, with the action being delivered through projects with frequent renewal. Comments are included in Table 3 for the actions classified as having a “possible” likelihood to be discontinued.

Table 3: GRSWS achieved and ongoing actions classified as having a “possible” likelihood to be discontinued

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Comment
3.9	Establishing secure ongoing funding for future maintenance and renewal of the monitoring network	DELWP, SRW, environmental managers	<p>This ongoing action helps to ensure funding for maintaining and renewing Victoria’s monitoring network. A formal process was needed to determine an operating and maintenance program that shares costs on a beneficiary-pays basis. Costs are shared between DELWP (funded through the Environment Contribution Levy) and water corporations (funded through fees and charges approved through the Essential Services Commission’s pricing determination processes). For groundwater, monitoring costs are covered by a partnership of water corporations, CMAs and DELWP. For surface water monitoring, costs are covered by a partnership of water corporations, CMAs, local governments, the Bureau of Meteorology and DELWP. Funding for monitoring maybe be under pressure, with an ongoing issue relating to the need for more monitoring versus capacity to pay.</p> <p>Since 2011, approximately \$ 1,500,000 has been invested in the Gippsland region into improving asset condition and capacity to capture monitoring data (loggers and telemetry expansion and upgrades) and post flood recovery works and OH&S improvements. This has improved the reliability of the asset performance, introduced data logging and telemetry and reduced the overall cost of the monitoring in some systems.</p> <p>The Progress report supports ongoing funding for future maintenance and renewal of the monitoring network.</p> <p>Where gaps in the monitoring network are identified, this action supports inclusion of filling gaps as part of the network “renewal”.</p> <p>The forward works program is now submitted for consideration under routine budgetary processes</p>
5.1	Local management plans for the main river systems in South Gippsland	SRW, WGCMA	Existing operating arrangements were documented on the Southern Rural Water website.
6.1	Local management plans for unregulated river systems	SRW, WGCMA, EGCMA	Existing operating arrangements were documented on the Southern Rural Water website.

3.4 Actions being progressed through *Water for Victoria*

There were 7 GRSWS actions reported as being progressed through *Water for Victoria* in the five-yearly assessment report. Progress has been made since then, and 1 action is now reported as achieved and completed, 1 as achieved and ongoing, and 3 as partly or not yet achieved. This Progress report confirms that 2 actions are still progressing through *Water for Victoria*. Progress report findings are included (Table 4).

Table 4: Progress report findings for GRSWS actions progressing through *Water for Victoria*

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Progress report findings
3.6	Providing more security to section 51 take and use licence holders	Minister for Water, SRW, CMAs	This action is linked to <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.2, which is in progress with a revised timeframe. DELWP has commenced a desktop review of the merits of converting licences into water shares and other products. When <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.2 is reported as completed, the SWS reporting should update the action status incorporating <i>Water for Victoria</i> findings.
4.2	Improving opportunities for water trading in groundwater and unregulated river systems	DELWP, SRW, DJPR, CMAs	This action is linked to <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 9.7, which is in progress and expected to be completed in 2021. DELWP has commenced market effectiveness case studies for selected systems in order to better understand opportunities for improving trade in groundwater and unregulated systems across the state. SRW is working with DELWP on an aquifer-based management framework to enable trading over larger connected systems.

3.5 Actions partly or not yet achieved

There were 12 GRSWS actions reported as partly or not yet achieved in the five-yearly assessment report. This Progress report confirms that **11** actions are partly or not yet achieved. The GRSWS proposed actions to promote sustainable water management and manage plantation forestry water use. The achievement of a number of these actions required amendments to the *Water Act 1989*. The necessary amendments were proposed in the Water Bill 2014, but the Bill did not proceed.

The five-yearly assessment linked some SWS actions — actions 3.12 and 3.13 related to promoting sustainable water management and action 3.10 related to the management of intensive forestry industries — with *Water for Victoria* action 8.4 (part b) considering that it addresses similar issues, captures their intent and re-examines the most appropriate mechanism to progress that intent.

Water for Victoria action 8.4 is reported as complete and now business as usual, with DELWP Annual Water Accounts now reporting on significant uses of water.

It is acknowledged that the completion of the Water Plan action represents further progress on these actions but does not represent a full completion of the SWS actions. Therefore, these actions are now classified as partly or not yet achieved:

- Action 3.10 Amend the *Water Act 1989* so intensive management areas can be declared to control water intensive land use changes in these areas
- Action 3.12 Improving information about domestic and stock dams
- Action 3.13 Requiring property owners to register new domestic and stock bores

Progress report findings and next steps for the 11 partly or not yet achieved actions are proposed (Table 5).

Table 5: Progress report findings and next steps for GRSWS actions partly or not yet achieved

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Five-yearly assessment comment	Progress report Findings	Next steps	Timeframe
3.1	Balanced approach to allocating new water entitlements in unregulated catchment areas	DELWP, SRW, CMAs	This action is to provide an approach to managing unallocated water on unregulated rivers and streams, which balances the needs of consumptive users and the environment. The Victorian winter-fill Sustainable Diversion Limits have been updated and are applied when assessing applications for new surface water licences and transfers.	The Progress report considers that this action is progressing. The 2010 order applies to (PCV orders): Thomson, Latrobe, Bunyip, Yarra, Maribyrnong, Werribee, Moorabool, Barwon, Otway Coast River Basins	DELWP plans to update the 2010 PCV Surface Water Order.	December 2019
5.2	Revised cap on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill (July to October) diversions in South Gippsland's catchments	DELWP, SRW, CMAs	This action is to revise the caps on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill diversions in South Gippsland's catchments. The winter-fill sustainable diversion limits were amended to account for reduced volumes of additional available water. Rural water corporations are managing the revised SDLs. The PCV Surface Water Order 2010 will be updated to reflect these changes. The amount of water available for new entitlements in South Gippsland's catchments is to be reviewed as part of the GRSWS review process.	The Progress report considers that this action is progressing. The 2010 order applies to (PCV orders): Thomson, Latrobe, Bunyip, Yarra, Maribyrnong, Werribee, Moorabool, Barwon, Otway Coast River Basins	DELWP plans to update the 2010 PCV Surface Water Order.	December 2019

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Five-yearly assessment comment	Progress report Findings	Next steps	Timeframe
6.2	Revised cap on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill (July to October) diversions in the Mitchell and Tambo catchments	DELWP, SRW, EGCMA	This action is to revise the caps on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill diversions in the Mitchell and Tambo catchments. The winter-fill sustainable diversion limits (SDLs) were amended to account for reduced volumes of additional available water. Rural water corporations are managing to the revised SDLs. The PCV Surface Water Order 2010 will be updated to reflect these changes. The amount of water available for new entitlements in the Mitchell and Tambo catchments is to be reviewed as part of the GRSWS review process.	The Progress report considers that this action is progressing. The 2010 order applies to (PCV orders): Thomson, Latrobe, Bunyip, Yarra, Maribyrnong, Werribee, Moorabool, Barwon, Otway Coast River Basins	DELWP plans to update the 2010 PCV Surface Water Order.	December 2019
7.2	Revised cap on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill (July to October) diversions in Far East Gippsland's catchments	DELWP, SRW, EGCMA	This action is to revise the caps on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill (July– October) diversions in the far East Gippsland catchments. The winter-fill sustainable diversion limits (SDLs) were amended to account for reduced volumes of additional available water. Rural water corporations are managing to the revised SDLs. The PCV Surface Water Order 2010 will be updated to reflect these changes.	The Progress report considers that this action is progressing. The 2010 order applies to (PCV orders): Thomson, Latrobe, Bunyip, Yarra, Maribyrnong, Werribee, Moorabool, Barwon, Otway Coast River Basins	DELWP plans to update the 2010 PCV Surface Water Order.	December 2019

3.10	Amend the <i>Water Act 1989</i> so intensive management areas can be declared to control water intensive land use changes in these areas	DELWP	<p>This action focused on amending the <i>Water Act 1989</i> to enable the Minister for Water to declare and manage an area according to the process explained in the GRSWS. To better manage the impact of land use change on water resources, the GRSWS proposed a process to declare intensive management areas, based on the intensity of water stress, the significance of water-dependent values and the potential for land use changes to affect these values. Intensive management areas would have specific rules and management actions to ensure the integrity of high-value water systems are maintained. Amendments to the Act to declare intensive management areas were proposed in the Water Bill 2014, but the Bill did not proceed through parliament. <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.4 continues to recognise the importance of water-intensive land use changes and proposes an approach to gain better information about the impacts of changes in land use on water resources. This work will inform the review of the GRSWS about the risks to water resources and whether action is required to mitigate them.</p>	<p>Drivers for large-scale forestry have changed since 2011. In the 10 years prior to the development of the SWS, the area of commercial hardwood plantations in Victoria doubled. Since then, the Victorian ‘State of the forests’ five yearly report (2018) confirms that plantation areas have gradually decreased. No new plantation areas have been established since the 2012-13 financial year.</p> <p><i>Water for Victoria</i> recognises that large-scale changes in land use could affect water availability by intercepting water that would otherwise reach streams and aquifers. This can affect the water resource, entitlement holders and the environment. It changed the focus the SWS proposed and focused on better recording and reporting of emerging significant uses of water. For commercial plantation forestry, this reflected the reduced development compared to that expected when the Strategy was developed.</p> <p>However, there is a recent interest in expanding plantation forestry for production purposes and for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions. The Victorian Government pledged \$110 million in the 2017-18 budget to assist with plantation development in the Latrobe Valley, with the first areas to be planted in 2019. In 2018, the Australian Government announced funding of \$20 million between 2018 and 2022, to underpin growth in Australia’s renewable timber and wood-fibre industry. South West Victoria was chosen as one of the four pilot Regional Forestry Hubs. The Commonwealth also offers financial support for a number of activities that seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the Climate Solutions Fund. Some</p>	DELWP will revisit the state-wide approach to manage the impact of plantations on water availability, update the information and incorporate changes in circumstances since the Strategy was released, such as the shift in drivers influencing land use change, as well as other relevant plans and policies.	June 2021
------	--	-------	--	---	--	-----------

commercial plantations, revegetation and farm forestry activities may be eligible.

The Progress report highlights the importance to have a process in place to manage adverse water resources impacts from land use change.

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Five-yearly assessment comment	Progress report Findings	Next steps	Timeframe
3.11	Statewide recording of water use by land use changes	DELWP	<p>This action is to improve understanding about the impact of land use changes on water use and the capability to estimate and report on these interactions. New technologies (such as satellite imagery and remote-sensing) are improving our understanding of how changes in land use affect water resources, and the importance of this understanding is increasingly recognised. In 2011–12, the National Water Commission funded the (then) Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to prepare the groundwork to regularly estimate and report on water use by land use. This work included estimates of evapotranspiration, which is a key water use in vegetated landscapes. DSE contracted consultants to provide the tools and guidance to make evapotranspiration estimates, and they are now made annually using Victorian Land Use Information System land use data. However, water use estimates are only reported at a whole-of-basin scale, and they are not broken down by land use category or land use change. DELWP is now working to report water use by basin and land use category in future Victorian Water Accounts.</p>	<p>While land use and vegetation cover will influence evapotranspiration, climatic conditions have a larger impact on changes in evapotranspiration.</p> <p>Given this, the estimates of evapotranspiration in the Victorian Water Accounts will continue to use climatic information as the basis for annual reporting of evapotranspiration.</p> <p>Since 2011, drivers for land use change across Victoria, particularly relating to the development of plantation forestry, have changed. Plantation areas across Victoria have been generally steady for the past decade.</p> <p>Changes in land use will be tracked using available information, such as the 5-yearly State of the Forests report, which reports the area of plantation forest across the State.</p> <p>Estimates of evapotranspiration will incorporate land use changes on a 10-yearly basis. This timing aligns with the commitment to review the net take from plantation forestry in Victoria's WRPs under the Basin Plan. More frequent updates may be undertaken if significant land use changes are identified in the intervening period.</p>	<p>DELWP to estimate evapotranspiration in the Victorian Water Accounts based on annual climatic conditions. Land use changes will be incorporated periodically, to align with other reporting obligations, such as the 10-year review of the Basin Plan.</p>	<p>Annually for climatic conditions, and periodically for changes in land use.</p>

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Five-yearly assessment comment	Progress report Findings	Next steps	Timeframe
3.12	Improving information about domestic and stock dams	Minister for Water, DELWP, SRW	<p>This action was to improve knowledge of farm dams to enhance understanding of overall water harvesting within a catchment. The Water Bill 2014 proposed amendments to do this, but it did not proceed through parliament. Regulations requiring registration of new and modified farm dams in rural residential areas were revoked in 2017 after a review found they did not achieve their purpose and were an unreasonable burden on dam owners. <i>Water for Victoria</i> commits to recording and reporting on all emerging, significant uses of water including investigating a reasonable-use limit for domestic and stock rights under Section 8 of the Water Act. This should improve monitoring and reporting on the use of these rights and effects on other water users and the environment through the Victorian Water Accounts.</p> <p><i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.4 maintains this as a priority.</p>	<p><i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.4 Better record and report on emerging significant uses of water (a) reinforced the importance to investigate the need to introduce reasonable use limit for domestic and stock rights under section 8 of the <i>Water Act 1989</i>.</p>	<p>The need to increase the information on domestic and stock dams and bores and ways to do this will be reassessed in consideration of the reasonable use for domestic and stock. DELWP will consult with stakeholders and community about options to progress this action.</p>	June 2020

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Five-yearly assessment comment	Progress report Findings	Next steps	Timeframe
3.13	Requiring property owners to register new domestic and stock bores	Minister for Water, DELWP, SRW	<p>This action was to improve knowledge about the use of bores for stock and domestic purposes. The Water Bill 2014 proposed amendments to do this, but it did not proceed through parliament. <i>Water for Victoria</i> commits to improved monitoring and reporting on significant uses of water through the Victorian Water Accounts.</p> <p><i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.4 maintains this as a priority.</p>	<p><i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.4 Better record and report on emerging significant uses of water (a) reinforced the importance to investigate the need to introduce reasonable use limit for domestic and stock rights under section 8 of the <i>Water Act 1989</i>.</p> <p>The Progress report reinforces that registering domestic and stock bores is important for improving accountability for the volume of water taken for domestic and stock purposes and important for an equity perspective (fairness in access to water resources).</p>	The need to increase the information on domestic and stock dams and bores and ways to do this will be reassessed in consideration of the reasonable use for domestic and stock. DELWP will consult with stakeholders and community about options to progress this action.	
3.17	Consistent groundwater licensing requirements for new quarries and mines	DELWP	<p>This action requires the Victorian Government to review the licensing requirements under the <i>Water Act 1989</i> for mines and quarries and take steps to ensure they are applied consistently across Victoria. Amendments to achieve the action were proposed in the Water Bill 2014, but the Bill did not proceed through parliament. This issue will continue to be pursued as part of future amendments to the <i>Water Act 1989</i>.</p>	The Progress report confirms that this action is progressing.	<p>Continue progressing this action.</p> <p>This issue will continue to be pursued as part of future amendments to the <i>Water Act 1989</i>.</p>	June 2021
4.4	Streamlining the approval of section 67 storage construction licences	Minister for Water, DELWP, SRW, CMAs	<p>This action is to provide guidance and clarity for section 67 storage construction licence applicants and assessing authorities. At the time the GRSWS was published, applicants for section 67 works licences had to undertake various investigations and environmental assessments, which were often burdensome. DELWP is currently progressing options for providing improved guidance to RWCs about the assessment required for licence applications and to improve the application process.</p>	The Progress report confirms that this action is progressing.	DELWP will publish guidance to RWCs about the assessment required for licence applications and to improve the application process.	September 2019

Action #	Action	Lead agency	Five-yearly assessment comment	Progress report Findings	Next steps	Timeframe
6.10	Opportunity for additional access to water in Blue Rock Reservoir for irrigators	SRW	This action was to make additional entitlement available for irrigators in the regulated Latrobe system, supplied by an additional 1% (about 800 ML) share of Blue Rock Reservoir, but it has not yet been achieved. Southern Rural Water and DELWP are continuing to work to achieve the action.	<p>The Progress report confirms that this action is progressing.</p> <p>This action was to enable additional permanent entitlement, corresponding to a 1% inflow share to Blue Rock Reservoir, to be made available for purchase by irrigators in the lower Latrobe River. SRW and DELWP are currently working together to achieve the action.</p>	Investigations are currently being undertaken by SRW and DELWP to determine the volume the 1% inflow share corresponds to and how it can be made available for purchase by irrigators. This work will inform the next steps.	June 2021

4. What's next?

DELWP will continue monitoring the actions and reporting annually the updated status of the actions in its Annual Report and in the DELWP SWS website.

This Progress report will guide future monitoring and reporting on the GRSWS actions.

4.1 Future review of the Strategy

The 10-year statutory review of the Strategy is supposed to start in 2021. It will be informed by the Long-term water resource assessment due in 2019.

The 10-year statutory review of the Strategy could be brought forward depending on the Long-term water resources assessment findings, which can also trigger SWS reviews.

The review of the Strategy will revisit the outstanding actions to consider if the actions are still appropriate and relevant and discuss the need to amend or discontinue actions. The review of the Strategy comprises a similar process to the making of a SWS, including the appointment of a consultative committee to provide strategic guidance and advice about the process and community consultation on a draft report.

Table 6: What the review of the GRSWS is expected to deliver (according to the GRSWS)

Action #	What the review of the Strategy is expected to deliver
Action 3.1 Balanced approach to allocating new water entitlements in unregulated catchment areas	Review the precautionary caps taking into account an assessment of demand when this Strategy is reviewed in 10 years. If demand exceeds a cap before this review, a change in the cap would be considered where detailed assessment of the resource demonstrates a low risk to existing users and the environment.
Action 3.14 Monitoring and tracking water use outside the entitlement framework	This information will be used to inform the review of this Strategy in 10 years, which will assess the need for more active management of water use outside the entitlement framework.
Action 5.2 Revised cap on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill (July to October) diversions in South Gippsland's catchments	The amounts of water available for new entitlements in South Gippsland will be assessed as part of the Strategy review in 10 years. Unallocated water in the Tambo River catchment: volumes to be evaluated again in 10 years as part of the Strategy review.
Action 6.2 Revised cap on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill (July to October) diversions in the Mitchell and Tambo catchments	The amounts of water available for new entitlements in the Mitchell and Tambo catchments will be reviewed as part of the Strategy review in the next 10 years.
Action 6.3 Establishing a drought reserve in Blue Rock Reservoir	The review of the drought reserve in 10 years provides an opportunity to reconsider the reliability of inflows over that period and any new information about climate or changes in water needs in the Latrobe Valley. The drought reserve will be reviewed as part of the Strategy review in 10 years. Policy 6.2 Principles for determining the terms and conditions of access to the drought reserve: these principles will be evaluated as part of the Strategy review in 10 years.
Action 6.4 Improved recreational opportunities on Lake Narracan	In addition to Southern Rural Water's annual process for determining the operation of Lake Narracan, these arrangements will be reviewed when the drought reserve arrangements are reviewed in 10 years. Consumptive users maintain their rights to harvesting water from the Latrobe system, and the arrangements described in this Strategy do not provide any rights to recreational users of Lake Narracan, or any longer-term certainty beyond the 10 year period. The effectiveness of environmental water management in delivering environmental outcomes, including an analysis of the potential need for more environmental flows or more investment in on-ground works, will be

Action #	What the review of the Strategy is expected to deliver
	evaluated as part of the Strategy review in 10 years. This review will consider the likely costs and benefits of recovering more water for the environment or investing in more on-ground works.
Action 6.20 Managing the Gippsland Lakes	<p>Reviewing the priority areas for freshwater based on any improved knowledge and understanding when the strategy is reviewed in 10 years.</p> <p>Freshwater needs of the lower Latrobe wetlands: the effectiveness of water commitments to meeting the needs of the Latrobe estuary and fringing wetlands will be evaluated in the Strategy review in 10 years.</p>
Action 7.2 Revised cap on the amount of unallocated surface water available for winter-fill (July to October) diversions in Far East Gippsland's catchments	The amounts of water available for new entitlements in Far East Gippsland will be reviewed as part of the Strategy review in 10 years.

Appendix A Approach for assessing achieved and ongoing actions

The continued achievement of ongoing actions is an important component of the Strategy implementation. Where an action is dependent on the ongoing component to give full effect to the action, maintaining the ongoing action is an important part of its completion. For example, actions that are completed, such as establishing a monitoring network, may require ongoing funding to undertake monitoring for the full effect of the action to be achieved. Likewise, where guidance is developed, the regular review and updating of the guidance contributes to its ongoing effectiveness.

In assessing the ongoing actions, it was important to understand the likelihood that an ongoing action would be discontinued. The likelihood of the ongoing component of the action being discontinued was ranked as “rare”, “unlikely” or “possible” (Table A1). The criteria used was:

- If the mechanism to deliver the action is linked to a statutory requirement, the likelihood the action would be discontinued was classified as “**rare**”.
- If an established program and adequate ongoing funding are in place to deliver the action, the likelihood the action would be discontinued was classified as “**unlikely**”.
- If the ongoing part of the action did not have clear funding, delivery method or was part of a project that required frequent renewal, the likelihood the action would be discontinued was classified as “**possible**”.

Additional narrative was included in Table 3 for all actions classified as “possible”. These actions will be revisited annually as part of the update of actions included in DELWP Annual Report and DELWP SWS website.

Table A1: Assessment of likelihood of discontinuity of GRSWS ongoing actions

# GRSWS Action	GRSWS Action name	Mechanism to deliver the action	Likelihood approach	Likelihood category
3.2	Strategic groundwater resource assessments	Government supports ongoing strategic groundwater resource assessments, <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.11 Improve water resource information to support planning and decisions. Current programs include assessment of groundwater resources, data stocktake/inventory, data gaps research, Statewide groundwater and climate studies, Statewide groundwater and surface water interaction studies.	Statutory requirement: Section 22(1)(a) of the <i>Water Act 1989</i> / Agreements in place to continue state wide surface water and groundwater monitoring networks.	Rare
3.3	Staged release of unallocated water	WaterBid platform.	Platform in place to continue delivery of the action.	Unlikely
3.7	Improving information-sharing about climate variability and risks	Government supports ongoing water and climate research. <i>Water for Victoria</i> actions 2.2 and 2.3, DELWP current programs on climate change, and links available on DELWP website.	Government supporting program (Victoria's Climate Change Framework).	Unlikely
3.9	Establishing secure ongoing funding for future maintenance and renewal of the monitoring network	Government established a partnership model for funding monitoring, reflecting a "user pays" principle. The forward works program is now submitted for consideration under routine budgetary processes.	Supported by government with a partnership arrangement but no program in place.	Possible
3.14	Monitoring and tracking water use outside the entitlement framework	Government supports ongoing monitoring and reporting on water use outside the entitlement framework. <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 8.4 reported as complete and now BAU. Annual Water Accounts report on significant uses of water. Victorian Water Register has information on water-use licences and works licence.	DELWP continuous water assessment program and publication of information on the availability and use of water by publishing the annual Victorian Water Accounts.	Unlikely
3.16	Considering adverse impacts of existing oil and gas extractions	New environmental plans are referred to the Victorian Government for comment. To date, there have been no new Environmental Plans submitted that would impact the Latrobe Aquifer. DELWP is confirming the notification process for off-shore EP development so that ongoing opportunities to comment can be taken.	Procedures in place to continue delivery of the action.	Unlikely

# GRSWS Action	GRSWS Action name	Mechanism to deliver the action	Likelihood approach	Likelihood category
3.19	Emerging technologies	There are regulatory and administrative procedures in place to ensure that emerging technologies appropriately consider impacts on groundwater.	Procedures in place to continue delivery of the action.	Unlikely
3.20	Considering water impacts when undertaking planned burning and other bushfire control measures	Consideration of risks to water quality and quantity on planned burns / Joint Fuel Management Program / Integrated Forest Ecosystem Research Program.	Government supported program - high level commitment to continue to update guidance for planned burns and fire management. Internal guidance for planning and conducting planned burns.	Unlikely
4.1	Promoting water conservation and efficiency	Government supports water efficiency programs. <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 5.3 reported as in progress. Water conservation and efficiency measures part of the Urban Water Strategies and the development of reasonable domestic and domestic stock use guideline.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> / Government supporting program ('Target your water use' Program).	Unlikely
4.5	Encouraging fit-for-purpose use of alternative water supplies	Urban water strategies and integrated water management forums.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> and IWM Program.	Unlikely
4.6	Extending the reticulated supply network	Principles embedded in decision making. <i>Water for Victoria</i> actions 4.1 and 4.2 reported as complete and now BAU. According to the <i>Water Industry Act 1994</i> , the Minister for Water may make and issue statements of obligations to water corporations. The Statement of Obligation 2010 requires water corporations to develop Urban Water Strategies and consider options and trigger points for augmentations. The Victoria's Water GRID Partnership also identify options and triggers for augmentations.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> / Government supporting program (Water GRID Partnership).	Unlikely
4.7	Promoting sustainable water management on dryland farms	Agriculture Victoria continue to publish guidance in their website: http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/soil-and-water/water/farm-water-solutions , including an Online Farm Water Calculator platform.	Government supporting platform to keep farmers informed.	Unlikely
4.10	Facilitating integrated water planning	IWM Forums and plans. <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 5.8.	Program based delivery. Government supporting program (IWM Framework for Victoria).	Unlikely

# GRSWS Action	GRSWS Action name	Mechanism to deliver the action	Likelihood approach	Likelihood category
4.11	Identifying water-dependent sites of cultural importance	Whole of Country Plans, West Gippsland Waterway Strategy 2014-2022 and the East Gippsland Waterway Strategy 2014-2022. <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 6.1 reported as in progress.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> / Government supporting program (Aboriginal Water Program).	Unlikely
4.12	Indigenous involvement in water management	Government supports through <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 6.4 - reported as in progress.	Government supporting program (Aboriginal Water Program).	Unlikely
4.13	Better coordination of regional Indigenous reference groups	Government supports through <i>Water for Victoria</i> action 6.2 - reported as in progress.	Government supporting program (Aboriginal Water Program).	Unlikely
4.14	Using consumptive water en route	The VEWH annual seasonal watering plan consider alternative water supply options such as use of consumptive water en route or augmenting natural flows in the criteria for prioritising environmental watering actions.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> .	Rare
4.15	Managing riparian land	Regional waterway management strategies (2014 to 2022), Regional Riparian Action Plan (2015-16 to 2019-20), and Victorian Waterway Management Strategy (until 2021).	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> .	Rare
4.16	Changing environmental management objectives	The first LTWRA has commenced in August 2018 and is due in 2019. LTWRA can trigger SWSs reviews.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> .	Rare
5.1	Local management plans for the main river systems in South Gippsland	Guidelines for preparing LMPs (2014). LMPs developed for all surface water systems listed in the GRSWS. Groundwater catchment statements developed for each groundwater catchment listed in the GRSWS, summarising the statutory management plans and local management plans within each catchment.	Supported by government but no program in place.	Possible
5.4	Protecting and improving the condition of South Gippsland inlets and estuaries through a continued focus on catchment management	West Gippsland Regional Waterway Strategy (2014 to 2022) and the Corner Inlet Water Quality Improvement Plan 2013, Powlett River Estuary Management Plan, SEPP.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> .	Rare
6.1	Local management plans for unregulated river systems	Ministerial guidelines were released for new and to amend existing local management plans. LMPs developed for all surface water systems listed in the GRSWS.	Supported by government but no program in place.	Possible

# GRSWS Action	GRSWS Action name	Mechanism to deliver the action	Likelihood approach	Likelihood category
6.13	Promoting sustainable irrigation	Government commitment through the Sustainable Irrigation Program. Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan.	Government supporting program (Sustainable Irrigation Program).	Unlikely
6.16	Managing the new environmental entitlement for the Latrobe River	The VEWH's annual seasonal watering plan, West Gippsland CMA's seasonal watering proposal and updated flows study to inform future environmental flows in the system. West Gippsland Waterway Strategy and Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan.	Part is statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> and other parts not (update flow studies - project based).	Unlikely
6.17	Maximising environmental benefits from investments made to manage the environmental impacts of coalmining on the Latrobe tributaries	WGCMA approvals of diversions.	Mechanisms in place to continue delivery of the action.	Unlikely
6.20	Managing the Gippsland Lakes	CMAs regional catchment strategies and waterway strategies, Victorian Water Accounts data, VEFMAP program, Local Management Plans. Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan and Gippsland Lakes Priorities Plan.	Part is statutory requirement: <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> , <i>Water Act 1989</i> and other parts not (VEFMAP program, Local Management Plans).	Unlikely
6.21	Providing water to the fringing wetlands of the lower Latrobe River	West Gippsland Waterway Strategy 2014-2022 and the VEWH's annual seasonal watering plans. Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan and Gippsland Lakes Priorities Plan.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> .	Rare
7.4	Protecting Far East Gippsland's high-value rivers through a continued focus on catchment management	East Gippsland Waterway Strategy 2014-2022 and the East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy 2013– 2019.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> .	Rare
7.5	Greater transparency in environmental water accounts and reporting for the Snowy River	Victorian Water Accounts, Victorian Water Register and VEWH reports.	Statutory requirement: <i>Water Act 1989</i> .	Rare
7.6	Environmental flows for the Victorian reaches of the Snowy River, estuary and wetlands	Snowy Advisory Committee in place and annual flow strategies developed for the Snowy River.	Mechanisms in place to continue delivery of the action.	Unlikely