

# Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy 2024–25 Progress Report

## Introduction

This is a progress report on implementation of the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (CGRSWS). It has been compiled to reflect progress as of 30 June 2025. Actions have been classified in the following categories, where red requires attention:

- **Behind schedule:** this action requires attention
- **Not yet started: Planned for future delivery:** work on this action is due to be delivered in future years
- **Started:** collaboration or a scope of work has commenced
- **Partially achieved:** the action has been partially achieved and still has remaining tasks to complete
- **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
- **Achieved and completed:** the action has been completed in full
- **Adaptively managed:** the action's implementation is ongoing and adjusted in response to new information and changes in context.

## Summary of progress

This report includes progress on all actions and on the water recovery policies in Chapter 8 of the CGRSWS. Detailed comments on each action can be found below in Table 1.

- The achievement status of these actions and policies are visualised in Figure 1.
- 98 of 111 actions and policies have either been achieved, partially achieved, or started.
- 32 actions have been achieved (12 completed and 20 ongoing).
- There are 13 actions and policies that have not yet started and are planned for future delivery.
- There are 7 actions that have started, are behind schedule but still progressing.
- 3 actions are being adaptively managed.

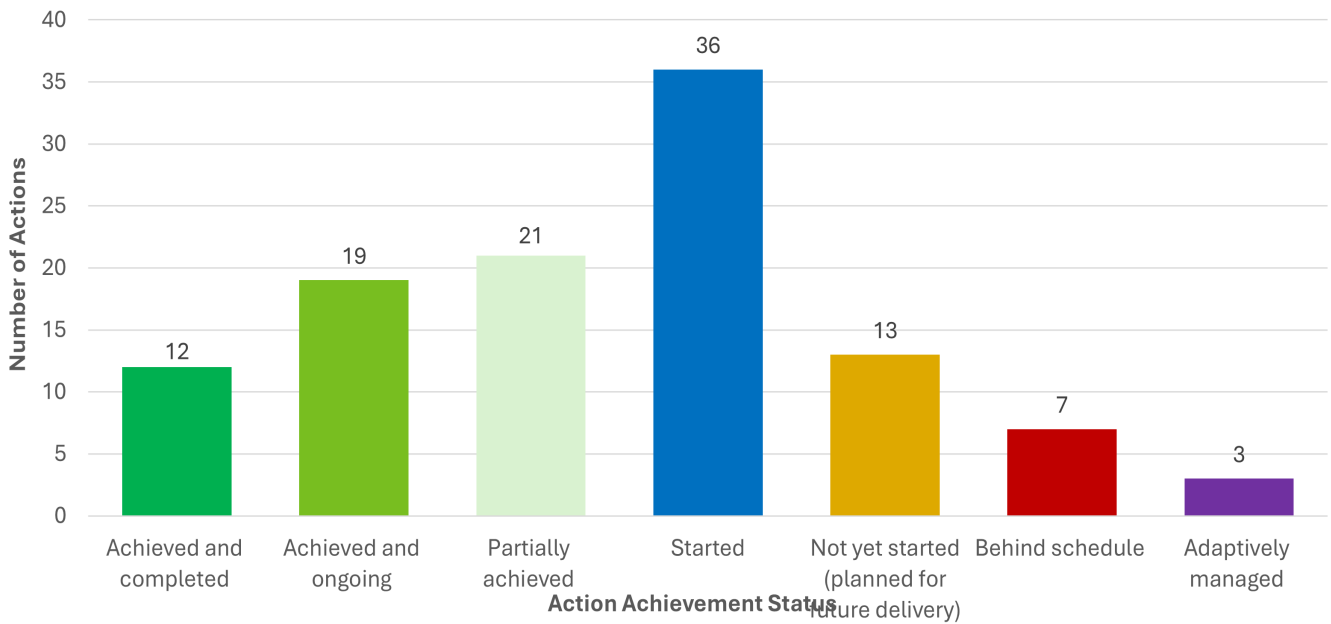


Figure 1: CGRSWS actions status, including water recovery target policies.

## Adaptive management

The following actions are being adaptively managed, in response to changes in action context or timing:

- **Action 4-7: Guidance for decisions about unallocated water.**

The agreed adaptive pathway for this action is for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to support a case-by-case approach by providing specific policy guidance where required in place of publishing guidance as originally planned.

- **Action 6-15: Support applications for unallocated water in the Otway Basin, including in the Gellibrand River.**

The agreed adaptive pathway for this action is for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to continue to partner with and be guided by the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, and to support and respond to self-determined priorities as needed.

- **Action 10-1: Strengthening the five yearly assessment.**

The agreed adaptive pathway for this action is for DEECA to continue to publish annual reports detailing progress against all actions in the strategy. Due to resourcing changes, a progress report at the 5-year point (2027) will take the place of the mid-term assessment. DEECA will continue to complete a 10-year review of the Strategy, as required by legislation.

## Detailed progress on each action

Further detail on each action can be found in Table 1. Action leads are identified in the CGRSWS implementation plan. Where required, DEECA has committed to exploring funding opportunities to implement actions over the life of the strategy.

**Table 1 CGRSWS action status and comments**

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 2-1: Changing behaviours at home	By 2024	Achieved and ongoing	DEECA has reviewed water efficiency behaviour change initiatives across the state to identify gaps and opportunities for collaboration. The Melbourne 'Target 150' water efficiency program was launched in 2022. DEECA is funding a Statewide Water Conservation Content Pilot, which is developing communications that can be used statewide and a framework to enable this to occur on an ongoing basis.
Action 2-2: Water efficient buildings	By 2024	Started	DEECA is preparing a Regulatory Impact Statement examining stronger state building and plumbing regulations to improve the water efficiency of all buildings.
Action 2-3: Better information and standards for appliances	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	DEECA continues to advocate for stronger minimum Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme ratings for appliances and fixtures.
Action 2-4: Showerhead replacement	By 2025	Started	DEECA has completed an analysis of showerhead replacement scheme options for a subsequent business case. A business case is now being developed that builds on these findings.
Action 2-5: Community rebates and community housing retrofits	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	Urban water corporations continue to support customers who are vulnerable or experiencing hardship to become more water efficient and reduce their water bills through the Community Rebate Program.
Action 2-6: Waterwise schools	By 2030 (with a mid-term target of 80% by end 2026)	Started	DEECA and Yarra Valley Water (YVW) took a range of actions to increase registration of schools to the Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP). DEECA undertook a comprehensive review of the program and, based on the recommendations, is in the process of making major reforms to increase registrations and improve the service provided.
Action 2-7: Maximising water efficiency in business and industry	By 2025	Achieved and ongoing	The action committed to implementing a targeted non-residential water efficiency program by 2025. A program to improve water efficiency in business and industry was scoped and commenced in September 2023. This program, WaterSmart, has since assisted councils, businesses and other organisations to reduce their water waste through rebates for digital water use monitoring and sporting ground water efficiency audits.
Action 2-8: Targets for reducing urban water system leaks	By 2025	Achieved and ongoing	Water corporations are responsible for managing distribution system leaks and losses as part their operations, and for setting targets where possible. All water corporations are delivering initiatives to actively manage system leaks and losses, and half of the CGRSWS water corporations have published non-revenue water targets in their corporate plans.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
			Water corporations are required to report on their performance against system leaks and losses in their annual reports, and as part of state and national water industry performance reporting. System leaks and losses are a key performance indicator for water network reliability (published by the Essential Services Commission) and under the National Performance Reporting Framework for water utilities (published by the Bureau of Meteorology).
Action 3-1: Investigating options to expand the region's desalination capacity	Ongoing	Partially achieved	DEECA and delivery partners are building knowledge of options for expanding the desalination capacity for the region and how the desalination capacity can be integrated into the existing storage and delivery network
Action 3-2: Incorporating consideration of water security into Plan Melbourne	By 2024	Achieved and completed	Plan Melbourne has been replaced by Plan for Victoria (Pfv). Pfv has been released. Action 11 of Pfv includes actions to enable the delivery of infrastructure for water security.
Action 3-3: Maturing the IWM investment framework	By 2025	Partially achieved	DEECA is leading a review of the challenges for funding Integrated Water Management (IWM) which included detailed engagement with the Victorian Water Industry and this work is currently being finalised. This work includes recommendations which will address identified key challenges for funding IWM. DEECA will review and assess these recommendations for implementation in late 2025.
Action 3-4: Investigating options for large-scale recycled water and treated stormwater networks in Greater Melbourne	By 2025	Partially achieved	Collaborative investigations for large scale recycled water networks and treated stormwater networks are underway across the Greater Melbourne region. These include the Werribee System Reconfiguration project and recycled water and treated stormwater use opportunities in Suburban Rail Loop precincts and south-east.
Action 3-5: Investigating options for a large-scale recycled water and treated stormwater network in the Barwon Region	By 2025	Partially achieved	The Feasibility Study is nearing completion and is on track to be completed by late 2025.
Action 3-6: Developing catchment-scale IWM action plans for Greater Melbourne	By 2023	Achieved and completed	DEECA in collaboration with Werribee, Maribyrnong, Yarra, Dandenong and Western Port IWM Forums delivered catchment-scale IWM action plans for Greater Melbourne. The Minister for Water launched these plans in April 2024. They are available on DEECA IWM Forums website: <a href="https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/integrated-water-management/iwm-forums">https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/integrated-water-management/iwm-forums</a> .

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 3-7: IWM planning for regional Victoria	By 2024	Behind schedule (still progressing)	IWM Planning at different scales is being explored in regional Victoria. Catchment modelling has commenced and is expected to be completed in early 2026. Investigations into governance options and reviews of the need and value of large scale IWM planning are underway.
Action 3-8: Use of recycled water and stormwater for greener, open spaces	By 2026	Partially achieved	<p>\$31 million in grant funding for 18 IWM projects (which increase the use of recycled water and stormwater for greener open spaces) have been awarded. Of those projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 are now complete</li> <li>• 10 are progressing well and on track for delivery</li> <li>• 4 are experiencing delays but continuing well.</li> <li>• One project has been found to be unfeasible during early investigation works, so a substitute project is being considered.</li> </ul> <p>In 2023-24 a program was developed in partnership with urban water corporations to provide water efficiency audits for outdoor community sporting grounds across the Central and Gippsland Region. \$1.8 million in funding has been allocated across the 10 water corporations. The program aims to assist a minimum of 130 sites by 30 June 2027.</p>
Action 3-9: Strengthen IWM in land-use and infrastructure planning	By 2025	Achieved and ongoing	IWM Planning Guidelines to assist the sector to undertake IWM Plans at different planning scales have been developed. These guidelines will support both water cycle and land use planners to deliver IWM outcomes defined in the Strategic Directions Statements and Catchment Scale IWM Plans through land use planning and urban development. The guidelines have undergone preliminary consultation and are expected to be released on DEECA's website shortly, before being adopted through relevant water and planning frameworks.
Action 3-10: Develop template guidance for recycled water use to streamline approvals	By 2023	Achieved and completed	VicWater (with funding provided by DEECA) finalised the templates in December 2023. Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) will make them available on its website in 2025
Action 3-11: Identify priority projects to contribute to state of knowledge on emerging contaminants	By 2023	Achieved and completed	DEECA has finalised and funded the next round of priority projects for this action. This included the development of formal EPA guidance on emerging contaminants in recycled water, and sampling/analysis of crops irrigated with recycled water (to be published by September 2025). No further work is required.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 3-12: Improving stormwater regulations to support increased capture and use	By 2023	Behind schedule (still progressing)	Working groups formed for Northern and Southern Victoria and a statewide steering committee, comprising council and water corporation representatives. Traditional Owner engagement was commenced in 2023. The problem statement, objectives, evaluation criteria and shortlisted reform options have been endorsed by the steering committee for consultation. The project was placed on hold due to resourcing constraints, however, consultation is expected to commence in late 2025.
Action 3-13: Implement Melbourne Urban Stormwater Institutional Arrangements (MUSIA)	By 2028	Started	Melbourne Water (MW) and Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) continue to progress operationalising the preferred-in-principle institutional arrangement from the MUSIA review (the improved 60-hectare option). In addition to engagement activities, a formal policy document has been developed, and DEECA, MW and MAV are each seeking approval of this.
Action 3-14: Review stormwater management arrangements in the Lower Barwon	By 2023	Behind schedule (still progressing)	<p>A jointly funded project has been set up to review stormwater management arrangements for City of Greater Geelong region. The objectives of the project are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) understand the current stormwater management landscape in the Barwon Region</li> <li>2) document current ambiguities and gaps relating to stormwater management roles and responsibilities</li> <li>3) undertake a comparative analysis of alternative stormwater management operating models across Australia and</li> <li>4) recommend a shortlist of potential models for further consideration.</li> </ol> <p>This high-level project is expected to be concluded by the end of 2025 and will likely recommend further exploration work. In addition to this review, the funding, delivery and responsibility of short-term stormwater volume management solutions for the Geelong and Bannockburn growth areas is a priority.</p>
Action 3-15: Develop a stormwater offsets framework	By 2024	Achieved and completed	A guidance document for councils has been published on DEECA's website at: <a href="https://water.vic.gov.au/water-sources/diverse-water-sources/victorian-stormwater-quality-offsets">water.vic.gov.au/water-sources/diverse-water-sources/victorian-stormwater-quality-offsets</a> . The guidance contains a link to a calculator tool, to assist councils to set their offsets price, plus other supporting documentation. These documents were developed in consultation with Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), local councils and Melbourne Water.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 3-16: Embedding stormwater flow requirements	By 2024	Behind schedule (still progressing)	DEECA is investigating the feasibility of mandating EPA's urban stormwater flow reduction targets. A detailed Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) was undertaken that explored the costs, benefits and proposed policy/regulatory instruments. Several work streams have been developed to address the preferred implementation mechanisms, including an amendment to the Victoria Planning Provisions to incorporate the 'other areas' flow reduction targets, determining reasonably practicable targets and solutions in the priority areas and pursuing a deemed to comply approach for detached houses in the building and plumbing regulations.
Action 3-17: Building community confidence in recycled water and stormwater	By 2026	Started	A gap analysis report on recycled water communications was finalised in consultation with water corporations, government agencies including the EPA, Department of Health (DoH) and VicWater. Six working groups were established targeting different actual and potential end users of recycled water to shortlist engagement options.
Action 3-18: Clearer guidance on recycled water accounting and reporting	By 2026	Achieved and completed	DEECA, with EPA support, undertook a review of data reporting categories within the Victorian Water Accounts and Essential Services Commission's (ESC) water performance reports. Revised data indicators have been developed and have been reflected in the Victorian Water Accounts since 2023.
Action 4-1: Investigate options to return water to the environment and Traditional Owners as regional-scale manufactured water sources are planned for Greater Melbourne and Geelong	Ongoing	Started	DEECA has started working with the water sector to ensure that as manufactured water options for Greater Melbourne and Geelong are considered, opportunities to return water to the environment and Traditional Owner are planned and developed. This is in the early stages until an investigation into regional-scale manufactured water source(s) commences.
Action 4-2: Commitment to consider how river entitlements can be reduced via water efficiency, IWM and substitution with manufactured water sources	Ongoing Proposals due by 2023	Achieved and ongoing	Water corporations submitted project proposals to DEECA in late 2023 proposing projects to reduce river bulk entitlements. DEECA is working with water corporations across the region to assess and progress these projects, with feasibility studies and other investigatory work underway for some proposed options.
Action 4-3: Securing additional water for Geelong and the Moorabool Yaluk (Moorabool River)	By 2025	Started	Work is well underway to return water to Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) and the environment (Actions 4-3 and 4-4 of the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy). This includes discussion of entitlement options, water resource modelling, system operations and a separate project led by WTOAC trialling water delivery in the Moorabool Yaluk

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
			(Moorabool River). A video documenting WTOAC 's first self-determined trial water delivery to Wadawurrung Dja (Country) can be found at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsS9hDKQ4LE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsS9hDKQ4LE</a> .
Action 4-4: Determine how water returned in the Moorabool Yaluk <sup>1</sup> (Moorabool River) will be shared between Wadawurrung and the environment	By 2025	Started	Discussions are well underway, including collaboration with WTOAC, Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA).
Action 4-5: Securing Warragul and Drouin's urban water supply	By 2023	Achieved and completed	A new Bulk Entitlement was gazetted on July 1, 2023.
Action 4-6: Streamlining temporary water trades	By 2027	Started	<p>Central Highlands Water has confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions have commenced with stakeholders to understand issues and opportunities.</li> <li>• Recent cultural flow release trials and work on returning water in the Moorabool River to the environment and Traditional Owners is also helping to support decision making processes.</li> </ul> <p>The project is expected to be completed in 2027.</p>
Action 4-7: Guidance for decisions about unallocated water	By 2023	Adaptively managed	<p>Guidance on existing policy and legislation in issuing unallocated water is being provided by DEECA on a case-by-case basis. A case-by-case approach is considered appropriate given the different context of each decision about unallocated water, including the amount of water available, the objectives of each Traditional Owner group, and whether there are other potential applicants. Going forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEECA will continue to support this case-by-case approach by providing specific policy guidance where required.</li> <li>• The scope of the action has been adaptively managed to reflect the updated approach. Specifically, that DEECA works with Traditional Owners and delegated authorities on a case-by-case basis to provide policy guidance on decisions that support self-determined use of unallocated water.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Note that the spelling of 'Yaluk' has been corrected since the publication of the CGRSWS in 2022 on advice from Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 4-8: Reallocation of the Latrobe 3-4 Bench bulk entitlement	By 2024	Achieved and completed	<p>Sixteen (16) gigalitres (GL) of the 25 GL Latrobe 3-4 Bench bulk water entitlement has been reallocated. After extensive consultation with industry stakeholders and community members, and the completion of the statutory process in March 2025, 3 new entitlements have been created:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a 5.333 GL entitlement that will support cultural values and self-determined outcomes for the Gunaikurnai people</li> <li>• a 5.333 GL entitlement that will underpin the resilience and growth of agriculture</li> <li>• a 5.333 GL entitlement that provides additional water for environmental flows to improve the health of the Latrobe River as well as the Gippsland Lakes system downstream.</li> </ul>
Action 4-9: Returning water to the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	By 2022	Achieved and completed	<p>The 1.4 GL section 51 water licence in the Birrarung was transferred to Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) by Melbourne Water in April 2024 and announced on 18 October 2024.</p>
Action 4-10: Reconfiguring the Werribee system	By 2024	Behind schedule (still progressing)	<p>Feasibility of the preferred infrastructure plan is complete together with a preliminary business case. Seeking funding for detailed business case development to progress this further through the National Water Grid Fund.</p>
Action 4-11: Investigating optimisation of Yarra system passing flow arrangements	By 2024	Behind schedule (still progressing)	<p>MW leads this action and in 2024-25 undertook associated hydrological modelling, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• model improvements have been completed to run the model on daily timesteps (in addition to the monthly timesteps) which is beneficial for environmental flow assessments</li> <li>• incorporation of Yarra environmental flow requirements and run-time environmental flow performance assessment has been completed</li> <li>• comparison of daily model performance against the monthly model has been completed to provide a benchmark assessment against the previously verified monthly model</li> <li>• initial modelled outcomes based on Watts River passing flow releases under current arrangement and increased flow of 23ML/day reviewed.</li> </ul> <p>To be undertaken by MW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• model refinements, particularly on pumping operations from Yarra River to Sugarloaf Reservoir (within the newly developed daily time step version of the model)</li> <li>• any additional model refinements resulting from review of previously modelled outcomes</li> </ul>

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 4-12: Reviewing management arrangements for the Wangangarra / WyYung (Mitchell River) for all water users	By 2024	Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>documentation and review of Watts River passing flow assessment with daily model.</li> </ul> <p>DEECA is working with Southern Rural Water (SRW) as delivery partner to progress the review of management arrangements. It is expected the review and summary report will be completed by 2025, which could inform any changes in 2026.</p>
Action 4-13: Review of water resource risks in small, dry, peri-urban catchments	By 2024	Started	The action is underway with SRW leading. SRW is working with their consultant and stakeholder reference group to deliver. The consultant's report will be delivered by end of 2025.
Action 4-14: Reviewing the Latrobe Reserve	By 2028	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery.
Action 4-15: Developing a vision and plan for the water future of the Latrobe Valley	Vision and plan for short-term actions: by 2023 Plan for medium to long-term actions: by 2025 Implementation: ongoing	Started	Lead agencies have established an Executive Governance Group, developed a draft project plan, commenced a situation analysis to inform the development of the vision and plan, and are exploring funding opportunities.
Action 4-16: Improving water management to deliver shared benefits	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	VEWH and Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) continue to deliver shared benefits as outlined in the VEWB publication <i>Reflections</i> : <a href="https://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/annual-planning-and-reporting/reflections">https://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/annual-planning-and-reporting/reflections</a> .
Action 4-17: Tracking and improving our understanding of interception activities, including small catchment dams and plantations	Ongoing	Started	Monitoring and reporting improvements are underway.
Action 4-18: Updating groundwater management arrangements and implementing priorities for reform	Ongoing	Started	Work is progressing on delivery of priority actions. Ground Water management 2030 (GM2030) can be accessed via: <a href="https://www.water.vic.gov.au/water-sources/groundwater/groundwater-management-2030">https://www.water.vic.gov.au/water-sources/groundwater/groundwater-management-2030</a> .
Action 6-1: The Victorian Government will ensure that Traditional Owners are resourced in order to partner in the implementation of the Strategy's actions and policies in a self-determined way	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	Funding has been provided to Traditional Owners in the region to continue to partner with implementation the Strategy in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. In May 2024, additional funding was secured through the Environmental Contribution Levy to continue partnering to 2027-28.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 6-2: The Victorian Government will work with water corporations to amend their Statement of Obligations (General) to include the cultural benefits framework in water planning and management	By 2025	Partially achieved	The action is underway. Amendments to the Statement of Obligations (SoO) (General) for water corporations are currently the subject of consultation with ESC and DTF. The draft amendments require Water Corporations to negotiate formal partnership agreements with Traditional Owner groups in accordance with written guidelines issued by DEECA. Specific references to frameworks have been removed to ensure broader applicability across Traditional Owner groups.
Action 6-3: Implement a Traditional Owner-led principle review process	By 2025	Started	The CGRSWS Traditional Owner Water Sharing Principles are in the early stage of being tested through case-studies. These on-ground projects will take some time to be completed. The Traditional Owner Partnership has begun discussing how the review could be carried out and has decided to focus on the recent water return projects.
Action 6-4: The Victorian Government will work to ensure that ownership of is not a barrier to Traditional Owners applying for, or holding, water entitlements	By 2025 By 2022 (interim arrangement)	Partially achieved	DEECA has obtained authorisation from Parks Victoria for Traditional Owner groups that are Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) to nominate Parks Victoria managed land for s51 licences. A letter has been sent to all RAPs where unallocated water is available to them to reflect the PV authorisation. A process map has been developed to identify and nominate suitable public land parcels as points of take for Traditional Owner water licence applications.
Action 6-5: Support Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation applications for unallocated water, including in the Ber'rawn (Tambo River) and South Gippsland basin (including the Lung Lung (Franklin River) and Albert River)	By 2022	Achieved and completed	Water has been returned to Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC). DEECA and licensing authorities are collaborating with GLaWAC to support applications for unallocated water. DEECA is supporting SRW with the provision of a Cultural Water Officer to assist with applications for unallocated water.
Action 6-6: The Victorian Government will seek to return water in the Carran Carran (Thomson River) and Durt-Yowan (Latrobe River) to Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	Long-term	Achieved and ongoing	A bulk entitlement has been created to supply GLaWAC in the Durt-Yowan (Latrobe River) through CGRSWS Action 4-8. DEECA, in partnership with the water sector, is committed to continuing to identify additional opportunities to return water to GLaWAC.
Action 6-7: Evaluate opportunities to return water to Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation currently used by the Royal Botanic Gardens	By 2023	Partially achieved	DEECA is progressing discussions with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) and City of Melbourne (CoM) on both Action 6-7 and 6-10. RBGV and CoM are undertaking internal work to inform their response.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 6-8: Support applications for unallocated water, including in the Powlett and Bass Rivers	By 2022	Partially achieved	DEECA and licensing authorities are collaborating with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) to support applications for unallocated water. DEECA is supporting SRW with the provision of a Cultural Water Officer to assist with applications for unallocated water.
Action 6-9: The Victorian Government will seek to return water to the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation on Bunurong Country	Long-term	Achieved and ongoing	DEECA, in partnership with the water sector, is committed to continuing to identify additional opportunities to return water to BLCAC.
Action 6-10: Evaluate opportunities to return water to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation currently used by the Royal Botanic Gardens	By 2023	Partially achieved	Please refer to 6-7.
Action 6-11: The Victorian Government will seek to return water in the Birrarung (Yarra River) to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Long-term	Achieved and ongoing	Water has been returned to WWCHAC in the Birrarung (Yarra River) through CGRSWS Action 4-9. DEECA, in partnership with the water sector, is committed to continuing to identify additional opportunities to return water to WWCHAC.
Action 6-12: The Victorian Government will seek to return water to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in the Mirrangbamurn (Maribyrrong River)	Long-term	Started	DEECA, in partnership with the water sector, is committed to continuing to identify opportunities to return water to WWCHAC, including through work being progressed through Action 4-2.
Action 6-13: Explore opportunities to return water to the Wadawurrung in Durdidwarrah wetland	By 2025	Achieved and ongoing	WTOAC are investigating cultural water values at Durdidwarrah Wetland with their community. They also continue to trial deliveries of water to the wetland in partnership with Barwon Water, DEECA and several other agencies to better understand how water could be delivered to the wetland. These projects are demonstrating the cultural values at the site, how water could be used, how it can be delivered and preparing WTOAC for the longer-term return of water in the Moorabool system under Actions 4-3 and 4-4.
Action 6-14: The Victorian Government will seek to return water to the Wadawurrung in the Moorabool Yaluk (Moorabool	Long-term	Started	In partnership with the Moorabool Working Group, including WTOAC, DEECA is progressing CGRSWS actions 4-3 and 4.4 to return water in the Moorabool Yaluk to VEWH and WTOAC. DEECA, in partnership with the water sector, is committed to continuing to

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
River) and Parwan (Barwon River)			identify additional opportunities to return water to WTOAC.
Action 6-15: Support applications for unallocated water in the Otway Basin, including in the Gellibrand River	By 2022	Adaptatively managed	DEECA will continue to be guided by Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation on this action.
Action 6-16: The Victorian Government will seek to return water to the Eastern Maar in the Barwon River	Long-term	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	DEECA has met with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and continues to look for opportunities to return water to it in a self-determined way.
Action 7-1: Planning for future investment in rural water infrastructure	By 2023	Partially achieved	<p>Action 7-1 is on track with expected delivery in 2025 in accordance with contractual commitments between the Commonwealth, State and SRW. Works are advanced to modernise irrigation infrastructure in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macalister Irrigation District (MID2030) Phase 2 (completed in June 2025)</li> <li>• Werribee Irrigation District Modernisation Project Stages 4&amp;5 (due for completion in early September 2025)</li> <li>• Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District Resilience and Critical Infrastructure Project (completed in November 2023).</li> </ul> <p>Planning for future investment in rural water infrastructure in central Gippsland is currently being explored by SRW as part of the Macalister Fresh Strategy which is due for completion in early 2026.</p>
Action 7-2: Investigating opportunities for new irrigation development	By 2024	Started	SRW has commenced planning and engagement on the Macalister Fresh Strategy (due for completion in early 2026), which will guide further development of opportunities for new irrigation development in the region along the Macalister, Avon and Latrobe catchments. Macalister Fresh will be developed in accordance with CGRSWS principles/actions and with close engagement with DEECA. Any irrigation development along the Latrobe catchment will also be guided by the CGRSWS actions regarding the 3-4 Bench Entitlement.
Action 7-3: Improving trade and transparency in Central and Gippsland water markets	Improving accessibility by 2024 Trialling an online water market by 2023 Investigating local	Achieved and ongoing	DEECA has been working with SRW to deliver this action. A water market exchange platform was developed and trialled in the Macalister Irrigation District and expanded to groundwater trade in SRW's region. The exchange platform allows for market participants to find information about the water market, such as volume available, prices, past trades, etc, in one place. DEECA continues to investigate local opportunities to make water trade rules more

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
	opportunities by 2024		flexible without impacting other water users or the environment.
Action 8-1: Rehabilitating the Moorabool Yaluk (Moorabool River) at Batesford Quarry	By 2026	Started	The action is underway and progressing with delivery partners including WTOAC and CCMA. Options report received July 2024. Further investigations to be undertaken by CCMA.
Action 8-2: Increasing understanding of water needs of the Upper Moorabool and Leigh catchments	By 2027	Started	Corangamite CMA funded to undertake scoping study with delivery due December 2026.
Action 8-3: Improving flows in Stony Creek	By 2027	Started	Action underway with delivery partners MW, Barwon Water (BW), WTOAC and Parks Victoria (PV). Flow options report commissioned by BW and MW completed July 2025. Planning for next steps underway.
Action 8-4: Improving waterway health in the Barwon River	By 2027	Partially achieved	Works to restore channel form and remove willows and reed sweet grass from the upper Barwon River have commenced.
Action 8-5: Updating watering recommendations for Reedy Lake and Hospital Swamp	By 2025	Partially achieved	Technical work to understand the water balance completed. FLOWS study has commenced in August 2025.
Action 8-6: Investigating the use of recycled water and stormwater for environmental flows in the Yarrowee and Leigh rivers	By 2027	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery.
Action 8-7: Complete a feasibility study of the long-term management options to mitigate waterway health issues of the Anglesea River and estuary	By 2023	Achieved and completed	DEECA and CCMA have completed the study. The study findings will help inform the future management approach for the Anglesea River. The study report is publicly available here: <a href="#">Anglesea River Management Options Investigation – Summary Report</a>
Action 8-8: Improving the health of Painkalac Creek	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	Delivery agencies continue to undertake investigations and works to improve the health of Painkalac Creek.
Action 8-9: Improving summer flows in the Gellibrand River	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	Delivery agencies developed a plan which is being implemented. Wannon Water and the Federal Government are funding works to augment urban supply that will then reduce summer extraction from the Gellibrand River.
Action 8-10: Improving fish passage in the Werribee River	By 2027	Started	The action is underway and progressing with delivery partners, including SRW and MW. The project is in the design phase.
Action 8-11: Improving the health of the Mirrangbamurn (Maribyrnong River)	By 2032	Started	The action is underway and progressing with delivery partners who are progressing detailed design options for upgrading the Rosslynne Reservoir outlet to increase the reservoir's release capacity.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 8-12: Improving the health of the Kooyongkoot (Gardiners Creek)	By 2023	Partially achieved	Action is underway and progressing with delivery partners. Kooyongkoot Alliance and WWCHAC have received funding to deliver this action. Delivery of action has been extended to 30 June 2026 to enable greater involvement of WWCHAC in line with their self-determined priorities for the Kooyongkoot (Gardiners Creek) and other sub-catchment scale collaboration.
Action 8-13: Thomson River– Rainbow Creek waterway management plan	Ongoing	Partially achieved	The actions in the management plan have been partially completed and funding has been obtained through to 2028 to continue their delivery.
Action 8-14: Improve flows in the Avon River	Ongoing	Started	SRW is exploring opportunities to improve environmental flows in the Avon River as part of its work on the Macalister Fresh Strategy (Action 7-2). Delivery agencies are working closely with DEECA and have commenced planning and engagement on the Macalister Fresh Strategy, which will guide further development of the Macalister Avon Irrigation Development Project.
Action 8-15: Build the Maffra Weir fishway (Wirn Wirndook Yeerung (Macalister River))	By 2027	Partially achieved	Design phase completed and construction is funded. West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SRW as the delivery partner. Initial planning for approvals and construction tender is underway. Planned for completion in 2026.
Action 8-16: Improve the delivery of environmental water to the Durt-Yowan (Latrobe River) downstream of Rosedale	By 2027	Started	Investigations, as well as some works subject to the findings of those investigations, were funded in June 2025. WGCMA project inception has occurred and engagement planning and preliminary modelling works are underway.
Action 8-17: Improve flows to the lower Latrobe wetlands	By 2027	Started	<p>Works to achieve the action have been funded and the action is on track for completion by 2027.</p> <p>There are 5 distinct activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heart Morass inlet construction</li> <li>• Dowd Morass inlet construction</li> <li>• Dowd Morass outlet upgrades</li> <li>• Sale Common inlet upgrade, and</li> <li>• McArdle’s Gap technical assessments.</li> </ul> <p>The construction contract for Heart Morass inlet is out for tender. Planning continues for the Dowd Morass inlet construction and outlet upgrade. Draft design for Sale Common upgrade has been completed. McArdle’s Gap assessments are nearly complete.</p>
Action 8-18: Improve fish passage in Tyers River	By 2027	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery in 2027.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 8-19: Improve flows in South Gippsland's flow-stressed waterways	By 2032	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery
Action 8-20: Improve fish passage along Merriman Creek	By 2027	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery in 2026
Action 8-21: Decommission the Nicholson River Dam	By 2030	Started	<p>East Gippsland Water and the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority have completed preliminary investigations into the potential removal of the dam. This includes feasibility assessments, evaluation of potential impacts, and the development of an initial concept design for a preferred removal option. These concepts have been discussed with stakeholders over several years, with particular consideration given to the Nicholson River environment and the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site.</p> <p>At this stage, further progress on decommissioning has been paused while East Gippsland Water undertake a review of its future water augmentation needs.</p>
Action 8-22: Developing guidelines for using recycled water for the environment	By 2023	Achieved and completed	<p>EPA guidelines were completed and published in February 2024 (Recycled water use in surface waters guideline). These can be viewed on EPA website: <a href="https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/recycled-water-use-surface-waters-guideline">https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/recycled-water-use-surface-waters-guideline</a>.</p> <p>Greater Western Water is working with Melbourne Water to determine how recycled water may be used for environmental flows in the Maribyrnong system.</p>
Action 8-23: Stormwater for the environment	By 2025	Started	The action is underway and progressing with delivery partners to understand options for use of stormwater in the Sunbury and Melton areas.
Action 8-24: Marine pollution load objectives for Port Phillip Bay and Western Port	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	<p>Technical work has been completed to understand land use contributions to sediment loads in Western Port. Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan (EMP) annual report contains information on Plan delivery - <a href="https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/port-phillip-bay-emp/annual-reports">https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/port-phillip-bay-emp/annual-reports</a>.</p>
Action 8-25: Marine pollution load objectives for Lake Wellington	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	Plans being implemented and On-ground works continue to be delivered in high priority locations, in accordance with the Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan and the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan. Monitoring and modelling to track progress are ongoing.

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 8-26: Marine pollution load objectives for Corner Inlet and Nooramunga	Ongoing	Achieved and ongoing	Plans being implemented and On-ground works continue to be delivered in high priority locations, in accordance with the Corner Inlet Water Quality Improvement Plan. Monitoring and modelling to track progress were designed and implementation commenced.
Action 9-1: Ongoing adaptive planning activities for future water supply options	Ongoing	Partially achieved	DEECA has been collaborating with urban water corporations statewide in developing revised Urban Water Strategy Guidelines (scheduled for release in late 2025) which will help to ensure adaptive management and planning is being undertaken.
Action 9-2: Publish a Water Grid Plan	Inaugural Water Grid Plan: by 2023 Annual updates: Ongoing Decision-making triggers: by end of 2022	Behind schedule (still progressing)	As at the end of this reporting period (30 June 2025) the Water Security Plan (formerly known as Water Grid Plan) had not been published. It was subsequently published on 25 September 2025. See <a href="https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/water-monitoring-and-reporting/water-security-plan">https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/water-monitoring-and-reporting/water-security-plan</a>
Action 9-3: Create a south-central pooled resource and associated reforms	By 2025	Partially achieved	Final bulk entitlements being prepared and on schedule for approvals in late 2025.
Action 9-4: Revising Melbourne Water's diversion limit compliance method	By 2026	Started	This action is being led by MW. MW has prioritised other CGRSWS actions, particularly Actions 9-1 and 9-3 which are due to be delivered by 2025. DEECA plans to support MW, where needed, to deliver the action when it progresses.
Action 9-5: Building community knowledge and involvement in water management	Ongoing	Partially achieved	Action 9-5.1 (a review of public data and information sources about water).and 9-5.2 (a review of community engagement) have been achieved.  Action 9-5.3 (recommendations to build community knowledge about water and improve multi-way dialogue between the water sector, Traditional Owners and the community) has been delayed due to a lack of resourcing but is expected to be delivered within FY25/26. A set of Knowledge Recommendations have been drafted based on the research conducted in 9-5.1 and 9-5.2. The Knowledge Recommendations will formally deliver on 9-5.3 and set out a framework for the ongoing elements of this action. A consultation draft will be delivered to the sector for comment and feedback in 2025.
Action 9-6: Apply principles for public investment in water infrastructure projects	Ongoing	Started	MW's prices for 1 July 2026 onwards are being reviewed by the ESC. MW's draft price proposal

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
Action 10-1: Strengthening the five yearly assessment	By 2027	Adaptatively managed	indicates that it will carry out tariff reform in line with the CGRSWS, An adapted approach will be taken to evaluation and reporting on progress of Strategy actions to respond to changes in resourcing and priorities. Public progress reports will continue to be published annually. A progress report at the 5-year point (2027) will take the place of the mid-term assessment, and a 10-year review will be undertaken as required by legislation.
Policy 8-1: Return water to the Moorabool Yaluk (Moorabool River) west branch	By 2032	Started	1,500 ML is being returned to the environment from Barwon Water and an Environmental Entitlement (EE) is currently being drafted. Looking for future opportunities for more water recovery.
Policy 8-2: Return water to the Moorabool River east branch	By 2032	Partially achieved	350 ML is being returned to the environment from Barwon Water and an EE is currently being drafted. Looking for future opportunities for more water recovery.
Policy 8-3: Return water to the Barwon River	By 2032	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery.
Policy 8-4: Return water to the Wirribi Yaluk (Werribee River) in the short term	By 2024	Started	Water savings are being finalised from the completed Werribee Irrigation District and Bachus Marsh Irrigation District modernisation projects, to confirm volumes to be allocated to the environment.
Policy 8-5: Return water to the Wirribi Yaluk (Werribee River)	By 2032	Started	The action is part of the Werribee reconfiguration project (Action 4.10), which is progressing and aims to return water for the environment
Policy 8-6: Return water to the Mirrangbamurn (Maribyrnong River)	By 2032	Started	Initial investigations are underway by Greater Western Water (GWW) and MW to explore water returns to the environment, from IWM projects and optimising bulk entitlements. (linked also to Action 4-2).
Policy 8-7: Return water to the Birrarung (Yarra River)	By 2032	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery.
Policy 8-8: Return water to the Bunyip and Tarago rivers	By 2032	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery.
Policy 8-9: Return water to the Carran Carran (Thomson River)	By 2032	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery.
Policy 8-10: Return water to the Wirn Wirndook Yeerung	By 2026	Started	Water savings to provide environmental water have been realised from the Macalister Irrigation

Action number and description	Due date	Achievement status	Comments
(Macalister River) in the short term			District Phase 2 project but volumes still to be confirmed for returning to the environment.
Policy 8-11: Return water to the Wirn Wirndook Yeerung (Macalister River)	By 2032	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Not yet started – planned for future delivery.
Policy 8-12: Return water to the Durt-Yowan (Latrobe River) in the short term	By 2027	Partially achieved	5.3 GL has been allocated to the environment from the 3-4 Bench and the Environmental Entitlement is created. Looking for future opportunities for more water recovery.
Policy 8-13: Return water to the Durt-Yowan (Latrobe River)	By 2029	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Not yet started – planned for future delivery.
Policy 8-14: Investigate feasibility of delivering additional water to the Durt-Yowan (Latrobe River)	By 2027	Started	WGCMA has been funded to determine options on how to address constraints to delivery of Environmental Water (Action 8-16).
Policy 8-15: Return water to the Tyers River	By 2032	Not yet started – planned for future delivery	Planned for future delivery.