

Healthy Waterways Strategy Regional Forum 2023

Healthy Waterways Strategy background and aligned strategy updates

Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-2028 background

The Healthy Waterways Strategy (HWS) provides a single framework to address community expectations and Melbourne Water's responsibilities for waterway management.

The Strategy is driven by a single regional 50-year vision: *Healthy and valued waterways are integrated with the broader landscape and enhance life and liveability. Waterways connect diverse and thriving communities of plants and animals; provide amenity to urban and rural areas and engage communities with their environment; and are managed sustainably to enhance environmental, economic, social, and cultural values.*

For each of the five major catchments within the Port Phillip and Western Port region (Werribee, Maribyrnong, Yarra, Dandenong, and Western Port), the Strategy outlines catchment-specific visions, goals, long-term targets (10 to 50 years) for key values and waterway conditions, and short-term performance objectives (10-years). Effort and investment at catchment and sub-catchment scale are prioritised and aligned to ensure they contribute to broader, regional goals and outcomes.

All strategy documents and annual reports are located on the dedicated website: <https://healthywaterways.com.au/>

Actions are tracked yearly and communicated through the [website](#).

Melbourne Water as the new Catchment Management Authority

On 1 January 2022, the former Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA) integrated into Melbourne Water, and Melbourne Water became the new Catchment Management Authority (CMA) for the Port Phillip and Western Port region.

These arrangements established Melbourne Water as the single, integrated body to manage all catchment and waterways functions for the Port Phillip and Western Port region.

We are now 12-months in, and are excited to be the new custodian of a wide range of collaborative natural resource management programs and projects, including:

- Regional Catchment Strategy
- Ramsar Protection Program
- Living Links Program
- Yarra4Life Program
- Grow West Program
- Regional Landcare Program



- Regional Sustainable Agriculture Program

The new Regional Catchment Strategy

The new [Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy](#), developed by the PPWCMA aims to help people and organisations work together to achieve a shared vision – a healthy and resilient environment and well-managed natural resources.

It describes the natural resources of this region and some of the key connections between them. It provides an overview of policy and planning, a vision and targets for the future and a basis for shared effort. It focuses on improving natural resource management while recognising that, by helping resources to be managed more sustainably, it will contribute to society's economic benefit and social wellbeing.

This is the fourth edition of the Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) over the past 25 years. Its regular renewal ensures the vision and targets stay in tune with the values, aspirations, and priorities of our many partner organisations and communities. Renewal also ensures the strategy contains the latest information about the state of our region's land, water and biodiversity and the trends, public policy and economic conditions that influence their future.

This new Regional Catchment Strategy includes timely assertions of the central place of Traditional Owner knowledge and aspirations in natural resource management. It asserts the unique rights, roles, status and responsibilities of Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owners as the voice for their Country.

The RCS is supported by a Natural Resource Management Plan (NRM Plan), which identifies priority projects that can help deliver on the objectives of the Strategy. The NRM Plan uses up to date science and natural resource mapping to help focus the energy of partners on on-ground projects that present the greatest opportunity to protect and enhance catchment health across the region.

Maribyrnong Flood review

An Independent review coordinated by Melbourne Water will look at the causes and contributors to the October 2022 flooding event in the urban area of the Maribyrnong river catchment, including any impacts the Flemington Racecourse flood wall may have had.

The review will invite submissions from stakeholders and the community, in particular impacted residents.

[Submissions](#) will open from 17 January 2023. Further details about the review will also be released at this time and a series of [community information sessions](#) will be held over January and February 2023.

Integrated Water Management Forums and Plans

Since the establishment of the Integrated Water Management (IWM) Forums in late 2017, the Forums have delivered [Strategic Directions Statements](#) for each catchment, which articulate a catchment vision and seven strategic outcomes for IWM, along with priority projects to progress these outcomes.



The IWM Forums recognised the need for a catchment wide IWM strategy to fill the planning gap at that scale. This work was prioritised by the metro IWM Forums and began in 2019.

The Catchment Scale IWM Plans are the keystone project of the metro IWM Forums. They provide Forum partners with meaningful scientific evidence to guide decision-making and prioritise investment in sustainable water and land use planning, management, and policy.

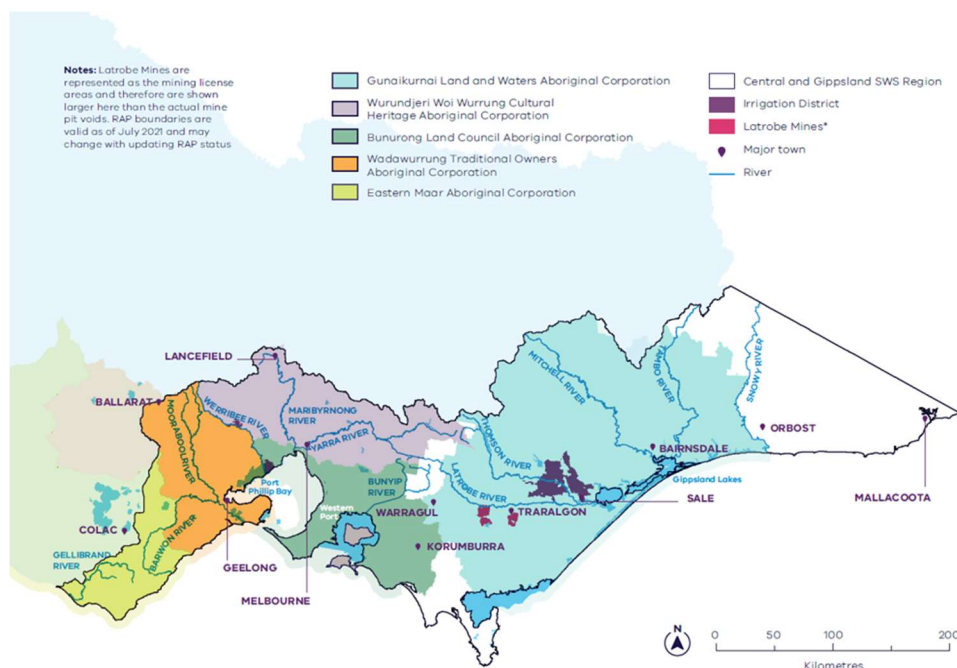
Creating a resilient and liveable future is a shared responsibility, which is why the Plans were developed through robust, Forum-endorsed collaborative processes. The Plans drew on the expertise of more than 50 stakeholder organisations.

To find out more visit the website - [Integrated Water Management Forums](#).

Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy

The Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy was released in 2022 by the Victorian State Government. Its role is to secure the region's long-term water supplies to protect jobs, farms, ecosystems, communities, and the cultural values of Traditional Owners in the region.

The Central and Gippsland Region covers the waterways and catchments south of the Great Divide down to the coast – from the Otways to Mallacoota.



Read the Strategy

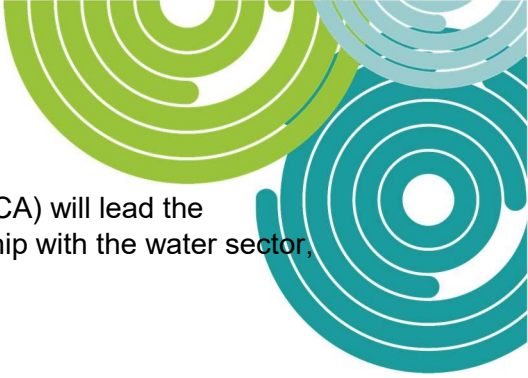
[Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy \(PDF, 18MB\)](#)

[Accessible Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy \(Word, 9MB\)](#)

Actions for the Port Phillip and Western Port region:

[Greater Melbourne Western Port Sub region](#)





The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) will lead the Strategy's implementation. Implementation will happen in partnership with the water sector, Traditional Owners, and the community.

To find out more: [Read the Implementation plan](#)

Yarra Strategic Plan

The Yarra Strategic Plan – Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo 2022–2032 (the Plan) is a whole-of-government initiative, co-designed with the Traditional Owners of the Birrarung and the responsible public entities. As a 10-year plan, it provides an overarching policy and planning framework in relation to the Yarra River and land in its vicinity. Importantly the Plan sets out a new collaborative governance structure for the river, with state and local government agencies working with Traditional Owners to put the interests of the river and its lands at the heart of decision making.

The Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people have always considered the Birrarung to be the lifeblood of Country. It flows across organisational boundaries, encompassing the land and waters of the river as well as its unique ecosystems. The Act and the Plan return to this holistic view – requiring focus, care, and reverence across all reaches of the river. Agreement to collaborate in decision-making, align investment in actions, and to use statutory planning mechanisms, including the land use framework, will cement this holistic view of the river as one living and integrated natural entity.

Under the guidance of the Birrarung Council, the 'voice of the River,' implementation of the actions and land-use directions in the Plan will bring to life the 50 year community vision and the aspirations of Traditional Custodians, while building on the Healthy Waterways Strategy to deliver multi-stakeholder projects for a healthy river and lands.

Waterways of the West

The Waterways of the West Action Plan is a five-year plan that will bring to life the 50-year vision developed by the community, with guidance from the Bunurong, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Traditional Owners. It includes immediate actions to improve the health, amenity, and sustainability of the waterways of Melbourne's west.

The Waterways of the West region extends from Ballan – north-west of Melbourne – to Lancefield in the north, to Footscray in inner Melbourne, and to Little River settlement to the west. The main waterways are the Maribyrnong (Mirrangbamurn) River and the Werribee River (Wirribi Yaluk). Other rivers and creeks in the region include Moonee Ponds

(Moonee Moonee) Creek, the Little River (Worrin-yaloke) and Laverton, Skeleton and Kororoit creeks. The region's waterways also include internationally significant coastal wetlands and estuaries.

This Action Plan will build on the community's connections to their waterways, establish the institutional arrangements needed to ensure an enduring legacy of waterway protection, and instil a new way of working with Traditional Owners and the community to walk together to heal Waterways of the West Country.

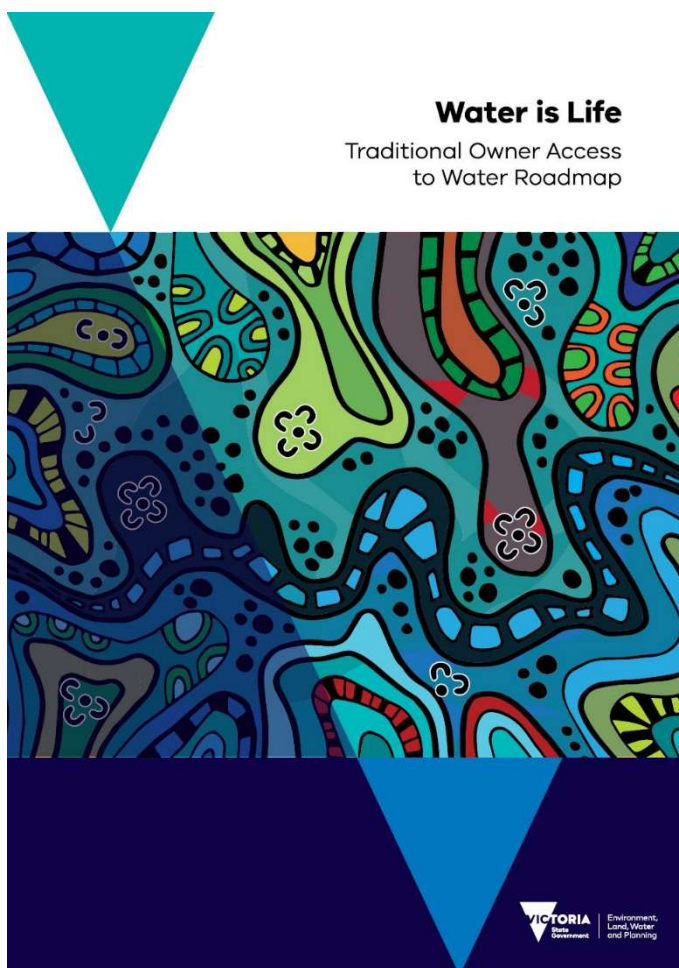


Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap

Water is Life provides an important framework to create and maintain a careful and considered balance between Traditional Owner self-determination in water access and management, and the rights and entitlements of a range of stakeholders.

Water is Life develops a pathway to genuine, meaningful outcomes for Traditional Owners. It represents actual and symbolic respect for the importance of Aboriginal connections to Country. Caring for Country and water can deliver thriving cultural economies and benefits for Traditional Owners, existing entitlement holders, and all Victorians.

To read Water is Life and for further details, visit the [website](#).



Melbourne Water Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways incentives program

After 25 years of working in partnership with private landholders through the Stream Frontage Management Program and Rural Land Program, we have transitioned all our grants programs into a single, streamlined approach, Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways. Information for private landholders is now available here: [Private Landholder Information](#)



All customers who were previously eligible under Stream Frontage Management Program or Rural Land Program can also now apply online. While all activities previously funded are still eligible, we are also encouraging new ideas from all our customers to help us improve Melbourne's waterways and to better manage stormwater runoff.

If you have a great idea for a project that will help us to co-deliver the Healthy Waterways Strategy, visit our updated website: www.melbournewater/liveable-communities-liveable-waterways or contact our Customer Service Centre: 131 722

