

Action Status Report

July 2023

WATER FOR VICTORIA

Overall Action Status:

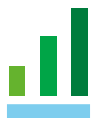
Work is underway on all 69 actions



57 complete and now business as usual



7 in progress



5 in progress with revised timeframe

Status

Complete and
now business
as usual



In progress



In progress with
revised timeframe

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
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Chapter 2: Climate change

Action 2.1

Achieve net-zero emissions in the water sector



The Minister for Water released the updated Statement of Obligations (Emission Reduction) in May 2022 committing water corporations to achieving a collective 42.4% reduction in emissions by 2025, 93.7% by 2030, and 100% (achievement of net-zero) by 2035. Water corporations are also committed to sourcing 100% of their energy needs from renewable energy sources by 2025. This puts water corporations on the pathway to achieving this action 15 years earlier than originally scheduled.

Ongoing

Action 2.2

Understand and apply climate science to water management



The Victorian Water and Climate Initiative was established in 2017. A research strategy was developed in 2017 in collaboration with stakeholders; including water sector practitioners, policy developers and research partners. Investment continues to be made to improve the sector's understanding of the impact of climate change on water availability, and to prepare and provide guidance to adapt and plan for Victoria's future. A synthesis of the research findings from the first phase of the research program was released in 2020, along with updated guidance for the water sector on how to assess the impacts of climate change on water resources.

Ongoing

Action 2.3

Lead climate change adaptation across Victoria's water system



Following successful delivery of a pilot Water Sector Climate Change Adaptation Plan, the legislated Water Cycle Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2022-26, was released in February 2022, with 21 new actions. This latest Plan is the first prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Climate Change Act 2017*. Under the legislation, Adaptation Action Plans are to be prepared for seven systems every five years.

Ongoing

Status



Complete and
now business
as usual











In progress










In progress with
revised timeframe


Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 3.1 Improving arrangements for urban waterways		<p><i>Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo</i>, the Yarra Strategic Plan (YSP) came into operation in February 2022, fulfilling the requirements of the <i>Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017</i>. The Birrarung Council's first annual report on the implementation of <i>Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo</i> was tabled in Parliament in February 2023, highlighting a strong start to delivering the plan, with priority projects on target for a 2023-24 delivery. The plan will coordinate the work of all responsible public entities and outlines a focus on strengthening partnerships with Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners.</p> <p>Protecting Victoria's urban waterways is also the goal of the Waterways of the West and Rivers of the Barwon / Barre Warre Yulluk Action Plans. Reporting on the first year of these Plans in March 2023 outlined significant progress to date.</p>	Ongoing
Action 3.2 Protect water quality through the State Environment Protection Policy		<p>Under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i>, the SEPP no longer has a formal legal role. The Act introduces new duties such as the general environmental duty (GED) and new subordinate instruments.</p> <p>Some of the content in SEPP is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replaced by the GED • in environment reference standards or regulations • reframed as EPA guidance. <p>More information is available in the EPA publication Using SEPPs and WMPs in the new environment protection framework guide.</p>	Ongoing
Action 3.3 Invest in integrated catchment management		<p>A new ministerial statement has been released building on the legacy of Our Catchments, Our Communities for better stewardship. Current investment continues to support the implementation of regional catchment strategies. Delivery of the next round of stewardship and partnership projects also continues across Victoria through continuing action of DEECA, catchment management authorities (CMAs), sector partners, Traditional Owners and the community.</p>	Ongoing
Action 3.4 Provide long-term investment to improve waterway health		<p>Agreements with delivery partners continue delivery of on-ground works to maintain and improve the health of our waterways out to 2024.</p> <p>Following the successful trial of the initial 10 flagship projects (which continue to be delivered), an additional nine flagship projects have been established, with new approaches for tracking progress and reporting being trialled at these waterways.</p>	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 3.5 Improve environmental water management in a changing climate		<p>New environmental entitlements were established for the Thomson and Barwon Rivers. Environmental works on several priority waterways have been funded; a new fishway on the Buchan River was completed in 2023. An additional \$17 million was committed in 2020 (from capital stimulus funds) to deliver five environmental waterway works projects in northern Victoria; construction has been completed or is underway. New environmental water recovery targets for high value waterways have been identified through the 2022 Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy.</p> <p>DEECA has released a range of climate change adaptation action plans including two that are relevant for environmental water management: "Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for Natural Environmental Systems" and the "Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for the Water Sector".</p> <p>Climate adaptation policy for waterway management is currently being developed as part of the new Victorian Waterway Management Strategy, which will be released for public consultation in mid-2024.</p>	Ongoing
Action 3.6 Better monitor and report on the benefits of environmental watering		<p>The Victorian Environmental Water Holder reports annually on the benefits of environmental watering via their Reflections booklet. Benefits are also described in DEECA's annual report. Seventeen projects are currently underway through the Victorian Environmental Flows and Wetlands Monitoring and Assessment Programs (VEFMAP and WetMAP); CMAs regularly use the outcomes from these statewide environmental flows monitoring programs to provide information to their partners, stakeholders and the broader community about the benefits of environmental watering. Environmental water outcomes will also be addressed in the State of the Environment report in 2023.</p>	Ongoing
Action 3.7 Ensure clear and transparent charging arrangements		<p>Draft policies have been developed to guide water corporations to set charges for the storage and delivery of environmental water holdings. Consultation with key stakeholders, including CMAs, VEWH, the MDBA and Victorian water corporations is underway. The policies will be finalised in 2023-24</p>	2024
Action 3.8 Support community partnerships and citizen science		<p>Waterway citizen science programs continue to be supported across Victoria.</p> <p>The Angler Riparian Partnerships Program is now complete. Over four years, 156 angling clubs and community groups participated in 35 events and helped to plant 41,555 native trees and shrubs and control 174 hectares of weeds in 39 separate projects. These efforts improved 70 kilometres of riparian land along 30 waterways across Victoria.</p>	Ongoing



Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 3.9 Improve knowledge and information about waterways and catchments		<p>Improvements to monitoring, evaluation and reporting programs have been implemented and a range of programs have been delivered, including the Riparian Intervention Monitoring Program, Wetland Intervention Monitoring Program, Native Fish Report Card, state-wide monitoring of benefits of water for the environment for rivers and wetlands, and state-wide Index of Estuary Condition.</p> <p>New data on aquatic biodiversity has been acquired using eDNA methods from over 1800 locations along Victoria's rivers and streams. This data will be incorporated into state and regional strategy updates.</p> <p>A waterway research hub was also established to support more coordinated strategic research and monitoring.</p>	Ongoing
Chapter 4: Water for agriculture			
Action 4.1 Supporting regional development and change		Water corporations are continuing to work with regional stakeholders to support regional development.	Ongoing
Action 4.2 Invest in rural water infrastructure		<p>Investment principles have been embedded in decision making, with six irrigation modernisation and domestic and stock pipeline projects complete, and five capital projects currently underway throughout the state. 14 feasibility studies have been completed, which may generate business cases for further government investment.</p> <p>In 2021, Commonwealth investment was also secured through the National Water Grid Fund Connections Funding Pathway, with the investment going towards nine construction projects.</p>	Ongoing
Action 4.3 Help irrigation districts adapt		Delivery share review is complete, with actions completed or embedded as business as usual from July 2021. Rural water corporations are working with their irrigation communities to adapt through modernisation, reform and innovation projects, and continue to engage with customers and other key stakeholders to ensure irrigation districts remain affordable and attractive to new businesses.	Ongoing




Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 4.4 Reduce barriers to change and support communities in irrigation districts		<p>The initial four-year Sustainable Irrigation Program is complete, with a further four years now being delivered until 2024. This program will assist irrigators through decision support, whole farm planning and a range of incentives and extension programs.</p> <p>In the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District, a project to reduce barriers to change by establishing an Agricultural Redevelopment Coordinator to streamline irrigation redevelopment across the district is underway. In West Gippsland, the Newry Farm Planning project is providing irrigators connecting to the Newry Pipeline the opportunity to prepare or update a whole farm plan for their property, reducing barriers to plan for the future.</p> <p>In October 2022, a planning scheme amendment updated the Solar Energy Facilities – Design and Development Guideline and Victorian Planning Provision clause 14.02-3S – Protection of declared irrigation districts. The updates clarified state planning policy for the protection of declared irrigation districts originally introduced in September 2019. The updates also introduced simpler assessment criteria for determining the suitability of a site for a proposed renewable energy facility in a declared irrigation district.</p>	Ongoing
Action 4.5 Improve water delivery efficiency in irrigation districts		<p>Water savings protocol and independent technical review are in place as part of a robust process to verify water savings, while work in evaluating on-farm water use efficiency continues. Funding has been provided to Agriculture Victoria for continuing work in evaluating on-farm water use efficiency.</p>	Ongoing
Action 4.6 Manage salinity, waterlogging and water quality		<p>Salinity management and monitoring programs in irrigation and dryland areas are underway and ongoing. The Victorian Irrigation Drainage Program Strategic Directions 2021-24 have been developed in consultation with program partners and the community. It is available at: https://www.vgls.vic.gov.au/client/en_AU/search/asset/1301998/0</p>	Ongoing
Action: 4.7 Manage irrigation developments		<p>The Mallee, Northern Victorian and Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines (IDGs) were updated in 2021 and are now being implemented. In 2021-22, a review of Irrigation Licensing Guidance Material was undertaken. Implementation of the recommendations is now underway.</p> <p>New Irrigation Development Guidelines prepared for the South West and Gippsland regions, and approved by DEECA, Southern Rural Water and Glenelg Hopkins, East and West Gippsland CMAs respectively.</p> <p>Application of the Northern Irrigation Development Guidelines (covering the Goulburn-Murray Water Area) has been progressing since sign-off in 2021.</p>	2016-2023





Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 4.8 Improve salinity management in the Mallee		Investment Guidelines for the Salinity Impact Charges have been implemented for 2020-21. An independent review of salinity charges is complete and two new Determinations put in place. Revised annual salinity impact charges came into effect on 1 January 2021. An interstate comparison of salinity management in the Mallee has been completed and Victoria continues to work with interstate jurisdictions on the management of salinity through the Basin Salinity Management Advisory Panel.	Ongoing
Action 4.9 Improve management of emergency water supply		<p>The Emergency Water Supply Point (EWSP) network was reviewed and works completed in 2016. Additional funding for improving access to supply points was announced in 2019 as part of drought support, and a total of 11 new EWSPs were constructed through this project.</p> <p>In 2021, an independent review was conducted which focused on identifying established infrastructure associated with emergency water supply and the consideration of where new infrastructure was required.</p> <p>In 2021-22, additional funding was announced for the extension and improvement of EWSP infrastructure across bushfire affected communities under the Victorian Government Building Works Package and the Commonwealth National Water Grid Fund. This will be allocated across several priority Local Government Areas identified through the 2021 review, with construction of new EWSPs and upgrades on existing infrastructure to be completed by December 2023.</p> <p>Work is on hold following the end of drought conditions. Further progress is pending the development of a suitable engagement strategy with local government.</p>	2023
Action 4.10 Develop a rural drainage strategy		Strategy finalised in late 2018. Implementation is taking place through the delivery of key actions including the development of a Rural Drainage Resource Kit for landholders and partner agencies.	Ongoing


Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 4.11 Balance water recovery for the Murray-Darling Basin		<p>In October 2020, the Minister for Water announced the Connections project had completed works to achieve the 429 GL water savings target. This major achievement reflects the project's successful delivery on time and within budget. A report on the socio-economic impacts of the Basin Plan on Victoria was released in 2018 and was updated in 2022. Work continues with the Federal Government, other Basin jurisdictions and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to ensure effective governance of the process to deliver environmental offsets. Through the Off-Farm Efficiency Program, DEECA will monitor project applications to ensure funded projects comply with the agreed socio-economic criteria.</p> <p>In 2021, the Commonwealth funded the \$177.5 million GMW Water Efficiency Project to deliver off-farm infrastructure works and modernisation in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District, and the Mitiamo Pipeline Project was completed.</p> <p>In July 2022, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water approved funding for the \$37.9m Lower Murray Water Sunraysia Water Efficiency Project. The project is expected to recover up to 2.5GL of water recovery, with 1.8GL of water recovery towards the Basin Plan's 62GL offset target and additional water savings to be allocated to Traditional Owners and urban water security for Mallee towns.</p>	Until completion of Basin Plan



Chapter 5: Resilient and liveable cities and towns

Action 5.1 Use diverse water sources to protect public spaces		<p>Through Urban Water Strategies, water corporations have identified ways to meet future demand through diversification of water supplies. On ground opportunities for increased use of diverse water sources are being identified and progressed through the state's Integrated Water Management (IWM) Forums and water corporations' Drought Preparedness Plans. The EPA released revised recycled water guidelines in 2021, which clarifies and improves regulatory arrangements to support the increased uptake of safe and suitable uses of recycled water. The EPA's stormwater guidance released in 2021 provides performance objectives for flow reduction volume to inform priority areas for stormwater harvesting.</p>	Ongoing
Action 5.2 Better urban water planning to address key challenges		<p>All 5-yearly updates to Urban Water Strategies were finalised in 2022, including the Greater Melbourne Urban Water & System Strategy, a combined strategy between Melbourne Water, Greater Western Water, South East Water and Yarra Valley Water. The next update of the Urban Water Strategies will be due in 2027</p>	Ongoing






Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 5.3 Reinvigorate water efficiency programs for Melbourne and regional Victoria		<p>Water corporations are continuing to promote Target 155 (now Target 150 - metro) and Target Your Water Use (regional) through bills, website and social media.</p> <p>A Water Efficiency Strategy promoting collaboration has been supported by all urban water corporations and the Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP) has been extended to over 1,320 schools. A DEECA facilities trial with 30 sites has been completed, resulting in significant water savings.</p> <p>The Victorian government continues to fund the Community Rebate and Community Housing Retrofit Programs. These programs have provided 16,326 rebates to customers in vulnerable and hardship situations to reduce their water consumption and water bills. This is done by improving the water efficiency of appliances, fixing leaks and undertaking other efficiency upgrades, working directly with customers or through not-for-profit emergency and community housing organisations.</p> <p>The new Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy includes eight strong urban water efficiency actions, ranging from an ambitious behaviour change program to actions to improve council and business water efficiency.</p>	Ongoing
Action 5.4 Make the most of our investment in wastewater		<p>Melbourne Water released its Melbourne Sewerage Strategy in 2018. Opportunities for resource recovery from wastewater are being explored through the Strategy and through IWM Forums and Intelligent Water Networks.</p>	Ongoing
Action 5.5 Improve stormwater management for greener environments and healthier waterways		<p>The Victoria Planning Provisions were amended to extend stormwater management requirements to most development types.</p> <p>There has been a notable change in industry practice as a result of the regulatory updates, particularly following the release of the EPA Urban Stormwater Guidance.</p> <p>The Stormwater Ministerial Advisory Council's recommendations to build technical expertise, increase awareness and improve guidance has been implemented through training, communications and an online portal. Between July 2020 and the June 2023, 20 sessions on Victoria's stormwater planning requirements have been delivered statewide to an audience of over 900 people. Course evaluation consistently shows participants having 100% satisfaction with training courses noting improvement in knowledge and skills, likelihood to change practice, and try new approaches.</p> <p>Significant consultation with industry and local government councils in developing the preferred option for stormwater offset schemes and development of guidance documents has resulted in an increase in the number of offsets schemes established by local governments across Victoria.</p> <p>Building regulation reform has commenced to improve stormwater management. Development of local place-based targets for stormwater management is underway.</p>	Ongoing




Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 5.6 Work across government for healthy and resilient urban landscapes		<p>Water related benefits are considered and incorporated into key government strategies on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Gazetted on 16 December 2022, Planning Scheme Amendment VC201 delivers stronger recognition and protection for the waterways, lakes, wetlands, and billabongs of the Waterways of the West and Rivers of the Barwon (<i>Barre Warre Yulluk</i>) regions. The amendment aims to improve waterway health, amenity and access while acknowledging the important community and cultural values associated with waterways. This builds on stronger planning controls for the Birrarung between the city and Warrandyte introduced in 2017 and made permanent in 2021.</p>	Ongoing
Action 5.7 Represent community values and local opportunities in planning		<p>15 IWM forums have been established across Victoria, and place-based IWM Plans are being developed and implemented at a range of scales – local, precinct and catchment. Catchment scale IWM Plans have been completed for Metropolitan Melbourne’s five catchments and regional IWM strategic direction statements have been refreshed to reflect community and Traditional Owner values in IWM priorities.</p>	Ongoing
Action 5.8 Put integrated water management into practice		<p>A collaborative prioritisation process by IWM forums has led to government co-investment and progress of 177 IWM projects, with additional projects self-funded and supported by IWM forum collaborations. Economic evaluation tools and guidance have been developed that are being used within the water sector. Targeted training and development programs have been undertaken to improve capacity and participation in IWM and planning. Further work is being undertaken to strengthen IWM in land use planning and consider more systemic funding options for IWM projects that contribute to water security.</p>	Ongoing
Chapter 6: Recognising and managing for Aboriginal values			
Action 6.1 Recognise Aboriginal values and objectives of water		<p>Projects led by Traditional Owners have better defined and documented Aboriginal values, uses, and aspirations of Victoria’s waterways and catchments. These projects explore cultural mapping, seasonal watering plans, water management plans, and research of cultural and environmental flows.</p>	Ongoing


Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 6.2 Include Aboriginal values and traditional ecological knowledge in water planning		<p>Changes made to the <i>Water Act 1989</i> and the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> include requirements for consideration of Aboriginal cultural values and uses of waterways in water and catchment management processes and increased requirements on water sector agencies to engage and consult Aboriginal people in water and waterway management.</p> <p>Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians have made significant contributions to water policy and planning processes, including the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy, the Yarra Strategic Plan / Burndap Birrarung Burndap Umarkoo, the Waterways of the West Action Plan and the Rivers of the Barwon / Barre Warre Yalluk Action Plan, regional catchment strategies, environmental water planning and management and other projects delivered in partnership with the water sector.</p> <p>Aboriginal Water Officers continue to play a significant role in leading Traditional Owner water priorities and water-related projects across Victoria. They contribute to the delivery of environmental, cultural, spiritual and economic outcomes for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians; strengthen capacity of Traditional Owners to participate in water management; support increased Aboriginal access to water and work collaboratively with water managers to include Aboriginal values and ecological knowledge in waterway management and planning.</p> <p>Traditional Owner groups from across Victoria worked in partnership with DEECA to develop Water is Life, an Aboriginal access to Water roadmap released in 2022. Water is Life provides strengthened policy direction on self-determination in water access and management for Traditional Owners, including the inclusion of Aboriginal values and expertise in water and waterway management.</p>	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 6.3 Support Aboriginal access to water for economic development		<p>Delivered in partnership with the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations and Murray Lower Darling Indigenous Nations, and Traditional Owner groups, the Economic Development Initiative delivered funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Traditional Owner groups to explore how access to water can support their economic development • Traditional Owner participation in the Cultural Water for Cultural Economies project and report (2018-2021), and • development of Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap (2021-22) which commits to working with Traditional Owners to increase access to water entitlements under current frameworks and increase cultural benefits from the way we store, deliver, and use water. <p>This work led to Victoria's first return of water to Traditional Owners in 2020, with further water returns completed or in progress by mid-2023.</p> <p>The Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy also identifies further actions and opportunities to return water to Traditional Owners to support cultural, economic and spiritual values and uses as determined by Traditional Owners in the region.</p>	Ongoing
Action 6.4 Build capacity to increase Aboriginal participation in water management		<p>Since 2016, funding has been provided for up to 24 Aboriginal Water Officers and facilitation of an Aboriginal Water Officers' Network.</p> <p>Aboriginal Water Officers contribute to the delivery of environmental, cultural, spiritual and economic outcomes for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians; strengthen capacity of Traditional Owners to participate in water management; support increased Aboriginal access to water and work collaboratively with water managers to include Aboriginal values and ecological knowledge in waterway management and planning.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Water Officer Network is a space for Aboriginal Water Officers to come together to share and discuss knowledge, information and experiences working in the water sector and undertaking projects.</p> <p>Water sector agencies continue to strengthen their capacity to work respectfully with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians through cultural awareness and safety training, targeted recruitment and procurement processes, and working in partnership with Traditional Owners through planning and projects that recognise Aboriginal cultural values and objectives.</p>	Ongoing




Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Chapter 7: Recognising recreational values			
7.1 Include recreational values in water and waterway planning		Amendments were made to the <i>Water Act 1989</i> in 2019, and recreational and social values and uses have been incorporated into subordinate instruments where relevant. Support and guidance are being provided to water sector agencies as these changes take effect.	Ongoing
Action 7.2 Help communities understand how to achieve their recreational objectives		Through the Boosting Recreational Water Use initiative (BRWUI), nine site-based projects have brought together water authorities, local councils and community groups to improve recreational access and experience at the Wimmera, Werribee, Barwon, Maribyrnong and Campaspe Rivers, Moonee Ponds Creek, Blue Rock, Eildon and Eppalock. Governance requirements and community engagement has been strengthened to ensure agencies continue to engage with recreational user groups and provide user friendly information. Building on BRWUI, further investment is now supporting the delivery of fifteen site-based projects across the state.	Ongoing
Action 7.3 Support recreation at water storages through infrastructure and better information		Water corporations continue to provide recreational management services and facilities at storages and are progressing land and recreation management plans for water storages of significant recreational value.	Ongoing
Chapter 8: Water entitlements and planning			
Action 8.1 Ensure a strong, responsive water entitlement system		<p>Work is being undertaken to simplify regulatory instruments for the management of water systems and improve consistency, transparency and accountability, maintain the integrity, and ensure a strong and responsive framework for bulk water entitlements and systems.</p> <p>A review of the roles and responsibilities for management of water systems has been completed. The roles of storage manager and resource manager codified under all relevant appointments and associated instruments has been clarified and documented. Existing appointments have been reviewed and are being refreshed consistent with the outcomes of the review.</p> <p>Ongoing work is underway to look at future options to further improve system management appointments to simplify and provide greater clarity of roles.</p>	Ongoing
Action 8.2 Provide greater flexibility and choice for licence-holders		An investigation into take and use licences has been completed. DEECA is considering enhancements to the water licensing framework that will improve flexibility and certainty to entitlement holders.	Ongoing




Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 8.3 Investigate increased flexibility for taking water under winter-fill licences		Preliminary investigation has been completed, concluding that it would be a highly unreliable source of water. Further work to be undertaken to consider the value and feasibility of increased flexibility under a changing climate.	Ongoing
Action 8.4 Better record and report on emerging significant uses of water		Annual Water Accounts continue to report on significant uses of water. Long-term water resource assessment and Sustainable Water Strategies will review risks to Victoria's water resources. Relevant information was included in the 2021 draft and 2022 final Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy.	Ongoing
Action 8.5 Ensure a modern compliance regime that works		Victoria takes active steps to continue to improve compliance and enforcement frameworks, including amending legislation, implementing new regulations and improving performance reporting. Regulations are now in place so that water corporations can apply penalty infringement notices (PINs) or "on-the-spot" fines for unauthorised take up to 10 ML. All water corporations with rural customers have Metering Action Plans outlining actions to ensure accurate metering and measurement of water, including the application of telemetry 'real-time data' for high-risk sites.	Ongoing
Action 8.6 Commence the long-term water resource assessment (LTWRA) process		The Long-Term Water Resource Assessment (LTWRA) for southern Victoria was released in March 2020. Legislation has been amended to allow for the findings of a LTWRA to be considered through the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy and to delay the LTWRA for Northern Victoria so that it can align with and inform the Basin Plan review in 2026. The findings of the LTWRA have informed the actions contained in the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy released in 2022.	Ongoing
Action 8.7 Commence sustainable water strategy (SWS) reviews		The Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy review is complete and was released in 2019. The Western Region and Gippsland Region 5-yearly assessments were completed and released in late 2018. The new Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy was developed in 2021-22. Public consultation on the draft was held from October – December 2021. It includes a range of climate change scenarios and considers opportunities to achieve shared benefits and recreational values. DELWP partnered with Traditional Owners to develop the strategy, with Traditional Owners represented on the Consultative Committee.	Ongoing





Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 8.8 Align the sustainable water strategy and long-term water resource assessment processes		Legislation has been amended to align the SWS and LTWRA processes.	Ongoing
Action 8.9 Improve rural water supply planning		<p>Rural water corporations have continued to improve provision of information on water resource availability through publication of annual water outlooks. Draft guidelines for the development of low flow contingency plans have been developed and consultation with water corporations is underway with pilot low flow contingency plans to be developed for priority systems as a next step.</p> <p>A new reserve rule was implemented for the Wimmera-Glenelg system in the 2022-23 season.</p> <p>Amendments have been scoped and proposed for inclusion in future bill to be further scoped with ongoing reform work. DEECA has continued to strengthen water resource assessments and modelling via a number of projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water resource assessments completed across the Central and Gippsland region of Victoria to inform the evidence base and policy direction of the Central and Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy and to support the implementation of its actions. • The annual assessment of Victoria's compliance with the Murray Darling Basin cap on water diversions, and transitional annual assessment of Victoria's compliance with diversion limits, and Sustainable Diversions Limit compliance assessment with diversion limits has been undertaken resulting in Victoria successfully meeting compliance and legislative obligations. 	Ongoing
Action 8.10 Provide clear information about water resources to the community		<p>Annual water accounts have been released via an interactive website as well as a comprehensive written report. Regular water resource reporting has been improved and the development of a new accounts website with even more detail is in progress. A water market watch app with real-time market information has been released.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria (GTAV), teacher and student water units for Years 7 and 10 have been developed to include DEECA's rich water data and new digital information products. DEECA and GTAV have commenced stage 2 which will involve curating an online space for teachers to access the wealth of information available from Water Corporations and DEECA on the water life cycle.</p> <p>Work is well advanced in the redevelopment of the Water Information Management System to meet end-user expectations.</p>	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 8.11 Improve water resource information to support planning and decisions		Real-time monitoring is in operation, and agreements are in place with over 50 regional monitoring partners to continue statewide surface water and groundwater monitoring networks. The transition from 3G to 4G surface water monitoring is almost complete. The 4G groundwater transition is underway. Water resource assessment and modelling capabilities have been strengthened to improve understanding of water availability, use and impacts of climate change, and are being used to inform evidence-based policy and decision-making.	Ongoing


Chapter 9: Realising the potential of the grid and markets



Action 9.1 Develop a grid oversight function		<p>A grid oversight function, the Water Grid Partnership, has been established and the first biennial statement on water resources status across the state was released in October 2018. Since then, further work has been completed to improve understanding of water availability, demand, risks, level of security and potential future grid augmentations – key inputs to the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy. The second biennial statement, improved to be more interactive, went live on the DELWP website in 2021.</p> <p>The findings of this work have informed the 2021 draft and 2022 final actions contained in the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy. This includes a commitment to a new governing arrangement (Executive Advisory Committee) and development of a Water Grid Plan in 2023.</p>	Ongoing
Action 9.2 Plan for future grid augmentations		<p>Potential future grid augmentation options will be considered through biennial statements, as well as through the Water Grid Plan and Urban Water Strategies.</p> <p>The findings of this work have informed the actions contained in the 2021 draft and 2022 final Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy. This includes a commitment to a new governing arrangement (Executive Advisory Committee) and development of a Water Grid Plan in 2023.</p>	Ongoing
Action 9.3 Improve the effectiveness of water markets		<p>A report on market effectiveness has been completed and improvements to water market oversight are in progress. Annual audits of water broker performance have been delivered.</p> <p>Work has also been undertaken to influence and contribute to joint government priorities including a water market reform roadmap based on the ACCC Murray-Darling Basin Water Markets Inquiry (March 2021) and associated final Roadmap due out by end 2022, and report on Managing Delivery Risks in the River Murray (2020).</p>	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 9.4 Increase water market transparency and information sharing		Enhancements to the Victorian Water Register have been completed to improve public entitlement and trade services. Targeted consultation with the public on transparency preferences has been completed, informing new Water Market Insights website pages with dashboards on water availability, trade opportunities and how trade rules work, market prices, and large water owners. Significant progress has been made on building a new Victorian Water Register.	Ongoing
Action 9.5 Develop the water market in south central Victoria		<p>The south central water market trial is now complete with the findings of this work, not to proceed with the development of a fuller market, contained in the 2021 draft and 2022 final Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy.</p> <p>Significant progress has been made on reforms to entitlements and pricing that will facilitate better management of pooled resources and provide better signalling for local and system scale augmentations – the findings of this work have informed actions in the 2021 draft and 2022 final Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy.</p>	Ongoing
Action 9.6 Improve trading rules in northern Victoria		<p>Regulatory steps have been completed to implement refined long-term Goulburn to Murray trade and operating rules. The rules, announced in June 2022, ensure trade is only allowed within the ecological tolerances of the lower Goulburn River. The new assessment process was reviewed following the first year of implementation for the assessment of works licences and extraction shares in the Lower Murray. New legislation was passed in 2021 to further clarify arrangements for rationing during a shortfall event.</p> <p>Interjurisdictional work program on River Murray delivery risks is continuing with improved resourcing. Tested Victorian shortfall preparedness plans with a shortfall “drill” involving the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and other river Murray states</p> <p>Passed amendments to the <i>Water Act 1989</i> to strengthen and clarify water delivery rights with the introduction of a Place of Take approvals framework and commenced implementation of this new framework.</p>	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 9.7 Develop trading rules in other water systems		A review of water entitlements and trading in western Victoria has been completed and actions to support trade in that system are being progressed. A review of the opportunities for trade between groundwater and surface water has been completed. Commitments to continue to improve groundwater trading were included in the Groundwater 2030 strategy. Work commenced with Southern Rural Water on a Macalister Irrigation District market platform trial to increase ease of trade.	Ongoing
Chapter 10: Jobs, economy and innovation			
Action 10.1 Improve engagement with customers and the broader community		A continuous program has been implemented to ensure water corporations improve interactions with all customer groups. The water sector also continues to participate in regionally based forums to inform and deliver on Regional and Metro Partnership priorities. Water corporations have continued to focus on customer engagement to inform pricing decisions under the PREMO model regulated by the Essential Services Commission.	Ongoing
Action 10.2 Consult business on future needs and provide information to support investment		Water corporations continue to engage with businesses on future needs and are building this into strategic planning processes.	Ongoing
Action 10.3 Promote innovation in the water sector		Investment has been made in the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities to help drive innovative solutions to water problems, while fifteen Victorian water corporations, DEECA and VicWater continue to actively participate in Intelligent Water Networks. In 2021, the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities completed its operations. A new research centre, the Water Sensitive Cities Institute (WSCI), has been established in its place and DELWP contributed funding to support the WSCI to focus work on regional IWM issues in Victoria. The Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge (the Challenge) was developed by Intelligent Water Networks (IWN) in partnership with DEECA, ready for its launch in 2023. The Challenge will run annually for three years, providing funding towards projects led by Victorian water corporations.	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 10.4 Build capacity and capability in the water sector		<p>Water corporations and CMAs are continuing to work with delivery partners to identify skills gaps and develop programs to improve skills and capacity in the sector, including traineeships, apprenticeships and Director development programs. DEECA will work with Traditional Owner Groups across 2022-2024 to develop a pipeline of First Nations Victorians who will make an expression of interest to be on a water board.</p> <p>Guidelines to assist water corporation and CMA boards engage Aboriginal Delegates were issued by DEECA on 11 September 2023. As part of the Aboriginal Delegate program, Aboriginal Delegates on water corporation boards will be entitled to an AICD scholarship and DEECA has directly funded CMAs to provide similar support to their Aboriginal board Delegates.</p>	Ongoing
Action 10.5 Provide third party access to existing infrastructure		<p>A framework for third party access has been developed, which will enable other service providers to use existing infrastructure if required to achieve strategic objectives, such as augmenting water supply or treating wastewater.</p>	Ongoing
Action 10.6 Drive strong governance and performance		<p>Ongoing engagement across the water sector has improved governance and clarified performance expectations against an outcomes framework.</p>	Ongoing
Action 10.7 Promote gender equity in the water sector		<p>The water sector has developed strategies and goals to increase and support both gender equity and Aboriginal inclusion including establishment of the Insight: Executive Leadership Program for women in water. The 12-month learning program targeting small regional and rural water sector organisations commenced in 2020 and moved seamlessly into a virtual learning environment. The program is running again in 2022 and 2024.</p>	Ongoing
Action 10.8 Increase Aboriginal inclusion in the water sector		<p>The water sector is making positive change to improve Aboriginal inclusion in the water sector, including increasing the number of Aboriginal Victorians appointed to water authority boards. This work continued in 2021-22 with scholarships awarded to high potential individuals to receive AICD training in governance. In 2022-23 further funding is being used to improve the awareness of the water sector, and to develop high potential individuals for future board positions.</p> <p>As at 1 October 2023, the number of Aboriginal board members will increase to 21, up from 11 in 2019 and 13 in 2021. With this increased representation, 19 out of 28 water sector Boards will have an Aboriginal board member.</p>	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 10.9 Support economic development through Aboriginal participation		The water sector is working with Traditional Owner groups to support increased Victorian Aboriginal self-determination by exploring and developing opportunities for Aboriginal enterprises to supply goods and services for the water sector. Water corporations and CMAs are also developing traineeship and employment programs for Aboriginal Victorians to increase participation in the sector.	Ongoing
Action 10.10 Respond to the Royal Commission into Family Violence		The Essential Services Commission has worked with water corporations to amend customer policies to include training and support, secure handling of information, debt management and referral of affected customers to specialist services.	Ongoing
Action 10.11 Find ways to cut red tape		<p>A review of administrative practices was undertaken, and amendments have been made to relevant legislation.</p> <p>A project to improve and consolidate performance reporting for the sector is also underway, allowing the last five years of historical data (i.e. Annual Report, Corporate Plan and ESC Pricing data) to facilitate analysis of water sector performance and identify areas for improvement. The project will examine the possible development of a process and mechanism for a 'one-stop' approach to performance data collection from water corporations. A pilot database was completed in 2021-22 and is in the testing and development phase.</p>	Ongoing

Action	Status	Highlight	Timeframe
Action 10.12 Improve emergency management capability		<p>The capability and capacity of the water sector to prepare and respond to water related incidents continues to be significantly improved, through training and emergency exercises, as well as improved emergency management processes and systems. Further capability has been included within DEECA's Water and Catchments Group with the training of additional Water Duty Officers and Water Service Specialists. These roles support the 6 State Controllers for Class 2 water emergencies.</p> <p>Water Corporations and CMAs roles and responsibilities in emergency management have been included in the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). Several SEMP Sub-plans have been updated, with DEECA reinforcing its emergency management capability.</p> <p>Through the upgraded web-based Water Intelligence Platform, data on algal blooms, dam safety and other key water sector risks continue to be readily available to key stakeholders for monitoring, analysis and reporting. Additional funding has been secured to further enhance the functionality of modules within Floodzoom.</p> <p>Learnings from Water Corporation emergency exercises and real emergency events such as the 2022 Victorian Floods provide the evidence to update and revise emergency process and systems. Leading seasonal briefings and information sessions ensure this sector is well connected to other emergency agencies. This is an ongoing initiative that is required to maintain emergency management capability and capacity in the water sector with the amplifying effect of climate change.</p>	Ongoing
Action 10.13 Deliver Water for Victoria		<p>Project Office and Project Control Board have been established. Water for Victoria progress updates continue to be published, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes are in place for all initiatives funded by the Environmental Contribution.</p>	Ongoing

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.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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