

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

LINKING COMMUNITIES
AND CATCHMENTS



Victoria's Catchment
Management Authorities -
working together towards
a sustainable future





Erskine River Estuary, Lorne



**CELEBRATING
10 YEARS**
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AND CATCHMENTS

CMA Boards

Catchment Management Authorities were established in July 1997 with community-based boards.

These boards provide an essential link with the community.

Their efforts and skilled input during the past decade have contributed significantly to the success of CMAs.

Contents

	Our CMA regions	2
	Victoria's Catchment Management Framework	4
	Minister's Foreword	5
	Corangamite CMA	6
	East Gippsland CMA	8
	Glenelg Hopkins CMA	10
	Goulburn Broken CMA	12
	Mallee CMA	14
	North Central CMA	16
	North East CMA	18
	Port Phillip and Westernport CMA	20
	West Gippsland CMA	22
	Wimmera CMA	24
	Contacting your CMA	26



Gippsland's Heart Morass

Overview

Victoria's 10 Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) have been delivering community-based, integrated catchment management since 1997.



Echidna

Information courtesy of Victorian Catchment Management Council (2007) Catchment Condition Report

Established by the Victorian Government, the state's catchment management framework is based on a model of community participation.

More than two-thirds of Victoria's landscape is privately owned, and as such CMAs act as a key conduit between community and government.

The catchment management framework also encompasses the Victorian Catchment Management Council, and many other agencies and groups play significant roles in managing our catchments, including DSE, DPI, Parks Victoria, local government and water authorities.

The primary role of each CMA is to develop and co-ordinate the implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS).

The RCS provides a vision for the future landscape of the region and identifies priorities, objectives and targets for managing natural assets.

It is the foundation for investment decisions to ensure improved natural resource outcomes for the region.

Other responsibilities of CMAs include waterway management, floodplain management, regional drainage and more recently, acting as custodians of the Environmental Water Reserve.

There are vast differences in the landscapes and communities of Victoria's CMAs. CMA regions encompass urban sprawl, temperate



rainforest, sculpted coast, open plains, alpine peaks, dryland farming, fruit growing and irrigation country.

However a special feature of CMAs is their relationship with our regional communities and ability to engage with key agencies, individuals, groups and business, including the indigenous community.

It is this direct community engagement role of CMAs that provides one of the key strengths of the catchment management framework in Victoria.

The pages to follow showcase some of the achievements of Victoria's CMAs during the past decade.

Foreword from the Minister



The Victorian Catchment Management Framework is now into its second decade, having achieved its 10th anniversary this year on 1 July. It is, therefore, a time for reflection on what has been accomplished, for celebration of this significant milestone and for considering the direction for the Framework for the next decade and beyond.

Our catchment management model is built on strong partnerships and community involvement. The framework that underpins the management of our land, water and biodiversity resources is supported by Catchment Management Authorities, the Victorian Catchment Management Council, numerous agencies and individuals. The Department of Sustainability and Environment has a major role, as do the Department of Primary Industries, local government, water authorities, voluntary stewardship organisations including Landcare, and others - a host of organisations and a host of caring individuals.

Managing our land, water and biodiversity resources at a time when the climate is changing, when our social landscapes are changing, when rainfall and inflows are at record low levels is not simple. Over time we may need to review our vision and goals, and to clarify and reinforce our various roles and responsibilities. The Catchment Management Framework is new in organisational terms and will continue to grow and evolve, especially with the challenges of climate change.

As Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, I have been impressed by the achievements and the commitment of the Catchment Management Authorities and their many partners in managing the land and water resources of this State. The Brumby Government is proud to have supported this effort by investing in the framework and committing to the long term sustainability of our natural resources through multi-million dollar investments in natural resource management programs across the State.

In celebrating this 10th anniversary of the Catchment Management Framework, I am looking forward with confidence to the next decade. By working together we, the partners in the Catchment Management Framework, can achieve significant outcomes for Victoria's natural landscape.

Gavin Jennings MLC
Minister for Environment and Climate Change





Waders and stilts take flight near Vaughan Island at Lake Corangamite.

Region Overview

The Corangamite CMA region spans 13,000 square kilometres of south-west Victoria.



Swan Bay

About 350,000 people live in our catchment, which stretches from Ballarat to Geelong and along the coast to Peterborough.

The Corangamite region is famous for its spectacular coastline, which incorporates the Great Ocean Road and the Great Otway National Park.

There are 13 Ramsar-listed wetlands in the catchment including Lake Corangamite, the largest permanent inland lake in Australia.

Significant river systems include the Aire, Barwon, Gellibrand, Curdies, Leigh, Moorabool and Woody Yaloak rivers.

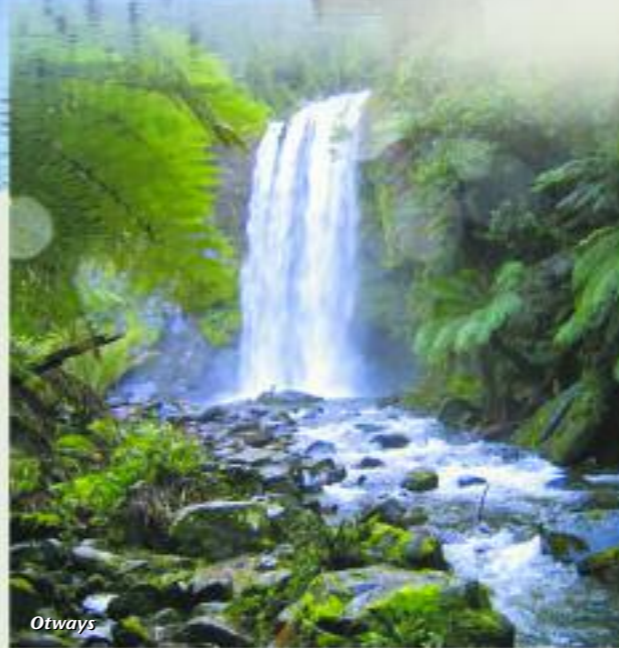
The goldfields of Ballarat, tall timber of the Otway rainforests and lush grasslands attracted early settlement, and today Corangamite's economic mainstays are agriculture, industry and tourism.

Corangamite's environmental challenges include land-use change, demands for water supply, urban migration, intensification of agriculture and increased tourism.

Program Highlights

Corangamite CMA was established in July 1997 with a Board and one Acting CEO. During the past decade the organisation has diversified, growing in size and responsibilities.

In addition to the leadership and funding co-ordination responsibilities common to most Victorian CMAs,



Otways

Corangamite CMA also has the statutory responsibilities of managing the Barwon River through Geelong, and two drainage schemes – the Woody Yaloak and Lough Calvert.

Our role as manager of the Barwon through Geelong in particular provides an excellent platform to engage with thousands of people in Victoria's largest regional city.



Wormbete Creek erosion works

The Corangamite region is also home to one of the most stressed river systems in Victoria, the Moorabool River. However the challenges presented by our role as manager of environmental water reserve has provided opportunities to strengthen our relationships with water authorities and local communities.



David Tournier, Cultural Heritage Officer for Southwest Victoria

As more people seek the lifestyle benefits of living along the coast and hinterland, the seachange and treechange phenomenon presents another dimension to Corangamite CMA's roles and responsibilities. Corangamite CMA is actively trying to capitalise on the engagement and capacity building opportunities along the coast through programs such as EstuaryWatch, and the employment of a marine and coastal co-ordinator.

Future Challenges

Our Board has identified climate change as the most pressing issue facing Corangamite CMA moving forward.

While climate change is a problem bigger than any one individual or organisation, the grassroots regional approach of catchment management authorities puts us in an ideal position to educate, inspire, empower and engage communities to act as one against the common threat of climate change.

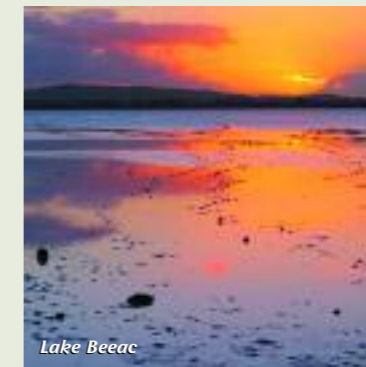
This collective action will be at its most effective through co-operation between a web of stakeholders including CMAs Landcare, local government, landholders, the agriculture sector, business, industry, schools, water authorities, regulatory bodies and government.

Investment

Total investment in NRM projects: About \$85 million

Total projects: More than 1,000

Estimated community involvement multiplier: Co-investment and volunteerism in the community approximately doubles the money invested through CMAs. This takes the total onground value to \$170 million.



Lake Beac

Snapshot of Achievements

- Corangamite CMA supports 203 Landcare, friends of and other community-based environmental volunteer groups.
- As part of a five-year Gellibrand River Restoration Project, Corangamite CMA carried out 60 kilometres of willow management, planted more than 250,000 seedlings and forged partnerships with 60 landholders along the Gellibrand and Carlisle rivers. The Carlisle River became the first stream in the region to be willow-free as a result of restoration work.
- In the first 18 months of a new EstuaryWatch community monitoring program, 50 volunteers received training and commenced monitoring activities at nine estuaries.
- An ongoing commitment to working with Local Government has resulted in the development and adoption of planning scheme Salinity Management Overlays for four municipalities, with SMOs for another four municipalities in development.
- In the past decade, our salinity program achieved approximately 876 hectares of salinity discharge management, 94 hectares of salinity recharge management, 307 hectares of revegetation, 70 kilometres of fencing for environmental protection and pasture management and 510 hectares of protection for primary saline areas.



Dr Bill Pryor of Scotsburn



Freeing rivers of willows



Monitoring estuaries for the community



Beaded glasswort grows in a saline environment



Lake Corangamite



Reeves Channel, Gippsland Lakes

Region Overview

The East Gippsland Catchment Management Region covers 2.2 million hectares of land, lakes and coastal waters in the eastern-most part of Victoria.



Mitchell River



EAST GIPPSLAND
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY

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About 80% of the land of the region is in public ownership, mainly as State Forests and National Parks.

With 40,000 residents, the current population is about 10 times that of the original Aboriginal population of the Kurnai-Gunai, Bidawal and Ngarigo peoples.

Variability of climate is a notable feature of the region. Rainfall ranges from 2,200 mm on the Errinundra Plateau to 500 mm in rain shadow areas like the upper Snowy valley. Annual rainfall is highly variable which gives rise to frequent droughts and major flooding events that have significant land management impacts.

Some of the important features of East Gippsland are:

- The Gippsland Lakes, which is the largest coastal lagoon system in Australia and Ramsar Listed as Wetlands of International Importance;
- Its array of streams, especially the wild rivers, including the iconic Snowy River and Victoria's biggest unregulated stream, the Mitchell River;
- Its long coastal reach with undeveloped estuaries, ocean beaches and spectacular headlands;
- Its mountains and forests, which provide great scenery, clean air, clean water, recreational opportunities and forestry products;



- Its scenic and productive farming lands, especially in the river valleys; and
- Its living wealth in the form of native plants and animals, some of which occur only in this region.

Program Highlights

The region's natural resource management priorities have been dominated by two factors:

1. The regular incidence of drought, fires and major floods; and
2. The large expanse of largely intact natural landscapes.



Coast dune grassland and scrub,
90 Mile Beach

East Gippsland has encountered major droughts in 1997/98 and 2002/07 which have given cause to the largest bushfires in European history in 2002/03 and 2006/07.

Each major drought has also been broken by major floods in 1998 and 2007.

Major recovery works have been undertaken in response to all these natural events.

We have the largest number of high value rivers including the Mitchell, Snowy, Bemm, Cann and Genoa. Work programs have been designed to manage invasive threats such as willows and blackberries to help maintain them in good condition. The Snowy has been the subject of a major rehabilitation effort including return of environmental flows and river rehabilitation works.

River health funding has been utilised to control willows in the Bemm, Snowy, Nicholson, upper Tambo and upper Mitchell rivers as well as in all catchments east of the Cann River.



Volunteer group, Cann River Valley

The region's native plants and animals are our living wealth and the Jewel in the Crown of Victoria's biodiversity. Initiatives such as the Southern Ark program have led the State in large scale native animal conservation and pest animal control.

Future Challenges

The population of our region is concentrated along the coast in major towns like Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Paynesville and Metung near the Gippsland Lakes.

This is a major economic driver which has focused the attention of the community on maintaining the Lakes in good health.

In a recent survey, over 70% considered the Lakes our most valuable natural asset.

The Great Alpine and Divide Fires of 02/03 and 06/07 created extensive burnt areas in the Mitchell, Tambo, Nicholson and Snowy catchments and together with recent floods will cause water quality and supply problems for many years.



Lakes Entrance

Snapshot of Achievements

- The significant co-ordination, planning and funding support of Landcare, and other community-based environmental volunteer groups in East Gippsland.



Environmental volunteers

- The establishment and implementation of the Snowy River Restoration program to improve the health of the Victorian reach of the Snowy River



Snowy River canoe tour

- The implementation of major Flood and Fire recovery programs in 1999, 2003, 2006 and 2007.



Bushfire damage





Dunkeld Arboretum

Region Overview

Lying south of the Great Dividing Range, the Glenelg Hopkins region contains areas of scenic beauty, magnificent and dramatic coastline, superb national parks and rich biodiversity.



The region spans some 2.6 million hectares and extends from Ballarat in the Central Highlands of Victoria, west to the South Australian border and south to the coast. The southern two thirds are characterised by flat volcanic plains while the Grampians, Dundas Tablelands and Black Ranges dominate the northern third.

The region has three major river drainage basins - the Hopkins, Glenelg and Portland Coast. The lower section of the Glenelg River is heritage listed for its environmental significance. Salt-wedge estuaries at the mouth of rivers entering the sea are environmentally significant. Extensive wetlands are a feature of the region and provide significant habitat for native biodiversity.

The Glenelg Hopkins region has a range of natural assets in the form of biodiversity, waterways and wetlands, soils, forests and coastal areas. These natural resources support a unique quality of life.

The south west region is an important part of provincial Victoria and boasts a diverse range of lifestyle, investment and working opportunities. The main economic drivers are agriculture, fisheries, retail, manufacturing, health and community services, education and construction. Blue gum plantations and mineral sands mining are recent additions to the region's industries.



Protecting our future - Naturally

Glenelg Hopkins CMA

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Program Highlights

Community engagement plays a vital role in the success of all natural resource programs at Glenelg Hopkins CMA.

Achieving meaningful long-term change in the health of the catchment and the way it is managed requires a holistic approach and investment in people and communities, as much as into on ground technical responses.

An engaged catchment community that understands, supports, actively participates and has a strong sense of having control of programs that shape their landscape is the most powerful tool for achieving change.

Community engagement highlights include:

Glenelg Hopkins Environmental Achievement Awards – the awards recognise achievements by individuals, communities and business in natural resource management.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA Partnership Project Scheme – supports individuals and groups to undertake works that promote sustainability and environmental protection.

Glenelg Hopkins Waterwatch – the most well-recognised community engagement programs for the CMA, Waterwatch conducts a comprehensive program to regional schools as well as involving local communities in the environmental monitoring of local waterways.

Drought Employment Program – in 2006/2007 Glenelg Hopkins CMA received considerable funding from the State government to assist drought affected farmers and farm community members. Taking on a partnership approach this program delivered environmental and community benefits.

Landcare – more than 150 Landcare, "friends of" and community based natural resource management groups are supported by Glenelg Hopkins CMA through Community Landcare Facilitators and the Waterwatch program.



Drought relief work crews were employed under the State Government's Drought Employment Program

Future Challenges

The key challenge for Glenelg Hopkins CMA is to continue to make natural resource management scientifically rigorous and socially relevant in the face of funding variations, lifestyle and populations changes, climate variability and increased demand for water resources.

The Habitat 141 project is an exciting mix of private and government initiatives that presents a unique opportunity to secure the future of the region's greatest natural asset - the heritage listed Glenelg River. Locking in environmental water from the Wimmera Mallee pipeline savings for the Glenelg will be an important challenge.

Combining community biodiversity improvements with productivity gains on farms and balancing public use and development with environmental protection of coasts and estuaries are the other major challenges.

Investment

Total investment in NRM projects (1997 - 2007):
\$80.8 million

Total projects: More than 4,000



Snapshot of Achievements

- Environmental water reserves and infrastructure upgrades along the Glenelg River will realise the full benefits of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project. Works include outlet upgrades and installation of carp screens at Rocklands Reservoir.
- More than 100,000 cubic metres of sand have been extracted from the Glenelg River, improving the effectiveness of environmental flow releases and restoring the natural river channel.
- The Grange Burn wetland project transformed 14 hectares of grazing land into a constructed wetland system that treats 70% of Hamilton's stormwater before it enters the Grange Burn. This has resulted in a significant reduction of litter and contaminants in the waterway, vital habitat for birds and provided an important recreational asset for the town.
- Across the Glenelg Hopkins region, community volunteers have fenced off 2,200 kilometres of waterways and revegetated 3,784 hectares in land and waterway protection projects.
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA's biodiversity program has seen the once common Mellblom's Spider-orchid bought back from the brink of extinction. With as few as six plants remaining in 1996, an intensive recovery program funded through the Natural Heritage Trust has resulted in more than 1,000 plants growing in the wild today.



Glenelg River



Sand extraction



Grange Burn wetland



Tree planting as part of the Partnership Project Scheme



Mellblom's Spider-orchid
Photo: Jeff Blackman



Tatura Trellis



Peaches

Region Overview

Situated in northern Victoria and part of the Murray Darling Basin, The Goulburn Broken Catchment comprises the catchments of the Goulburn and Broken rivers and part of the Murray River valley.



Goulburn Eastern Channel Pine Lodge

The catchment covers 2,431,655 Ha or 10.5% of the State of Victoria. Although it occupies just 2% of the Murray Darling Basin, the Goulburn Broken Catchment region provides 11% of the Basin's stream flow.

The region stretches from close to the outskirts of Melbourne in the south to the Murray River in the north. The Catchment includes Victoria's main water storage, Eildon and the popular Mt Buller Alpine Resort. It includes the municipalities of Moira, Campaspe, Mitchell, Murrindindi, Mansfield and Strathbogie Shires, Benalla Rural City and the City of Greater Shepparton.

Approximately 1.4 million hectares is dryland agriculture, 270,600 hectares is intensive irrigated agriculture and 800,000 hectares is public land. In addition, 70,000 hectares of the North Central Catchment forming part of the Shepparton Irrigation Region, is included in the works program for ease of management.

Major natural resource issues are water quality, water quantity, dryland and irrigation salinity, degradation of rivers and streams, native vegetation decline, biodiversity and pest plants and animals.

Almost 200,000 people live in the catchment. Rapid population growth is occurring in some parts of the catchment, notably centres within commuting distance of Melbourne, Shepparton and towns on the Murray.



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Program Highlights

Over the last 10 years The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has worked to ensure land and water resources are protected and enhanced as well as improving the region's social wellbeing, environmental quality and productive capacity.

A major feature of Catchment Management within the Goulburn Broken has been the partnerships with DPI, DSE, CSIRO, Universities and Research Cooperations which has resulted in an improved knowledge of how people and the environment interact.

The Goulburn Broken CMA has been appointed as the manager of Environmental Water Reserve (EWR). Highlights of the EWR are:

- 80:20 deal finalised (20 percent of sales pool of water now part of EWR)
- Victorian Government \$1 billion funding announcement for Food Bowl Modernisation Project providing 75 GL of water savings to EWR annually

- Victorian Government \$52 million announcement to modernise irrigation infrastructure providing 52 GL of water savings to EWR annually.

There have been many successful programs over the last 10 years one of which is the RiverConnect program. This program has involved a wide range of stakeholders, including the Aboriginal community and local government, allowing the GBCMA to engage in a partnership to carry out natural resource management activities.

A major function for the GBCMA is to be involved in the Community. Over the past 10 years the GBCMA implementation committees have been supported by 7 landcare networks and 103 landcare groups.

With the Drought having a devastating impact on many landholders, the Drought Employment Program (DEP) was a great success:

- The Program employed 72 people and resulted in a dramatic increase in fencing of riparian vegetation
- 33,460 hectares of land protected from over grazing with 338 stock containment areas.



Lake Mokoan

Challenges and Opportunities

At the Goulburn Broken CMA there will be many challenges but also many opportunities to come. The following issues pose both challenges and opportunities for the GBCMA:

- Climate Change
- Modernisation of the Irrigation Network
- Demographic Change



Pivot Centre Mooroopna

The GBCMA will continue to successfully implement the Regional Catchment Strategy through partnerships with DPI, DSE, G-M Water, G-V Water, Local Government, Landcare and Landholders.

A decade of natural resource management

Total investment in NRM :
Total investment in natural resources in the Goulburn Broken Catchment in the last 10 years is \$180 million by government and at least \$280 million by the regional community. This gives a total of \$460 million invested in NRM in the catchment in the last decade.

Snapshot of Achievements

Some achievements for the Goulburn Broken CMA over the last decade have been:

- Winning the National Riverprize and being a finalist twice for the International Award. GBCMA were also the winners of the National Banksier Award and received an Engineering Excellence Award for the Murkatak Surface Drainage Project.
- Over 1,266 of properties completed a Whole Farm Plan and 84,000 hectares of land formed.
- 1,906 Farm Water Reuse Systems completed.
- 5,496 hectares of land across the catchment were revegetated.
- A reduction of phosphorous export from 450 tonnes per year to less than 100 tonnes.



Barmah Wetlands



Dickie Swamp



Tomatoes (before & after)



Landscape



Autumn orchard



The River Murray

Region Overview

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority region is the largest catchment area in Victoria, covering approximately 3.9 million hectares – almost one-fifth of the State.



A malleefowl chick. An iconic species of the Mallee.

The regional population is approximately 65,000, with Mildura the major urban centre. The north and east of the region is bordered by the River Murray, its anabranches, tributary channels, floodplains and associated wetland systems.

In the south, north flowing intermittent streams, including the Yarriambiack Creek and Tyrrell Creek terminate in a number of ephemeral wetland complexes including the Wirrengren Plain, Lake Corrong and Lake Tyrrell.

There are over 900 wetlands in the Mallee CMA region, 14 of which are listed as 'nationally significant' in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia. In addition, the wetland and floodplain ecosystems of the Hattah Lakes and Lindsay, Wallpolla and Mulcra Islands have been recognised by the Murray Darling Ministerial Council as "icon sites" to receive environmental water under the Murray Darling Basin Commission's Living Murray initiative.

Land use in the Mallee is diverse with agriculture the most economically important industry and the River Murray a major influence.

The region's semi-arid climate supports primary industries including cereals, prime lambs, citrus, nuts, vegetables, vine and fruit growing activities.

Many of these horticultural sectors have faced a challenging period in recent years due to the drought.



Environmental watering at Hattah Lakes

Program Highlights

Helping communities to develop and increase their ability to engage in the process of protecting and improving our natural resources has been a key focus for the Mallee CMA over the past decade.

Initiatives such as Landcare, Waterwatch, the Frontage Action Plan Project, Environmental Action Planning, and indigenous programs have all been instrumental in building community capacity and knowledge of regional natural resource management issues.

The voluntary involvement of over 150 local farmers in such programs as the Environmental Management Action Planning project signals a turning point in the direction of farming to include environmental considerations, while the voluntary contributions of Landcare groups, local schools and other community organisations in restoring frontages along the River Murray highlights the

capacity of the community to implement environmental change.

Indigenous Cultural Heritage has become a key consideration of the Authority across all units, programs and projects.

The Indigenous Cultural Heritage training program has boosted the capacity of the local indigenous community to identify key cultural heritage sites to ensure their ongoing protection.

Undertaking research to inform future decisions in terms of natural resource management in our region has also been a key focus of the Mallee CMA over the past decade. With salinity one of the most significant threats to be faced by the Mallee region over the next 20 years, the aerial mapping of over 25,500 kilometres from Nyah to the South Australian border will provide data essential for future decision making in this area.

Future Challenges

The challenges of the vast Mallee region are both diverse and complex, demanding strong leadership, strategic planning and co-ordination.

The future looks set to present many challenges with the continuing prolonged drought, low inflows into the Murray system, demand for water resources, rising salinity levels and climate change.

Changing socio-economic conditions, urban migration and land-use change will also present challenges for the Mallee region in the future.

The Mallee CMA will continue to demonstrate its commitment and ability to embrace the challenges of increased natural resource management responsibilities through our key goals of business excellence, leadership and partnership and community engagement.

Investment

Total investment in NRM projects: About \$50 million

Total projects: More than 1,000



Mallee Environmental Employment Program

Snapshot of Achievements

- Support of over 200 Landcare, Waterwatch and other community-based environmental volunteer groups, involving more than 10,000 people.



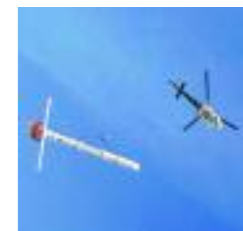
Mallee Waterwatch

- The establishment of the Frontage Action Plan Project, an integrated community program that has restored over 44 hectares of vegetation, stabilised over 350 hectares of degraded river frontage and protected over 740 hectares of high value floodplain along the River Murray.



Frontage Action Plan program

- The aerial mapping of 25,500 kilometres from Nyah to the South Australian border to gain data essential for future decision making in regards to salinity.



Aerial salinity mapping

- The development of an Indigenous Cultural Heritage program and associated training program to increase the number of people able to assess sites for cultural heritage value and indigenous history.



The Cultural Heritage Training Program - Cecilia Burke

- The involvement of more than 150 Mallee landholders, covering more than one million acres of regional farmland, in the Environmental Management Action Planning project; a coordinated whole farm planning approach to the protection of natural resources in the Mallee.



The EMAP program



Morning Mist – photo by Jessica Chaplin

Region Overview

Covering an area of around 30,000 km (about 13% of Victoria), our region is bordered by the River Murray to the north, the Great Dividing Range and Wombat State Forest to the south and Mt Camel Range to the east.



Caring for our waterways



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The region is packed with an abundance of diverse natural attractions from forested national parks to waterfalls, gorges and slowly meandering waterways.

Our backyard is also home to a teeming assortment of flora and fauna, some of which are found nowhere else; all easily accessible as wonderful day trips.

The four major river catchments in our region include the Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca and Avon-Richardson; they are the lifeblood to the region and its people. They have helped shape, grow and sustain communities including Bendigo, Bridgewater, Donald, Echuca, Kerang, Kyneton and Swan Hill.

Discovery of gold in the 1850's and 1860's resulted in the most significant human event in the evolution of this region. This mass influx of people from all parts of the globe, together with the influences of irrigation in the late 1800's/early 1900's, inevitably altered the 'balance' of the natural environment of this region.

Much has changed in our backyard since then; whilst these changes have provided wealth, stability and protection, it has come at some cost to the region's natural health and wellbeing.

The North Central Catchment Management Authority and the landholders in our region understand the importance of our natural environment, in particular our rivers



Lizard in Mandurang

and other key waterways. It is our collective responsibility to look after our precious waterways and their surrounds for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

We take pride in our region, as well as the role we play in managing our region's natural resources of land, water, biodiversity and climate; after all it's our backyard too.

Program Highlights

We have experienced considerable success across a number of key natural resource management programs over the last decade. The following, however represents a snapshot of our Drought Employment Program (DEP) during 2006 - 2007.

This program, with its total funding of \$2.936 million sourced from State Government, was able to provide funding and resources to landholders in rural communities experiencing unprecedented hardships caused by the drought.

The program built on our partnership approach with the Department of Primary Industries to deliver significant environmental and community benefits. It also enabled the North Central Catchment Management Authority to accelerate a number of on-ground works programs, or add value to existing programs.

When compared to our original program targets our cumulative achievements were an inspiring 115%. Equally impressive was that significant environmental works were completed during a time of severe drought.

The DEP demonstrates our continued commitment to investing in significant on-ground natural resource management changes, this time with a focus of positioning our natural resources to be better placed to recover from the dry times.

The program also demonstrates strong and overwhelming community and agency support to bring about 'real' changes by actively engaging in a whole of community and government approach to natural resource management.



Golden Fields of Canola

Future Challenges

Casting our eyes forward to the horizon, the North Central Catchment Management Authority recognises and accepts that there are a number of challenges ahead in how we operate.

Challenges will continue to present themselves in the form of changing government policy, community expectations, new science and knowledge, climate as well as other changes to our natural environment.

We will continue to focus on achieving excellence through investing in our people and the capacity of the region. The past decade has established a solid foundation upon which we are 'getting on with the job'.

Investment

The area takes in a population of over 200,000 people; the region has become one of Victoria's most rapidly growing areas in terms of urban and agricultural activities.

This growth, together with the Government's strategic focus on regionally-based agencies developing and delivering on-ground natural resource management programs in partnership with local communities, is reflected in the following investment snapshot for the last decade.

Total Investment Revenue since 1997:
\$140,523,559

Total Projects since 1997:
Engaged in more than 8,800 projects

Snapshot of Achievements

The Loddon Stressed River Restoration Project - Over 450 km of waterways along the Loddon River, Tullaroop and Birches creeks, together with an investment of more than \$3.8 million has been focused on enhancing the environmental values of these key waterways.



Kangaroo Paw Prints
- by Maggie Whittaker

These include:

- 188 km of riparian fencing to alleviate the pressure of stock access on the remnant vegetation and riverbanks.
- 94,000 grasses and shrubs established to enhance the diversity of plants and the habitat they provide.
- 63 ha of exotic Crack Willow and Weeping Willow removed from the riparian vegetation to increase the naturalness of the riparian and in-stream habitat.
- 140 off-stream watering systems provided for alternative sources of water for livestock.



The Loddon River in flow

The Gunbower Forest Flooding for Life Project - Gunbower Forest on the River Murray is an internationally significant floodplain system and the second largest River Red Gum forest in Victoria. Spanning 20,000 ha.

Key outcomes included:

- In spring 2005 environmental water was delivered to Gunbower Forest to sustain several permanent and semi-permanent wetland complexes.
- The delivery of water between November 2005 and February 2006 also supported breeding opportunities for colonial water birds. This resulted in the most significant breeding event of the Great Egret since 1999/2000.
- River Red Gum trees have responded with flushes of new growth and some regeneration of understorey vegetation.
- Hundreds of records have identified several frog species including Spotted Marsh Frog, Barking Marsh Frog and Perons Tree Frog. All species were able to successfully breed in the flooded areas of the Forest.



Gunbower Island lily



Region Overview

Victoria's North East is rich in natural assets; snow-topped mountains, river valleys, open plains, woodlands and natural forests.

The main industries in the region are agriculture (dairy, beef, lamb, wool, cropping and horticulture), forest products, tourism, value-added processing industries and manufacturing. Combined, they contribute an estimated \$3.24 billion every year to the State's economic wealth.

Our region covered by the North East CMA is bounded by the Murray River in the north, the Victorian Alps in the south, the NSW border in the East and by the Warby Ranges in the west. It takes in the local government municipalities of Wodonga, Indigo, Wangaratta, Alpine and Towong, plus parts of Moira and East Gippsland shires.

North East Victoria – a snapshot

Population: 95,000
Area: 1,957,000 hectares
Public land: 55%
Length of streams: 10,602 kilometres



NORTH EAST CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

North East CMA

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The North East Region plays a vital role in providing water resources for south-eastern Australia. Although it comprises only 2% of the geographic area of the Murray-Darling basin, the region's river basins contributes 38% of the total water in the Murray-Darling Basin system.



Major water storages (at capacity)

Dartmouth Dam:	3,906,400 megalitres
Lake Buffalo:	24,000 megalitres
Lake William Hovell:	13,500 megalitres
Hume Weir:	3,038,00 megalitres
Rocky Valley Dam:	29,110 megalitres

Program Highlights

The North East CMA is a practical, community-focussed, regional government authority that is working hard to build diverse, healthy landscapes and vibrant communities across North East Victoria.

Our work is guided by science and implemented through effective partnerships.

We have a highly skilled and dedicated network of almost fifty staff who work from our Wodonga, Kiewa and Everton offices.

Innovation in the North East

River Tender – an auction-style, incentive program pioneered in the North East is helping farmers and crown land leaseholders to take practical steps to protect the environmental health of one of Victoria's most significant heritage rivers – the Ovens. To date, land managers have utilised funding from River Tender to protect more than 1,300 hectares of floodplain and almost 150 kilometres of Ovens River frontage. River Tender is a Victorian Government initiative that is funded through the Victorian Water Trust and the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust. It is managed by the North East CMA.



Fire recovery – bushfires in 2003 and 2006 caused major damage in our region. We assisted the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) – the lead agency- with fighting Great Divide fires and subsequent containment line rehabilitation over waterways in the region, such as Buckland Valley and above Lake Buffalo. We also commissioned research to better understand the impact of fires on catchment and water values.



Supporting Landcare – the North East has the highest rate of Landcare membership among farmers in the State. Some 50 Landcare groups and four Landcare Networks operate in our region.

The North East CMA provides a regional Landcare co-ordination service to support Landcare groups. Our coordinators run education activities, assist groups with funding applications and put new residents in touch with their nearest Landcare group.

Future Challenges

The North East CMA encourages landholders, community groups and government to address the 'big' natural resource management issues facing our region, including adapting to climate change, fostering sustainable agriculture, managing cultural heritage and identifying the impacts of 'tree change' trends on land management in the North East.

Adapting to climate change – in response to community interest, we conducted seminars and field days about climate change predictions and best practice adaptation for more extreme climatic events. In addition the CMA is a member of the North East Greenhouse Alliance, and jointly hosted an alternative fuel workshop to look at production and end-use options.

In December 2006 we commissioned an independent audit of our offices and depots with the aim of reducing energy use and greenhouse gas pollution.



Managing cultural heritage – more than 90% of our staff and Board have attended cultural awareness or site identification training.



Identifying the impacts of 'tree change' – we are working with local government to identify the best ways of managing our natural resources in the face of changing population trends in our region;

Fostering sustainable agriculture – we have made a long-term commitment to encouraging Environmental Management Systems because of the many ways they support sustainable agriculture. We recently signed up 42 participants for a new EMS programme in our region.



Snapshot of Achievements

Since 1997, the North East CMA has:

- Secured more than 400 partnership agreements with landholders in our catchment;
- Planted more than 2.6 million trees to control erosion and attract biodiversity;
- Revegetated 2,400 hectares of the catchment to improve water quality and encourage biodiversity;
- Erected more than 253 kilometres of fencing to protect waterways and encourage regeneration of trees and grasses;
- Measured 554 sites for the Statewide Index of Stream condition - the benchmark of river health in Victoria; and
- Processed more than 1,300 floodplain referrals to ensure that development does not occur in areas prone to flooding.



Region Overview

The PPWCMA region features highly valuable agricultural production, famous natural tourist attractions and two iconic bays – Port Phillip Bay and Western Port.



Community support is strong

Port Phillip and Westernport



CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Port Phillip and Westernport CMA

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With metropolitan Melbourne at its centre, the region is home to 3.5 million people, covers 38 council areas and has around 500 active environmental community groups.

Engaging so many organisations in natural resource management, and enhancing co-ordination amongst them, is particularly challenging.

The complex circumstances of this region have called for special organisational arrangements, so the PPWCMA has a different history from other CMAs.

The PPWCMA was the last of the CMAs to be established and is now around five years old. It is a great story of emerging community engagement, strategic planning and collaboration with many partners to generate impressive on-ground achievement.

Future Challenges

In a region with 3.5 million people and with more arriving every day, there remain immense challenges for achieving a sustainable future of our natural resources.

One challenge is to effectively tap into the private sector for funds that can benefit the local environment.

Grow West, Living Links, Yarra 4 Life and Bring Back the Bunyip are well placed to take advantage of the emerging markets for corporate social responsibility, carbon offsets and ecosystem services.



Managing urban growth is a challenge

Another important challenge is finding ways that the growth of Melbourne can be accommodated with minimal impacts on the surrounding green wedges, landscapes and agricultural production.

New schemes that reward landholders for provision of public benefits from their private land are opportunities for the future. Perhaps the greatest challenge is managing the impacts of climate change on the natural resources of this region.



Our state's capital

The bays, coastline, agricultural production, native flora and fauna, rivers and landscapes of this region will be impacted upon by a drier, hotter climate, as will the lifestyles of all residents and visitors. Finding new ways of protecting and enhancing our natural treasures is imperative.

Sandflats contrast with agricultural reaches



Investment in natural resource management

The PPWCMA directs most of its time and effort into coordinating the implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy.

The strategy is the roadmap to a sustainable environment in this region and was prepared in close consultation with many organisations and interest groups across the region.

To implement the strategy's 97 actions, the PPWCMA often brings together relevant organisations to undertake collaborative planning and coordinated action.

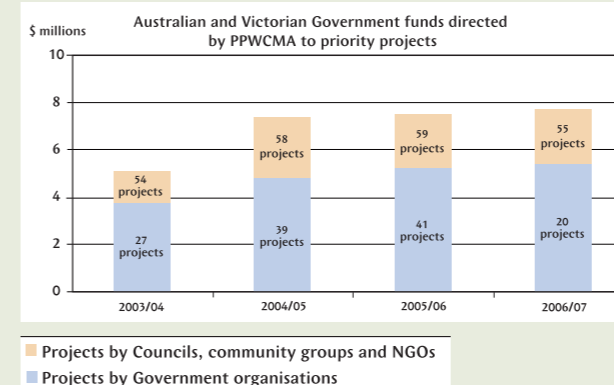
The PPWCMA also directs the investment of the Victorian and Australian Governments into priority projects undertaken by various organisations in line with the Regional Catchment Strategy. The PPWCMA has funneled over \$26 million to priority projects over the past four years.



The Western reaches are impacted by agriculture



Victoria's endangered bird emblem the Helmeted Honeyeater



Snapshot of Achievements

The 2004 - 2009 Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy was undertaken with extensive community consultation and generated strong ownership of the strategy by other organisations and commitment to its implementation.

- An excellent partnership has been established between the PPWCMA and Melbourne Water enabling strong collaboration and co-ordination between the organisations on various activities.
- Played a leading role in supporting the 470 Landcare and Friends groups across the region with a PPWCMA Community Grants program, assistance for strategic planning, regular provision of relevant information and the initiation of the biannual Regional Landcare Awards. PPWCMA was recognised for these services with a Victorian Landcare Award in 2005.
- Initiated and hosted regular community seminars across the region on topics including the state of the catchments, water quality in the Yarra River and the future of Melbourne's green wedges. These seminars have attracted around 1,200 people in the past 2 years.
- Managed the implementation of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games Tree Planting project that contributed to the Games being a carbon-neutral event. This project achieved 450 hectares of revegetation with indigenous trees and shrubs at 17 sites across Victoria.
- Reported annually on the condition of the environment in the region via its annual report. Now, a report card is being initiated that will take the messages to a broader audience via the mainstream media.
- Developed and showcased some ideas for improving the protection of green wedges in the future and achieving public benefits from these areas.
- Lead and supported the "Grow West" project around Bacchus Marsh that aims to revegetate 10,000 hectares of degraded land. In recent years, over 1,600 hectares of revegetation has occurred and the landscape is being rapidly improved. Corporate sponsors are being attracted to Grow West and will play a major part in the future works.
- Initiated the "Living Links" project in the Dandenong Creek catchment south-east of Melbourne. Living Links has united 12 councils, government agencies and various community groups with a vision to create a web of living parks, wetlands, pathways and open spaces as a world-class urban ecosystem. On-ground works have started in this long-term project.
- Initiated the "Yarra 4 Life" project in the Yarra Valley and the "Bring Back the Bunyip" project in the Bunyip River and Cardinia Creek Catchments. These projects have united local stakeholders with visions for improving their local landscapes and environments.





Tidal River - Wilsons Promontory

Region Overview

Covering an area of 17,685 km², the West Gippsland region extends from Warragul to the Gippsland Lakes and from the Great Dividing Range to Wilsons Promontory.



Mount Worth - Strzelecki Ranges

The Latrobe, Thomson, Macalister and Avon rivers flow to Lake Wellington in the east and waterways from the Strzelecki Ranges flow south to inlets and estuaries along the coast between San Remo and Lakes Entrance.

Across seven municipalities, the region is well known to residents and tourists for its diversity of unique landscapes, farming communities, industries, urban centres and ecologically significant features.

The region consists of rolling hills, extensive networks of rivers, streams and creeks, wetlands, red gum plains, alpine ranges, vast floodplains and coastal areas.

The area is home to 169,094 people, with the Gunai/Kurnai peoples and the Kulin peoples the traditional custodians of the country.

Forty per cent of the region is public land including six national parks, four marine national parks and two Ramsar sites.

The region provides 20 per cent of Australia's milk production, 95 per cent of the State's electricity and much of its gas and oil (offshore). Sixty per cent of Melbourne's water storage capacity is provided by the Thomson Reservoir.



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Upper Macalister River

Program Highlights

Throughout the past ten years the WGCMA has focused on improving catchment health in partnership with the community, agencies and other authorities in the region.

It is this partnership approach that has enabled many significant achievements.

Of particular note is the growth and consolidation of partnerships with community groups and non-Government organisations such as Landcare and Greening Australia.



Tube stock for revegetation

Their efforts have enabled the community to actively participate in initiatives that protect and enhance the health of our catchments.

The WGCMA's achievements over the past ten years are significantly underpinned by the efforts of our operations group. Dedicated river restoration teams working in the Thomson, Latrobe and South Gippsland basins have helped improve the health of the region's waterways. This could not have been achieved without the consent, passion and involvement of local landholders.

Whilst it is important to measure physical work related to improving catchments we also note the growth in regional capacity to address the many catchment management issues facing Gippsland. Looking back on 10 years it is interesting to note that the knowledge, expertise and the willingness to address catchment challenges have grown significantly. With this in mind we can be confident that the next 10 years will be an exciting time for the WGCMA and its partners.

Future Challenges

With the long period of drought and the State Government's emphasis CMAs as the caretaker of river health and manager of the Environmental Water Reserve, we have a clear focus on understanding the water yields and water needs in our region for the coming years.

The region's waterways and aquifers have been placed under pressure to provide high quality water to meet the residential demands of Melbourne and the increased use of water for intensive farming, agriculture, urban supply, power generation and other industrial use.

Our region has been subject to significant fires and flooding in recent times. Considerable resources and activity will be focussed on fire and flood recovery and rehabilitation over the next five years, along with work examining how we might mitigate fire and flood risk into the future.

The region is also subject to social, economic and environmental trends such as changing land use, the impact of climate change and expanding urban fringes; we will continue to work with our partners and the community in achieving catchment health gains into the future.

A decade of natural resource management

Total investment in NRM projects:

The co-ordination of in excess of \$100 million worth of funding for the region over 10 years.

Total projects:

In partnership with agencies, landholders and community groups, the WGCMA has delivered of more than 500 programs in the region over a 10 year period. These programs include:

- A diversity of on-ground projects ranging from large scale river restoration to drought employment programs, from fire and flood recovery work to supporting communities in addressing local catchment issues.
- The development of plans and strategies for a coordinated approach to river health, native vegetation, water quality, and nutrient and salinity management.

Snapshot of Achievements

- River restoration work of around 872 km of exotic weed reduction, 1,437 km of riparian fencing and 1,218km of riparian revegetation using approximately 1.5 million indigenous plants.



Revegetation - Upper Latrobe River, Willow Grove

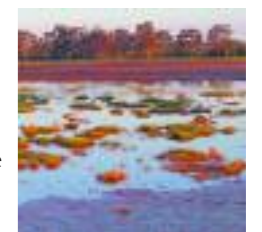
- 90% of the Tarra River and 95% of the Franklin River restored.

- GippsLandcare established. A consortium of the four Landcare networks of the West Gippsland region. The consortium exists to coordinate, promote and implement sustainable land management projects on a regional scale.



Boolarra South Landcare

- The buy-back of 1,930 acres of Gippsland's Heart Morass for rehabilitation, a partnership between Field and Game Australia, WGCMA and Watermark. Heart Morass is a wetland complex of international significance that forms the western portion of the Gippsland Lakes.



Gippsland's Heart Morass

- Strong partnerships with community groups.
 - 2,200 families involved in 74 Landcare groups as part of four Landcare networks managing over 330,000 hectares of private land in the region.



Thomson River, Canoeing

- Over 100 Waterwatch volunteers monitoring more than 100 sites across the region and over 80 schools participating in Waterwatch activities annually.

- Diverse community and landholder representation on WGCMA Boards and Community Consultative Committees (CCC) over 10 years:
 - 30 + Board members
 - 110 + CCC members.



Bunurong Coast



Region Overview

The Wimmera catchment in western Victoria extends from the Grampians, north to Lake Albacutya and from the South Australian border east to Navarre. The catchment represents about 10.3% of Victoria's total land area, with a population of about 48,000.



The natural features within the Wimmera include more than 3,000 wetlands supporting a diverse range of flora and fauna, the Grampians and Little Desert national parks, the Wimmera River and its tributaries and valuable groundwater assets in the Millicent Coast basin and in the south-west of the catchment.

The Wimmera is home to about 1,500 native plant species and 420 native animal species, including 20 mammal species, 40 reptile species and more than 250 bird species. Habitats for these species are found across the landscape, in the parks and reserve system, state forests and on private land.

Program Highlights

Wimmera CMA's role in educating, supporting and empowering the community to make a difference to the Wimmera environment is the organisation's greatest achievement in the past decade.




Wimmera
Catchment Management
Authority

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Through difficult climatic times, Wimmera CMA has supported major positive changes in land management practices and helped foster an increasing appreciation for the natural environment.

Many environmental programs across the region have been co-ordinated and driven by Wimmera CMA. There is also a strong focus by Wimmera CMA to support individuals or groups in their efforts to make positive environmental changes.

Wimmera CMA uses a variety of tools, from grants to market-based instruments, educational programs and training to reach its goals.

The organisation and its staff work hard to meet the needs and expectations of the community, as well as meet strategic regional goals.

Future Challenges

The Wimmera faces environmental and economic challenges due to increasing climate variability.

Construction of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline, however, should improve the certainty of water supply to residents and the environment.

The challenge for the next decade will be to ensure an appropriate mix of economic, social, recreational and environmental uses for available water.

Wimmera CMA expects positive changes to the condition of the Wimmera River and its tributaries as a result of pipeline construction.

Photographs that appear in this publication have been provided by Wimmera Catchment Management Authority and are courtesy of the following photographers: David Fletcher, Paul Carracher, Wimmera CMA staff and the Wimmera Mail-Times.

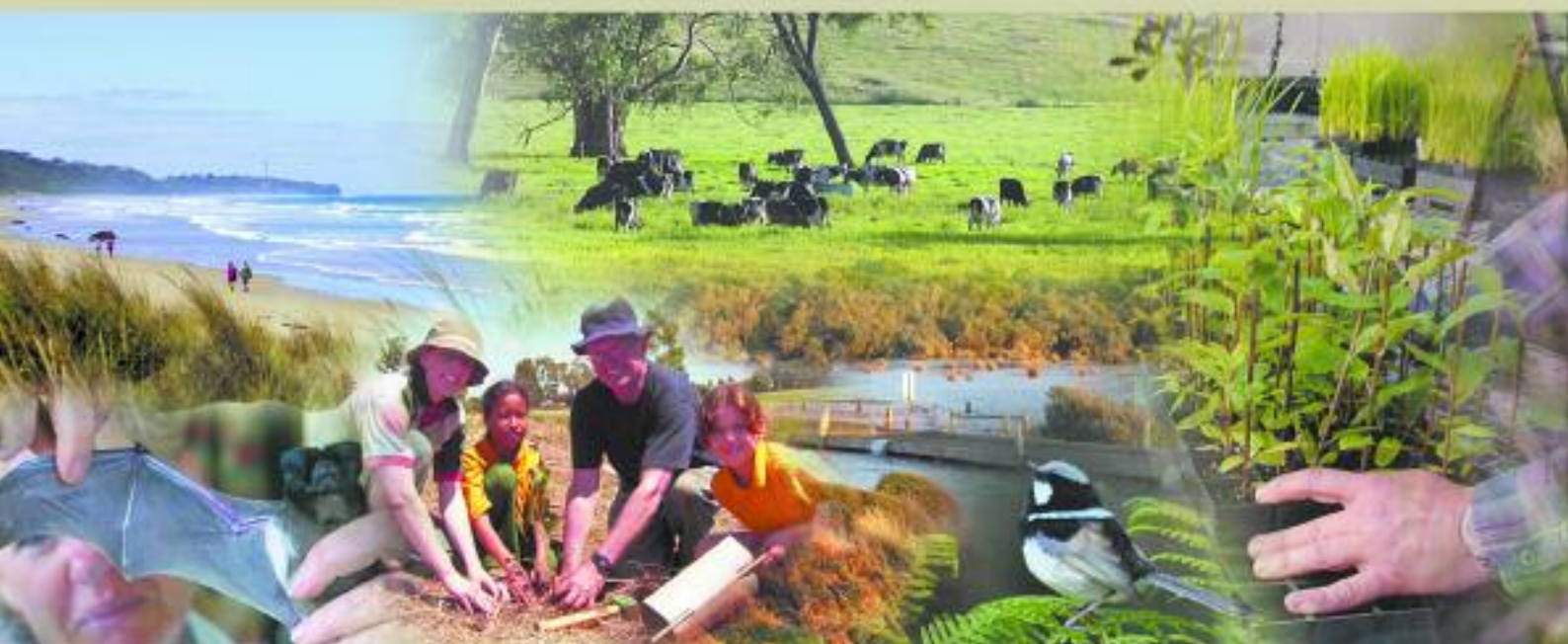


Snapshot of Achievements

Community partnerships are a big part of Wimmera CMA's work.

- In the past 10 years, Wimmera CMA has worked with and supported more than 60 Landcare groups in the region, working on projects which truly make a difference to the environment.
- The Wimmera is home to one of Victoria's longest-running community Waterwatch groups. Since Jeparit community members started monitoring the health of the Wimmera River in May 1995, the Waterwatch program has grown rapidly. More than 12,500 people now participate in Wimmera Community Waterwatch, including a large contingent of school students. The work of Waterwatch forms an important part of Wimmera CMA's catchment monitoring program.
- The continued popularity of the annual Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar, just one of many major environmental initiatives that Wimmera CMA supports, highlights the pro-active nature of the authority in interacting directly with those doing scientific research on regional issues.
- Through Wimmera CMA's innovative incentive programs, about 6,000 hectares of native vegetation has been planted, which, combined with independent planting, has delivered increased habitat for native flora and fauna across the region.
- Wimmera CMA's ongoing interaction with the community is a continuing source of pride. The organisation continually improves its engagement programs in an effort to increase interest in environmental issues. The Wimmera Kids Conference, the Property Management Planning program for landholders, annual World Wetlands Day celebrations, urban drain education, highly-successful waterway education initiatives such as the Adam Goodes 'all drains lead to our waterways' campaign and a creative approach to involving the community in looking after our environmental assets are just a small sample of the major achievements.





Working in partnership with

