

Waterways of the West

Action Plan Annual Report
March 2023



Acknowledgments

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Photo credit

Front cover: Aerial image of the townships of Melton South and Brookfield alongside Melton Reservoir, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Country, on the Werribee River.

The new Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) was established on 1 January 2023. This department includes the previous functions of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, excluding the Planning portfolio and those areas supporting it which are now part of the new Department of Transport and Planning.

Acknowledgment

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge their ongoing connection to land, water and natural and built landscapes, and acknowledge the ongoing contribution this makes to the Waterways of the West region.

We support the need for genuine and lasting partnerships with Traditional Owners to support self-determination and the protection of Country. The Victorian Government is committed to working towards equity of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice for Traditional Owners. We recognise the Waterways of the West as living and integrated natural entities: the rivers, creeks and wetlands and the landscapes through which they flow that form the Maribyrnong (*Mirrangbamurn*) River, Werribee (*Wirribi Yaluk*) River and Moonee Ponds (*Moonee Moonee*) Creek catchments. Their waters flow together from the uplands to the sea, supporting and bringing life to the region.



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Content

Introduction	2
How the 5-Year Action Plan builds on the Vision for the Waterways of the West	3
Interdependencies with other strategies	4
Action plan implementation for 2022	5
Implementation in focus	10
Jacksons Creek <i>biik wurrdha</i> Regional Parklands	10
Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan	11
Engaging communities as core to Waterways of the West Action Plan	12
Iconic Urban Waterways Grants Program 2022	13
Looking ahead	14
Implementation of longer-term actions – Progress summary	16

Introduction

This report implements the Victorian Government's commitment to update the community annually on progress towards delivery of the Waterways of the West Action Plan (the Action Plan). The Action Plan, released in late 2021, drives enduring protection for waterways and their parklands by addressing impacts of development and pressures of urbanisation on the distinct waterway landscapes west of Melbourne. It covers a connected network of creeks and rivers from Jackson (*biik wurrdha*) and Deep Creeks in the outer north-west, Little and Werribee (*Wirribi Yaluk*) Rivers in the outer south-west, and Moonee Ponds (*Moonee Moonee*) Creek and the Maribyrnong (*Mirrangbamurn*) River in Melbourne's inner west.

The Action Plan is the Government's response to the Waterways of the West Ministerial Advisory Committee and is guided by the community's vision for the region's waterways.

The Action Plan recognises the Waterways of the West as living and integrated natural entities: the rivers, creeks and wetlands and the landscapes through which they flow that form the Maribyrnong (*Mirrangbamurn*) and Werribee (*Wirribi Yaluk*) catchments. The plan also recognises the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners as 'voices of the living entities' on their Country. It is a new community-led approach to ensure iconic waterways in Melbourne's west are protected for generations to come.

The Action Plan identifies nine directions and 40 actions. Short-term actions have been developed to deliver results within the first year of implementation and longer-term actions within five years, subject to funding. It will drive enduring protection for waterways and their parklands by addressing waterway pollution, waterway amenity, and stronger land use planning controls to guard against inappropriate development.

Community vision for Waterways of the West

The Waterways of the West 50-year community vision underpins the Action Plan – representing the community's aspirations and expectations for the protection of the west's waterways. The community vision guides policy makers, waterway and land managers and the community as we walk together with the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Custodians of the Waterways of the West and their lands over the next 50 years.

The vision was developed by a community assembly representing the region and was further informed by an engagement process that included young people through a 'Schools Vision' and through a targeted program for the region's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community.

The vision outlines the communities aspirations for cities, suburbs and towns; rural and agricultural lands; natural places; and forested areas. It envisages healthy, diverse and sustainable waterways throughout the west – where community members meet and gather, reflect, run, walk and play. This vision is integrated into the Action Plan's nine directions.

How the 5-Year Action Plan builds on the vision for the Waterways of the West



Figure 1: Waterways of the West implementation framework



Interdependencies with other strategies

Delivery of the Action Plan has influenced and been influenced by development of broader Government policies and strategies released during its first year of implementation. [Water is Life – Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap](#) (*Water is Life*) and the [Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy](#) (*CGRSWS*) have been particularly important.

Water is Life, released in September 2022, was developed in partnership with Victorian Traditional Owners. It sets out the actions the Government will take in partnership with Traditional Owners, the water sector and existing water users to increase Traditional Owner access to water. *Water is Life* will guide the process of restorative justice to strengthen the role of Traditional Owners in water planning and management and work to return water entitlements to Traditional Owners as water becomes available. Expanding on the vision of the Waterways of the West, *Water is Life* outlines a recognition of Waterways of the West as living and integrated natural entities and Traditional Owners as the ‘voice of these living entities.’ *Water is Life* commits state-wide support for Traditional Owners to self-determine how these concepts will be applied on their Country.

The next one to three years will see Traditional Owners supported to work with Victoria’s Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and stakeholders to develop legislative proposals for consideration by Parliament.

Also released in September 2022, *CGRSWS* sets out actions to secure the region’s long-term water supplies. The Waterways of the West and *CGRSWS* provide pathways for addressing the future needs of the region’s growing population in the face of declining water availability. The strategies look at building resilience through improved management and utilisation of fit for purpose manufactured water sources such as stormwater and recycled water. *CGRSWS* identifies clear policies and actions for securing additional water for environmental and cultural water returns for key waterways, including for Werribee (*Wirribi Yaluk*) River and Maribyrnong (*Mirrangbamurn*) River, as strongly advocated by the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners and the wider community. There is also a complementary focus on protecting water quality in the west’s waterways including managing the nutrient load that runs into Port Philip Bay, a goal supported by the work of the Waterways of the West Pollution Taskforce.



Footscray Park, Maribyrnong (Mirrangbamurn) River, Wurundjeri Country

Action plan implementation for 2022

Progress on the Action Plan's short-term actions – to be delivered within the first year of its release – is outlined below in Table 1. An update on the status of longer-term actions is outlined at the end of this report. A detailed explanation of all deliverables and actions, including background, can be found in the [Waterways of the West Action Plan](#).

While each action below lists a responsible lead organisation, the delivery of the Action Plan is only achievable through extensive collaboration and partnership.

In particular, it is acknowledged that the timing and delivery of actions undertaken in partnership with Bunurong, Wadawurrung, and Wurundjeri woi wurrung are guided by the self-determined approach of each group, and will occur in parallel with implementation of *Water is Life* and the CGRSWS. In delivering the Community Vision, all agencies and the community will continue to walk together with the Traditional Owners of the Waterways of the West towards shared outcomes.

Table 1: Waterways of the West short-term action updates

Delivery of actions in 2022	Status
<p>Action 1.1 – ‘Living entity’ and ‘voice’ for Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS)</p> <p>Melbourne Water engaged with the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners to develop a new Port Phillip and Western Port RCS. The Port Phillip and Western Port RCS reflects Traditional Owners’ knowledge, aspirations and right to self-determination. The Port Phillip and Western Port RCS acknowledges that waterways and lands are increasingly being recognised as living and integrated natural entities and Traditional Owners should be recognised as their ‘voice.’</p> <p>The strategy was approved in early 2023 by the Minister for Water. The complete strategy can be accessed at portphilipwesternport.rcs.vic.gov.au</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 1.2 – Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung aspirations in RCS planning</p> <p>The State Government made funding available to support the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation’s participation in the development and implementation planning of the Port Phillip and Western Port RCS. Each group determined its own level of involvement in RCS development.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 1.3 – Support for Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung to express ‘voice of living entities’</p> <p>The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation are being supported to express their ‘voice of living entities’ on Country which is guided by self-determination priorities.</p> <p>This includes being involved in all levels of governance of the CGRSWS and in technical and cultural review of planning controls. The Victorian Government supports and resources this partnership approach as we continue to walk together.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action</i></p>	In progress

Delivery of actions in 2022	Status
<p>Action 2.1 – Embed connections to Country in RCS</p> <p>Melbourne Water partnered with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in planning the Port Philip and Western Port RCS – with all groups approving the strategy. The strategy is considerate of the Healthy Country Plans of the Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners. The Bunurong Healthy Country Plan had not been prepared at the time the strategy was completed. Ongoing partnership will occur with the implementation of the strategy.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 2.2 – Partnerships to implement ‘voice’ on Country</p> <p>Melbourne Water will continue to partner with Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung to deliver outcomes on Country, including implementing the ‘voice of the living entities’. The timing and delivery of this action will be guided by partnerships and a self-determined approach with each of the Traditional Owner groups.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	In Progress
<p>Action 2.3 – Support for Jacksons Creek ‘biik wurrdha’ Regional Parklands Cultural Values Study</p> <p>Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation completed a cultural values study for the Jacksons Creek <i>biik wurrdha</i> Regional Parklands in collaboration with Hume City Council. The development of the cultural values study embedded Wurundjeri values from the start of <i>biik wurrdha</i> planning. The Woi wurrung language name for the parklands – <i>biik wurrdha</i> – was provided by Wurundjeri Elder Auntie Gail Smith.</p> <p>See: Implementation in focus - Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 3.1 – Stronger planning policy and guidance</p> <p>The Government has finalised Amendment VC201 to the region’s planning scheme to enhance the protection of the Werribee (<i>Wirribi Yaluk</i>) and Maribyrnong (<i>Mirrangbamurn</i>) Rivers and Moonee Ponds (<i>Moonee Moonee</i>) Creek. The amendment inserts a new regional policy to protect the Waterways of the West from the impacts of urban development and updates State planning policy for waterway protection. Amendment VC201 responds to short-term actions of both the Waterways of the West and Rivers of the Barwon (<i>Barre Warre Yulluk</i>) Action Plans. Information about the amendment can be found here.</p> <p>This action supports the community visions that ‘The open space and amenity of these waterways, their lands and the coastal area underpin the region’s vibrancy and the liveability of local neighbourhoods. They offer a place for people to connect with nature and each other.’</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Transport and Planning</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 3.2 – Interim landscape and environmental controls for key waterways</p> <p>Significant Landscape Overlay schedules have been introduced to protect landscape value and amenity within the urban growth boundary for the Maribyrnong (<i>Mirrangbamurn</i>) River, Werribee (<i>Wirribi Yaluk</i>) River and Moonee Ponds (<i>Moonee Moonee</i>) Creek. The schedules aim to identify and protect each waterway corridor landscape, recognising the need to better manage increasing development pressures. Generally consistent across each schedule, strategies are included to enhance the continuous riparian corridor landscape, retain indigenous vegetation and encourage revegetation. They will ensure that building and works are setback and not visually dominant and that rear boundary fencing facing the waterway corridor is transparent. While landscape controls have been introduced, further investigation is planned to examine the need for additional environmental controls on the waterways, focusing on vegetation and biodiversity, as part of delivery of longer-term actions 3.3 and 3.4.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Transport and Planning</i></p>	In Progress

Delivery of actions in 2022	Status
<p>Action 4.1 – Waterway amenity values in RCS</p> <p>The amenity values of waterways were incorporated into the development of the Port Philip and Western Port RCS. Mapping of waterway condition and social needs was used to identify amenity values. Mapping helps to identify locations where works can be undertaken to improve amenity, such as better access, shaded pathways, more recreational facilities, or visitor information signage.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 4.2 – Develop a Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan</p> <p>Launched in 2022, the Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan (LWWAAP) aligns the efforts of numerous stakeholders' strategic projects across the Lower Werribee area. The LWWAAP demonstrates the benefit of a cross-agency approach to, and advocacy for, improving the amenity of waterways – which in turns contributes to achieving the communities' long-term vision for the Waterways of the West. The LWWAAP complements works being undertaken on Werribee River Regional Park which will provide the community with greater access to healthy outdoor activities in this key growth corridor.</p> <p>The Bunurong and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners partnered in the development of this action plan and a cultural values assessment is a key next step.</p> <p>See: Implementation in focus – Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 4.3 – Waterway amenity advocacy</p> <p>Melbourne Water has delivered outcomes that benefit both the environment and amenity by implementing the Healthy Waterways Strategy in the Maribyrnong (Mirrangbamurn) and Werribee (Wirribi Yaluk) catchments. These include several education and engagement programs and partnerships, increased access on, to and along waterways, action to reduce litter onsite and at source, four creek naturalisation programs, and a range of riparian vegetation and environmental water delivery projects that have both environmental and amenity benefits.</p> <p>Internal consultation is currently underway around the renewal of the Waterway Corridor Guidelines, which provide guidance to developers about the treatment of the waterway corridor within new development areas, such as appropriate setbacks from the waterway to uses that have potential to impact the waterways, environmental and amenity values.</p> <p>Waterway amenity needs mapping was undertaken and included in the Port Philip and Western Port RCS. The mapping was developed using a framework that considered health, socio-economic factors and access to open space indicators. Collaboration occurred with partner agencies involved in open space management, such as local councils and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	In progress
<p>Action 5.1 – Wetland mapping data update</p> <p>Victorian Wetland Inventory (2021 update) was released in September 2021. It provides public wetland information that enables stakeholders to access more accurate and comprehensive wetland mapping for including the Port Phillip and Western Port region.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 5.2 – RCS wetland mapping</p> <p>The Port Phillip and Western Port RCS includes mapping of the region's wetlands.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	Delivered

Delivery of actions in 2022	Status
<p>Action 6.1 – Funding for Traditional Owner cultural water assessment priorities</p> <p>Funding was provided to the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to self-determine their cultural water priorities. All three Traditional Owner groups were involved in the CGRSWS Traditional Owner Partnership Group and were represented on the consultative committee that guided its development. This was the first sustainable water strategy developed in partnership with Traditional Owners and took significant strides towards enabling increased Traditional Owner access to water. Traditional Owners will continue to identify priorities as we walk together to heal Country.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 7.1 – Pollution Prevention Taskforce</p> <p>The Waterways of the West Pollution Prevention Taskforce, chaired by Dr. Jane Doolan, brought together key stakeholders to identify additional pollution prevention activities to support implementation of the general environment duty. As secretariat of the taskforce, the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) investigated pollution hotspots and collated data on key high-risk industries. It also convened a series of multi-stakeholder workshops in 2022 to develop a program of actions to tackle pollution risks. This coincided with an EPA enforcement blitz of the region. The involvement of the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners, as the ‘voice of this living entity’ played a key role in developing the taskforce’s recommendations. A longer-term commitment of the Action Plan is to undertake actions proposed by the Pollution Prevention Taskforce, subject to funding.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Environment Protection Authority Victoria</i></p>	In progress
<p>Action 8.1 – Community engagement about Traditional Owner culture and values</p> <p>Melbourne Water will continue to partner with Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung to deliver outcomes on Country, including community engagement about Traditional Owner culture and values. The timing and delivery of this action will be guided by partnerships and a self-determined approach with each of the Traditional Owner groups.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	In progress
<p>Action 8.2 – Community engagement strategy, including CALD</p> <p>Funding was provided for a project to grow waterway knowledge and engagement with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. A CALD engagement and community participation strategy will be considered and developed as part of Melbourne Water’s Water Literacy Program.</p> <p>See: Implementation in focus - Engaging communities as core to Waterways of the West Action Plan</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	In progress
<p>Action 8.3 – CALD engagement toolkit</p> <p>The Waterways of the West CALD engagement toolkit was developed collaboratively between Brimbank City Council, CommUnity+, Friends of Steele Creek, Maribyrnong City Council, Melbourne Water, Tran Hung Dao Scouts Group, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Werribee River Association</p> <p>This toolkit will assist in planning increased connection with Waterways of the West region’s CALD communities and will be launched in early 2023. Translations, released by DEECA, of the Waterways of the West community vision and supporting videos were made for the ten most commonly spoken languages of the region. The translated versions can be found here.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action</i></p>	Delivered

Delivery of actions in 2022	Status
<p>Action 8.4 – Community Vision inclusion in RCS</p> <p>The Port Philip and Western Port RCS acknowledges the 50-year Waterways of the West community vision.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Melbourne Water</i></p>	Delivered
<p>Action 9.1 – Annual implementation report</p> <p>The first annual implementation report for Waterways of the West Action Plan was published on the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action’s website in March 2023.</p> <p><i>Lead organisation: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action</i></p>	Delivered



Werribee (Wirribi Yaluk) River, Wadawurrung Country
Credit: Werribee River Association

Implementation in focus

Jacksons Creek *biik wurrdha* Regional Parklands

Action 2.3

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung will undertake the Jacksons Creek Regional Parklands cultural values study and will be supported in achieving aspirations identified by the study.

Action 2.4

Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung to deliver a planning pilot project — the Jacksons Creek Planning Partnership — to embed cultural mapping values that inform future protections and form part of the broader Jacksons Creek Regional Parklands Master Plan.

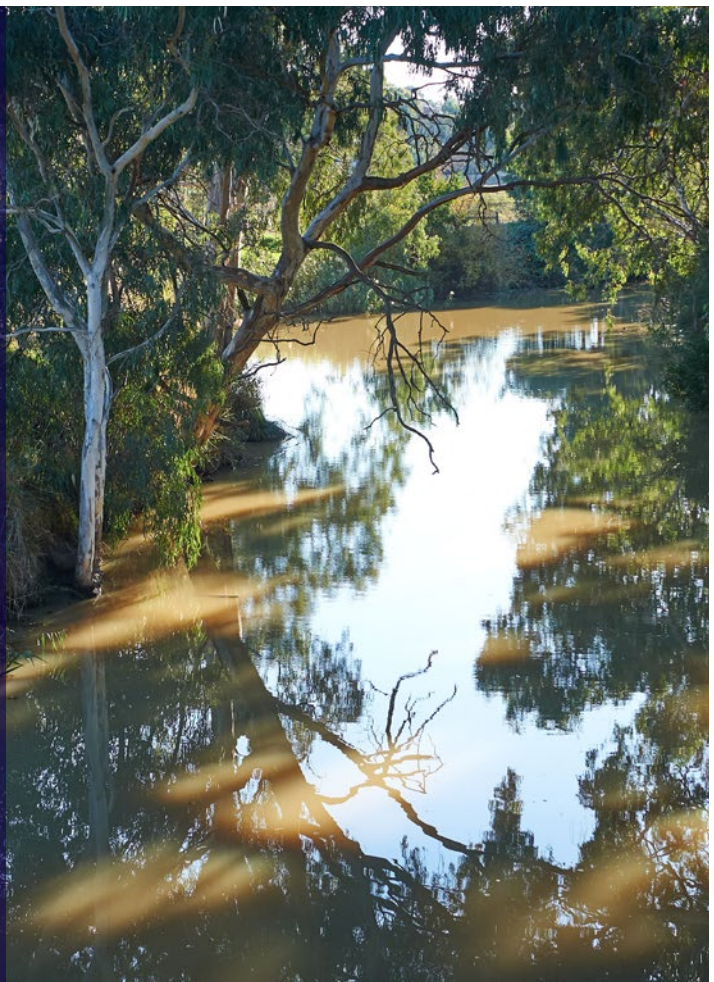
The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's cultural values study of Jacksons Creek was a core part of the development of the [Jacksons Creek *biik wurrdha* Regional Parklands Plan](#) launched in 2022. The study provides insights into how the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung peoples shaped the landscape through its occupation and land management and outlines 10 recommendations for future direction and planning for the area.

A key objective of the plan is the protection of *biik wurrdha* cultural landscape and increasing awareness amongst visitors and the surrounding community of the significance of the area through the sharing of Woi wurrung culture. Importantly, the plan supports the use of the name *biik wurrdha* for Jackson Creek, which acknowledges Woi wurrung custodianship and strengthens community knowledge of the cultural importance of the parklands. The Waterways of the West community vision sets out the aspiration to embrace cultural values and walk together with Wurundjeri Woi wurrung peoples in caring for Country.

biik wurrdha forms part of the Victorian Government's Suburban Parks Program, which aims to create new and upgraded parklands in Melbourne's growing outer suburbs.

Vision:
Jacksons Creek *biik wurrdha* Regional Parklands will be an inspiring natural and cultural landscape valued for the ecological, spiritual, historical and living connections it provides to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung community and visitors from Sunbury and beyond.

Jacksons Creek, Sunbury





Smoking ceremony at launch of Lower Werribee Waterways Amenity Action Plan. Credit: Melbourne Water

Action 4.2

Support Melbourne Water and other public land managers to deliver the Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan.

Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan

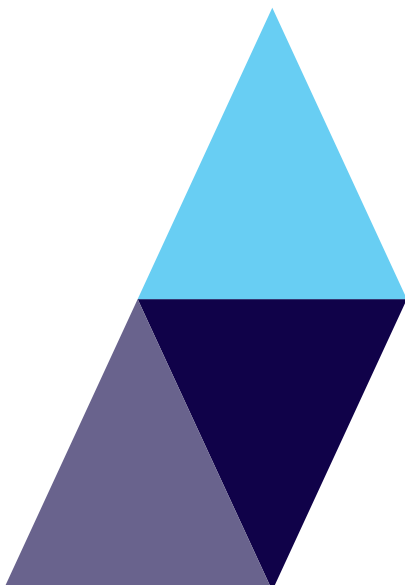
The [Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan](#) (LWAAAP) was completed and officially launched in April 2022. One of LWAAAP's aims is to align the efforts of the numerous stakeholders within the region to improve access, connectivity, and visibility for the community. Key stakeholders include:

- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Melbourne Water
- Parks Victoria
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Werribee Open Range Zoo
- Werribee River Association
- Western Melbourne Tourism Inc.
- Wyndham City Council.

This approach should foster more focused leadership and collaboration around waterways, generating wider benefits for the community and region.

This year saw the delivery of projects to improve shade and tree planting around the picnic areas and shared path along Riversdale Road and the completion of a new kayak launch in Werribee Regional Park, expected to open in early 2023. A large part of the success of LWAAAP will be the engagement of a passionate local community, through the Werribee River Keeper, as well as the aspirations of Traditional Owners caring for Country along the Werribee (*Wirribi Yulluk*) River. Broader strategic projects being undertaken by project partners in the region also contribute to LWAAAP's wider goals, including:

- work occurring on the Werribee irrigation district reconfiguration
- planning for the new Werribee Township Regional Park
- enhanced visitation and ecotourism to the wetlands of the Western Treatment Plant.



Engaging communities as core to Waterways of the West Action Plan

Action 8.2

Melbourne Water will develop a community participation and volunteer strategy to boost community involvement in waterway planning and management, that includes a program specifically for the Waterways of the West's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Action 8.3

Deliver a Waterways of the West CALD engagement toolkit to assist planning to increase the connection of the region's CALD communities with the Waterways of the West.

Already local champions at engaging the community on the Werribee (*Wirribi Yulluk*) River, the Werribee River Association created a dedicated CALD engagement program in 2022.

The program seeks to encourage increased visitation and understanding of the Werribee (*Wirribi Yaluk*) River and surrounding area within the local CALD community. It aims to achieve this through enhancing volunteer engagement and strengthening partnerships with CALD groups and Traditional Owners. The Werribee River Association ran a targeted engagement program, supported by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, which included face-to-face activities at a range of public locations and events such as the Monsoon Festival (250 attendees) and Eid Multicultural Bazaar (100 attendees). The program also deployed a wide-ranging communications campaign across social media, local news, radio, a postcard series and more. A standout was the 'Landscapes of Werribee' poster series that was translated and rolled out for Wyndham's most commonly spoken languages (English, Hindi, Mandarin and Arabic). By focusing on new estates and collaborating with multiple stakeholders including developers, community centres, cultural groups and businesses, the program was able to reach a portion of the community that had not traditionally been engaged on waterway issues.



Iconic Urban Waterways Grants Program 2022

Projects listed in Table 2 were funded by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action in 2022. The total funding allocated was \$911,000, with all projects to be delivered by June 2024.

The iconic urban waterways include the Birrarung (Yarra River), the Waterways of the West (Maribyrnong and Werribee catchments) and the Rivers of the Barwon (*Barre Warre Yulluk*). This initiative is implementing Action 3.1 in Chapter 3 of Water for Victoria.

It is fulfilling the Government's commitment to improve planning arrangements for urban waterways, and protect and enhance the health of their catchments now and into the future.

Table 2: Iconic Urban Waterways Recipients 2022

Project title	Recipient	Description
Arnolds Creek – coming back to life	Melton City Council	Developing projects identified in 'Reimagining Arnolds Creek' with the potential to improve environmental, amenity and social values in the Arnolds Creek catchment.
Bungies Hole Concept Design	Wyndham City Council	Concept design for improved landscape outcomes and on-water access at Bungies Hole.
Cherry Creek Stormwater Harvesting Project	Hobsons Bay City Council	Plan for delivery of constructed wetlands, channel naturalisation and stormwater harvesting system to enhance the amenity of Cherry Creek, Altona.
Upper Moonee Ponds (<i>Moonee Moonee</i>) Creek Shared Trail Enhancement Project	Greater Western Water	Development of the design for an extension of the Moonee Ponds (<i>Moonee Moonee</i>) Creek Trail in Westmeadows, including construction specifications and costings.
Werribee (<i>Wirribi Yaluk</i>) River – Feasibility study – Eastern Riverbank Shared Path	Wyndham City Council	Feasibility study of the construction of a shared path along the eastern bank of the river between the K Road Cliffs and Werribee South Beach.
Wurundjeri/Chain of Ponds Cultural Heritage Resource	Greater Western Water	Initiative for the Moonee Ponds (<i>Moonee Moonee</i>) Creek community to learn more and engage with Wurundjeri Woi wurrung culture and aspirations for the creek, delivered as part of a First Nations and Chain of Ponds partnership.
Werribee Catchment Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community Engagement Program	Melbourne Water	Partnership between Melbourne Water and Werribee River Association, to enhance CALD communities' knowledge and connection to the natural environment of the catchment.
Growing Waterway Knowledge and Engagement in the West	Melbourne Water	Grow West will engage with and connect the local community in valuing and protecting their waterways.

Looking ahead

The Action Plan will enter the second year of its five-year implementation timeframe in 2023. Some highlights of the year ahead include:

- The Regional and Strategic Partnership (RASP) for the western shoreline of Port Philip Bay will formally commence following the awarding of an Australian Government grant of \$950,000 for the project. This grant supports RASP's collaborative approach to improving the environmental, social, and cultural values of the coast, estuaries and wetlands with a focus on climate change resilience
- Progressing recognition of waterways as living entities with Traditional Owners across the State
- Continuing partnership and engagement with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on their self-determination as the 'voice of this living entity' with consideration to their priorities as identified in their Nation Statements in *Water is Life*, their Country Plans, and the ongoing development of the Victorian Treaty Process
- Collaboration with the Department of Transport and Planning to continue actioning Direction 3 – *Strengthen planning policy and controls for waterways*. The Victorian Government has committed to applying new planning controls to protect 13 key waterways, including Waterways of the West such as Maribyrnong (*Mirrangbamurn*) River, Werribee (*Wirribi Yaluk*) River, Cherry Creek, Jacksons (*biik wurrdha*) Creek, Kororoit Creek, Moonee Ponds (*Moonee Moonee*) Creek, Steele Creek, Stony Creek and six other waterways in other Melbourne regions
- The Victorian Government will also establish a \$10 million *Green Links* fund to support projects to revegetate waterways and protect wildlife along strategic water landscapes
- Identifying opportunities to deliver recommendations from the Waterways of the West Pollution Taskforce
- Action 4-1 of *CGRSWS* – investigating options to return water to the environment and Traditional Owners as regional-scale manufactured water sources are planned for Greater Melbourne and Geelong – will continue to be implemented. This action will contribute to the recovery of 12 gigalitres for the Werribee (*Wirribi Yaluk*) River and seven gigalitres for the Maribyrnong (*Mirrangbamurn*) River
- Yarra Riverkeeper Association will undertake Phase 3 of the Polystyrene Pollution Project funded by the Victorian Government. Through multi-stakeholder collaboration between communities, government and industry, this project aims to increase the state of knowledge of polystyrene pollution prevention and will co-develop and pilot priority actions to control and manage polystyrene pollution in the Yarra (*Birrarung*) and Maribyrnong (*Mirrangbamurn*) Rivers. The project will build on previous phases learnings about the causes of polystyrene pollution to design evidence-based solutions to reduce the impact of polystyrene on the environment.



Werribee (Wirribi Yaluk) River Gorge , Wurundjeri Country

Implementation progress summary

– long-term actions

Longer-term actions are scheduled to be delivered by 2026, subject to funding. These actions focus on bringing about legislative and institutional changes which will result in leaving a legacy that reflects the community vision.

Table 3: Longer-term Action Status Report

Directions and Actions	Lead	Status
Direction 1: Recognise the Waterways of the West as a living and integrated natural entity and the Traditional Owners as the 'voice of this living entity'		
Action 1.4 Engage with Traditional Owners across Victoria on possible legislation to enable all waterways and the landscapes through which they flow to be recognised as living and integrated natural entities and the Traditional Owners to self-determine the application of these concepts on Country.	DEECA	In progress
Action 1.5 Investigate legislation to embed the recognition of the waterways and their lands as living and integrated natural entities and the Traditional Owners as the 'voice of these living entities' on Country.	DEECA	Planned
Action 1.6 If legislation is introduced, it will contain a preamble that celebrates and supports the Country and the preservation and promotion of Aboriginal cultures and languages and recognises past and ongoing Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners' stewardship of and connection to Country.	DEECA	Planned
Direction 2: Embed Traditional Owners' values in planning and decision-making for waterways		
Action 2.4 Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung to deliver a planning pilot project — the Jacksons Creek Planning Partnership — to embed cultural mapping values that inform future protections and form part of the broader Jacksons Creek <i>biik wurrdha</i> Regional Parklands Master Plan.	DEECA	Planned
Action 2.5 Investigate potential amendments to the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> and the planning policy framework to embed Traditional Owners and their values. Develop tools to support agencies, Traditional Owner groups and planning practitioners to implement any amendments to the Act and the planning policy framework.	DEECA and DTP	Planned
Action 2.6 Melbourne Water will include in its RCS reporting an assessment by the Traditional Owners of RCS activities that give effect to Traditional Owners' aspirations and Country plans.	Melbourne Water	Planned

Directions and Actions	Lead	Status
<p>Action 2.7</p> <p>Melbourne Water will invite the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners to partner in the planning and the implementation of the next Healthy Waterways Strategy (due in 2028), with a focus on their reinstated role as the 'voice of the living entities'.</p>	Melbourne Water	Planned
Direction 3: Strengthen planning policy and controls for waterways		
<p>Action 3.3</p> <p>Protect the Maribyrnong (<i>Mirrangbamurn</i>) River, Moonee Ponds (<i>Moonee Moonee</i>) Creek and the Werribee (<i>Wirribi Yaluk</i>) River from inappropriate development with stronger built-form planning controls.</p>	DTP	Planned
<p>Action 3.4</p> <p>Review planning controls for the regional reaches of the Waterways of the West and prepare stronger planning controls for other significant waterways including Skeleton Creek, Stony Creek, and Jacksons (<i>biik wurrdha</i>) Creek.</p>	DTP	Planned
<p>Action 3.5</p> <p>Review interim planning controls to ensure the ongoing protection of waterways.</p>	DTP	Planned
Direction 4: Improve waterway amenity to meet community expectations		
<p>Action 4.4</p> <p>Update the Melbourne Water Statement of Obligations to incorporate a clear role to plan for the amenity of waterways and their lands that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – advocating for amenity outcomes through planning processes – testing customers' willingness to pay for higher amenity in priority areas, to inform future pricing and investment – better incorporating amenity values in the renewed Healthy Waterways Strategy. 	DEECA	Planned
<p>Action 4.5</p> <p>The Victorian Waterway Management Strategy will provide stronger guidance about planning for urban waterway values and threats including waterway amenity naturalness, escape and safety.</p>	DEECA	Planned
Direction 5: Better protection of the region's wetland values		
<p>Action 5.3</p> <p>Deliver a 'pathways to resilience' plan through a Regional and Strategic Partnership (as the <i>Marine and Coastal Act 2018</i> enables) for the western shoreline of Port Phillip Bay. This project will identify effective adaptation strategies and actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change and rising sea levels on the natural systems of the north-western coast and estuaries.</p>	DEECA	In progress
<p>Action 5.4</p> <p>Develop a master plan that prioritises activities to protect the coastal wetlands and enable their management as a living and integrated natural entity and consider how best to protect them in a formalised park system.</p>	DEECA	Planned

Directions and Actions	Lead	Status
Direction 6: Identify opportunities to meet environmental and cultural water needs		
Action 6.2 In the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy, address environmental water deficits and water for culture by investigating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – options to meet flow- related objectives through investment in all sources of water including recycled water and stormwater and irrigation efficiency and modernisation, to reduce extraction from waterways – complementary works to improve waterway health. 	DEECA	In progress
Direction 7: Protect the waterways of the west from pollution		
Action 7.2 Undertake actions developed by the Pollution Prevention Taskforce to reduce pollution and change business practices to improve water quality across the Waterways of the West.	DEECA/EPA	Planned
Action 7.3 Melbourne Water will lead the implementation of the place-based stormwater performance objectives identified in the Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018 to protect the ecological health of sensitive, downstream waterways and bays, enhance amenity and recreational values, and reduce flooding.	Melbourne Water	In progress
Direction 8: Increase community connection, education, and participation		
Action 8.5 Melbourne Water will include the Waterways of the West Community Vision in its co-designed catchment programs for the Werribee (<i>Wirribi Yaluk</i>) and the Maribyrnong (<i>Mirrangbamurn</i>) River catchments at the mid- term review of the Healthy Waterways Strategy.	Melbourne Water	Planned
Direction 9: Ensure accountability and transparency for Action Plan delivery		
Action 9.2 Publish a final review of the implementation of the Action Plan.	DEECA	Planned
Action 9.3 Melbourne Water will continue to report on the waterway values and conditions and on the delivery of this Plan's actions within its responsibility, including implementation of the 'voice of the living entities' concept, advocacy for amenity outcomes along waterways, and community engagement and participation programs, in the Healthy Strategy 2018 performance objectives.	Melbourne Water	In progress



Bacchus Marsh, Wurundjeri Country

