



GANNAWARRA

Shire Council

Wednesday, 21 August 2024

6:00 PM

Kerang Senior Citizen Community Rooms

Kerang

AGENDA

Council Meeting

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Geoff Rollinson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Playing of the Welcome to Country video clip.

2 OPENING DECLARATION

We, the Councillors of the Shire of Gannawarra, declare that we will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor, in the best interests of our community, and faithfully, and impartially, carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in us, to the best of our skill and judgement.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Meeting - 17 July 2024

5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

General conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests (as defined in Section 127(2) of the Act) could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

Material conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the *Local Government Act 2020* or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person (as defined in Section 128(3) of the Act) would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

Disclosure of a conflict of interest

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest and is attending a meeting of the Council must make a full disclosure of that interest by either advising:

- a) the Council at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting; or
- b) the Chief Executive Officer in writing before the meeting –

whether the interest is a general conflict of interest or a material conflict of interest; and the nature of the interest.

Note: If a Councillor advises the Chief Executive Officer of the details under b) above, the Councillor must make a disclosure of the class of interest only to the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting.

In accordance with Section 130 of the Act, a councillor who has a disclosed a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to the matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting, and any action in relation to the matter.

Failure to comply with Section 130 of the Act may result in a penalty of 120 penalty units

6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

6.1 RECORDS OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS - 10 JULY 2024 TO 6 AUGUST 2024

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to CEO

Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1 Council Briefing Record - 10 July 2024 to 6 August 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the records of Councillor Briefings 10 July 2024 to 6 August 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents to Council written records of Councillor Briefings in accordance with Clause 31 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

COUNCIL PLAN

Council Plan 2021-2025:

- Be a creative employer of choice through our adherence to good governance and our inclusive culture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with Clause 32 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, a written record of a meeting held under the auspices of Council is, as soon as practicable, reported at a meeting of the Council and incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The record must include:

1. The names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending
2. The matters considered
3. Any conflict-of-interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending
4. Whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest left the meeting.

CONSULTATION

Consultation with Councillors and staff has occurred to ensure the accuracy of the Councillor Briefing records.

CONCLUSION

To ensure compliance with Clause 32 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, it is recommended that Council note the Councillor Briefing records as attached to this report.

RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



Type of Meeting	Councillor Briefing Session
Date:	Monday, 5 August 2024
Time:	9:00am – 4:20pm
Location:	Council Chambers, Kerang
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Ross Stanton (Mayor) Cr Keith Link Cr Garner Smith Cr Kelvin Burt
Apologies:	Cr Travis Collier, Cr Jane Ogden, Cr Charlie Gillingham
In Attendance: (Officers)	Geoff Rollinson, Dylan Taylor, Wade Williams, Amanda Wilson, Paul Fernee, Leigh Hollingworth, Narelle O'Donoghue, Craig Maffescioni, Kellie Burmeister
In Attendance: (Other)	Nil
Matters Discussed:	<p>Presentations</p> <p>Nil</p> <p>Councillor Briefing Updates</p> <p>2.1 Corporate Performance Reporting Framework Quarterly Report – April to June 2024</p> <p>2.2 Children's Services Update</p> <p>2.3 Gannawarra Flood Recovery Plan Update</p> <p>2.4 Capex Update – August 2024</p> <p>2.5 Building and Planning Activity – Quarterly Update</p> <p>2.6 Future Listing Report</p> <p>August Council Agenda</p> <p>7.1 Winning and Stockpiling of Sandstone G09-2024</p> <p>7.2 Supply of Road Making Materials G10-2024</p> <p>7.3 Awarding of Tender G08-2024 Road Reseal Program</p> <p>7.4 G11-2024 Provision of Project Management Services 24-27 - Panel</p> <p>7.5 Variation to Contract G01-2024</p> <p>7.6 New Council Policy 149 – Public Street Lighting</p> <p>7.7 Council Policy No. 150 – Fair Access Policy and Action Plan</p> <p>7.8 Christmas Office Closure</p> <p>7.9 Murray Darling Basin Plan Report</p> <p>Councillor Issues</p> <p>3.1 Councillor Issues raised for discussion with CEO and Directors</p> <p>CEO and Councillor Only Discussion</p> <p>Councillor Only Discussion</p>

Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	Councillor/Officer left meeting Yes/No
Nil		
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 	



7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 WINNING AND STOCKPILING OF SANDSTONE G09-2024

Author: Craig Maffescioni, Manager Operational Services

Authoriser: Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development

Attachments: 1 Evaluation Matrix

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Award contract G09-2024 for the Winning and Stockpiling of Sandstone to Allstone Quarries Pty Ltd for a contract term of three years, with the option of two one-year extensions, for a total contract period of up to five years; and**
- 2. Note the contract includes a “rise and fall” provision to be calculated at the commencement of each financial year.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to approve and appoint Allstone Quarries Pty Ltd as the successful tenderer for contract G09-2024 for the Winning and Stockpiling of Sandstone at Coughlan’s Pits. Tenders were called for this purpose to support road maintenance and construction, in compliance with Council’s Road Management Plan and Council Plan 2021-2025. Five compliant tender submissions were received.

PURPOSE

To provide information for Council to award contract G09-2024 Winning and Stockpiling Sandstone.

ATTACHMENTS

- Evaluation Matrix

DISCUSSION

Tenders were invited for G09-2024 Winning and Stockpiling of Sandstone in Coughlan’s Pit, Oakvale. The tender was offered with a contract term of three years with the option of two one-year extensions up to a period of 5 years and is subject to “rise and fall”.

Tender submissions opened on Wednesday, 5 June 2024 and closed on Friday, 3 July 2024. Five tender submissions were received through Council’s E-Tendering Portal. All tenders received were compliant to the Tender Specification.

The tendered rates are summarised in Attachment 1.

Evaluation Criteria and Weighting

The evaluation criteria and weighting contained in the tender conditions for G09-2024 were as follows:

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA	RELATIVE WEIGHTING
Financial costs to Council - including rates for variations etc. and any additional overhead costs and/or liabilities Council could bear (such as Work Cover).	75%
Tenderers and any nominated sub-contractor's OH&S record and procedures and ability to minimise Council's insurance risks.	15%
Local Benefit	10%

All tenders received were conforming to the specification. The rates quoted below are per tonne.

Table 2: Weighted Score

Tenderer	Price exc GST
Allstone Quarries Pty Ltd	\$4.95
Tenderer B	\$5.68
Tenderer C	\$8.69
Tenderer D	\$11.39
Tenderer E	\$15.00

The five tenders submitted conformed to the specification, and all tenderers are of equal standing in the industry with similar capabilities. Allstone Quarries undertaken this type of work as part of their Quarry network and has the resources to successfully complete the annual program within the required timeframe and budget. ASQ is a regionally owned (Bendigo), family-operated business, which has been servicing the industry since 1970. Over the past 54 years, the business has developed to now encompass three integrated divisions:

- ASQ Quarries
- ASQ Premix Concrete
- ASQ Garden & Landscape

RELEVANT LAW

Not Applicable

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable

OPTIONS

1. Award G09-2024 for the Winning and Stockpiling of Sandstone
2. Re-advertise the Tender.

Council officers recommend proceeding with option 1.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- **Economic:** Due to the length of the various projects, the successful tenderer's purchases of accommodation, meals and fuel will have an economic benefit for businesses in the municipality.
- **Social:** Not applicable
- **Environmental:** Not applicable
- **Climate Change:** Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable.

COLLABORATION

Council will work with the successful tenderer to optimise work patterns to achieve best value for money.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

In year one Council processes 80,000 tonne of road making material from Coughlan's Pit will be crushed at an estimated cost to Council of \$396,000 per annum. Council's long term financial plan has considered future years of pavement materials renewals and needs to maintain the current quantities to meet the needs of the community and industry now and into the future.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

Gannawarra Shire Council

Contract name: Winning and Stockpiling

Contract number: G09-2024

Criteria	Weight	Allstone Quarry		Tenderer B		Tenderer C		Tenderer D		Tenderer E	
		Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score
1 Financial costs to Council - including rates for variations etc. and any additional overhead costs and/or liabilities Council could bear (such as Work Cover).	0.75	9.00	6.75	8.00	6.00	6.00	4.50	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.50
2 Tenderer's and any nominated sub-contractor's OH&S record and procedures and ability to minimise Council's insurance risks.	0.15	7.00	1.05	7.00	1.05	7.00	1.05	5.00	0.75	6.00	0.90
3 Local Benefit	0.10	9.00	0.90	8.00	0.80	10.00	1.00	10.00	1.00	8.00	0.80
TOTAL WEIGHTEDSCORE :			8.70		7.85		6.55		4.75		3.20

Approximate Contract Total

Criteria	Weight	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments
Financial costs to Council - including rates for variations etc. and any additional overhead costs and/or liabilities Council could bear (such as Work Cover).	0.75	Price presents best value for Council	Competitive pricing submissions	Competitive pricing submissions	Submissions where on the higher end of submitted rates	Submissions where on the higher end of submitted rates
Tenderer's and any nominated sub-contractor's OH&S record and procedures and ability to minimise Council's insurance risks.	0.15	Comprehensive system with extensive safety procedures	Comprehensive system with extensive safety procedures	Comprehensive system with extensive safety procedures	Detailed OH&S procedures	Well documented OH&S policies and accredited systems
Local Benefit	0.10	Regionally based company	Southern Victorian based company	Local based contractor	Local based compant	Melbourne based company

7.2 SUPPLY OF ROAD MAKING MATERIALS G10-2024

Author: Craig Maffescioni, Manager Operational Services
Authoriser: Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council award contract G010-2024 Supply of Road Making Materials to Allstone Quarries Pty Ltd, EB Mawsons, for a contract term of three years with the option of two one-year extensions up to a total contract period of five years subject to rise and fall provisions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Allstone Quarries Pty Ltd, E.B. Mawsons submission provides the greater number of materials required for the tender, Tenderer C only provided fine sand and gravel.

The report seeks approval from Council to award Contract G010-2024 to Allstone Quarries Pty Ltd, E.B. Mawsons the supply and or delivery of road making materials.

Tenders were called for the Supply of Road Making Materials for the purpose of road maintenance and construction. This enables Council staff to comply with Council's Road Management Plan and the Council Plan 2021-2025. Three tender submissions were received. Two submissions were compliant with the majority of Tender Specification. The third submission covered fine sand and gravel only was not conforming. The Contract is based on a schedule of rates.

Table 1 – Summary of Tender Submissions

Supply of Road Making Materials					
Tenderer	Specification Conformance	Tender Price	Capacity to Supply	Available resources	OHS Compliance
	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/no	Yes/No
Allstone Quarries Pty Ltd	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EB Mawsons	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tenderer C	No	No	No	No	No

PURPOSE

To provide information for Council to award contract G010-2024 – Supply of Road Making Materials.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

DISCUSSION

For the 2023/2024 year the spend value was approximately \$325,240. Based on this value the estimated five-year Contract value could be approximately \$1,626,200.

There is a difference in rates supplied for the various road making materials from all tenderers, as such Council staff will choose the most appropriate and cost-effective product and supplier based on each project.

RELEVANT LAW

Not Applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable.

OPTIONS

1. Award the tender Supply of Road Making Materials schedule of rates to Mawson's and Allstone Quarries.
2. Re-advertise the Tender.

Council officers recommend proceeding with option 1.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- **Economic:** Due to the length of the Tender various projects, the successful tenderers are Local and regional based which have direct impacts economic benefits to community, business and municipality
- **Social:** Not applicable
- **Environmental:** Not applicable
- **Climate Change:** Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable.

COLLABORATION

Council will work with the successful tenderer to optimise work patterns to achieve best value for money.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council's 2024/2025 Budget for gravel resheet program is \$1,210,000, sealed road rehabilitation program \$1,022,000, footpath replacement \$160,000, kerb and channel replacement \$266,000 Council's long term financial plan has considered future years for Capital works renewal program and maintenance levels for assets in a serviceable condition to meet the needs of the community and industry now and into the future.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND. POLICIES

- **Road Asset Management Plan** - Acts as a tool to support Council's ability to deliver well targeted, responsive and value for money maintenance and operational services for the community.
- **Road Management Plan** - The purpose of the Road Management Plan is to establish a management system to assist the Shire to meet its *Road Management Act 2004* duties based on its policy and operational objectives having regard to available resources.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

7.3 AWARDING OF TENDER G08-2024 ROAD RESEAL PROGRAM

Author: Craig Maffescioni, Manager Operational Services

Authoriser: Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development

Attachments: 1 Evaluation Matrix

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Award tender G08-2024 for the Road Resealing Program to Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd, trading as Primal, for a three-year period with the option of two one-year extensions at the tendered schedule of rates; and**
- 2. Note the contract is subject to rise and fall with works carried out annually within Council's Capital Works Budget.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council officers have completed a tender and evaluation process and recommend awarding the tender for the Road Resealing Program to Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd. The Road Resealing Program ensures the sealed road network is maintained to an appropriate standard for the community.

PURPOSE

To provide information for Council to award contract G08-2024 - Road Resealing Program.

ATTACHMENTS

- Evaluation Matrix

DISCUSSION

Council manages and maintains over 510 km of sealed roads within the municipality. To ensure these roads are maintained at a level that supports both safety and longevity of the network, the seal must be replaced (resealed) before it begins to fail. Generally, the life of a sealed surface is between 10 to 15 years, depending on traffic count, vehicle type, climatic conditions, and the quality of road-making materials.

Council officers undertake an Asset Condition Survey of the road network every three years. This condition information informs the reseal program to ensure that roads are resealed as required based on the condition of the seal. An Asset Condition Survey was last undertaken in January 2024.

Tenders for the Road Resealing Program closed on Friday, 5 July 2024. Six submissions were received as detailed below. Evaluation of the submissions included weighted criteria demonstrating price, capability, experience, sub-contractor capability, OHS compliance, and local benefit, all of which were included in the tender specification package (refer to Table 1).

The tender, which is a schedule of rates contract, was advertised as a three-year contract with the option of two one-year extensions. The schedule of rates allows flexibility for the location of work over the contract period to match the behaviour of the sealed road network over this time.

Of the six tenders received, five conformed to the specification. One tender submitted an asphalt-only tender, which was considered non-conforming.

Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd has been evaluated as the preferred tenderer using the sealed road condition survey report in conjunction with the proposed sealing program and applying the schedule of rates submitted. The 2024/2025 capital works reseal budget is \$1,061,000.

As this is a schedule of rates contract subject to rise and fall, future years' works will be based upon the road condition survey report and within the limit of Council's adopted capital works reseal budget.

Evaluation Criteria and Weighting

The evaluation criteria and weighting contained in the tender conditions for G08-2024 were as follows:

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA	RELATIVE WEIGHTING
Financial costs to Council - including rates for variations etc. and any additional overhead costs and/or liabilities Council could bear (such as Workcover).	70%
Tenderers and any nominated sub-contractors' resources, technical and financial capabilities to successfully complete the contract.	10%
Tenderers and any nominated sub-contractor's experience on similar projects and standing, experience and skill within the industry.	10%
Tenderers and any nominated sub-contractor's OH&S record and procedures and ability to minimise Council's insurance risks.	10%

The following table summarises the weighted score assigned to each tenderer using the evaluation criteria as listed above:

Table 2: Weighted Score

Tenderer	Weighted Score
Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd	9.80
Tenderer B	8.30
Tenderer C	6.90
Tenderer D	5.10
Tenderer E	3.40
Tenderer F	Non-conforming

Five of the six tenders submitted, conformed to the specification, and all tenderers are of equal standing in the industry with similar capabilities. Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd has previously undertaken this type of work for Council and has the resources to successfully complete the annual program within the required timeframe and budget.

RELEVANT LAW

- **Road Management Act 2004 (No 12 of 2004)** - Sec 33 Role of a road authority.
- **Road Management Act 2004 (No 12 of 2004)** - Sec 40 Statutory duty to inspect, maintain and repair public roads.
- **Local government Act 2020** - Sec 9 Overarching governance principles and supporting principles.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable.

OPTIONS

1. Award the tender to Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd.
2. Re-advertise the Tender.

Council officers recommend proceeding with option 1.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- **Economic:** Due to the length of the various projects, the successful tenderer's purchases of accommodation, meals and fuel will have an economic benefit for businesses in the municipality.
- **Social:** Not applicable
- **Environmental:** Not applicable
- **Climate Change:** Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Department of Transport has stipulated that vehicles are to cease reversing on work sites from 2022. All vehicles are to move in a forward direction to minimise occupational health and safety risks. Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd was the only tenderer that referenced that their fleet consists of five live floors (non-tipping) forward spreading aggregate tippers (Trout River/QFE ANTs). These units replace the conventional hoisted reversing tippers that follow the bitumen sprayers to minimise the number of reversing vehicles on the jobsite and thus provide a safer jobsite."

COLLABORATION

Council will work with the successful tenderer to optimise work patterns to achieve best value for money.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council's 2024/2025 Budget is \$ 1,061,000 for the reseal program. Council's long term financial plan has considered future years reseal program needs to maintain the sealed road assets in a serviceable condition to meet the needs of the community and industry now and into the future.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy
- Loddon Campaspe Transport Strategy

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- **Council Plan 2021-2025 Goal 2** - Grow the Gannawarra through a diverse and broad economy. Strategic Priority 1, Facilitate infrastructure, programs and policies that support economic development and productivity, whilst considering our natural environment.
- **Council Plan 2021-2025 Goal 3** - Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability. Strategic Priority 2, Carefully monitor expenditure to ensure value for money and monitor our long-term financial plan to maintain financial sustainability.
- **Road Asset Management Plan** - Acts as a tool to support Council's ability to deliver well targeted, responsive and value for money maintenance and operational services for the community.
- **Road Management Plan** - The purpose of the Road Management Plan is to establish a management system to assist the Shire to meet its Road Management Act duties based on its policy and operational objectives having regard to available resources.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

Gannawarra Shire Council

Contract name: Road Sealing Program
 Contract number: G08-2024

Criteria	Weight	Primal Surfacing		Tenderer B		Tenderer C		Tenderer D		Tenderer E	
		Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score	Score	Wghtd score
1 Price - Financial Cost to Council	0.70	10.00	7.00	8.00	5.60	6.00	4.20	4.00	2.80	2.00	1.40
2 Tenderer's and any nominated sub-contractors' resources, technical and financial capabilities to successfully complete the contract.	0.10	8.00	0.80	8.00	0.80	8.00	0.80	6.00	0.60	5.00	0.50
3 Tenderer's experience on similar projects and standing, experience and skill within the industry	0.10	10.00	1.00	10.00	1.00	10.00	1.00	8.00	0.80	7.00	0.70
4 Tender's and nominated sub contractors OH&S record and procedures and ability to minimise Council's insurance risks	0.10	10.00	1.00	9.00	0.90	9.00	0.90	9.00	0.90	8.00	0.80
TOTAL WEIGHTEDSCORE :			9.80		8.30		6.90		5.10		3.40

Approximate Contract Total

Criteria	Weight	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments
Price - Financial Cost to Council	0.70	Competitive pricing with detailed cost breakdown across all services.	Competitive pricing with detailed cost breakdown across all services.	Competitive pricing with a well-structured cost breakdown.	Competitive pricing with comprehensive cost details.	Competitive pricing including all necessary components.
Tenderer's and any nominated sub-contractors' resources, technical and financial capabilities to successfully complete the contract.	0.10	Strong ability to meet requirements with extensive experience.	Strong ability to meet requirements with extensive experience.	Robust capability with a strong organizational structure.	Strong ability with a well-structured team.	Proven ability to meet the specified requirements.
Tenderer's experience on similar projects and standing, experience and skill within the industry	0.10	Extensive experience with multiple similar projects. Have worked with Council previously	Extensive experience with multiple similar projects. Have worked with Council previously	Highly experienced with multiple similar projects.	Highly experienced with relevant past projects	Experienced with several relevant past projects.
Tender's and nominated sub contractors OH&S record and procedures and ability to minimise Council's insurance risks	0.10	Comprehensive OH&S systems with extensive safety procedures. Only submission with forward spreading aggregate	Comprehensive OH&S systems with extensive safety procedures.	Comprehensive OH&S systems with extensive safety procedures.	Comprehensive OH&S systems with detailed safety strategies.	Accredited OH&S systems with detailed safety procedures.

7.4 G11-2024 - PROVISION OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES 2024-27 – PANEL

Author: Leigh Hollingworth, Manager Projects and Design.
Authoriser: Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Appoint the panel of consultants as shown in Table 1 at the rates submitted for a period of three years, subject to rise and fall, for G11-2024 Provision of Project Management Services.**
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute the documents required to finalise the panel of contractors.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To seek approval from Council to appoint all received tenders for G11-2024 Provision of Project Management Services 2024-27 – Panel for a period of three years subject to rise and fall.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to request Council to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute the documents required to finalise the panel of contractors under the G11-2024 Provision of Project Management Services 2024-27 – Panel tender.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

DISCUSSION

Council at times requires specialist project management services to assist in the delivery of various projects depending on the complexity of the project and available internal resources.

Council has advertised for tenders from qualified and experienced project managers to be appointed to a panel of suppliers for a period of 3 years to fill this need.

Consultants from the panel will be engaged on a project-by-project basis via a competitive quoting process using rates from this contract. Evaluation will be based on cost, how their skill set and experience aligns with the given project along with their availability to perform the required duties.

Tenders were invited for G11-2024 Provision of Project Management Services 2024-27 – Panel through Council's E-Tendering Portal. Tender submissions opened on Wednesday, 3 July 2024 and closed on Thursday, 25 July 2024. Twenty-eight (28) submissions were received through Council's E-Tendering Portal. Table 1 lists all of the consultants who submitted a tender.

Table 1: List of Consultants

A1 Services Co Pty Ltd	MPDCB Pty Ltd
AA Roadmaint Consultaing Pty Ltd	P&L Arthurson Family Trust
ABHG Pty LTd	Planright Australasia Pty Ltd
Accuraco Pty Ltd	Price & Associates Unit Trust
Agile Edge Pty Ltd	PT Tomkinson & Associated Pty Ltd
CDSE Consulting Pty Ltd	PV Engineering Solutions Pty Ltd
CT Management Group Pty Ltd	Saba Civil Management & Consultancy Pty Ltd
Currie & Brown (Australia) Pty Ltd	Scott Flanagan
Engeny Australia Pty Ltd	Shepherd Services Pty Ltd
Fifteen50 Consulting Pty LTd	Spaces Pty Ltd
JJ Ryan Consulting Pty LTd	Sutra Services Pty Ltd
MBB Consulting Pty Ltd	Thr Trustee for D & L Dodemaide Family Trust
McClure Civil Management Pty Ltd	The Trustee for Subdivision Management & Design Unity Trust
Morphum Environmental Ltd	The Trustee for TJ & LM Sherman Family Trust

All tenders received were conforming to the specification. The tender was advertised as a schedule of rates, subject to rise and fall every 12 months with a three-year term expiring on 30 June 2027. As Council requires project managers with differing areas of expertise depending on the project being completed, the appointment of a panel of contractors is recommended.

As the tender required contractors to provide rates for the provision of services, travel and accommodation it is recommended all tender submissions be accepted. Tenders received provide a variety of skills and experience that Council may or may not utilise as required, in the performance of works.

Table 2 shows the evaluation criteria which will be used at the time of engagement of any of the consultants under this contract.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria

Consultants fee for the works	30%
Demonstrated skills, experience, and capacity to undertake the described works	25%
Experience and expertise specifically with similar projects	25%
Government agency/ local Government experience	20%

Under the terms of the contract there is no obligation on Council to use any of the submissions received and there is no guarantee of a minimum quantity or period of work under this tender.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020 – Section 108 Procurement

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable.

OPTIONS

1. Accept all tenders and appoint all tenderers to a panel.
2. Accept some of the tenders and appoint a selection of tenderers to a panel.
3. Not accept the tenders.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not Applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

All works undertaken through this panel will be funded from the adopted budget for any relevant year or project.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Gannawarra Shire Council Policy 109 - Procurement prescribes the requirements relating to purchasing or procuring goods and services.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This Report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

7.5 VARIATION TO CONTRACT G01-2024

Author: Leigh Hollingworth, Manager Projects and Design.
Authoriser: Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development
Attachments: 1 Contract G01-2024 award Council report

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Approve a variation to contract G01-2024 Design and Construct for Apex Park Road and Kervins Road Bridge Replacements with Murray Constructions Pty Ltd for the design and construction of the replacement of McLean Road Bridge for the additional amount of \$453,355 excluding GST, not subject to rise and fall.**
- 2. Allocate funding of \$500,000 from Council's Roads to Recovery funding budget to allow completion of the McLean Road bridge replacement.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs Council of the budgets and further cost implications for Council and seeks approval of a variation of the contract for the design and construction of Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridge replacements to include the replacement of McLean Road bridge.

PURPOSE

To seek approval of a variation to Contract G01-2024 Design and Construct for Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridge replacements to include the replacement of McLean Road bridge along with allocation of budget to fund the works.

ATTACHMENTS

- Contract G01-2024 award Council report

DISCUSSION

Council has responsibility for 68 bridges and has been replacing aged timber structures with new concrete bridges which are designed to cater for larger heavy vehicle loads. The increasing demand to utilise High Mass/High Performance Vehicles (HPV), particularly to the farm gate, has increased the need for Council bridge assets to be upgraded to SM1600 standard.

To monitor its inventory of bridge assets, Council routinely engages consultant engineers to perform Level 2 bridge inspections to identify areas of concern, particularly with regards to structural components.

In 2023 the bridge suffered a failure, due to a suspected overweight vehicle, and has since been closed. The bridge provides access to several farming properties in the area which can still be accessed when the Back Creek is not in flood via a bypass road. A level 2 inspection of the bridge at McLean Road, Ninyeunook was completed by a consulting engineer in late 2021. This identified some minor cracks to timber stringers, highlighted but no major structural defects.

Council awarded a contract to Murray Constructions Pty Ltd in March 2024 for the amount of \$1,122,470 for the replacement of the Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridges. At the time of tendering Council sought prices for the replacement of the McLean Road bridge as well, however this was not accepted at the time due to budget constraints.

Recently Council has received notification that it will receive an allocation of Federal Government funding through the Roads to Recovery Program over the period 2024 to 29 of \$11,598,043, which is an increase over the \$5,271,820 that was allocated from 2019 to 2024.

Council applied earlier in 2024 for funding under the Bridges Renewal Program to allocate budget towards this project, however, was unsuccessful.

Table 1 shows the proposed breakdown of funding for contracted works all three of the bridge replacements. Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridges budgets have been allocated through Council's 2024/2025 Budget via a combination of Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) funding and Council Capex monies.

Table 1: Breakdown of Funding for Contracted Works

	LRCI PHASE 4B	ROADS TO RECOVERY	COUNCIL	TOTAL
Apex Pk Rd	\$ 522,000		\$ 100,220	\$ 622,220
Kervins Rd	\$ 238,226		\$ 262,024	\$ 500,250
McLean Rd		\$453,355		\$ 453,355
Total	\$ 760,226	\$453,355	\$ 362,244	\$1,575,825

The original tender prices for each contractor are displayed in *Table 2*. In seeking a variation price to include McLean Road bridge into the existing contract the contractor notified of a price increase of \$12,825 due to material cost increases resulting in a variation price of \$453,355.

Table 2: Original Tender Prices

	APEX PARK ROAD	KERVINS ROAD	MCLEAN ROAD	TOTAL
Tenderer 1	\$ 883,795.22	\$ 564,429.40	\$553,833.00	\$ 2,002,057.62
Tenderer 2	\$ 1,275,879.92	\$ 936,281.10	\$827,110.44	\$ 3,039,271.46
Murray Constructions	\$ 622,220.00	\$ 500,250.00	\$440,530.00	\$ 1,563,000.00
Tenderer 4	\$ 793,841.31	\$ 564,453.74	\$546,408.90	\$ 1,904,703.95

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

Road Management Act 2004

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Contract award Council report from the Council meeting held 20 March 2024 is attached.

OPTIONS

1. Approve a variation to contract G01-2024 Design and Construct for Apex Park Road and Kervins Road Bridge Replacements with Murray Constructions Pty Ltd for the design and construction of the replacement of Maclean Road Bridge for the additional amount of \$453,355 excluding GST, not subject to rise and fall.
2. Not approve the variation and defer the bridge replacement until additional funding from other sources can be secured.
3. Not approve the variation and remove the bridge.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The bridge will be of concrete construction with a design life of 100 years. Throughout this time there should be minimal maintenance required compared to timber bridges which are subject to termite damage and greater wear and tear.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Lessons learned in the past several years with completed bridge replacements have influenced the project specification for these bridges. For example, some recent bridges have consisted of plank decks which drain water longitudinally to each end of the deck instead of having cross-fall. This has proved problematic and resulted in maintenance and rideability issues, as a result these projects have specified a cross-fall on the deck of these bridges.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Committing an additional bridge replacement will result in an impact on Council's Capex budget as detailed in the Discussion above. Choosing not to replace the bridge at this time will likely result in an increased cost in the future due to the economies of scale achieved by replacing multiple bridges together.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy
Priority 11: Upgrade bridges and culverts.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2021-2025:

- Goal 2 Growth - Facilitate infrastructure, programs and policies that support economic development and productivity, whilst considering our natural environment.

Gannawarra Shire Council Bridge Asset Management Plan:

- Reliability for freight: 100% of new construction to exceed SM1600.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

Council Meeting

20 March 2024

7.2 G01-2024 - DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT FOR APEX PARK ROAD AND KERVINS ROAD BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS

Author: Leigh Hollingworth, Manager Projects and Design.
Authoriser: Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development
Attachments: 1 G01-2024 Evaluation

RECOMMENDATION**That Council:**

1. Allocate funding of \$363,000 through Council's Capital Works budget to allow completion of the Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridges.
2. Award a contract for the design and construction of Apex Park and Kervins Road bridges to Murray Constructions Pty Ltd for 1,122,470.00 excluding GST, not subject to rise and fall.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs Council of the budgets and further cost implications for Council and seeks to award a contract for the design and construction of Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridge replacements.

PURPOSE

To inform Council of the budgets and possible further cost implications for Council and seeks to award Contract G01-2024 Design and Construct for Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridge replacements to Murray Constructions Pty Ltd.

ATTACHMENTS

G01-2024 Evaluation

DISCUSSION

Council has responsibility for 68 bridges and has been replacing aged timber structures with new concrete bridges which are designed to cater for larger heavy vehicle loads. The increasing demand to utilise High Mass/High Performance Vehicles (HPV), particularly to the farm gate, has increased the need for Council bridge assets to be upgraded to SM1600 standard.

To monitor its inventory of bridge assets, Council routinely engages consultant engineers to perform Level 2 bridge inspections to identify areas of concern, particularly with regards to structural components.

In 2023, the bridge at Apex Park Road, Reedy Lake suffered a failure and collapsed. The bridge provides access to one residence and the popular Apex Park facilities and free camping area.

An inspection after the October 2022 flood raised no areas on concern structurally. Due to the constant water levels in the Washpen Creek, Council has not been able to determine the exact cause of failure and it is possible it was due to excessive loads or a fault under the waterline.

Council Meeting

20 March 2024

A Level 2 inspection on Kervins Road bridge identified some components that required further investigation, a Level 3 inspection highlighted defects with some of the structural components of the bridge. Subsequently works have been carried out to strengthen these components.

Income

Funding for the replacement of the two bridges has been allocated from two separate grant opportunities.

Round 4 of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program allocated Council \$760,226 under Part B which is to be used for road focussed projects. Council officers submitted the Apex Park Road and Kervins Road Bridges as projects under this funding. Budgets of \$522,000 and \$238,226 respectively were estimated based on previous projects, built for a square metre rate of \$3,177, with an allowance for escalations in construction costs.

Proposed budget allocations are shown in Table 1 subject to confirmation of the Bridges Renewal grant application being successful.

Table 1: Income Sources

	Grant	Source
Apex Pk Rd	\$ 522,000.00	LRCI Phase 4B
Kervins Rd	\$ 238,226.00	LRCI Phase 4B
Total	\$760,226.00	

Expenditure

Council advertised a tender for the design and construction of the Apex Park Road bridge and Kervins Road Bridge with a tender option to include McLean Road bridge into the contract. The awarding of the McLean Road bridge will be considered in a future report to Council.

A total of four tenders were received, the tender prices are shown below in Table 2. The cheapest tender has a replacement rate of approximately \$5,000/sqm which equates to a 57% increase in construction prices since 2020.

Table 2: Tendered Prices

	Apex Park Road	Kervins Road
Tenderer 1	\$ 883,795.22	\$ 564,429.40
Tenderer 2	\$ 1,275,879.92	\$ 936,281.10
Tenderer 3	\$ 622,220.00	\$ 500,250.00
Tenderer 4	\$ 793,841.31	\$ 564,453.74

RELEVANT LAW

Road Management Act 2004 (VIC)

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable

Council Meeting

20 March 2024

OPTIONS

1. Accept the tender for Apex Park Road and Kervins Road bridges and provide additional funding of \$363,000 through Council's Capital Works budget to allow completion of the projects and award a contract to Murray Constructions Pty Ltd for \$1,122,470.00 excluding GST not subject to rise and fall.
2. Divert the allocation of LRCI funding from Kervins Rd to the Apex Park Rd bridge to ensure its replacement and redirect any remaining allocation towards another project. Defer the Kervins Road bridge replacement until further funding is available.
3. Abandon the projects.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The bridges will be of concrete construction with a design life of 100 years. Throughout this time there should be minimal maintenance required compared to the existing timber bridges which are subject to termite damage and greater wear and tear.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Consultation was initially undertaken with neighbouring property owners adjacent the Apex Park Rd bridge which has in turn informed the project specifications for the Kervins Rd bridge with regards to carriageway width.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Lessons learned in the past several years with completed bridge replacements have influenced the project specification for these bridges. For example, some recent bridges have consisted of plank decks which drain water longitudinally to each end of the deck instead of having cross-fall. This has proved problematic and resulted in maintenance and rideability issues, as a result these projects have specified a cross-fall on the deck of these bridges.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Committing to all two bridge replacements will result in an impact on Council's Capex budget as detailed in the Discussion above.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy
Priority 11: Upgrade bridges and culverts.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2021-2025:

Goal 2 Growth - Facilitate infrastructure, programs and policies that support economic development and productivity, whilst considering our natural environment.

Bridge Asset Management Plan

Reliability for freight: 100% of new construction to exceed SM1600.

Item 7.2

Page 3

Council Meeting

20 March 2024

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

7.6 NEW COUNCIL POLICY 149 - PUBLIC STREET LIGHTING

Author:	Dmitry Belyakov, Manger Council Assets & Property
Authoriser:	Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development
Attachments:	1 Council Policy No. 149 - Public Street Lighting
	2 Council Policy No. 149 - Public Street Lighting Procedure

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt Council Policy No. 149 – Public Street Lighting**
- 2. Adopt the accompanying Public Street Lighting Procedure**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Policy 149 – Public Street Lighting is proposed to govern the design, installation, and management of public street lighting within the Gannawarra Shire. As the Council officers review and develop Council policies to maintain compliance with relevant legislation and to ensure that they are reflective of current practice.

PURPOSE

Purpose is to ensure Council complies with the *Road Management Act 2004*, approaches towards design, installation and management of the public lighting assets are aligned with the current AS/NSZ 1158 Lighting for Roads and Public Spaces standard and is able to appropriately consider community requests in relation to the provision and management of public lighting.

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Council Policy No. 149 - Public Street Lighting
- Public Street Lighting Procedure (to accompany Council Policy No. 149)

DISCUSSION

Council officers review and develop Council policies to maintain compliance with relevant legislation and to ensure that they are reflective of current practice. The need to develop the Council Policy 149 – Public Street Lighting was identified through reported ambiguities in decision-making process in relation to new lighting design and installation and a number of residents requests which highlighted matters which can be adequately addressed only by a Policy.

Officers have prepared a draft Policy and accompanying procedure to address the following matters:

- Lighting assets ownership, classification, and the entities responsible for management.
- Approach to lighting installations for the new and existing streets and public spaces.
- The approach towards determining the need for lighting.
- Requests / complaints resolution procedures for frequently reoccurring concern types.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Local Government Act 2020*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable.

OPTIONS

Council may wish to endorse the proposed Policy and Procedure or make adjustments or decide to not proceed with the policy endorsement at this time.

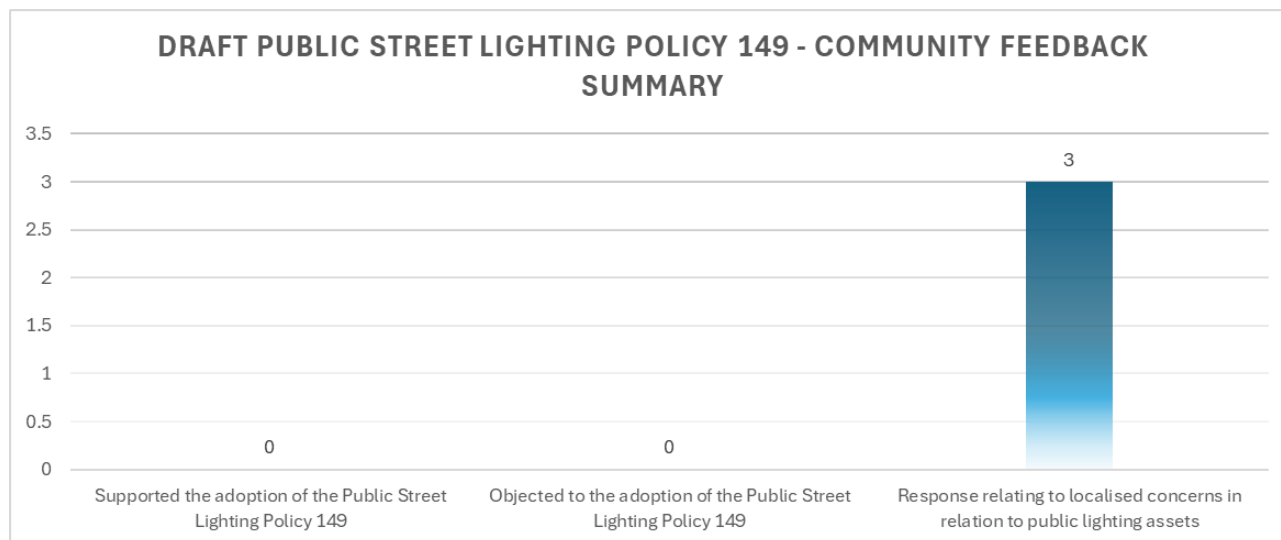
SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community feedback was sought between 16 May 2024 and 7 June 2024, with the engagement process promoted via the distribution of a media release on the 17 May 2024, social media post published on Council’s Facebook page, reference in the 28 May 2024 edition of Gannawarra News and the references during the fortnightly 3SH Mayoral Interviews during the consultation period.

There was minimal response from the community members, with the total of three responses received during the community engagement period.



Out of these responses:

- Two responses highlighted concerns with the street lighting infrastructure managed/operated by the power utility organisation (Powercor).
- One response raised concerns in relation to the external lighting system of one of Council’s buildings.

All responses were compiled into the Public Street Lighting Policy 149 Feedback document that was presented to Councillors. To ensure compliance with Council’s Public Transparency policy, all feedback provided will remain confidential as the comments received could identify and may cause harm to individuals within the community.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The policy aims to enable implementation of innovative lighting solutions including solar lighting systems, supporting innovation and sustainability enhancement endeavours.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The policy aims to address the potential financial viability implications from inconsistent approach to management of existing street public lighting assets, by mitigating the risk of establishment of undesired and financially unviable practices.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 - Liveability – Goal 1 – Build unique transformational infrastructure that enhances liveability and passive and active recreation.
- Public Transparency Council Policy No. 141
- Community Engagement Policy Council Policy No. 143

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be presented in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.



Public Street Lighting

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 149

1. POLICY PURPOSE

- To provide guidance on the design, installation, and management of public street lighting within the Gannawarra Shire.
- To ensure new public street lighting installed is generally in accordance with relevant Australian Standards, applicable Road Design Guidelines, and applicable best practices for contributing to the sustainability and amenity of the municipality.
- To provide a consistent approach for the provision of public lighting enabling it to support the safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic at night.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to internal Council staff and any external contractors with a formal role in the design and management of public lighting in Gannawarra Shire Council.

3. POLICY

Urban areas and rural townships typically contain public lighting for safety due to increased pedestrian activity. Arterial roads, some rural intersections and car parks may also contain lighting. The level of lighting will depend on whether its purpose is for pedestrian or vehicle movements.

The Road Management Act 2004 establishes Council's authority to consider the provision of public lighting in roads and road-related areas – such as carparks. As the landowner / land manager, Council is also authorised to manage public lighting at all Council reserves / land and buildings.

3.1 Public Lighting Assets Ownership

Public lighting in Gannawarra Shire consists of street lighting and a variety of other off-street lighting types in public open spaces. The categories of public lighting assets are as follows:

- Public lighting systems owned and operated by Council typically have a separate meter box to record electricity consumption or an alternative source of power (e.g. solar). Examples include metered lighting in parks, public car parks, reserves, and recreation facilities.
- Public lighting systems owned and operated by VicRoads typically have a separate meter box to record electricity consumption. Such lighting is generally located along the main (arterial) roads.
- Public (street) lighting units owned and operated by the Electricity Distribution Company are non-metered which includes standard and approved non-standard lights. The maintenance service standards for Electricity Distributor operated lighting schemes are set out in the Essential Services Commission "Public Lighting Code (2015)" document.

The Council does not own most street lighting infrastructure and pays (in accordance with the negotiated agreement) for electricity, installation, maintenance, and replacement as part of its on-going responsibility of providing infrastructure and amenities to the community.

3.2 Composition and Classification of Public Lighting Assets

Lighting units have a variety of pole types, each containing the same basic parts. Street lighting may also be attached via brackets to power distribution poles. Main components include (but not limited to):

- Pole - used to mount luminaires onto, poles are typically made of steel, aluminium, wood or concrete.
- Light source – The light source (a lamp or globe in a traditional luminaire, or LED chips) emits light and is located within the luminaire (lantern).
- Luminaire (lantern) – a device that distributes, filters or transforms the light given by a light source.

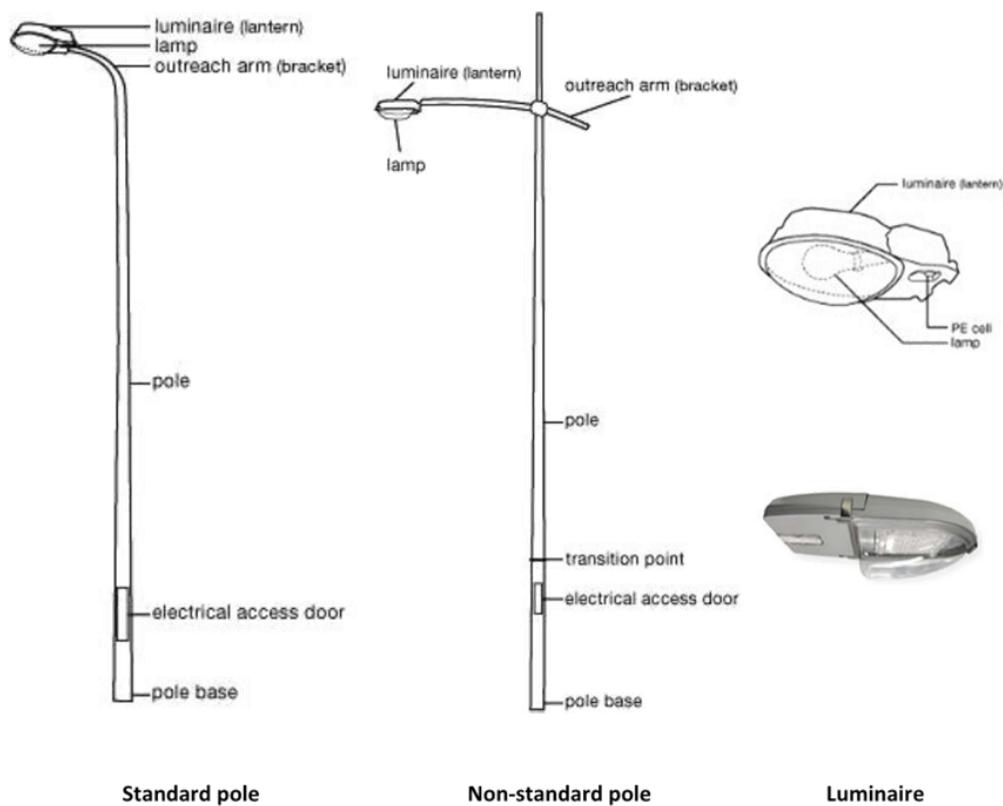


Fig 1. Typical View and Components of Public Lighting Assets

The lighting units can be classified into:

- Standard lighting units (unmetered lighting) – luminaires installed on standard poles. Most street lighting is delivered via the standard lighting units.
- Standard or non-standard lighting units (metered lighting) – lighting units connected to a meter to measure energy taken from the electricity network. This lighting is typical for sports facilities, car parks and open space reserves. Includes decorative lighting units installed in public parks and town centres.
- Aesthetic lighting (metered lighting) – typically not installed for the purposes of maintaining functional lighting levels in an area. Examples of aesthetic lighting may include uplighting or feature lighting.



3.3 Council’s Approach to Lighting Installations

For all new urban / township street and public space lighting installations, Gannawarra Shire Council aims to deliver lighting consistent with the current AS/NSZ 1158 Lighting for Roads and Public Spaces standard. Where possible, the provision of public lighting will be in accordance with the lighting categories:

- PR category – for roads in local areas.
- PP category – for pathways.
- PA category – for public activity areas (excluding car park areas).
- PE category – for connecting elements.
- PC category – for outdoor car parks.
- V category – for major traffic routes.

The diagram below shows the summary of the applicable lighting categories for different public space types. In most cases the appropriate lighting category will be determined by the Council staff using the data defining the function and busyness of the road / public space.

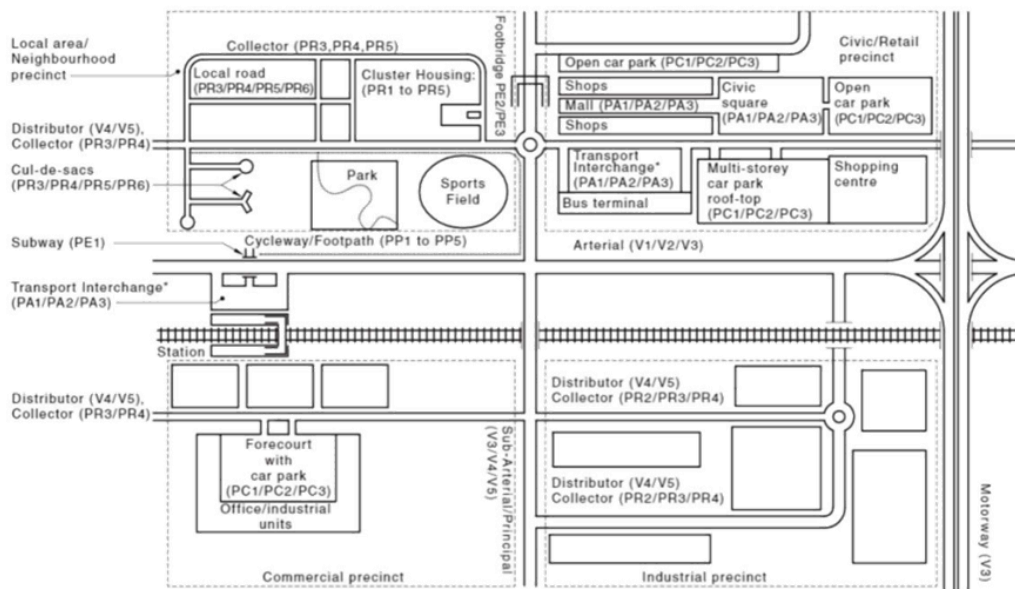


Fig 2. Minimum Lighting Standards Diagram AS/NZS 1158.3.1:2020

For all existing residential / township areas which don’t currently meet the relevant standards, the Council will not be proactively retrofitting lighting systems for economic reasons. The Council may upgrade lighting at its own discretion in scenarios such as (but not limited to): upgrading lighting to enhance access route to a new asset / public facility, or a lighting upgrade based on substantial supporting data confirming the general public need for improved lighting at a location.

For rural intersections lighting, “Flag” lighting at appropriate intersections consisting of a small number of luminaires may be provided to indicate the presence and location of the intersection without providing lighting to any particular category level. The Council will only provide such lighting based on confirmed road safety need and / or crash history, with consideration to power supply availability and funding availability constraints.



4. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy as required but always within two years after a general election of the Council.

At the time it was developed, this policy was compliant with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna Offices, or online at www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au.

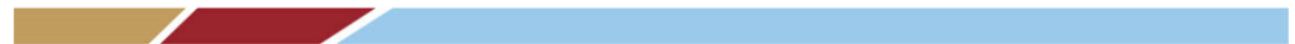
Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Director Infrastructure and Development on (03) 5450 9333.

Altus ECM Folder: 3.000518

Originally adopted: xx/08/2024

To be reviewed by: 2028

Minute Book Reference:





Public Street Lighting Procedure

TO ACCOMPANY - COUNCIL POLICY NO. 149

This Procedure should be read in conjunction with Gannawarra Shire Council Policy No. 149 – Public Street Lighting, which sets the guidelines for lighting assets design and installation in accordance with AS/NZS 1158.3.1:2020. The procedure applies when selecting / approving / managing complaints / undertaking community consultations in relation to lighting assets – street lighting or off-street lighting at public open spaces within the Gannawarra Shire.

THE “NEED FOR LIGHTING” CHECK

Prior to installing the lighting assets, the Council should validate the need for lighting. Sometimes the new lighting may not be required for reasons, as follows:

- Adequate lighting is already available at the location from a source such as adjacent street lighting, car park or public building.
- The area where lighting is not recommended. Examples include (but not limited to) nature reserves, recreation areas / sporting facilities not used for organised competitive sporting events, playgrounds, laneways and areas of high vandalism (if economically not viable or the likelihood of it being an effective deterrent was not confirmed).

Additionally, lighting may not be needed at some locations for safety reasons. While this may seem contradictory, it is important to not light spaces that may be inherently dangerous with or without lighting. Examples include:

- Areas which don't have sufficient (passive) surveillance looking into the space from residential houses facing the space or passing vehicles / pedestrian traffic looking into the area.
- Areas which lead to a dead end or otherwise unsafe area with little (passive) surveillance.

Further considerations should also include an assessment of:

- Whether the area can support the required infrastructure.
- Environmental and cultural heritage considerations.
- Whether a new metered supply is required.
- Suitability of environmentally sustainable lighting options for the location (e.g. solar lighting units).
- Use of dimming and timers for the areas where usage is intermittent and lighting is not required during a portion of the night.

Also, where the need for the new lighting had been confirmed, the Council may deviate from the categories prescribed by the standard at its discretion. This includes situations such as (but not limited to) where there are confirmed special circumstances applicable to the specific area (for example: limited availability of suitable poles), or in situations where a custom lighting design may be more appropriate.

REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

The Council staff will process and address all requests / complaints as follows:

- **Street Light Fault Report** – requests in relation to all unmetered (standard street lighting) should be made to Powercor on **13 24 12** or via the web portal <https://publiclighting.portal.powercor.com.au/PublicLightFault>. Please submit your lighting fault complaint to Council only if your fault report is in relation to one of the unmetered lights managed by Council.
- Requests for New Street Lighting (Existing Lighting) – such requests will be limited to validation of functionality of the existing lighting system. In general, requests for installation of new lighting will not be supported.
- Requests for New Street Lighting (No Existing Lighting) – requests for installation of new lighting will be at Council's discretion for sites / locations which historically were developed without the installation of public lighting systems.
- Requests for Removal of Street Lighting – in general, such requests will not be supported.
- Complaints About Over Lighting or Light Spill – these requests will be assessed against the requirements of the AS 4282:2019 Control of the Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting. The Council will provide feedback detailing the assessment outcomes and whether light spill control measures will be applied.
- Complaints About Shading of Lighting by Trees – will be addressed via on-site inspection and tree trimming, as required. Feedback can be provided if requested.



7.7 COUNCIL POLICY NO. 150 - FAIR ACCESS POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

Author: Katrina Thorne, Coordinator Community Partnerships

Authoriser: Paul Fernee, Director Community Wellbeing

Attachments:

- 1 Policy No. 150 - Fair Access
- 2 Fair Access Policy - Action Plan
- 3 Summary - Fair Access Policy Community consultation - survey results

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopt Policy No. 150 – Fair Access Policy
2. Adopt the accompanying Fair Access Action Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fair Access Policy is to respond to the Victorian Government’s Fair Access Policy Roadmap, which seeks to address known barriers experienced by women, girls and people of all cultures and socio-economic demographics in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of Gannawarra Shire’s culture and identity. The sport and recreation sector provides opportunities for enriching our communities through the promotion of respect and fair mindedness for all people, whilst also supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all Victorians.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to adopt a new Policy No. 150 Fair Access Policy and supporting Action Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- Policy No. 150 – Fair Access Policy
- Fair Access Action Plan
- Summary – Fair Access Policy Community consultation – survey results

DISCUSSION

Council officers briefed Councillors in August 2023 regarding the Fair Access Policy Roadmap and Council’s obligation if it is to remain eligible for future Victorian Government funding programs relating to community infrastructure from 1 July 2024. A draft Fair Access Policy and action plan was presented to Councillors in June 2024 where it was endorsed for public consultation for 4 weeks.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council made a decision at the June 2024 where the policy and action plan was endorsed for public consultation for 4 weeks

OPTIONS

1. Council may adopt the Fair Access Policy and Action Plan as presented.
2. Council may reject the recommendation and seek a revised version of the Fair Access Policy and Action Plan.
3. Council may choose to not adopt the Fair Access Policy and Action Plan, noting that this deems Council ineligible for future Victorian Government community infrastructure funding from 1 July 2024.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Compliance with the Fair Access Policy Roadmap requirements ensures that Council remains eligible for Victorian Government community sports infrastructure funding. Council relies heavily on grant funding to support the delivery of key community sports infrastructure improvements and new built facilities.

Adopting a Fair Access Policy and Action Plan will provide direction to Council and community sports clubs in the delivery of infrastructure upgrades and/or initiatives that seek to address known barriers for women and girls to be involved and participate in and enjoy the benefits of community sport. This direction will then enable an environment for improved health and wellbeing outcomes for the Gannawarra.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council held a public consultation period from 27 June 2024 through to 22 July 2024 to obtain feedback and to consult with the community on the Fair Access Policy and action plan.

Throughout the public consultation period, Council officers held three community drop-in sessions in Koondrook, Cohuna and Kerang, as well as two consultation meetings with Kerang and Cohuna recreation reserve representatives.

In addition, there was opportunity for the broader community to provide feedback via an online survey, writing to Council or submitting a survey through the post.

Council received 20 responses to the survey, with 95% of those living within Gannawarra Shire.

It should be noted that the consultation sessions included clubs and committees that reside in the cross-border location of Koondrook/Barham, where residents in Barham would access community sports infrastructure in Koondrook.

A summary of the survey results is attached, with some key points to note:

Age range:

26-45 years	35%
46-65 years	25%
65+	40%

Respondents identified 40% as a parent or carer, with 10% falling into people who earn less than \$650 per week.

A large majority of survey respondents (95%) indicated that they enjoy the social aspect of sport and recreation in Gannawarra, with second to that (85%) being to improve health.

Some positive feedback received on the policy included:

- *I'm glad that it fleshed out to include people of minority*
- *Encourages all people*
- *That it is being looked at - the more people involved in sport the better*
- *Trying to address the issue of women's inclusion into sport*

There were some concerns noted about the policy that included:

- *There may be further administrative burden on volunteer committees to manage a new process*
- *I didn't feel we needed a policy in place to allow this to happen. Women's sports being well represented these days*
- *The expense of implementing this policy at this time.*

In summary, the survey results indicated that the community through those who committed to providing feedback and through general conversations at the consultation sessions are overall satisfied with the Fair Access Policy and Action Plan.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Fair Access Policy and Action Plan reflect Gannawarra Shire Council's commitment to improving equitable community access to facilities and public places. The Policy and Action Plan supports the Victorian Government's commitment to creating an environment for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

The Victorian Government has developed a reform agenda to change the systems that have perpetuated gender inequality by designing an enduring structure that requires implementation and tracking of progress over time.

COLLABORATION

The development of the Fair Access Policy and supporting Action Plan occurred in collaboration with the Office of Women in Sport and Recreation (OWSR), Sport and Recreation Victoria and Mallee Sports Assembly.

The State Government coordinated the delivery of workshops as part of a Fair Access Policy roadshow to provide LGA's with the relevant background, information, and support to develop local versions of the Fair Access Policy.

The Mallee Sports Assembly facilitated four Communities of Practice meetings where staff were able to network and discuss elements of the development of the policy with neighbouring LGA's as part of a regional support network.

In addition, Council officers also met with staff from Women's Health Loddon Mallee to ensure that a Gender Impact Assessment was undertaken on this policy, and feedback from WHLM was that this Policy and action plan was well written and addressed relevant localised concerns regarding access to community sports infrastructure.

Responsibilities for tasks within the Action Plan have been confirmed by each of the identified work teams.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

From 1 July 2024, to be eligible for State Government funding for infrastructure projects, Gannawarra Shire Council must have an endorsed Fair Access Policy that meets the Victorian Government requirements. This Policy and Action Plan meet legislative requirements and has been endorsed by the Office of Women in Sport and Recreation.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Active Victoria 2022-2026
- Victorian Government Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation (2015) Recommendation 6: Deliver female friendly built environments and equitable facility usage policies
- *Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020*

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- 2021-2025 Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 'Growing Gannawarra'
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025
- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2019 - 2029

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open meeting of Council

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.



Fair Access Policy

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 150

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Fair Access Policy is to address barriers women, girls, and people of all cultures and socio economic demographics experience in accessing community sports infrastructure, in response to the Victorian Government's Fair Access Policy Roadmap.

The Policy aims to enhance Gannawarra Shire Council's capacity to identify and eliminate systemic gender inequality in policies, programs, communications and services. It promotes gender equality and ensures a place-based response for equitable use of community sports infrastructure.

An accompanying Action Plan is a commitment that Council will continually work towards ongoing implementation steps for this Fair Access Policy.

2. BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In 2015 an Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation was conducted by the Victorian Government. This inquiry included 9 recommendations which now form part of a Victorian Government reform agenda *Change the Game*, which includes addressing the traditional structures and way community sport and recreation organisations operates in Victoria.

Recommendation 6 from the inquiry is to: *Deliver female friendly built environments and equitable facility usage policies.*

Recommendation 6 also includes the following actions:

"...encourage facility owners and managers to review access and usage policies to ensure women and girls have a fair share of access to the highest quality facilities at the best and most popular times"; and

"facilitating a universal adoption of [policies, strategies and audit tools] that will drive change further"

The policy also enables effective and efficient integration of the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, and other legislative frameworks.



3. SCOPE

To support Gannawarra Shire Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure.

This Policy applies to all Gannawarra Shire Council owned and/or managed community sports facilities and recreation reserves, which includes the following:

- Cohuna Recreation Reserve
- Leitchville Recreation Reserve
- Kerang Swimming Pool
- Cohuna Swimming Pool
- Leitchville Swimming Pool
- Kerang Indoor Exercise Pool

This Policy applies to sport and recreation groups and local recreation reserve committees seeking Victorian Government and Council funding for facilities and programs.

4. PRINCIPLES

This Policy and action plan are based on the six Fair Access Principles of inclusivity, full participation, equitable access, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

Council considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of the Gannawarra Shire municipality.

No.	Principle
1	Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe, and inclusive.
2	Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
3	Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. of the highest quality available and most convenient b. at the best and most popular competition and training times and locations c. to support existing and new participation opportunities, and a variety of sports
4	Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.
5	Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices.
6	Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.

5. POLICY

This Policy establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Gannawarra Shire Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

Gannawarra Shire Council has identified specific actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure in its Fair Access Action Plan (refer Appendix A).



6. RESPONSIBILITY

Gannawarra Shire Council is responsible for implementing this Fair Access Policy. Council’s management and staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders (for example State Sporting Associations and Regional Sports Assemblies) have a shared responsibility to support the policy.

7. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this Policy and action plan as required, but always within twelve months of a general election of Council.

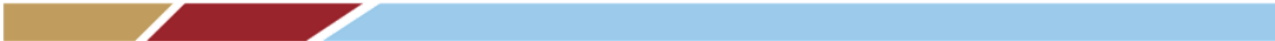
8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council’s Kerang and Cohuna offices or online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Director Community Wellbeing on (03) 5450 9333.

Records –	
Originally adopted:	2024
To be reviewed	2025







Appendix A

Fair Access Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Action Plan supports the implementation of the Fair Access Policy and details the identified actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure within Gannawarra Shire.

The timeframes have been determined as Short term (within 1-2 years), Medium term (within 3-5 years) and long term (5 years or longer).

PRINCIPLE 1:

Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe and inclusive.

Actions to achieve progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of success
Audit community facilities to ensure it is demonstrating inclusivity via posters, merchandise, website, social media platforms etc.	S	Community Sports clubs with support from Council	Development of an audit template Minimum of two (2) audits undertaken per calendar year across the municipality
Audit Council owned and managed facilities to identify gaps in gendered facilities (changerooms) and safety (lighting, lockable doors etc)	S	Council's Infrastructure team	Minimum of one (1) Gannawarra Shire Council owned/managed facility audited per calendar year
Update Council facility use agreements to include statements noting councils' expectation of equitable access	M	Council Governance team	Up to 50% of facility use agreements updated and executed



PRINCIPLE 2:

Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sports and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.

Actions to achieve progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of success
Promote training opportunities for girls and women to undertake leadership programs	S	Community Sports clubs Council's Community Partnerships team Council's Communications Coordinator	Number of training opportunities included in regular community newsletters, club Facebook pages etc on average once every 3 months
Support and promote regional sports assemblies in their delivery of women's leadership programs or sport activation opportunities	S	Council's Community Partnerships team Council's Communications Coordinator	Number of programs and workshops delivered by regional sports assemblies with Gannawarra Shire Council support/partnership

PRINCIPLE 3:

Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure:

- a. of the highest quality available and most convenient
- b. at the best and most popular competition and training times and locations
- c. to support existing and new participation opportunities, and a variety of sports.

Actions to achieve progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of success
Review Council's sport and recreation strategies, policies and procedures	S	Council staff	Review Council's sport and recreation strategies, policies and procedures, then determine a schedule of auditing
Update facility use agreements to incorporate fair access principles	S	Council Governance team	Up to 50% of facility use agreements updated
Incorporate universal design into the planning of all future sport and recreation infrastructure projects	M	Council staff Facility managers	Planned projects are inclusive of universal design features prior to progressing to an application stage





PRINCIPLE 4:

Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.

Actions to achieve progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of success
Review Council Community Grants program to support initiatives that empower and upskill women and girls	S	Council’s Community Partnerships team	Community Grants program guidelines reviewed alongside a Gender Impact Assessment Funding stream identified A weighting/scoring established in the assessment process to clubs that apply and demonstrate commitment to gender equality
Promote local training and mentorship opportunities to clubs to assist them to upskill women for leadership roles.	S	Council’s Community Partnerships team	Number of opportunities shared
Showcase women and girls and their work in leadership roles in clubs	S	Council’s Community Partnerships team	Ask if sporting organisations would be interested in highlighting local leaders as part of consultation process





PRINCIPLE 5:

Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices.

Actions to achieve progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of success
Encourage community sports clubs to undertake a gender health check	S	Council's Community Partnerships team	Ensure VicHealth Gender health check template available on Council's website, to be located under the Community Development section Promote Gender health check through communication channels with local sports clubs
Support organisations such as regional sports assemblies to provide gender awareness training and development opportunities to local clubs and groups.	S	Council's Community Partnerships team	Number of training opportunities hosted in Gannawarra municipality in a calendar year
Apply gender and intersectional lens to policies, programs, services as they are reviewed and updated.	S	Council staff	Number of Gender Impact Assessments completed
Promote fair access through council communications e.g. council newsletters.	S	Council's Communications Coordinator	Fair Access promoted in at least one edition of <i>Gannawarra Connect</i> per year
Use inclusive and non-specific language in all council communications e.g. chairperson instead of chairman, seniors and juniors, rather than boys and girls	S	Council's Communications Coordinator	Annual audit of Council media platforms Consider development of an Inclusive Language Guide



PRINCIPLE 6:

Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.

Actions to achieve progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of success
Support community groups that identify options to improve active recreation and sporting participation outcomes for girls and women through Council's Community Grants program.	S	Council's Community Partnerships team	Community Grants program guidelines reviewed Funding stream identified A weighting/scoring established in the assessment process to clubs that apply and demonstrate commitment to gender equality
Prioritising support for external funding opportunities to user groups that demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure	S	Council's Community Wellbeing team Council's Infrastructure team	Development of a <i>Sport and Recreation Facilities Funding and Capital Contributions Policy</i> (or equivalent) by 30 June 2025 Undertake a Gender Impact Assessment on any new Policy development

IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION:

The implementation of the Fair Access Action Plan will be overseen by the Community Wellbeing directorate. An overall review of the Plan will be conducted annually to measure against the indicators of success identified across the six principles.

STAKEHOLDERS:

Who is this Action Plan for?

To support Gannawarra Shire Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure, this Action Plan identifies a range of stakeholders who will support the delivery of these identified actions.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Gannawarra Shire Council management and staff
- Local sport and recreation groups who manage community sports infrastructure
- Local Committees of Management who manage Crown Land community sports infrastructure
- State Government representatives (i.e. Sport and Recreation Victoria)
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Office for Women in Sport and Recreation

Gannawarra Shire Council**Fair Access Policy Community consultation
Survey responses**

Total responses 20

1. 95% of respondents live in Gannawarra Shire
2. 55% female / 45% male respondents

3. Age

- 35% 26-45 years old
- 25% 46-65 years old
- 40% 65+ years old

4. I identify as: (please tick all that apply)

- 40% a parent or carer
- 10% a person who earns less than \$650 per week
- 5% a person with a disability
- 45% None of the above
- 0 LGBTQIA+
- 0 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 0 CALD (Culturally and linguistically diverse)
- 0 a person who speaks a language other than English at home
- 0 Born overseas

5. Which of the following best describes your use of sport and active recreation facilities in Gannawarra Shire? (i.e. sporting clubs, ovals, pitches)**OPTION FOR MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE**

- 70% Current user
- 25% Past user
- 10% Would like to participate in the future
- 5% No response
- 0 Not interested in using

6. How do you currently participate in sport and active recreation in Gannawarra Shire? (please tick all that apply)

- 60% Club member
- 50% General park or facility user
- 50% Player
- 55% Committee member
- 45% Volunteer (Coach, Team Manager etc.)
- 35% Parent/Carer
- 25% Umpire
- 0 Paid staff member
- 0 I don't currently participate in sport and recreation in Gannawarra Shire

7. Do any of the following barriers prevent you from participating in local sport and active recreation in Gannawarra Shire? (please tick all that apply)

- 70% None of the above
- 15% Not enough time (e.g. childcare/caring responsibilities/work commitments)
- 15% Local facilities don't meet my needs
- 15% It's too expensive & Costs (i.e. registration, uniform, travel costs to participate)
- 5% Lack of confidence/lack of options for beginners
- 5% Activities aren't at times that suit me
- 5% Not knowing how to get involved
- 5% Uniform or equipment doesn't suit me
- 5% Access or location barriers (e.g. too far to travel, no transport options)
- 0 Not feeling welcomed or safe
- 0 Paperwork is too hard

8. What do you like about sport or active recreation? (please tick all that apply)

- 95% Socialising/connecting with others e.g. friends and family
- 85% Improving health: weight/fitness
- 65% Developing skills/ learning
- 65% Having a place to go, and people to spend time with
- 65% Relaxation/stress relief/wellbeing

- 60% Helping others
- 60% Challenging yourself or being challenged by others
- 60% Teamwork and support
- 45% Competing against other people
- 20% Improving body image
- 15% Having alone/ 'me' time

9. Has it been hard for you to participate in sport or active recreation due to your gender or other factors?

- 95% No issues with participation
- 5% Hard to participate

10. Have you read Council's draft Fair Access Policy?

- 85% have read the policy

11. What best describes your thoughts on this policy?

- 55% Satisfied
- 15% Very satisfied
- 25% Neutral
- 5% No response

12. What do you feel is positive about this policy? Please tell us!

- ❖ Better access for older people
- ❖ Compliance with communities expectations.
- ❖ Considering those with barriers and providing opportunities for those barriers to be removed.
- ❖ Encourages all people
- ❖ I'm glad that it fleshed out to include people of minority
- ❖ It should help minority groups

- ❖ Just having it in place and acknowledging that not everyone has equal access to participate in opportunities in this shire.
- ❖ Make and support everyone
- ❖ that it is being looked at - the more people involved in sport the better
- ❖ The need to encourage more women to feel that they can participate on equal footing to the men
- ❖ Trying to address the issue of women's inclusion into sport
- ❖ We need to include all

13. Do you have any concerns about this policy? Please let us know below:

- ❖ Reinventing existing policies for respect and inclusion.
- ❖ There may be further administrative burden on volunteer committees to manage a new process.
- ❖ I didn't feel we needed a policy in place to allow this to happen. Women's sports being well represented these days
- ❖ The expense of implementing this policy at this time.
- ❖ Understanding of the policy's intent in the community and that everyone needs to reflect on the barriers that exist for people from all different backgrounds and diversities, need to feel safe, welcome and able to fully participate in sport and recreation opportunities across Gannawarra.

14. Overall, do you support the policy?

100% Yes

15. Are there any additional key actions that you would like to see considered to support the implementation of the Fair Access Policy?

- ❖ Education for people on committees to support a culture where people from various backgrounds and diversity are able to feel safe, supported and included and be able to participate in decision making - having committees that reflect diversity of the community is a starting point. Clubs also need to be supported to tackle the current drug and alcohol cultures that exist so that they actively demonstrate leadership and a commitment to change and provide a safe and inclusive culture.
- ❖ Better facilities out of the weather for elderly

- ❖ Adequate footpaths for wheelchairs etc.
- ❖ Where to go to with concerns regarding governance and inclusion. Sometimes it may be an issue which is difficult but having a mentor or another person who will discuss the problem rationally would help

16. Are there examples of local clubs or groups who have done great work in increasing gender inclusion that you think could be showcased?

- ❖ I can't think of any but hopefully this policy prompts thinking.
- ❖ Kerang FNC
- ❖ I am not sure about the other local sports clubs but the clubs with older men and women can be outdated. As a member of Golf Bowls I find the older women accept that the men make the important decisions while the women do the catering .It is not intentional gender inequality but the culture of that age group. Training on how to change stereotypes or how to implement change gradually without upsetting some members who are happy with the status quo
- ❖ Koondrook Pool. Has an all female executive team and majority of females on the committee. Very welcoming to genders and the older members of our community
- ❖ Wandella
- ❖ Koondrook REC Reserve

17. Do you have any other feedback or comments on Council's draft Fair Access Policy?

None

1. Thinking about your organisation, which groups do you feel participate less in sport or active recreation?

45%	Female
40%	21-40 years of age
35%	People with disability
25%	41-60 years of age
25%	Low income
25%	Non-English speaking background
25%	LGBTQIA+
25%	People with a chronic medical condition
20%	Refugee community
20%	People born overseas
15%	0-20 years of age
15%	Gender diverse
10%	First Nations People
10%	60+ years of age
0	English speaking background
0	Straight
0	High income
0	Male

2. Select the main reasons you think certain groups participate in lower numbers (Please tick all that apply)

- 50% Cost - e.g. of membership, game fees or equipment
- 45% Competing interests – e.g. work, caring responsibilities, other sports
- 35% Flexibility of options – degree of difficulty or commitment e.g. social or competition
- 25% Community awareness of clubs and programs offered
- 25% Administration and red tape
- 20% Transportation
- 20% Club culture – that supports inclusion and community
- 15% Facilities – e.g. for players or spectators
- 15% Representation – of diversity in clubs in e.g. memorabilia, promotional material or leadership roles
- 10% Skill and support for beginners – options for beginner players and developing skills at all ages
- 10% Participation caps – e.g. team size limits or not enough volunteers
- 10% Uniform and equipment – for different needs
- 10% Safety
- 5% Scheduling and sharing of facilities
- 5% Skill and support for leaders – e.g. executives, coaches and umpires
- Other: language/communication barrier
- Other: Currently there is no female cricket league within the Gannawarra shire

3. Do you have any ideas that may help increase participation in sport and active recreation in the Gannawarra Shire?

- ❖ A Shire-wide EOI opportunity that could be used to assist with directing people to appropriate sports/recreation activities.
- ❖ Golf Australia are assisting Cohuna Golf Club with flexible programs to support our Strategic Goal of increasing participation from all potential players.
- ❖ Having clubs that are committed to a culture of inclusion and participation rather than a culture of winning. Also, committees making decisions that reflect diversity - not heavily weighted towards white men who control decision making, culture (sometimes demonstrating a very poor culture), and who and how people can use facilities and participate.
- ❖ More support from Shire
- ❖ Society in general--ladies too busy working and transporting children to different events.
- ❖ Training for leadership. What does leadership mean? The importance of the whole club not just about winning premierships .Delegation good and asking members to accept volunteer roles. The importance of communication. By asking members to take on a role they feel needed.
- ❖ Walking groups for older people, lunch-times / weekends

7.8 CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE 2024

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to CEO
Authoriser: Amanda Wilson, Director Corporate Services
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Approve the closure of Council offices to the public over the Christmas/New Year period from 2pm on Tuesday, 24 December 2024 through to and including Wednesday, 1 January 2025, with business resuming as usual on Thursday, 2 January 2025.**
- 2. Give notice of the amended office hours by publishing the details in the local newspaper, on Council's website and on social media.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gannawarra Shire Council has historically closed its offices over the Christmas/New Year holiday period. It is proposed that Council close its main administration offices, libraries, Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre administration and Works Depot from 2pm on Tuesday, 24 December 2024 and re-open on Thursday, 2 January 2025.

PURPOSE

To seek approval for Council to close its offices over the Christmas/New Year holiday period and to advertise the alteration of operating hours over this period.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

DISCUSSION

In 2024, Christmas Day and Boxing Day are on a Wednesday and Thursday respectively, with both days recognised as public holidays. New Years Day falls on a Wednesday.

This Christmas/New Year period is generally a time of low customer enquiry and minimal operational deadlines in the organisation. To support staff to it is recommended to close Council's main administration offices, libraries, Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre administration and Works Depot from 2:00 pm on Tuesday, 24 December 2024.

Whilst the above offices and depot will be closed, certain key and emergency services will be maintained. These include Local Laws and emergency call out arrangements in the case of fire, flood, storm, or other such significant event. These arrangements and contacts will be communicated with the closure.

Staff will be on call as required, to attend to any incidents that may occur during the closure.

RELEVANT LAW

The Christmas closure is detailed in the Gannawarra Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) No. 10.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council considers Christmas closure annually. Last year the closure was for three days as agreed as part of Councils Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA).

OPTIONS

Council has the following options:

- Close the offices from 2pm on Tuesday, 24 December 2024 until Thursday, 2 January 2025 (three-day closure).
- Close the offices for a period greater than four days which would require consultation with staff prior to Council determining an outcome.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The outcome will be advertised to the community via local media and social media channels.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Any closure greater than the three days between Christmas and new year would require appropriate negotiation with staff.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Christmas/New Year period is a time where staff can take leave and from a financial perspective, can reduce leave liabilities on the balance sheet.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Council Plan 2021-2025: Sustainability – Be a creative employer of choice through our adherence to good governance and our inclusive culture. The leave proposed aligns with the Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that as an employee of Council, all staff are affected by office closures and leave taking for all staff. The above conditions are in accordance with EBA conditions so there is no conflict of interest in this matter.

7.9 MURRAY DARLING BASIN PLAN REPORT

Author: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1 Victorian Planning our Basin Together Prospectus

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Murray River Group of Council's (MRGC) water advocacy position, specifically that the MRGC:

1. Maintains its strong opposition to open tender voluntary water purchase programs (buy backs) in the southern connected basin due to the long term social and economic damage such programs do to our communities;
2. Stresses that the Federal Government has grossly underestimated the detrimental socio-economic realities of open market water buy backs;
3. Notes the Victorian Government's draft response to the Federal Government's 'Restoring Our Rivers' Act, titled "Planning Our Basin Future Together: A prospectus to safeguard Victoria's environments and communities in the Murray-Darling Basin";
4. Endorses the four principles for water recovery contained within the prospectus as a better option for delivering the amended Basin Plan targets as opposed to open market water buy backs, as follows:
 - Principle 1 - Demonstrated environmental benefits in and for Victoria
 - Principle 2 - Minimised impact on water availability for towns, industries and agricultural production
 - Principle 3 - Proactive structural change to support a sustainable future for irrigators and communities
 - Principle 4 -Support progress towards Traditional Owner self-determination in water access and management;
5. Supports the completion of the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Projects (VMFRP) to deliver environmental outcomes to critical wetlands in the MRGC region; and
6. Stresses the need to mitigate the socio-economic impacts on communities as a result of further water recovery through identification of strategic local economic investments in areas from where water is recovered.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) is a cluster of 6 Victorian Councils that stretches along the length of the Murray River from Moira Shire Council to the Rural City of Mildura and covers much of the Victorian irrigation districts fed via the Murray Darling Basin.

The MRGC has consistently supported the Basin Plan since it was developed, recognising that nationally co-ordinated water policy is necessary to rebalance the allocation of water resources in the Basin.

The 2023 legislative amendments, the *Restoring Our Rivers Act 2023*, which MRGC campaigned against, has fundamentally altered the Basin Plan and its implementation. The legislation provides extended timelines for water recovery, until December 2027, for the contracting of water recovery and Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) projects as well as allowing for alternative SDLAM project proposals. It also enables the Commonwealth to use voluntary water purchase or “buy backs” to recover the 450GL where previously this was to be achieved through efficiency measures. The legislation further removed the socio-economic test requirements for buy backs meaning this is not a factor in considering the impact of the purchase on community or agricultural sustainability.

Although the legislation acknowledges that there will be negative socio-economic impacts from buy backs and commits to providing community adjustment funding to affected areas, the impacts are significantly and consistently understated or dismissed.

The new legislation means that considerable additional water will now be transferred to environmental water holders. Much of this will come from northern Victoria and significant volumes are likely to be recovered through buy backs. The first tranche of buy backs have commenced by open tender on 15 July and will seek to recover 70GL.

MRGC water advocacy has always centred on communities and focused on the socio-economic impact of the Basin Plan. MRGC has actively campaigned against open market buy backs due to the economic and social harm they have caused to our communities.

Of particular concern is the “Swiss cheese” effect of open tender buy backs. Previous water purchase programs led to water being purchased from ad hoc locations. Ultimately this left irrigation districts with a substantially intact geographic footprint and significantly reduced deliveries, meaning the same or similar overall infrastructure and operating costs are borne by fewer irrigators, increasing costs and farm risk for the remaining irrigators.

Further buy backs will have the same effect, further exacerbating the problem.

In response to the Commonwealth legislation, the Victorian Government has developed a Prospectus: “Planning Our Basin Future Together” (the Prospectus) which sets out a strategic, catchment-based methodology for water recovery that looks to increase environmental benefits and reduce socio-economic impacts on communities. This approach is more complex, costly and time consuming than open market buy backs and relies on working with Victorian communities to develop catchment specific plans. However, this approach will deliver a better outcome for the Australian people.

At the National General Assembly of Local Government on 4 July 2024, the following motion was passed:

‘This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to enhance the Murray Darling Basin Plan’s implementation with a focus on the economic and social welfare of local communities. This entails revising water allocation policies to ensure equitable access and support for the agricultural sector, alongside community engagement initiatives to foster local input and trust in water management decisions, rejecting open market buy backs and putting communities at the heart of any water recovery plans. It further calls on the Australian Government to revise the proposed compensation package for communities which is grossly inadequate.’

Despite this call from the local governments of Australia, the Minister for Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek almost immediately announced the first open tender to purchase 70 gigalitres of water from our southern connected basin.

PURPOSE

The MRGC continues to strongly oppose open market buy backs. Further, the MRGC notes the Prospectus and endorses the principles for water recovery outlined in it. The MRGC is seeking support from all member Councils and others further abroad for its continued advocacy position.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Council on the MRGC's Basin Plan advocacy position, and
- Seek support from Council for the advocacy position.

ATTACHMENTS

- Victorian Planning our Basin Together Prospectus

DISCUSSION

The Prospectus notes that Victoria has delivered 77% of its "Bridging the Gap" target for Basin Plan implementation. This would rise to 93% with the completion of the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration projects.

Unlike open market buy backs, the proposed approach of the Victorian Government's prospectus would deliver environmental outcomes in Victoria and water security for communities in northern Victoria through planned strategic system reconfiguration and funded transition.

The Prospectus does not detail the social impacts or full economic impacts of open tender buy backs. MRGC has provided feedback that issues such as food security and cost of living impacts should be emphasised as well as the cumulative impact on the wellbeing of individuals and communities of the ongoing uncertainty, anxiety and stress associated with constant reform and adaptation over decades.

Ultimately, the future of irrigation in northern Victoria depends on irrigation districts being viable and irrigators having certainty about allocations regimes into the medium and long term.

MRGC strongly opposes open market buy backs as these programs have the worst impacts on communities and local economies. They also will have the least positive environmental benefits for Victorian ecosystems.

The Prospectus does not provide detail of the methods for engaging with communities but proposes that this is done at catchment scale. MRGC will press for strong engagement with local government in these processes.

The Commonwealth has recently provided more detail about its Community Adjustment Assistance fund, which will be \$300 million over four years across the entire Basin. MRGC notes that the Commonwealth's adjustment package is woefully inadequate to offset the economic damage that would be done to our region through open market buy back water recovery.

The Federal Government should be held responsible for the impacts that the Restoring Our Rivers legislation will have on the MRGC region.

MRGC will continue to advocate for large scale, regional transition investment in key regional economic development enablers such as digital connectivity, energy transition, agricultural innovation, housing supply and workforce and population growth.

RELEVANT LAW

The *Restoring Our Rivers Act 2023* has fundamentally altered the Basin Plan and its implementation. Significant water entitlement will be purchased by the Commonwealth through damaging open market buy backs in northern Victoria.

In response to the legislation, the Victorian Government has proposed community-led discussions to generate proposals at a catchment scale that would produce water savings and would lead to reconfiguration or rationalisation of the irrigation system.

The MRGC continues to strongly oppose open market buy backs. Further, the MRGC notes the Prospectus and endorses the principles for water recovery outlined in it. The MRGC is seeking support from all member Councils and others further abroad for its continued advocacy position.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nil

OPTIONS

Council could choose to not support the Murray River Group of Council's (MRGC) water advocacy position.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Federal Government's Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) also released an updated estimate of farm gate economic impact of water recovery in the Southern Basin which notes that production will be reduced by some \$111 million per year. This is based on recovery of 225GL of water in total, which is likely to be an underestimate of what the Southern Basin will need to contribute.

With less water in the consumptive pool there will be lower agricultural production but the same infrastructure and operating cost for the irrigation network. This is likely to result in lower productivity and higher fixed costs spread between less irrigators. Consumers could expect this to impact on the cost of food during a time when cost of living is a key issue in our community.

The MRGC remains steadfast in its opposition to open market buy backs, emphasizing the severe socio-economic harm and limited environmental benefits these programs bring to northern Victorian communities. The *Restoring Our Rivers Act 2023*, while extending timelines and acknowledging some negative impacts, fails to adequately address the broader and deeper economic and social challenges posed by the legislation. MRGC supports the Victorian Government's community-led, catchment-based approach outlined in the Prospectus, as it aims to achieve water recovery with minimal socio-economic disruption.

However, the Commonwealth's current adjustment assistance fund is grossly insufficient to mitigate the economic damage anticipated. MRGC calls for significant federal investment in regional economic development to support the long-term prosperity and sustainability of our irrigation districts and communities.

The need to continue to advocate for a balanced approach that ensures water security and economic viability for the future of northern Victoria is paramount for the long-term prosperity and social well-being of the region.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Murray River Group of Councils is a local government advocacy group in northern Victoria that comprises Mildura Rural City, Swan Hill Rural City, Gannawarra Shire, Loddon Shire, Campaspe Shire and Moira Shire Councils. The member councils work collaboratively on behalf of our communities to promote regional priorities.

The Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Manager Economic Development have met with several members of the Gannawarra community who hold water entitlements for their significant agricultural enterprises or are involved in managing water across the Irrigation District. A clear message was that they oppose further water being taken from the consumptive pool. Their concerns relate to the impact on agriculture within Gannawarra, which makes up approximately 30% of the economic output and employing 1063 people, the flow on impact upon our townships, the alternative and better ways to achieve the outcomes through improved management, and the politicisation of water by the Federal Government.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION

The Murray River Group of Councils is a local government advocacy group in northern Victoria that comprises Mildura Rural City, Swan Hill Rural City, Gannawarra Shire, Loddon Shire, Campaspe Shire and Moira Shire Councils.

The member councils work collaboratively on behalf of our communities to promote regional priorities.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Commonwealth has recently provided more detail about its Community Adjustment Assistance fund which will be \$300 million over four years across the entire Basin.

It also released an ABARES updated estimate of farm gate economic impact of water recovery in the Southern Basin which notes that production will be reduced by some \$111m per year. (This is based on recovery of 225GL of water in total, which is likely to be an underestimate of what the Southern Basin will need to contribute).

MRGC notes that the Commonwealth's adjustment package is inadequate to offset the economic damage that would be done to our region through open market buy back water recovery.

MRGC will continue to advocate for large scale, regional transition investment in key regional economic development enablers such as digital connectivity, energy transition, agricultural innovation, housing supply and workforce and population growth.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Restoring Our Rivers Act 2023

Victorian Government's draft response "Planning Our Basin Future Together: A prospectus to safeguard Victoria's environments and communities in the Murray-Darling Basin".

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Goal 2. Growth No.5 Continue to support existing agriculture and facilitate diversification to improve regional productivity through sustainable planning.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

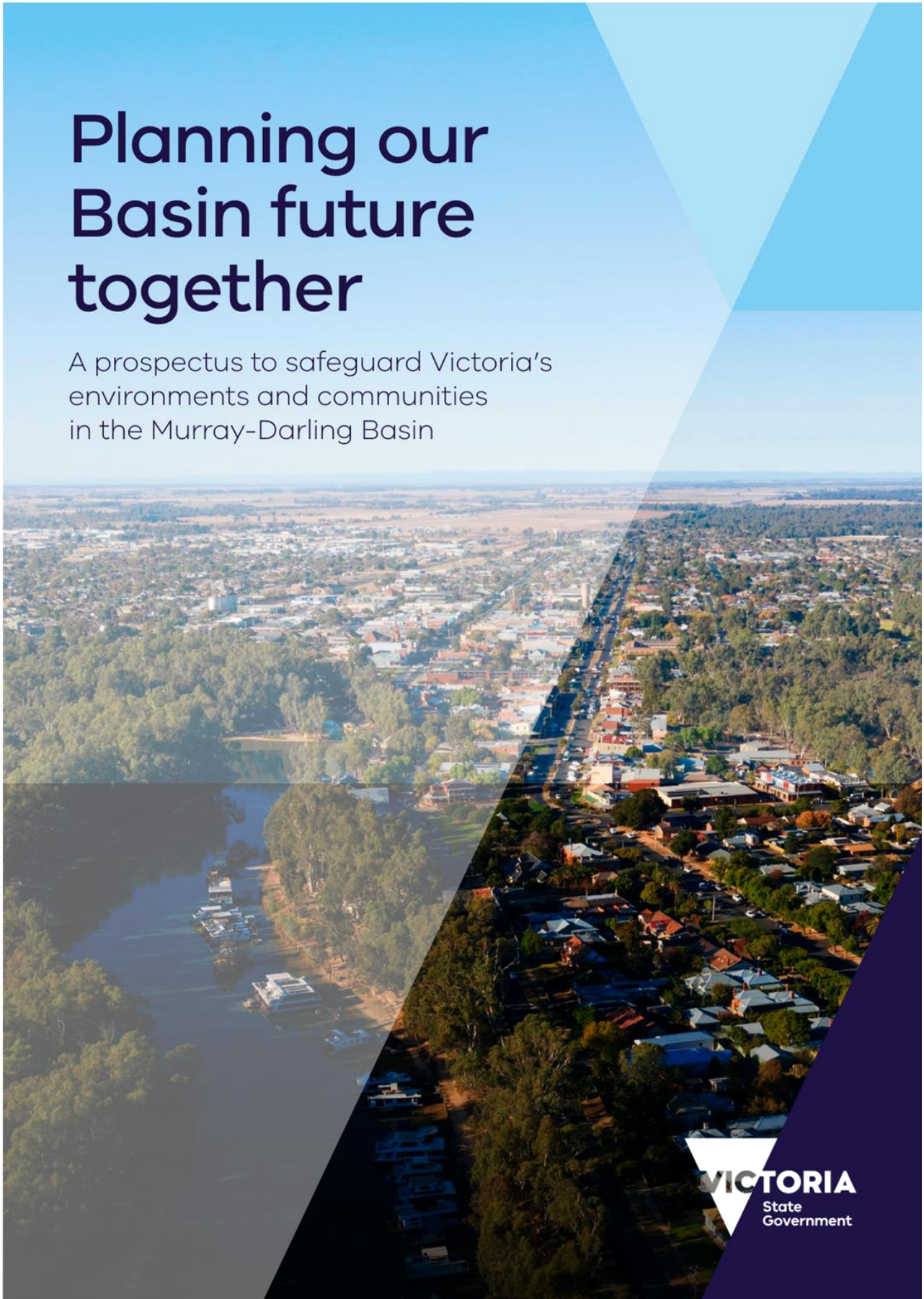
This decision will be made in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

Planning our Basin future together

A prospectus to safeguard Victoria's environments and communities in the Murray-Darling Basin



VICTORIA
State
Government



Cover: Yorta Yorta / Murray River at Echuca

Above credit: Mallee Catchment Management Authority

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices. We are committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.

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Foreword



Victoria has worked with a sense of urgency and purpose to improve water management and environmental outcomes in the Basin for decades, and particularly since the establishment of water extraction caps in 1992. The Basin Plan presents our biggest opportunity in generations to make a significant and enduring difference in our river rehabilitation work across the southern connected Basin. As the second step to the Living Murray Program, the Basin Plan allows us to accelerate our own local catchment improvement work with communities in ways that support them to thrive into the future.

That is why, despite the challenges of such a major reform program, Victoria has delivered on all our key milestones and obligations to date, with a focus on real-world outcomes.

All Victorian Water Resource Plans were accredited on time. All of our bridging-the-gap water recovery targets in Victorian catchments were met on time. The largest water infrastructure upgrade program in Australia's history was delivered across the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District and 17.7 GL of additional water recovery has already been contracted that complies with the agreed socio-economic criteria.

We have seen the benefits to the environment that are already being realised from previous river and floodplain restoration programs through the Living Murray initiative – which celebrated its twentieth anniversary this year. The Living Murray represented a new approach to river management – bringing together water for the environment with changes to rules and infrastructure to get ecological benefits in a highly regulated water system. We are continuing to deliver these benefits through environmental works and measures under the Basin Plan, as a proponent or co-proponent in 22 of the 36 Sustainable Diversion Limits Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) projects, which allow environmental water to be used to its greatest potential.

Victoria is a vocal advocate for the water interests and aspirations of First Nations communities and the release of the *Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap* in 2022 provides an important pathway 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 irrigators and landholders, environmental groups, and the community.

We are demonstrably committed to the objectives of the Basin Plan, and our actions show the value we place on a healthy basin and sustainable communities in the context of population growth and climate change. These challenges must be faced with the communities where they are taking place.

With limited protections for the community from the socio-economic impacts of additional water recovery, the Commonwealth Government's long-awaited agreement to fund critical Victorian environmental works will reduce the volume of water that is removed from the consumptive pool.



Latji Latji and Ngintait / Psyche Bend Pumps
Credit: Darryl Whitaker

However, our collective success is not just ‘what’ we implement, but ‘how’ we implement the various components of this ambitious Basin Plan. Our communities and industries will remember the devastating impacts that untargeted open tender water purchases have had on Victorian communities and industries. It has been publicly documented by Commonwealth Government agencies and economic experts that these buyback programs have short-term benefits to willing sellers, but negatively impact the communities remaining and the irrigation systems that they rely on. All Basin jurisdictions know about these impacts and are looking for a range of ways to remove or reduce negative socio-economic impacts of these changes for their stakeholders and communities.

Bringing our collective knowledge, expertise and views together, including our growing partnerships with Victorian Traditional Owners, we have found ways to deliver significant and lasting benefits that rehabilitate landscapes. We have done this by taking conscious steps towards resizing irrigation infrastructure to make sure that the industries that rely on it are sustainable, and have access to reliable, affordable water.

This prospectus sets out the ways that further water recovery in Victoria could be done in a better way than the blunt open tender water purchases of the past. This plan is intended to guide the work we do to influence the processes and negotiations of any significant volume of water to be purchased in Victoria. We want to talk with you about how to use what we know, build on our experiences, and identify and maximise the opportunities that benefit local environments without risking the viability of our communities.

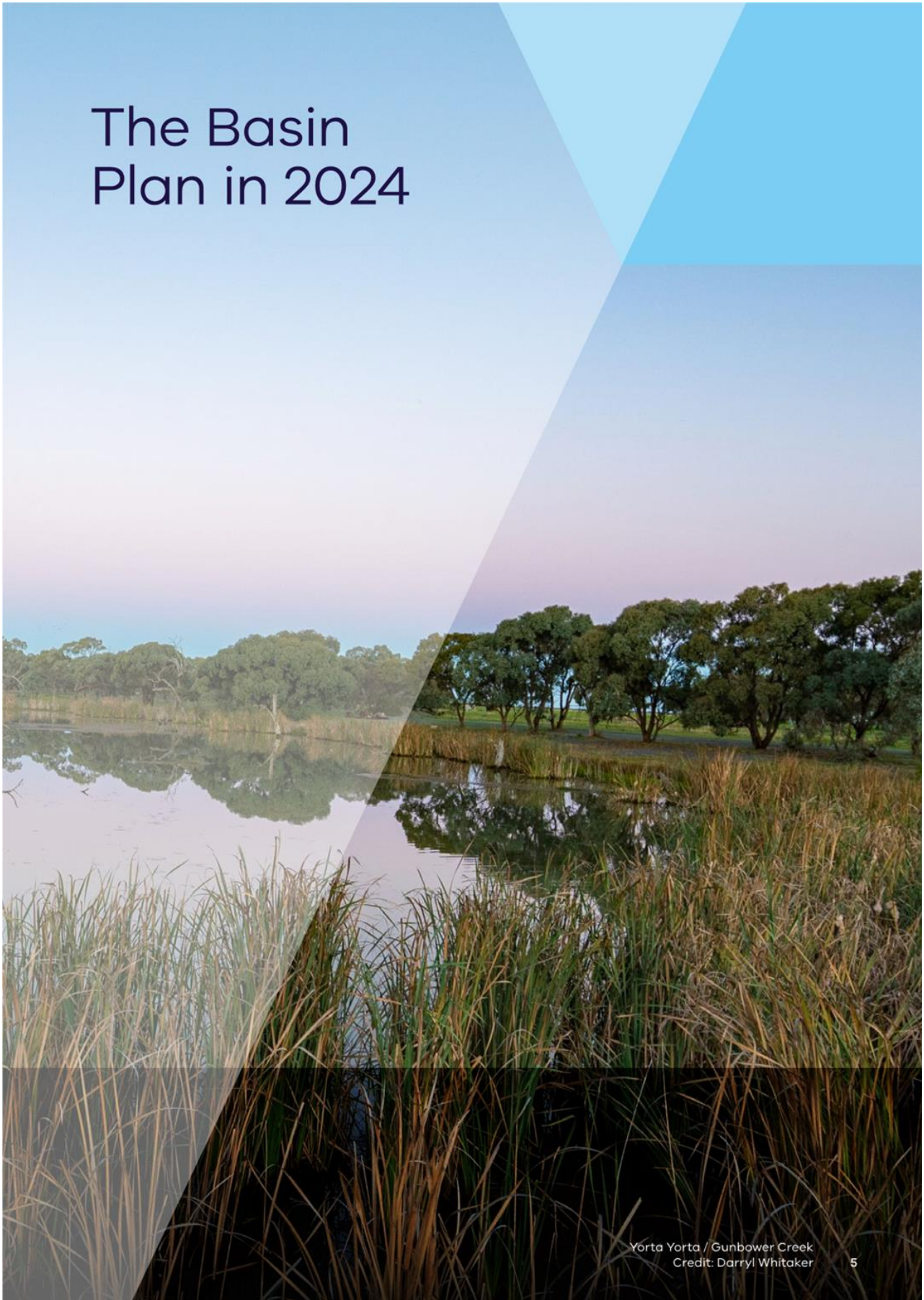
"Our actions show the value we place on a healthy basin and sustainable communities in the context of population growth and climate change"

This prospectus builds on the achievements of the past and proposes alternative ways to get environmental benefits, without stopping essential projects and running open tender buyback programs. This approach will not completely eliminate the negative socio-economic impacts that further water recovery from the consumptive pool will have on our communities. But it will enable us to identify and mitigate these negative impacts.



4

The Basin Plan in 2024



Yorta Yorta / Gunbower Creek
Credit: Darryl Whitaker

Rehabilitating the rivers and floodplains of northern Victoria

Since 2013, Victoria has led the delivery of the Basin Plan

Working with communities with a focus on environmental outcomes, Victoria has secured

826.5 GL of our target. That's 77% despite floods and the pandemic

1075.3 GL

Bridging the Gap target

Victoria has 22 notified SDLAM projects and we are on track to deliver:

- 88% of our target through operational projects
- 93% with addition of VMFRP
- 98% with addition of Constraints Management Program

We also have further projects under investigation

Plus additional water recovery with neutral or positive socio-economic outcomes

7 GL

Delivered

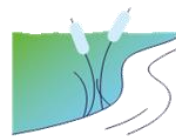
10.7 GL

Additional contracted water recovery



Note: As at 1 March 2024

Basin Plan outcomes



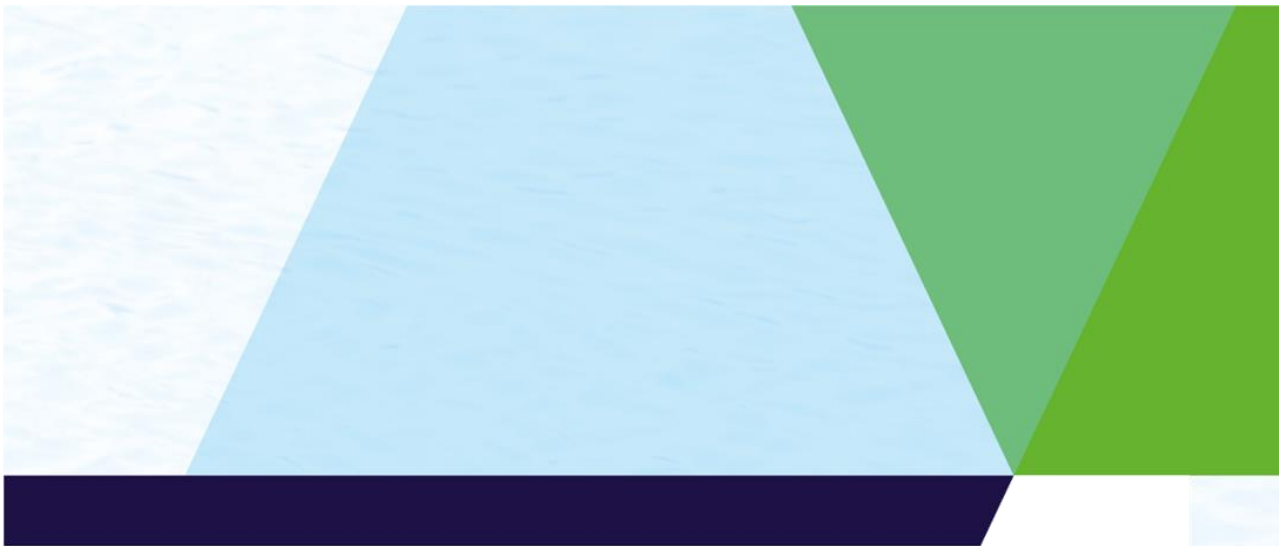
Environment

- Our investment in these environments is approaching **\$1 billion** statewide since 2004, with a focus on works like fishways, snags, in-stream vegetation and controlling pest plants and animals.
- Environmental water has been delivered to **120+** Victorian sites to benefit local plants, animals and ecosystems, reviving and transforming our Living Murray icon sites like the Hattah Lakes and Barmah-Millewa Forest.
- Meeting our environmental watering goals has improved habitats and breeding opportunities for waterbirds.
- Environmental water has improved the abundance and distribution of small and large-bodied native fish, maintaining species richness.



Compliance and enforcement

- Victoria has a transparent, robust and nation-leading compliance framework complemented by extensive metering coverage.
- Victoria has the largest fleet of modern meters in Australia with **98%** of water take in the Murray-Darling Basin metered and **61%** of meters telemetered, providing real-time data to water authorities.



SDLAM

- We are delivering our Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) projects which will continue to increase positive and long-term environmental outcomes.
- This includes significant progress on the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project to restore the heath and increase climate resilience for **14,000 hectares** of environmentally critical and culturally significant floodplain landscapes.



Rules and regulation

- All of Victoria's Water Resource Plans are accredited and in place, clearly demonstrating how our water management frameworks meet the requirements of the Basin Plan, and Victoria continues to comply with Sustainable Diversion Limits in all valleys.
- Victoria is compliant with Basin Plan trading rules and has reviewed and improved the rules around intervalley trade to make sure delivery of traded water doesn't cause ongoing damage to the Goulburn and Campaspe Rivers.



Community wellbeing and food and fibre production

- Victoria led the development of the socio-economic criteria to apply to all additional water recovery, ensuring that up to **450 GL** of water could be recovered with neutral or positive outcomes for the community.
- Australia's food bowl is in northern Victoria, and includes the largest irrigation area in the country, producing more than **\$3 billion** worth of farm-gate produce every year, which along with flow-on industries, employs over 35,000 people.
- In Sunraysia, irrigated production represents **25%** of Victoria's agricultural value, including **99.9%** of table grapes, **99.6%** of almonds, **86%** of citrus and **75%** of our wine grapes.
- In the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District, we produce **21%** of Australia's milk, **75%** of Australia's pears, **50%** of Australia's stone fruit.

Recent Commonwealth announcements

In August 2023, the Commonwealth Government announced that it had made an 'Agreement' with New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory governments to make changes to the Basin Plan.

This announcement by the Commonwealth Government made the commitment of more time to deliver on Basin Plan targets – including water recovery, environmental projects, and constraints relaxation – and the ability for the Commonwealth Government to use water purchases to deliver the additional 450 GL of water above the Basin Plan target of 2,750 GL.

The Commonwealth Government 'Agreement' was not developed or made at the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council table. This was the first time a major change has been made to Murray-Darling Basin water management without the agreement of all jurisdictions. The Victorian Government was not satisfied that there was enough evidence to warrant a departure from the original Basin Plan, beyond more time to deliver critical floodplain restoration projects including those impacted by the Victorian floods and the impacts of the pandemic, which had been consistently advocated for since 2018, including by the Productivity Commission.

The Victorian Government has always maintained its commitment to the Basin Plan as originally agreed, which included a legislated requirement for any recovery towards the 450 GL to have neutral or positive socio-economic outcomes. This requirement also explicitly prevented any water purchases towards the 450 GL.

The Victorian Government did not agree with the changes by the Commonwealth Government because those common-sense changes to allow more time for projects were tied to accepting water purchases for an additional 450 GL and the negative impacts that flow from that. There was no certainty or detail on how much water might be recovered out of our catchments, or how this recovery might be done.

In December 2023, the Commonwealth *Water Act 2007* was amended, including removing the cap on water purchases, providing the Commonwealth Government with the ability to purchase up to 300 GL of additional water under the Basin Plan to meet existing 'bridging the gap' targets (the outcome required to reach the Basin Plan target of 2,750 GL of outcomes for the environment), as well as being able to purchase water towards the additional 450 GL, with no requirements to protect socio-economic outcomes.

The amended legislation provides more time for projects that make up the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism, like the critical Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Program and Constraints Projects, as well as allowing new efficiency or offset projects to be brought forward that can contribute to water recovery under the Basin Plan.

The legislation also makes it clear that not all of the 450 GL needs to be recovered from the southern connected basin, with water recovery in northern catchments being clearly eligible under the 450 GL. This is significant to the health of the Darling River and interconnected systems, and the Commonwealth's position that environmental water is needed across the entire Basin.



What is at stake for Victoria

These Commonwealth changes mean that northern Victorian communities are exposed to greater risks from potentially large-scale, untargeted open tender water purchase programs. With a clear indication from the Commonwealth Government that it intends to begin recovering water in 2024 towards the 450 GL, it is likely that more water will be recovered in Victoria in the years to come.

To implement the agreed Basin Plan of 2012, nearly 1,000 GL of consumptive water has already been recovered from the southern Basin with water purchases. More than 50% of this has come from Victorian high reliability water shares. In this context, the Victorian Government has been closely monitoring the socio-economic impacts of the Basin Plan and has continued to build an evidence-based understanding of the nature and extent of how the Basin Plan has affected communities.

Our consistent position on the Basin Plan is rooted in this understanding of what is at stake. Northern Victorian catchments, from the alpine rivers of the north-east through to Sunraysia, are home to large populations in thriving and connected towns which are underpinned by water. Water which supports values for Traditional Owners, values for agriculture, towns, industry and is fundamental to riverine ecosystems and floodplain landscapes.

Northern Victoria is Victoria's largest and highest value irrigation region accounting for more than 60% of Victoria's irrigated agricultural production valued at more than \$3 billion annually. Major sectors include dairying, horticulture (nuts, fruit, and vegetables), viticulture, cropping and livestock production, each of which support flow-on industries including processing, distribution, and tourism. Northern Victoria accounts for 90% of Victoria's grapes, fruit, and nuts, and around 30% of the State's dairy and vegetable production.

The Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID) is the largest irrigation district in Australia, and is home to thousands of farm businesses, as well as secondary and tertiary industries that flow from primary production, providing employment and services for people in the region. Beyond the GMID, private diverters along the Murray River, and the pumped irrigation districts of the mid-Murray and Sunraysia service high-value horticultural plantings and the flow-on industries they support.

Agricultural production is an important economic driver in northern Victoria with around 21,000 people directly employed in agriculture and a further 16,500 employed in related industries including processing and manufacturing. Dairy and horticulture make up a large portion of this accounting for over 10,000 direct jobs and a further 3,500 in manufacturing and processing.

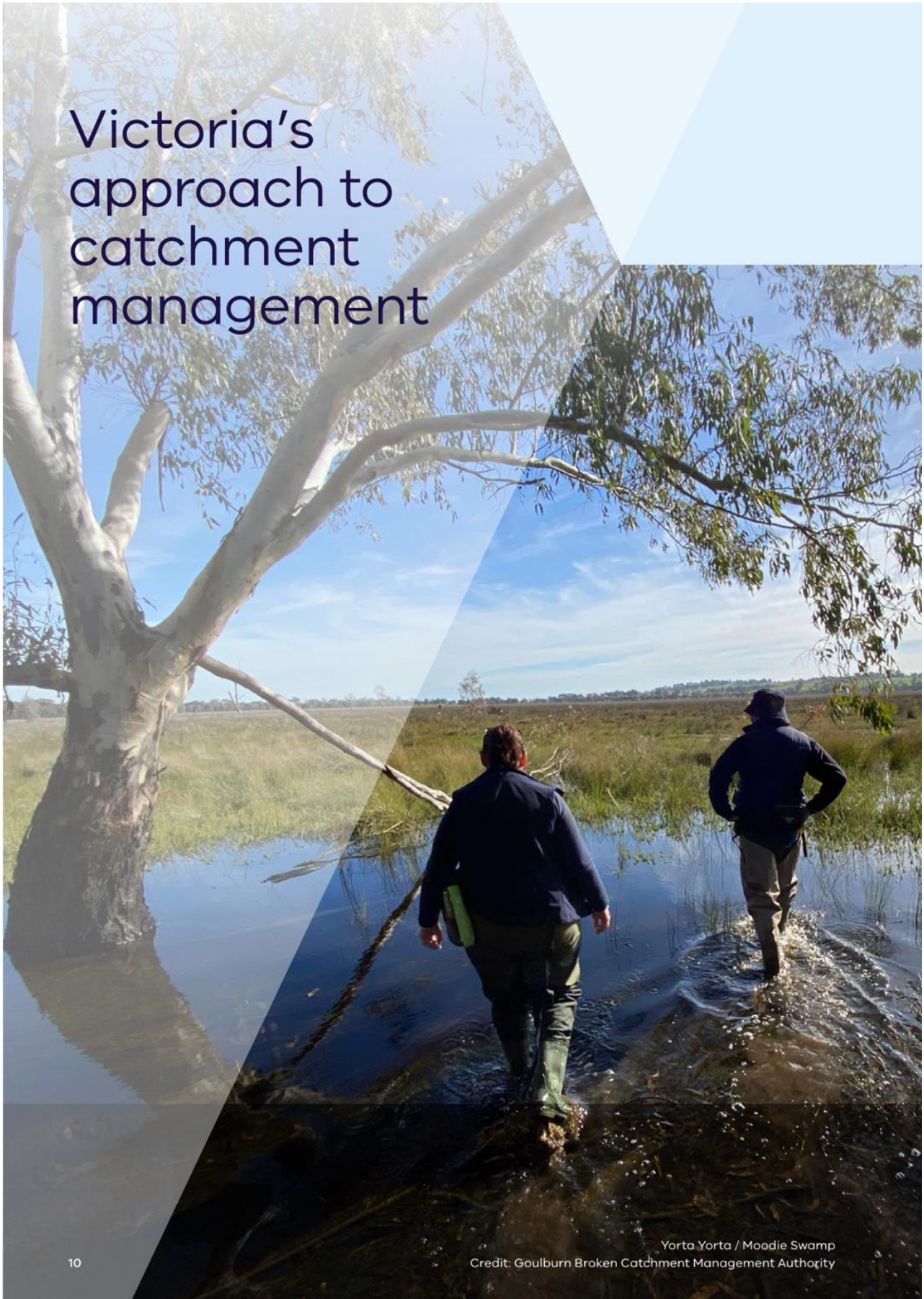
Victorian irrigation districts are publicly owned and supported by the thousands of landholders that benefit from water delivery to their farms and properties. The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have spent more than 2 billion dollars modernising and rationalising irrigation districts to reduce losses, improve water delivery, set the system up for the future and recover significant volumes of water for the environment.

Across northern Victoria, ecologically significant waterways and floodplains intersect with irrigation districts, cities, and towns, and in many cases are facing the challenges of ongoing river regulation, as well as climate change. These riverine and floodplain landscapes need active and adaptive management to continue to survive and improve into the future.

Victorian Traditional Owners have managed land and water in what we call the Murray-Darling Basin for tens of thousands of years. Victorian Traditional Owners have been all but entirely excluded from water management decisions for over 200 years, and the Victorian Government is continuing a stronger partnership approach to water management with Traditional Owners, recognising the importance of Traditional Owner knowledge and expertise.

Water plays an essential role in the health, prosperity and identity of our Basin communities. It is in this context that the Victorian Government takes a strong position on the Basin Plan and continues to work proactively to find and advocate for environmental outcomes and the reduction of negative impacts of changes to the Plan, to provide the best possible future for Victoria.

Victoria's approach to catchment management



10

Yorta Yorta / Moodie Swamp
Credit: Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

Managing for community values in Victorian catchments

Victoria's catchment management framework helps us to achieve improvements in rivers, floodplains and catchment landscapes despite the modifications and impacts that have occurred because of the development of major towns, infrastructure, and agricultural industries.

We act to target change from individual river reaches to entire river basins, focusing on key indicators of waterway health in all tributaries to our mighty rivers. We have learnt that success is achieved by localised, consistent effort across physical landscapes, social landscapes, public and private land and over long periods of time.

Together with our communities, we have developed regionally focused, holistic, landscape-based strategies that co-ordinate efforts of local land, water and biodiversity managers. This includes Sustainable Water Strategies, Regional Catchment Strategies, Regional Waterway Strategies and Land and Water Management Plans in irrigation areas.

As statutory bodies, Victoria's Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) are central to integrated catchment management outcomes – strategically investing in activities such as pest plant and animal control around important places, working with landowners to reduce water quality impacts and by planting native vegetation to support connectivity between areas of high biodiversity.

Victoria's CMAs also have a strong track record of planning for and working with water corporations and land managers to deliver water for the environment and targeting threatened species through dry and wet times. This has supported the objectives of both the EPBC Act (Cth) and the FFG Act (Vic). For example, delivering water for Murray Hardyhead at Lake Elizabeth, Kunat Kunat (Round Lake), Brickworks Billabong and Koorlong Lake where reduced flow and increasing salinity are key threats that need to be addressed for their recovery.

Well before the Basin Plan was in place, CMAs were completing environmental flow studies to identify how best to get positive ecological responses in water dependent ecosystems. This included working with their partners and local communities to set realistic management objectives, considering the gaps between current and 'ideal' watering regimes and what was possible in highly modified systems.

"Victoria has been supporting Aboriginal Water Assessments that Traditional Owners can use to assert their cultural water needs"

This work led to policy and projects to identify what changes would lead to the best environmental improvements, from changing infrastructure and operations or recovering water for the environment to restore key elements of the natural hydrograph.

As a partner in The Living Murray program, Victoria has long understood that effective catchment management in northern Victoria requires water to be delivered for the environment, infrastructure works and complementary management activities to increase the environmental benefits gained from using this water, active use of environmental water, and the involvement of Traditional Owners in how significant landscapes are managed.

Building on this approach, Victoria has been supporting Aboriginal Water Assessments and similar approaches that Traditional Owners can use to assert their cultural water needs and continues to be more ambitious in commitments to work with Traditional Owners in a partnership approach in water management.



Victoria's approach to the Basin Plan

Victoria's approach to delivering the outcomes of the Basin Plan remains the same.

The Victorian Government's approach has always been to achieve environmental outcomes in a way that minimises socio-economic impacts by:

- investing in water recovery methods that have the least impact on the consumptive pool available to water users, and
- maximising environmental outcomes from the water available to environmental water holders.

The Victorian Government's priority has always been to develop and deliver projects to achieve the 2,750 GL target we signed up to (Figure 1).

Existing environmental works and measures

Victoria is maximising environmental outcomes by delivering floodplain projects that get the most out of environmental water in a drying climate, like the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project. These projects impact landscapes that are significant for communities and Traditional Owners requiring genuine consultation every step of the way.

Victoria continues to be committed to these floodplain projects, which are the only way to provide water consistently to these landscapes due to the impacts of river regulation and the ongoing effect of climate change. Without floodplain projects, these landscapes will never be able to be watered in a way that suits local plants and animals, except in historically rare flooding events. One example is the proposed works at Wallpolla Island described in Figure 2.

As a partner in 22 out of 36 existing measures under the Sustainable Diversion Limits Adjustment Mechanism, we are delivering on diverse ways to get the most of environmental water, including through projects to improve river operations like Enhanced Environmental Water Delivery, which aims to coordinate environmental water releases across all Murray River tributaries to maximise downstream and system-wide connectivity outcomes.

Potential for new environmental works and measures

The changes to Commonwealth legislation mean that new environmental works and measures can be proposed which deliver environmental outcomes through enhancing the benefits of environmental watering and increasing flexibility for river operators (e.g. works to maximise environmental benefits from available water like the proposed project at Wallpolla Island (Figure 2).

These new measures can contribute towards the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM), providing improved environmental outcomes which contribute towards achievement of the 'bridging the gap' Basin Plan target of 2,750 GL.

The Victorian Government is considering what new ideas could contribute to meeting Basin Plan obligations, including re-establishing a project to recognise and enhance the environmental gains achieved by modern river operations (Improved Regulation of the River Murray (IRORM) Project).

Victoria is delivering improved environmental outcomes for our waterways and wetlands by delivering water for consumptive purposes in creative ways through irrigation channels and rivers. We will work with Commonwealth agencies to investigate how these benefits can be recognised.

All opportunities to enhance how water delivery can benefit our waterways will be further explored, for example:

- By looking at ways to build new infrastructure that can deliver more water for the environment, minimising the negative impacts of river regulation (e.g. increasing the size of the outlet at Lake Eppalock to increase Campaspe River flows).
- Investigating the benefits that could be achieved by delivering water through the Lindsay River and onto the floodplain in a flexible way in that vital waterway of the Mallee.



Figure 1: Victoria’s focus when delivering the outcomes of the Basin Plan

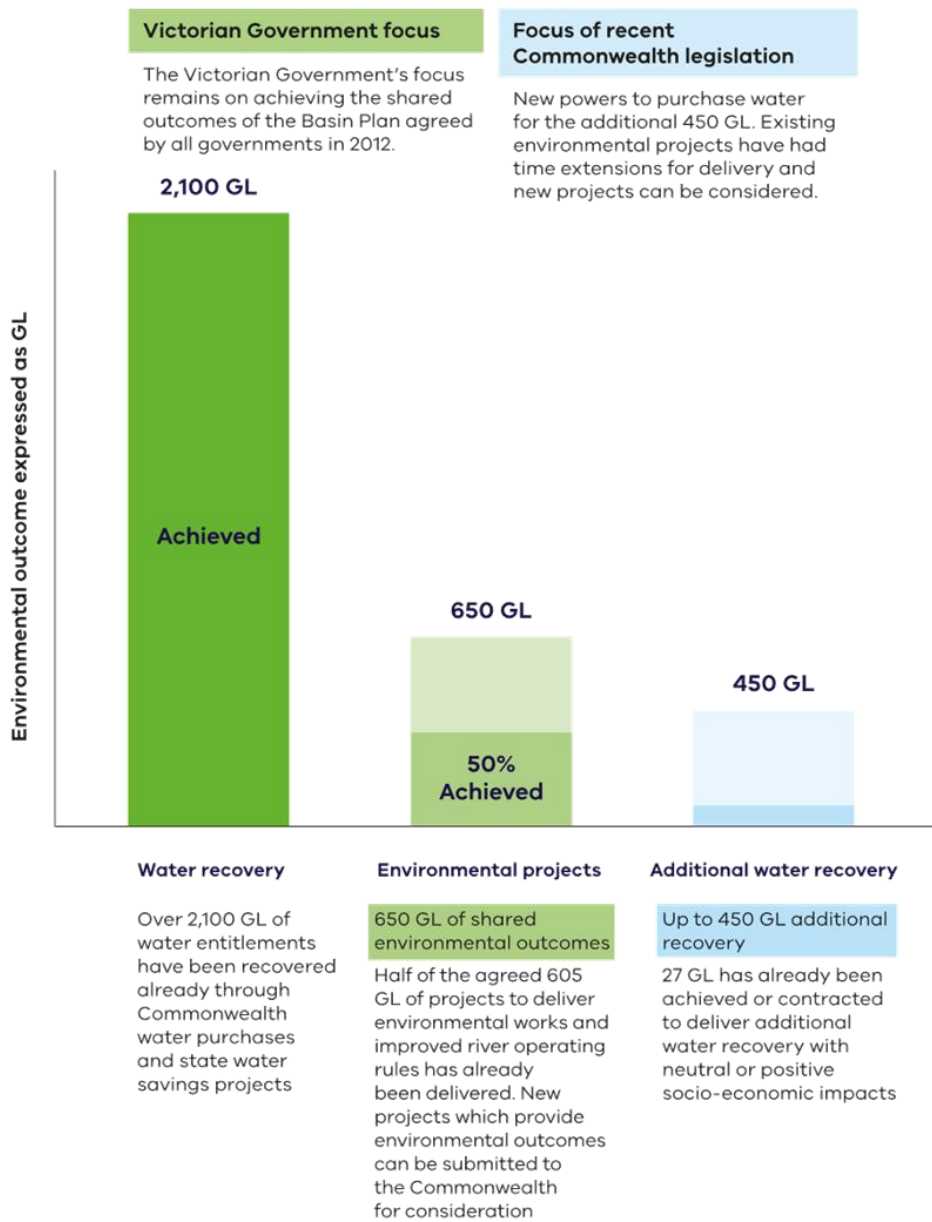
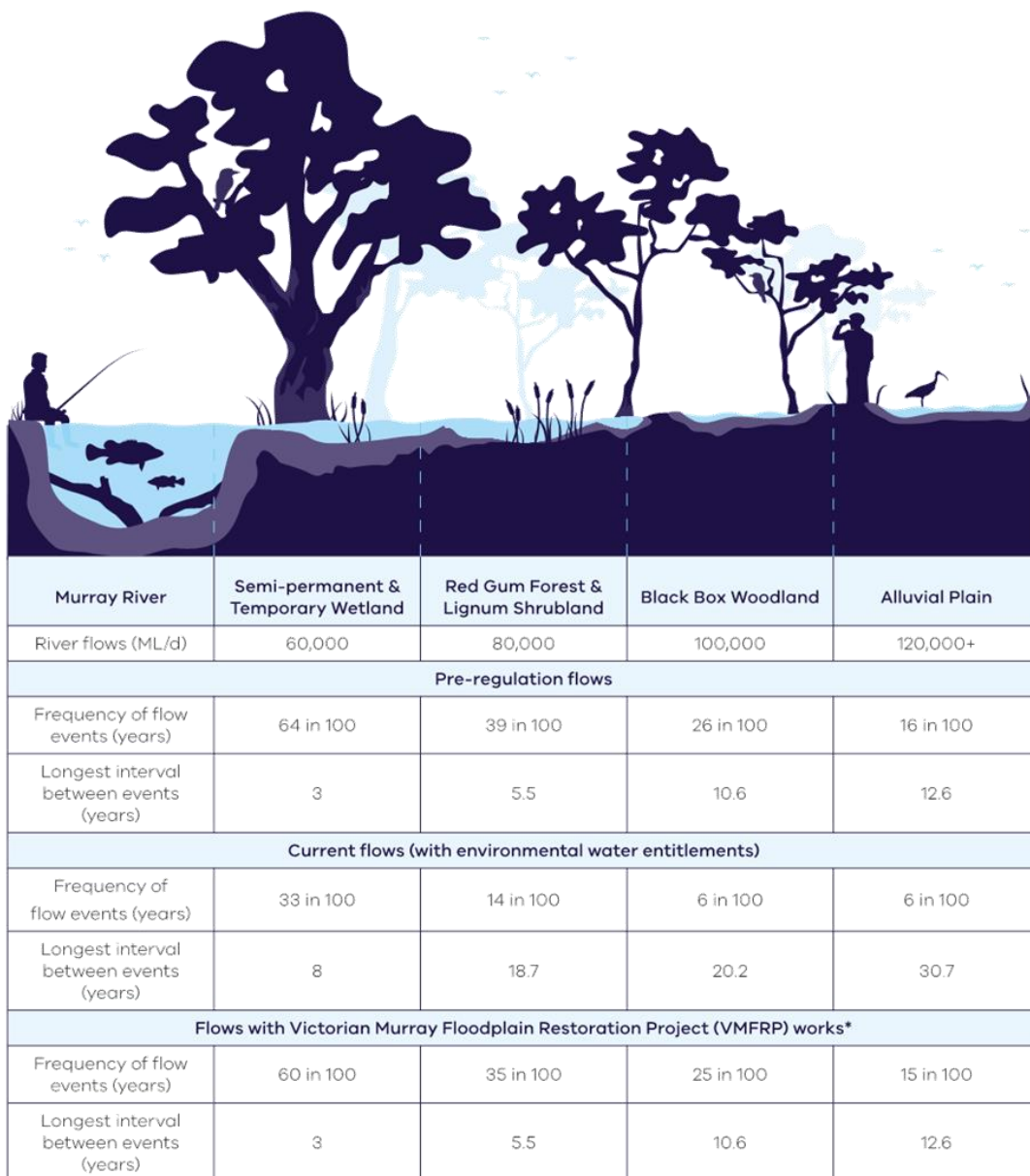


Figure 2: Outline of the benefits of the proposed works at Wallpolla Island, enabling water to be delivered to the floodplain in a way that replicates the frequency, duration and extent of flood events with significantly less water (figure adapted from Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project)



* The VMFRP sites can reduce the longest interval between floods to less than or equal to the maximum pre-regulation interval, depending on ecological thresholds and site condition.

Water recovery for environmental outcomes

Victoria has been successful at finding ways to recover water for the environment that result in positive on-ground outcomes for ecosystems and species and doing it in a way that minimises negative impacts on communities and industries.

This work has been driven by close to three decades of efforts by individuals, water corporations and governments to improve water use efficiency in Victoria to support water recovery for the environment and adapt to a changing climate. Forty-six major projects spread across the state have delivered more than 1,600 GL of water savings, the majority of which have gone to the environment (over 1,400 GL). The Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District has played a significant part of this water recovery.

In 1993, the Goulburn regulated water supply system was the first to have both consumptive and environmental rights clearly articulated followed by the Victorian Murray system. Over the next 30 years a wide variety of water recovery mechanisms have been used to recover water for the environment.

This has included

- water purchases,
- entitlement conversions (e.g. the 'sales water' deal as part of the Living Murray Initiative),
- decommissioning of head works water storages (e.g. Lake Mokoan, Greens Lake),
- shutting down delivery networks (e.g. Campaspe and Wimmera Irrigation Districts),
- irrigation district upgrades and rationalisation (e.g. Connections), and
- on-farm efficiency upgrades including entitlement transfer from landholders.

Through implementation of the Basin Plan we have learned that different water recovery methods have both positive and negative impacts, and some have unintended consequences that were not envisioned when first proposed. It is critical these learnings are incorporated into any future water recovery.

"Victoria is focused on continuing to use the best possible ways to get that water and get the best outcomes for communities and the environment"

We know from work completed by ABARES that water purchases and on-farm water recovery programs have increased water market prices in the past, and that further water purchases will exacerbate this impact. We also know from the CEWH's environmental water portfolio that Victorian high reliability water shares have been disproportionately purchased in previous water recovery programs.

As water markets have matured over the past 15 years, it has become clear that Victorian high reliability water shares are a critical part of functioning of water markets in the southern-connected Basin that can support diverse irrigation industries and support towns and industries to meet their water needs in dry years. Victorian high reliability water shares provide a major source of seasonal allocations in drier years due to our conservative allocation approach, and flexible carryover rules provide entitlement holders options to manage their risks between seasons.

In the current setting, more water may be recovered in Victoria to meet the Basin Plan target of 2,750 GL for the environment, to recover water towards the additional 450 GL for enhanced environmental outcomes, or to meet other Commonwealth Government policy objectives.



In responding to the implementation of Commonwealth policy, our work will be informed by a range of factors, including:

- Continuing to find ways to deliver water recovery through approaches that minimise the volume of water taken from the consumptive pool, including through water infrastructure upgrades like the GMW Water Efficiency Project.
- Where any water is recovered from the consumptive pool, looking for complementary water savings through a targeted approach, finding system savings to boost environmental outcomes without unnecessarily reducing the water available for productive use.
- Recovering water through projects that result in a direct environmental outcome and can be delivered to where it is needed for targeted ecological requirements.
- Recovering water in a way that has community support, including by working in partnership with Traditional Owners to deliver projects that can benefit cultural outcomes in specific regions.
- Looking at ways to reduce the impacts of river regulation by thinking about how water recovery could open up opportunities to restore a large proportion of natural flow regimes (e.g. by creating entitlements to restore unregulated flows or removing barriers to flow and fish passage).
- Finding water recovery approaches that actively reduce the long-term costs of water infrastructure for the community in Victoria, like rationalising irrigation delivery infrastructure or changing system operations to be more efficient.

If and when targeted strategic buyback programs do occur, it is essential that the socio-economic impacts are meaningfully identified and addressed at the outset.

In this context, a strategic approach is needed to minimise the socio-economic impacts of any water recovery from the consumptive pool.

This could include programs which align to system-scale outcomes and:

- Seek to concentrate water purchases in regions where entitlement holders are keen to transition away from irrigated agriculture and the purchase of entitlements can be matched with rationalisation of infrastructure to reduce ongoing costs into the future.
- Focus on water products that are both useful for environmental water holders and reduce socio-economic impacts by minimising the impact on the connected water market – for example, low reliability water shares, or water entitlements that are not integrated into the southern-connected water market such as take and use licences in unregulated rivers.
- Assess water purchase applications against Victoria's principles for water recovery (Table 3) to minimise risks of stranded assets or water market arbitrage.



Working with Victorians to implement the Basin Plan

The recent changes to Commonwealth legislation have changed the way the Basin Plan will be implemented and increased the risk that water could be recovered in ways that will not improve the health of Victorian rivers and wetlands.

The Victorian Government has continued to seek confirmation from the Commonwealth Government about how much it intends to purchase from Victoria and there has not been a clear response. In the absence of this critical information, we cannot wait any longer to start the conversation with our communities about the next steps for Victoria. These conversations are critical to allow for communities to plan for the future and to provide advice on the types of actions that the Commonwealth Government should undertake to minimise impacts of water purchase, in particular preventing blunt untargeted water purchases.

The Victorian Government wants to work with its communities and the Commonwealth Government to ensure Basin Plan water recovery happens in a way and through a process that can get the best outcomes for Victorian environments and communities.

The approach set out in this prospectus provides a pathway to achieve environmental benefits that would not be possible under a non-targeted

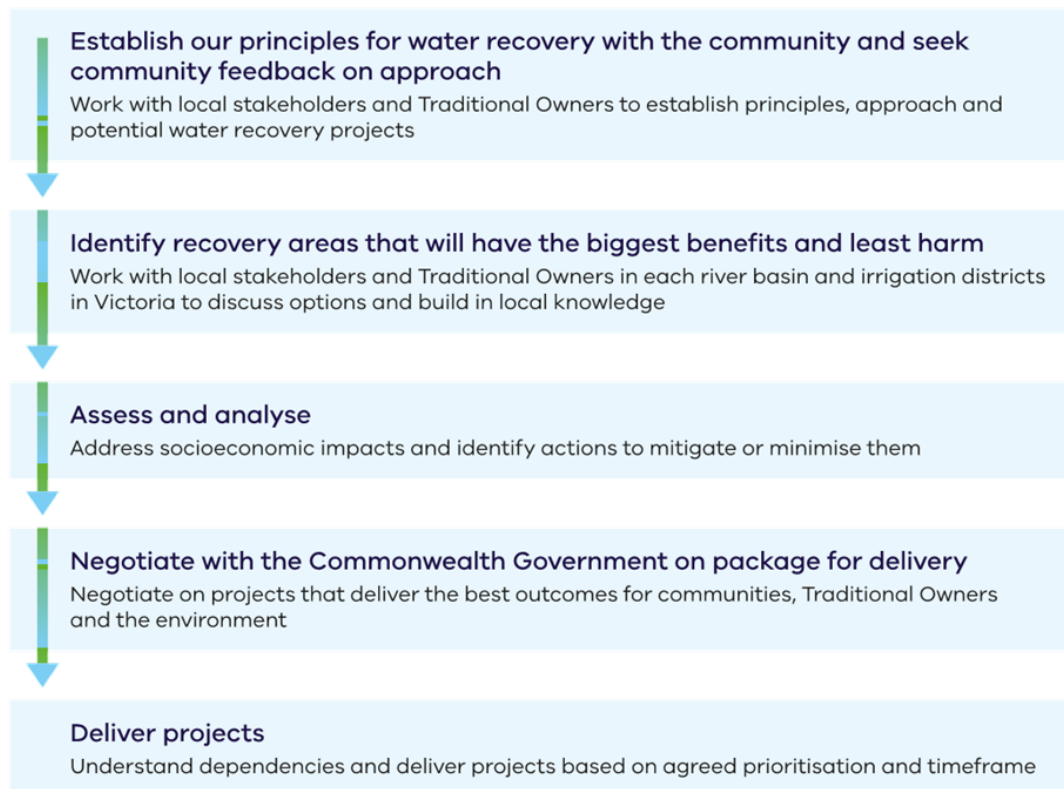
water purchase program. Through a strategic approach in each catchment, it is possible to both increase environmental benefits and reduce socio-economic impacts on our communities.

We will learn from the past and look at options in all catchments, considering the scale of future irrigation infrastructure, current and future utilisation, operating costs, and system loss requirements.

Where current infrastructure like weirs, regulators and channels are not providing value to the community or existing system operations are no longer supporting productive outcomes, we will look at potential changes to deal with the damage caused to waterways by river regulation, not just adding to environmental water held in storages.

The first step is to start the conversation with communities about the opportunities, and what we need to consider in any further water recovery (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Proposed approach to community consultation on the next steps of Basin Plan implementation in Victoria



Principles

In this new context, we have developed a set of principles based on Victorian Government policies and our work with communities over many years for how we consider options for further water recovery for any purpose in northern Victoria – including towards the agreed 2,750 GL Basin Plan target, or the additional 450 GL (Table 1). These principles are not new, they are built on the lessons learned from past programs and our ongoing engagement and consultation with the community, Traditional Owners and stakeholders.

We are seeking feedback on how well these principles reflect community values and cover what we need to consider as we work together on identifying opportunities.

Table 1: Principles for further water recovery in Victoria

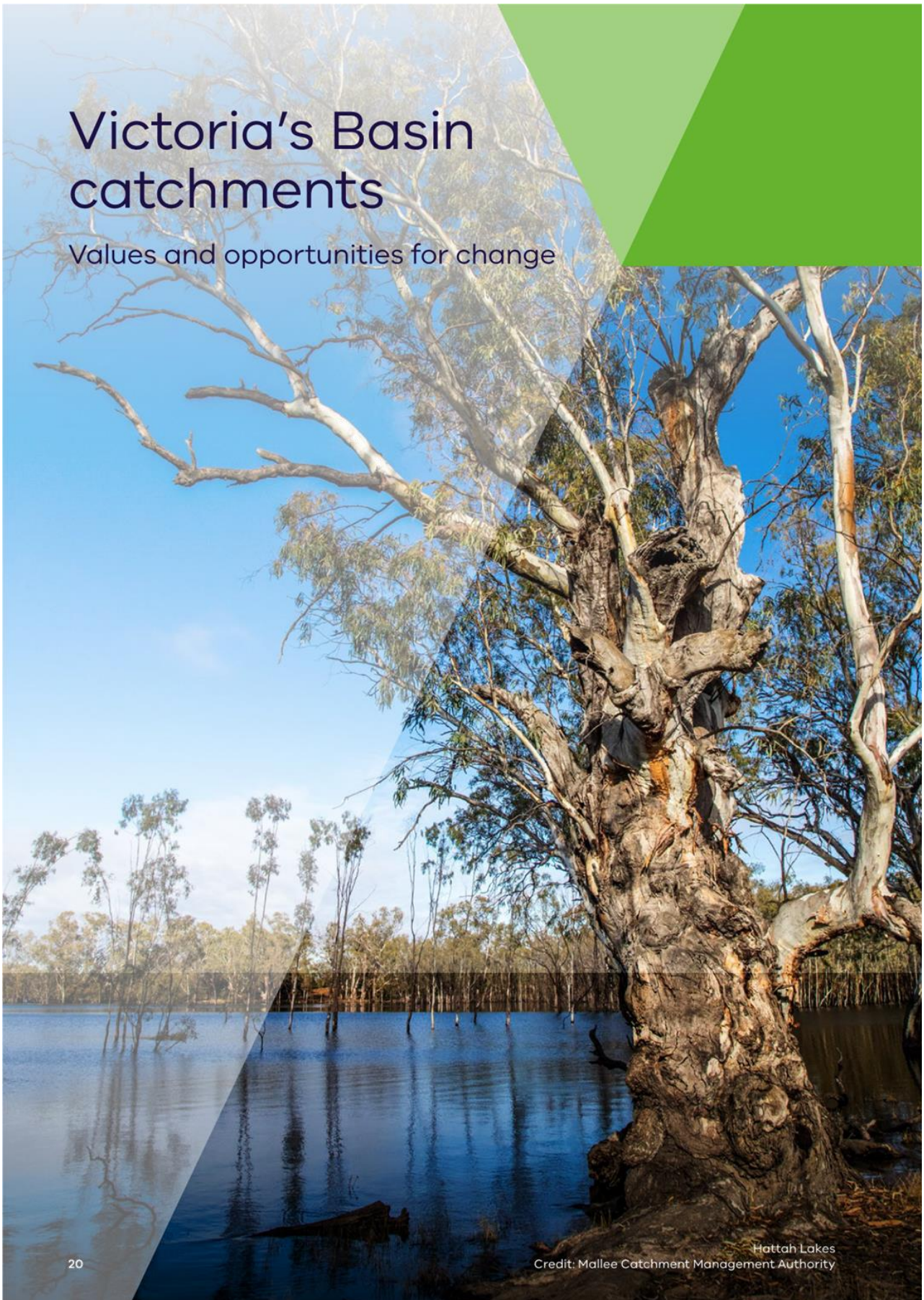
Principle	Why it matters
Demonstrated environmental benefits in and for Victoria	<p>Victorian landscapes should benefit from water recovery. While progress has been made on rehabilitating our riverine landscapes, there is more to do.</p> <p>Our rivers are heavily regulated, and we need a strategic approach, including complementary works like fishways and removing unnecessary infrastructure. Without this, further water recovery will have little benefit for our rivers, and in some instances will pose risks for rivers, wetlands, and floodplains.</p>
Minimised impact on water availability for towns, industries and agricultural production	<p>Water availability for things like agriculture, industries, sports grounds and parks and urban drinking supplies is the foundation of northern Victorian communities.</p> <p>A strategic approach to water recovery that recognises these important values will give us the best chance of supporting strong, resilient, and thriving industries, towns and the communities they support.</p>
Proactive structural change to support a sustainable future for irrigators and communities	<p>As water availability and ownership changes across northern Victoria, it is more important than ever to have upfront transparency and understanding of the costs, benefits, and long-term viability of irrigated systems.</p> <p>This will mean that water users will have the infrastructure they need and can remain an important part of their regional economies for a long time to come.</p> <p>Regional development goals will be incorporated, so that the long-term benefit of any change lines up with where our regions are heading in the future.</p>
Supports progress towards Traditional Owner self-determination in water access and management	<p>Victoria has a commitment to supporting Traditional Owner self-determination to access water and influence water management.</p> <p>We need to work in partnership with Traditional Owners to ensure that when major projects or changes are considered, we incorporate Traditional Owner knowledge and outcomes up front, making the most of all opportunities.</p>



Yorta Yorta / Campaspe River near Echuca
Credit: Darryl Whitaker 19

Victoria's Basin catchments

Values and opportunities for change



20

Hattah Lakes
Credit: Mallee Catchment Management Authority



This section outlines a summary of each of Victoria’s Murray-Darling Basin catchments, describing the water which flows through them, the water-dependent values in each region and what the scope of change associated with water recovery could be and what this might mean for local outcomes.

The Victorian Government does not support untargeted open tender water purchases, but recognises that with the change in legislation the Commonwealth Government intends to enter the market. To minimise the impacts of Commonwealth Government water purchases, the Victorian Government supports alternatives to untargeted open tender water purchases that promote positive socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

These ‘opportunities’ do not represent specific projects or proposals at this stage, but rather show where a certain volume of water recovery for the environment may start to open up opportunities to make more fundamental changes to how water is managed at a catchment scale. They provide the setting for an alternative to untargeted open tender water purchases based on regionally based strategic projects.

These summaries give a high-level outline of how water is managed, held and used in each river basin of northern Victoria. They include the volume of water entitlements held privately for productive uses in different parts of each region (referred to as ‘water shares’ for major regulated systems).

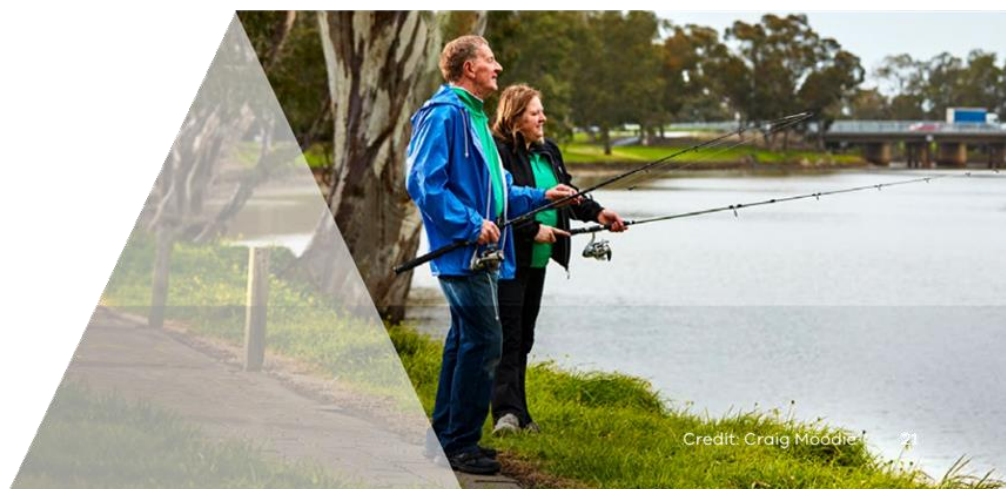
The history of water reform in Victoria over the past 100 years has shown that how water is managed,

used, and valued continues to evolve. This evolution is driven by policy reform, climate change, community values, industry trends and the increasing recognition of Traditional Owner knowledge and government responsibilities for Traditional Owner engagement and agency in water management.

Our water recovery legacy means that the large-scale projects to increase water use efficiency and modernise infrastructure have largely been done. That means that integrated projects including multiple ways to recover water are required to avoid the worst-case socio-economic outcomes and to creatively achieve better on-ground outcomes for the environment.

A fundamental part of what water recovery options there are in northern Victoria is considering the risks and opportunities in major irrigation areas like the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District and Sunraysia. More specific information about irrigation districts is in [Adapting Victorian irrigation districts for the future](#).

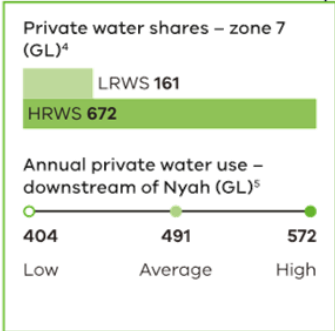
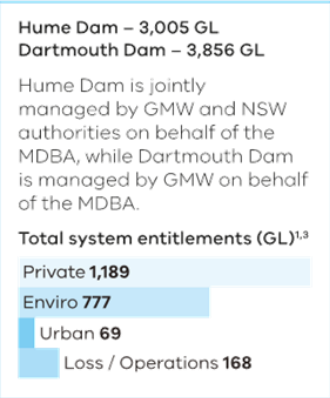
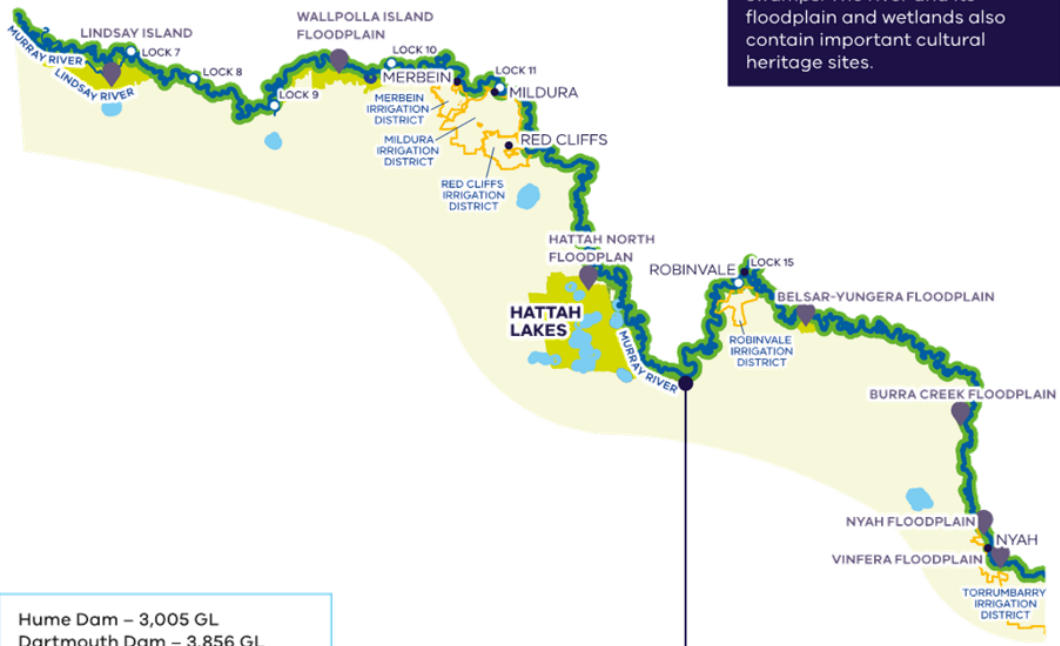
These summaries are how we start discussing the Victorian Government’s preferred alternative to open-tender water purchases and look at the bold changes that could be made to set northern Victorian regions up for the future.



Credit: Craig Moodie

The Victorian Murray downstream of Nyah

The Victorian Murray downstream of Nyah is characterised by iconic river red gums along watercourses and wetlands, with black box woodlands at higher elevations and a mosaic of widely distributed lignum and nitre-goosefoot shrublands, floodplain lakes, wetlands and grassy swamps. The river and its floodplain and wetlands also contain important cultural heritage sites.



Agricultural production



The main irrigated land uses in the Victorian Murray downstream of Nyah are perennial and annual horticulture



Grapes are the main crop in the Sunraysia irrigation districts, almond plantings dominate outside these areas



Irrigated agriculture in the lower Murray and Sunraysia contributes to approximately \$1,860 million of gross annual total agricultural production value²

Environmental condition and objectives

Flow seasonality in the Murray downstream of Nyah is more natural than the mid-Murray, with flows peaking in spring/summer, however the river channel becomes much larger and floodplain inundation requires much higher flows. Floodplain vegetation has declined in condition and extent due to the reduction in flood frequency/duration caused by river regulation, as well as land clearing that has left only fragmented remnants of wetland and floodplain habitat.

Operational constraints currently limit the ability to deliver large river flows for sufficient durations to inundate floodplain wetlands to meet native vegetation and waterbird breeding requirements. Environmental watering aims to support native fish, birds and vegetation through a range of measures, including flow pulses to trigger spawning of native fish and using infrastructure to direct water onto the floodplain to target high value areas. This protects these areas during dry times and, when natural flooding occurs, enables the duration and extent to be maintained or increased to support large colonial waterbird breeding events.

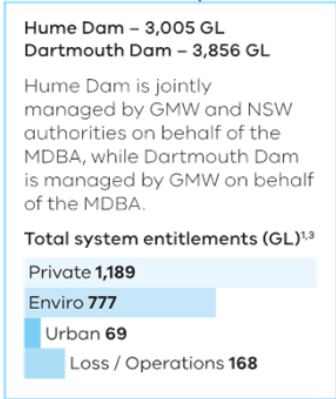
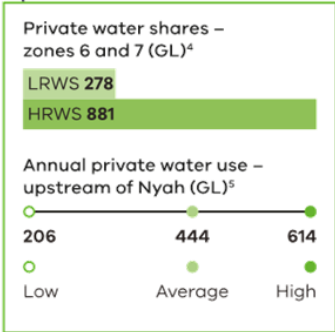
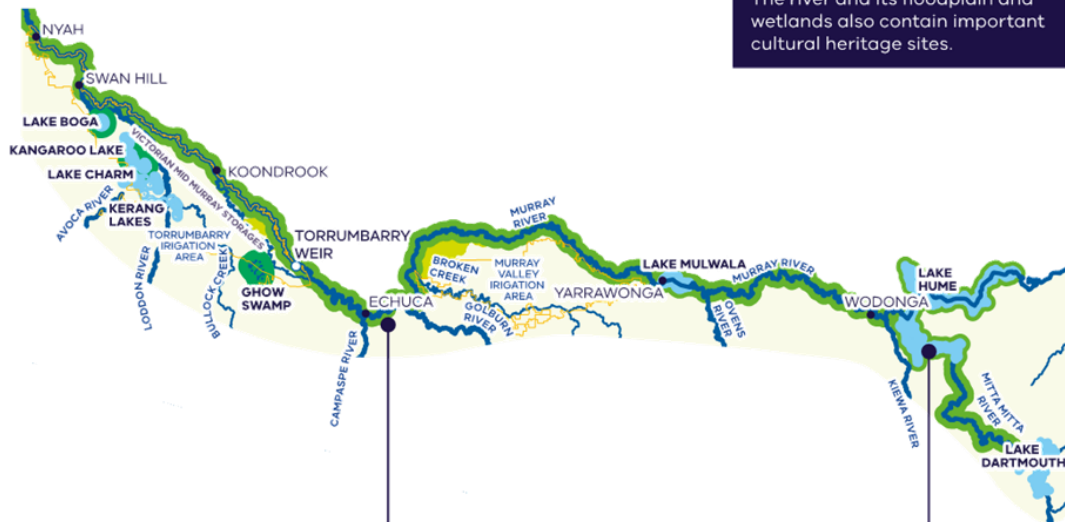
Potential change scenarios

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in small local areas Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through efficiency upgrades to modernise remaining open channels in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunity to improve level of service for any users that benefit from supply channel upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches, particularly in anabranches, may support more natural local flow regime and could be complemented by restoration of local waterways and floodplains
Medium 10-20 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in specific parts of irrigation districts or supply systems Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through efficiency upgrades, feasible alternative water supply options and rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for removal or reconfiguration of floodplain obstructions (e.g. private channels, roads) to promote floodplain connectivity and support more natural local flow regime
High 20+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases at a regional scale Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through changes to weir infrastructure and river operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support Significant opportunity for complementary savings to reduce scale of water purchase required to achieve the same outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to reconsider weir infrastructure and river operations practices to support ecological outcomes that depend on variable water levels, and restore a more natural flow regime to parts of the Murray River


These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The Victorian Murray upstream of Nyah


The Victorian Murray upstream of Nyah supports significant ecological values, including varied native vegetation communities, a range of fish, birds, frogs, turtles, platypus and macroinvertebrates, including many vulnerable and endangered species, as well as important ecosystem functions. The river and its floodplain and wetlands also contain important cultural heritage sites.



Agricultural production

 The main irrigated land uses in the Victorian Murray upstream of Nyah outside irrigation districts are cropping and livestock grazing (non-dairy)

 In the Torrumbarry and Murray Valley Irrigation Areas the main land uses are cropping and dairy

 Irrigated agriculture in the Victorian Murray upstream of Nyah contributes to approximately \$892 million of gross annual total agricultural production value²

Environmental condition and objectives

The Murray River begins high in the Australian Alps and then flows unregulated around 300 km to the Hume Dam. Downstream of Hume Dam, flows are highly regulated by multiple low-level weirs to supply water for irrigation. This has reversed flow seasonality, with higher flows in summer and autumn.

Operational constraints currently limit the ability to inundate floodplain wetlands to meet the needs of native vegetation and waterbird breeding. In the unregulated upper reaches, flow for the environment is managed by cease-to-pump rules on licence conditions and monitoring for changes in demand/

use to maintain minimum flows and water level in in-river pools to support native species and ecosystems during critical periods.

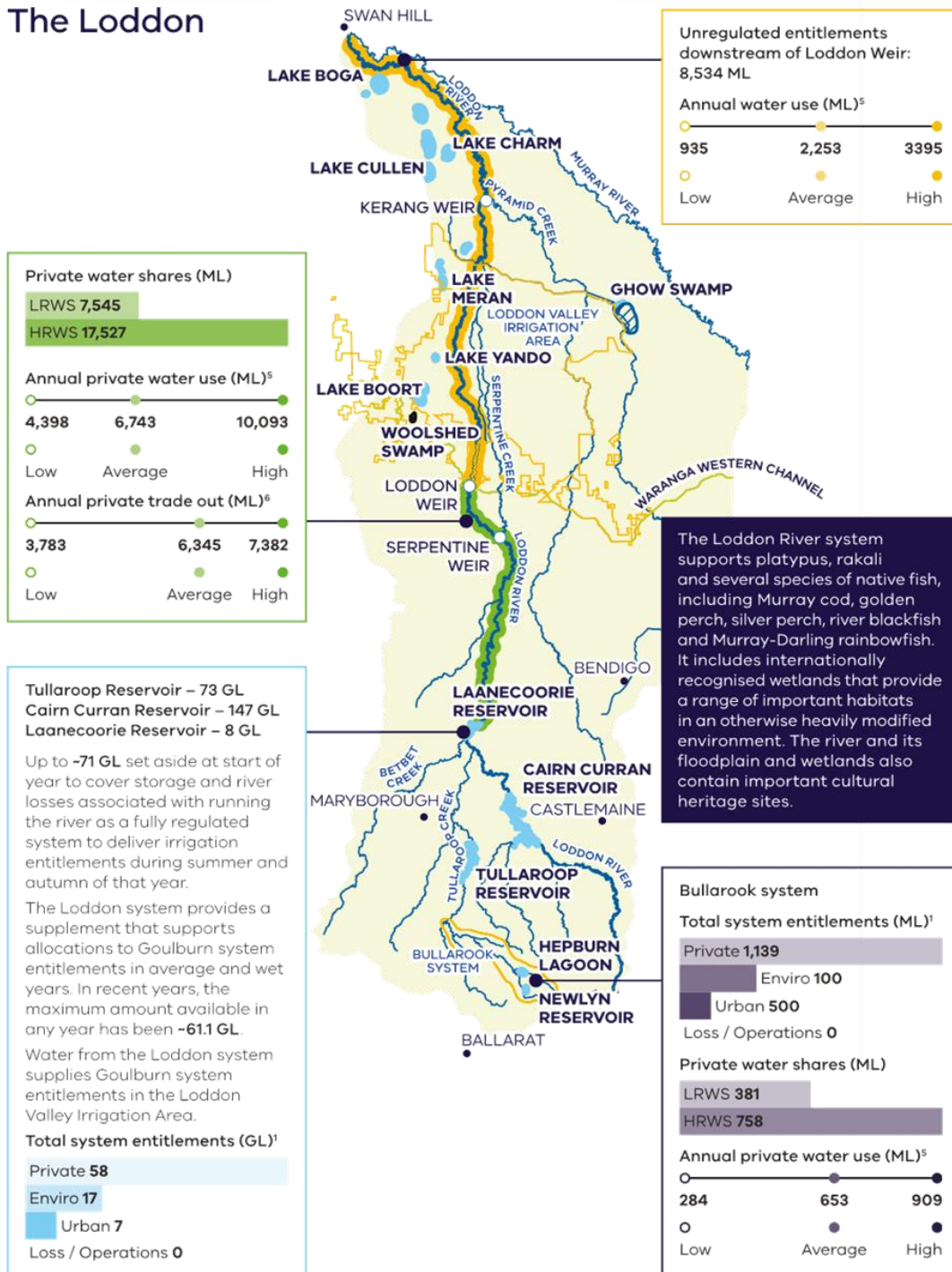
In the mid-Murray, environmental water management focuses on providing habitat, connectivity, spawning cues and dispersal for native fish species, enhancing in-channel and fringing native vegetation, floodplain forests and wetlands (e.g. Barmah-Millewa and Gunbower-Koondrook-Perricoota), and waterbird habitat and breeding. Ecosystem functions are also targeted including drought refuges, maintaining water quality, transporting nutrients and sediment.

Potential change scenarios

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in small local areas Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches or sections of the river system (e.g. Gunbower Creek or other anabranches) may support more natural local flow regime and/or complementary environmental works
Medium 10-20 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in specific parts of irrigation districts or supply systems Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure and changes to system operations (e.g. providing greater flexibility in management of mid-Murray storages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches or sections of the river system (e.g. Gunbower Creek or other anabranches) may support more natural local flow regime and/or complementary environmental works
High 20+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases at a regional scale Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure and changes to system operations (e.g. providing greater flexibility in management of mid-Murray storages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure Significant opportunity to achieve complementary savings to reduce scale of water purchase required to achieve the same outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to reconsider system operations in local areas and how this supports multiple outcomes for the environment, including opportunities to restore natural flow regimes and deliver complementary measures

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The Loddon



Agricultural production

The main irrigated land uses in the Loddon, including the Loddon Valley Irrigation Area, are cropping and livestock grazing (non-dairy)

Irrigated agriculture in the Loddon contributes to approximately \$925 million of gross annual total agricultural value²

Environmental condition and objectives

Achieving environmental objectives in the Loddon system is limited by the availability of water for the environment, particularly in drought years, with the reaches downstream of the Loddon Weir most impacted. The lower reaches of the Loddon River are critical vegetation corridors in a landscape where only 13% of original vegetation remains. Environmental water is critical to maintain water quality, connect pools, provide habitat for re-establishing native fish populations, and improve the condition of streamside vegetation.

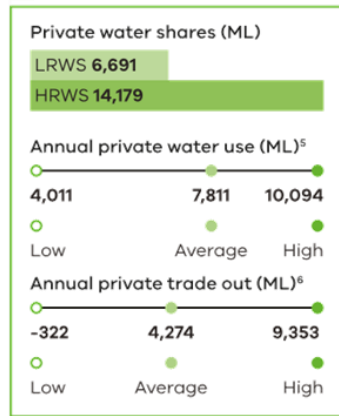
Although fish populations in the Loddon system are affected by the many barriers caused by weirs and reservoirs, a large range of species are still found through the catchment. Pyramid Creek and the lower Loddon River support large-bodied fish such as golden perch, Murray cod and silver perch, and are important corridors for fish migration between the Loddon and Murray systems.

Potential change scenarios

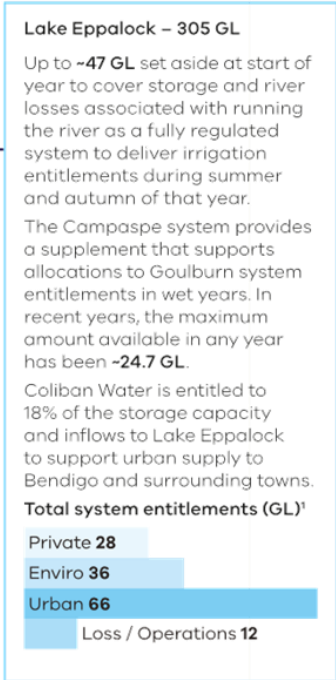
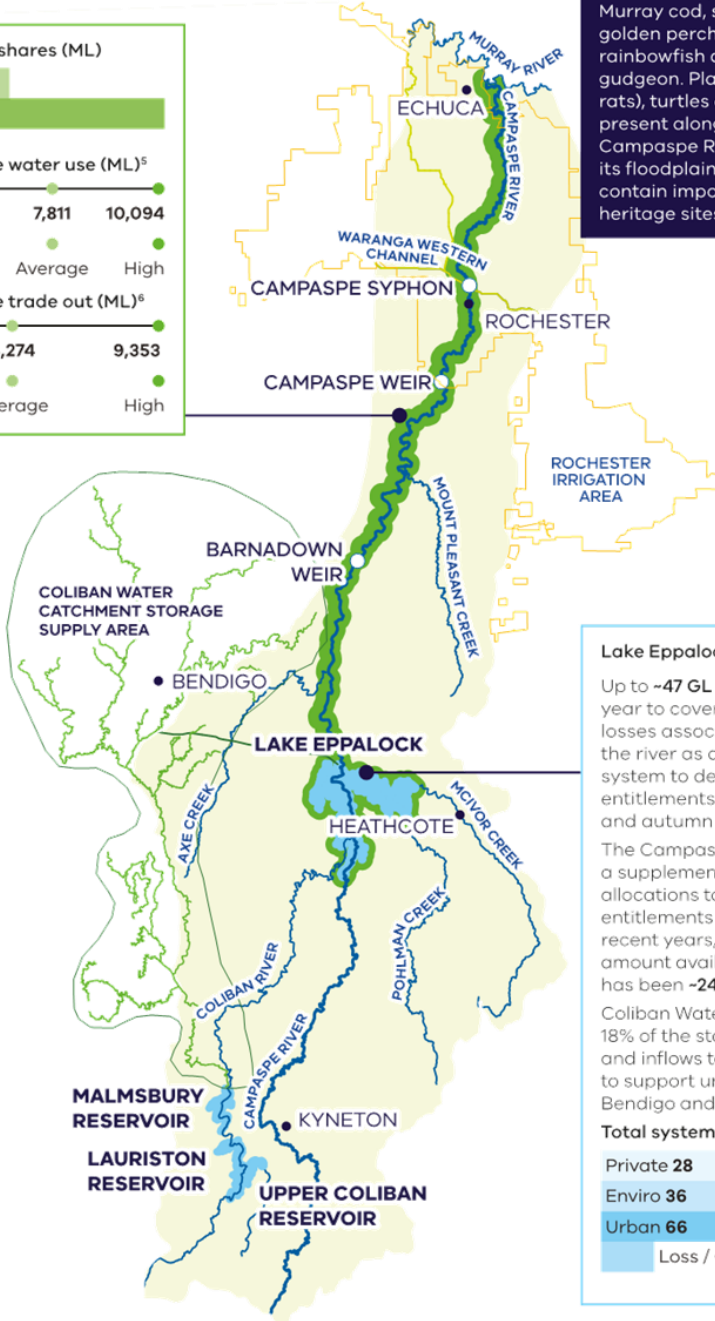
Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-5 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in small local areas Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver summer low flows and freshes in dry years to maintain water quality and drought refuges Deliver higher low flows during winter and spring to increase productivity and support fringing vegetation and platypus movement Enable wetland outcomes to be targeted, filling or topping up wetlands (e.g. to support turtle populations)
Medium 5-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in specific river reaches or parts of irrigation districts supplemented by the Loddon system Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through reduced system losses (e.g. through changes to operations at Laanecoore Reservoir) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More frequent freshes to improve fish, platypus and productivity outcomes Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches may support more natural local flow regime
High 10+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in specific river reaches or parts of irrigation districts supplemented by the Loddon system Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure, reduced system losses and review of operations and allocation of water resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure Significant opportunity to achieve complementary savings to reduce scale of water purchase required to achieve the same outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to reconsider system operations and how this supports multiple outcomes for the environment, including opportunities to restore natural flow regimes and deliver complementary measures

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The Campaspe



The Campaspe River provides important habitat for several native fish species, including Murray cod, silver perch, golden perch, Murray-Darling rainbowfish and flat-headed gudgeon. Platypus, rakali (water rats), turtles and frogs are also present along the length of the Campaspe River. The river and its floodplain and wetlands also contain important cultural heritage sites.



Agricultural production

The main irrigated land uses in the Campaspe outside irrigation districts are cropping and livestock grazing (non-dairy)

In the Rochester Irrigation Area cropping and dairy are the main land uses

Irrigated agriculture in the Campaspe contributes to approximately \$372 million of gross annual total agricultural production value²

Environmental condition and objectives

Achieving environmental objectives in the Campaspe system is limited by current operational constraints. The Campaspe River and its main tributary the Coliban River are highly regulated and natural flows have been heavily disrupted. Around 40% of entitlement in the Campaspe system is held by environmental water holders. With current infrastructure – in particular the 1,600 ML/day outlet capacity at Lake Eppalock – it is a significant challenge to deliver environmental water in the volumes and timing required to achieve ecological objectives.

With a larger outlet and potential for greater environmental water deliveries, restoration of more of the natural flow regime could help native fish migrate and disperse throughout the Campaspe system, better support platypus, bank vegetation and condition as well as reducing blackwater risks.

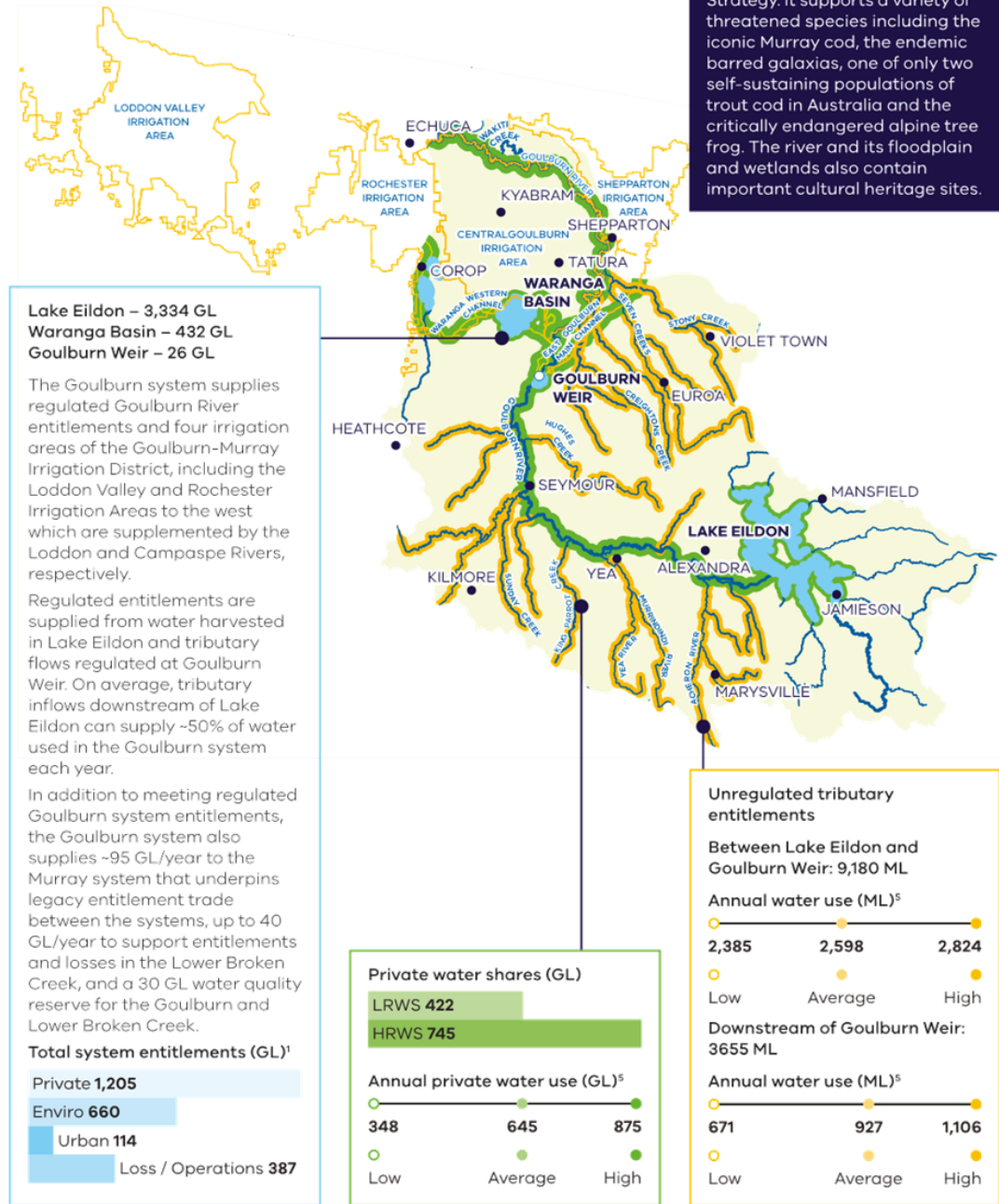
Potential change scenarios

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-5 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in small local areas Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through reduced local delivery losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation of any local opportunities to restore fish passage associated with system changes Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches may support more natural local flow regime
Medium 5-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in specific river reaches or parts of irrigation districts supplemented by the Campaspe system Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure (e.g. opportunities through the Coliban Regional Rural Modernisation Project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Investigate opportunities to provide additional flood mitigation benefits through greater storage operations flexibility (e.g. larger outlet at Lake Eppalock) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate potential restoration of fish passage with a more natural flow regime Opportunity to reconsider system operations and how this supports multiple outcomes for the environment, including opportunities to restore natural flow regimes and deliver complementary measures
High 10+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases at a regional scale Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure, reduced system losses and review of operations and allocation of water resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support Investigate opportunities to provide additional flood mitigation benefits through greater storage operations flexibility (e.g. larger outlet at Lake Eppalock) Significant opportunity for complementary savings to reduce scale of water purchase required to achieve the same outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant opportunity to reconsider system operations and how this supports multiple outcomes for the environment, including opportunities to restore natural flow regimes and deliver complementary measures

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The Goulburn

The Goulburn River is identified as a priority waterway in the Goulburn Broken Waterway Strategy. It supports a variety of threatened species including the iconic Murray cod, the endemic barred galaxias, one of only two self-sustaining populations of trout cod in Australia and the critically endangered alpine tree frog. The river and its floodplain and wetlands also contain important cultural heritage sites.



Agricultural production



The main irrigated land uses in the Goulburn outside irrigation districts are cropping and livestock grazing (non-dairy)



In the Central Goulburn Irrigation Area dairy and cropping are the main land uses



Irrigated agriculture in the Goulburn contributes to approximately \$1.2 billion of gross annual total agricultural production value²

Environmental condition and objectives

The Goulburn catchment is Victoria’s largest river basin, covering 7.1% of the state. The Goulburn River has several significant tributaries, including the Acheron, Yea and Broken rivers. The natural flow pattern of both the Goulburn River and local waterways and wetlands within the wider catchment have been significantly altered due to river regulation, land use changes, small dams and drainage schemes. Flows in the upper Goulburn River are now typically low in winter/spring and high in summer/autumn, which is the reverse of the natural seasonal flow pattern. New trade and operating rules for the lower Goulburn River aim to prevent unacceptable impacts

to the environment due to unseasonal high flows in summer and autumn.

Achieving environmental objectives in the Goulburn system is limited by current operational constraints, which mean that flows to restore the natural flow pattern and connect the river and its floodplains during winter/spring cannot be delivered from storages. However, opportunities to restore and protect unregulated tributary flows through the Goulburn system could help promote more natural flow patterns in the Goulburn River as well as providing benefits to the Murray River further downstream.

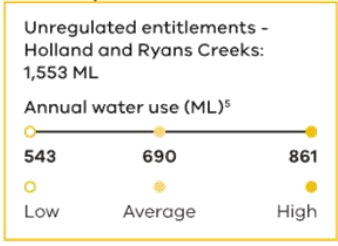
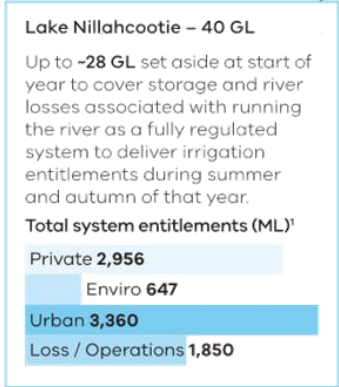
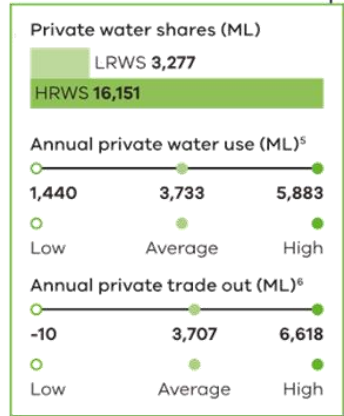
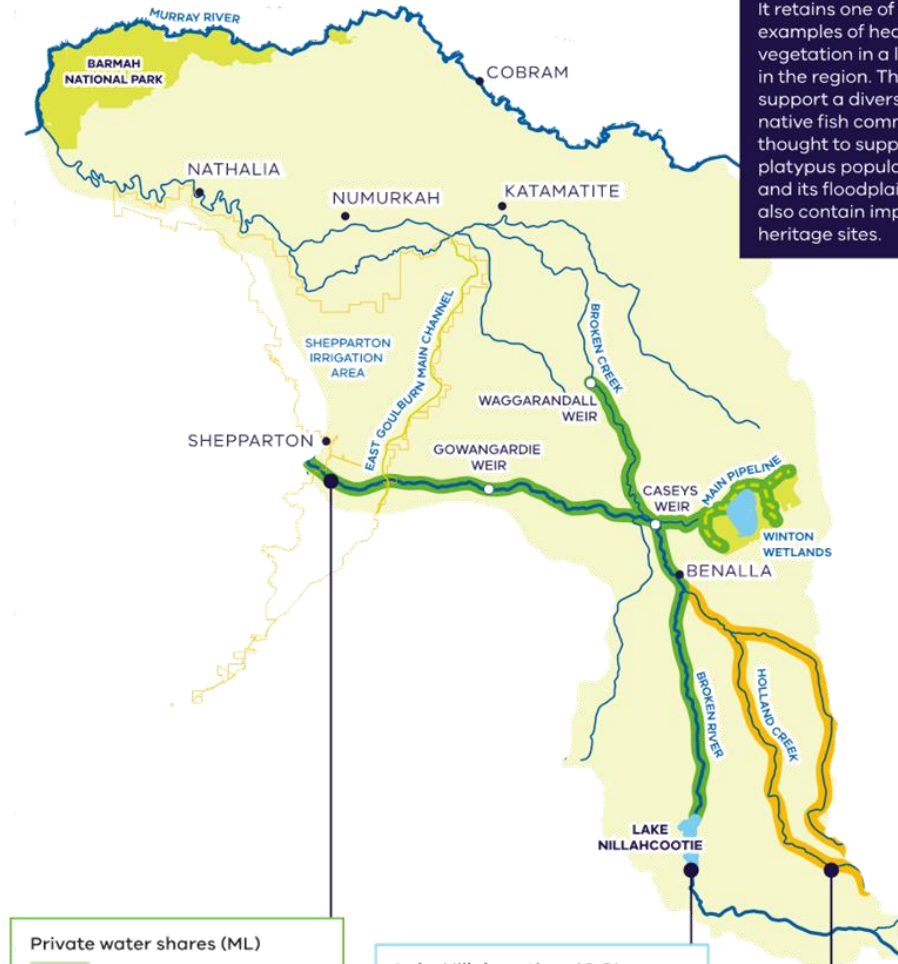
Potential change scenarios

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in small local areas Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure and reduced local delivery losses (e.g. in small supply systems) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches may support more natural local flow regime
Medium 10-20 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in specific river reaches or parts of irrigation districts Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure and reduced local delivery losses (e.g. in small supply systems) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches may support more natural local flow regime Investigate opportunities to help mitigate challenges delivering environmental water through targeted purchases focused on specific areas to restore more natural local flow regimes
High 20+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases at a regional scale Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through fundamental changes to system operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure Investigate links between water recovery in the Goulburn and supporting system reform in priority areas like the Loddon and Campaspe where local water resources currently supplement Goulburn entitlements Significant opportunity for complementary savings to reduce scale of water purchase required to achieve the same outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to support environmental outcomes across multiple systems through reconsidering supplements from the Loddon and Campaspe systems Opportunity to reconsider system operations and how this supports multiple outcomes for the environment, including opportunities to restore natural flow regimes and deliver complementary measures

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The Broken

The Broken River is identified as priority waterway in the Goulburn Broken Waterway Strategy. It retains one of the best examples of healthy in-stream vegetation in a lowland river in the region. These waterways support a diverse and abundant native fish community and are thought to support a large platypus population. The river and its floodplain and wetlands also contain important cultural heritage sites.



Agricultural production

The main irrigated land uses in the Broken are livestock grazing (non-dairy) and cropping

Irrigated agriculture in the Broken contributes to approximately \$366 million of gross annual total agricultural production value⁷

Environmental condition and objectives

Achieving environmental objectives in the Broken system is limited by the availability of water for the environment. Environmental water management focuses on providing and maintaining habitat and water quality for native fish, macroinvertebrates and aquatic vegetation, and for platypus in the Upper Broken Creek. A significant component of the natural winter/spring flow regime in the lower Broken River was restored when Lake Mokoan was decommissioned, which has supported improved seasonal flows downstream in the lower Goulburn and Murray Rivers.

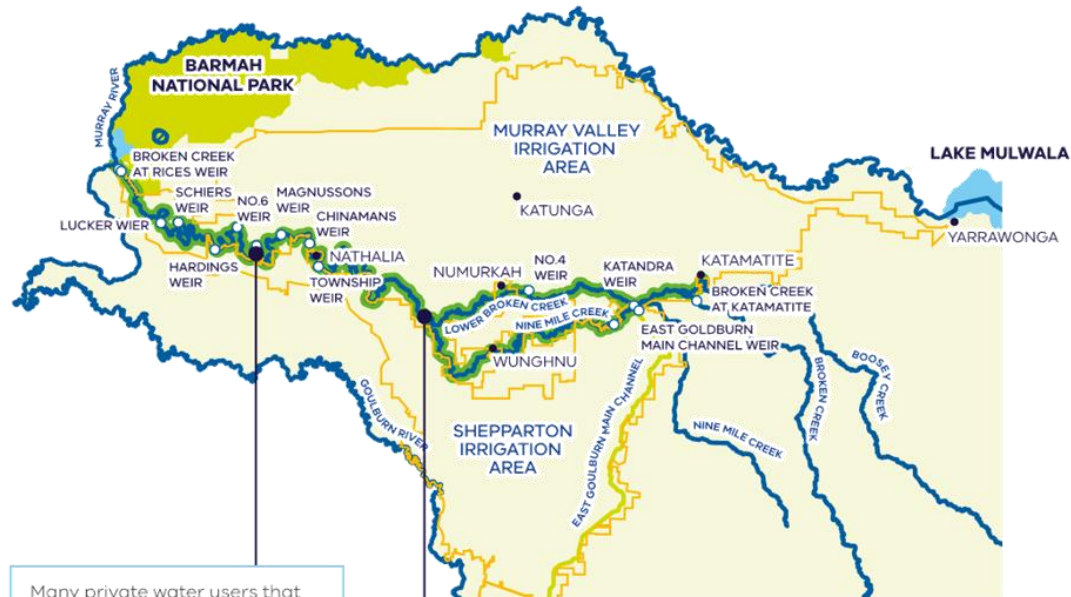
The small volume of environmental water currently held in the Broken system itself is used to maintain low flow recommendations at critical times of the year and opportunistically deliver small freshes. Meeting these recommendations currently requires the VEWH to trade water into the Broken system and at times watering actions have not been delivered due to the limited volume of environmental water available.

Potential change scenarios

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-5 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in local river reaches Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through reduced local delivery losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to meet low flow requirements, year-round and in all years Investigation of any local opportunities to restore fish passage associated with system changes Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches may support more natural local flow regime
Medium 5-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in local river reaches Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through reduced local delivery losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver summer and autumn freshes to different parts of the river system to improve river health Coordinate potential restoration of fish passage with a more natural flow regime
High 10+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases at a regional scale Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through fundamental changes to system operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support Investigate opportunities to transition irrigation supply to neighbouring channel systems Significant opportunity for complementary savings to reduce scale of water purchase required to achieve the same outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to reconsider system operations and how this supports multiple outcomes for the environment, including opportunities to restore natural flow regimes and deliver complementary measures

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The Lower Broken Creek

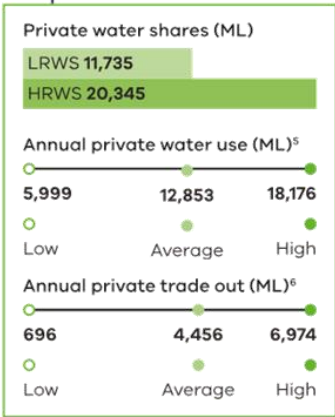


Many private water users that divert water from the Lower Broken and Nine Mile Creeks can also be supplied from channels in the Murray Valley or Shepparton Irrigation Areas. Water to support entitlements in the Lower Broken Creek is largely supplied from the Goulburn system via the East Goulburn Main Channel. The volume supplied has declined in recent years, with an average of -15.8 GL supplied in each of the past five years to support private entitlements – a 40% drop compared to the preceding five years.

The Murray system supplements supplies when seasonal determinations in the Murray system are higher than in the Goulburn.

Total system entitlements (ML)¹

Private	32,057
Enviro	7,458
Urban	2,013
Loss / Operations	0



The Lower Broken Creek is identified in the Goulburn Broken Regional Waterway Strategy as a priority waterway, and recognised locally and regionally for Victorian native flora and fauna dependent on the aquatic ecosystem. The creek and its floodplain and wetlands also contain important cultural heritage sites.

Agricultural production

The main irrigated land uses in the Lower Broken Creek, Murray Valley and Shepparton Irrigation Areas are cropping, dairy and livestock grazing (non-dairy)

Irrigated agriculture in the Lower Broken Creek contributes to approximately \$641 million of gross annual total agricultural production value²

Environmental condition and objectives

The Lower Broken Creek and anabranches are highly modified natural waterways with irrigation development for more than 100 years. Prolonged static water level provided by weirs is the primary driver of erosion and bank degradation. The natural flow regime has been seasonally reversed, with dominant high flows in summer and autumn to supply water for irrigation. Despite this, the creek and associated wetlands provide important habitat for large and small native fish such as the nationally vulnerable Murray cod, particularly in dry years.

Environmental water management focuses on supporting habitat for fish, platypus, rakali and turtles, particularly in non-irrigation season when flow can stop, providing flows to trigger fish reproduction and movement and support fish passage, encourage germination and growth of native plants, promote in-stream productivity, control water quality and flush the water fern azolla as necessary.

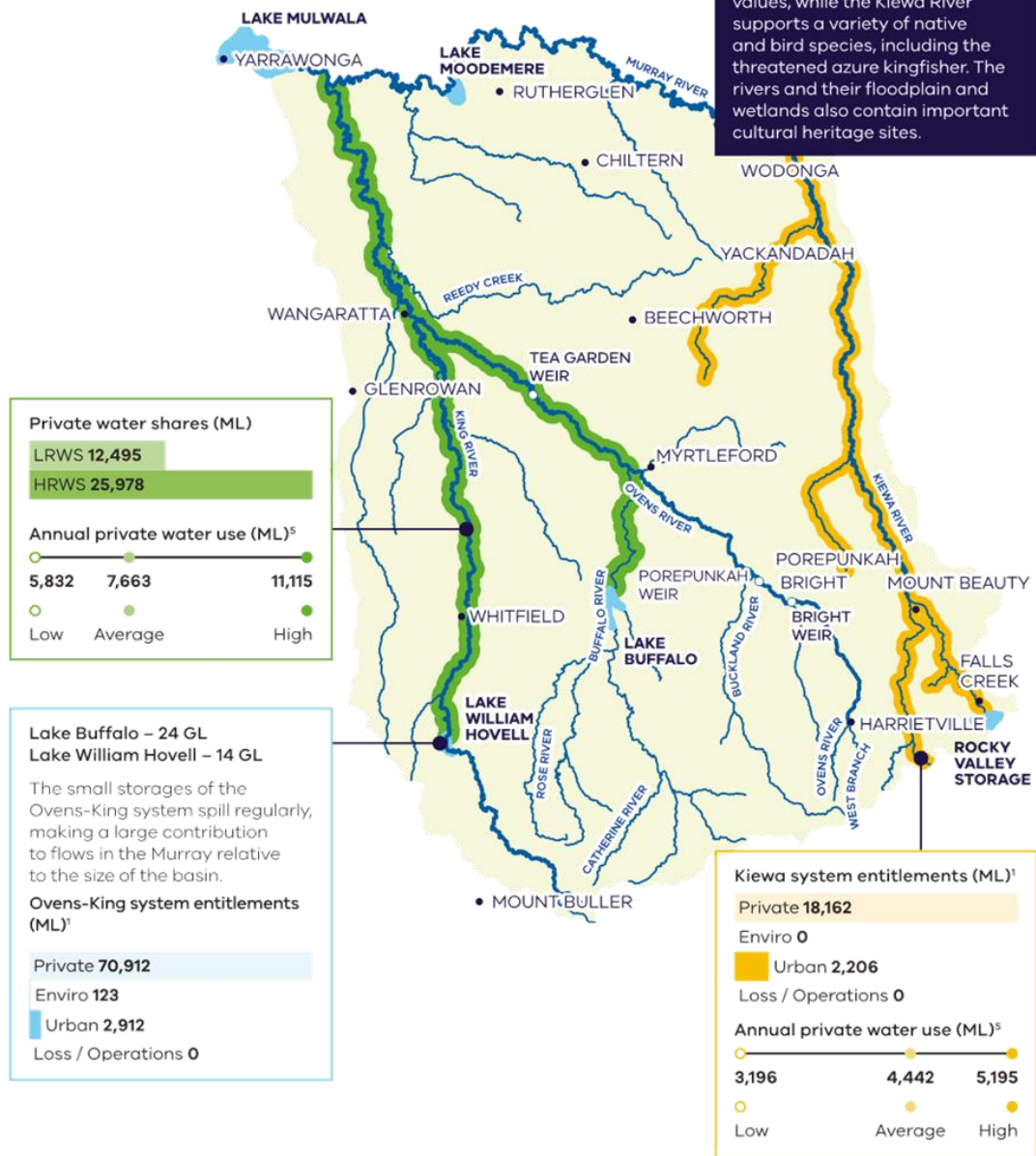
Potential change scenarios

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-5 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in small local areas Investigate whether further environmental benefits could be recognised in reduced local delivery losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in irrigation supply to specific reaches may support more natural local flow regime Investigation of any local opportunities to restore fish passage associated with system changes
Medium 5-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in specific creek reaches Investigate opportunities for recover water through targeted removal of weirs not required for town supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support Opportunities to rationalise infrastructure alongside any water purchases will be prioritised to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate potential restoration of fish passage with a more natural flow regime Increased opportunity to reverse negative environmental impacts of prolonged static water levels (e.g. erosion, poor water quality)
High 10+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases at a regional scale Investigate opportunities to recover additional water through fundamental changes to system operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support Investigate opportunities to transition irrigation supply to neighbouring channel systems Significant opportunity for complementary savings to reduce scale of water purchase required to achieve the same outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to fundamentally change system operations to enable restoration of natural flow regime and promote multiple positive environmental outcomes

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The rivers of north east Victoria

The rivers of north east Victoria are particularly valuable to the ecology of the Murray River given their limited regulation, which provide natural inflows into the Murray River. The Ovens River is the only lowland river listed under the Victorian Heritage Rivers Act for its unique environmental values, while the Kiewa River supports a variety of native and bird species, including the threatened azure kingfisher. The rivers and their floodplain and wetlands also contain important cultural heritage sites.



Agricultural production

The main irrigated land uses in the Ovens-King are livestock grazing (non-dairy) and perennial horticulture (mostly wine grapes along the King River)

The main irrigated land uses in the Kiewa are dairy (agistment and fodder) and cropping

Irrigated agriculture in the Ovens-King and Kiewa contributes to approximately \$374 million of gross annual total agricultural production value²

Environmental condition and objectives

The Ovens-King system is semi-regulated and has regular spills (most years) from the King and Buffalo River storages, so the rivers and floodplains receive more of a natural flow regime compared to other northern Victorian catchments. The small volume of held environmental water can be used to maintain habitat and water quality for native fish and aquatic vegetation for short periods in dry times.

The Kiewa River retains a largely natural flow regime as consumptive use is relatively low - almost all basin inflows reach the Murray River. The largest diversions are associated with the Kiewa Hydroelectric Scheme, which enables water to be harvested from various locations and funnelled through three hydropower

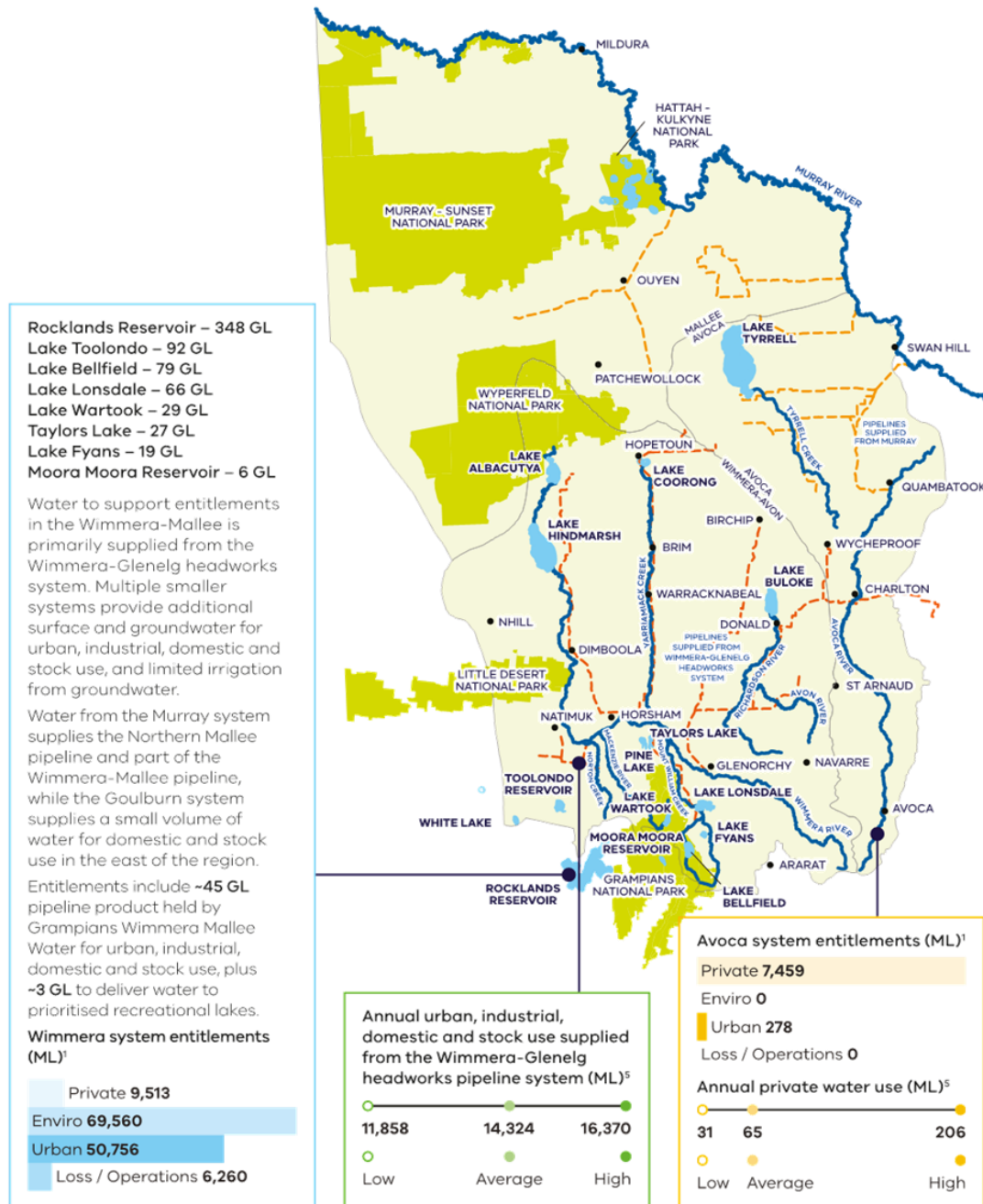
stations, before being returned to the river. Historically, this has increased the size of some flow events in summer. However, hydroelectricity production in summer is becoming less profitable due to the growth in rooftop solar and release patterns are changing, which will change the impact on flows. There is no held environmental water in the Kiewa basin, and flow is managed with passing flow conditions on bulk entitlements and licensed diversions and by 17 local management plans that have restriction triggers or flow sharing arrangements.

Potential change scenarios

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Low 1-5 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in local river reaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable summer and autumn baseflows to be maintained and freshes to be delivered in the Ovens River during dry periods Contribute to meeting downstream environmental objectives in the Murray River
Medium 5-10 GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in local river reaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production must be matched with sensible transition support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable summer and autumn baseflows to be maintained in the Ovens and King Rivers, and freshes to be delivered in the Ovens River during dry periods Contribute to meeting downstream environmental objectives in the Murray River
High 10+ GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary, targeted water purchases in local river reaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reduction in potential for irrigated production would require regional transition support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable summer and autumn baseflows to be maintained and freshes to be delivered in both the Ovens and King Rivers, during dry periods Contribute to meeting downstream environmental objectives in the Murray River

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

The Wimmera-Mallee



Agricultural production

The main agricultural land uses in the Wimmera-Mallee are cropping and dryland grazing

A small amount of irrigation from groundwater occurs in the Wimmera-Mallee, with annual and perennial horticulture, and hay production the main irrigated land uses

Water use by agriculture in the Wimmera-Avon and Avoca basins – predominantly for livestock – contributes to approximately \$2,350 million of gross annual total agricultural production value

The Wimmera-Mallee has several priority waterways identified in the Wimmera and North Central Waterway Strategies, including the Wimmera and Avoca Rivers, and the Ramsar-listed Lake Albacutya. There are also over 50 highly diverse wetlands, supplied with water from pipelines. Wimmera-Mallee waterways support large populations of waterbirds, unique populations of river red gums, many significant native fish populations (including one of Victoria’s few self-sustaining populations of freshwater catfish), platypus, turtles and frogs. The waterways of the Wimmera-Mallee also contain important cultural heritage sites.

Environmental condition and objectives

Within the Murray-Darling Basin, the main rivers of the Wimmera-Mallee flow into terminal lakes before reaching the Murray River. They are characterised by extreme fluctuations in flow from season to season and year to year. Over summer and autumn waterways typically don’t flow for long periods of time, if at all. There are limited opportunities to deliver additional water for the environment for rivers in the Wimmera-Mallee, in part due to limited infrastructure and watercourse capacity.

There has been significant investment in modernisation of water supply systems and recovery of water for the environment in the Wimmera-Mallee. The environment holds 48% of all entitlements as a result of the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline project and the closure of the Wimmera Irrigation District. Pipelines supply water to over 50 Wimmera-Mallee wetlands, mostly located on reserved Crown land. Some are localised hotspots for highly diverse

communities of native flora and fauna, including several threatened species, in an otherwise agricultural landscape.

Environmental water management is focused on maintaining critical habitats for native fish, waterbirds, platypus, rakali, turtles, frogs and crayfish, improving connectivity for native fish movement, supporting breeding opportunities for waterbirds, plus enhancing vegetation within and along waterways. Ecosystem functions are also targeted including supporting drought refuges, and maintaining appropriate surface water salinity and geomorphic habitat.

Achieving environmental objectives in the Wimmera-Mallee is limited by the reliability of existing water for the environment, particularly in drought years when water storages can become critically low.

Potential change scenarios

Because most water entitlements in the region are held for urban, industrial, domestic and stock use, and this water is already delivered via an efficient piped supply, there are limited new opportunities to recover additional water for the environment.

Water recovery range	Potential recovery method	Potential socio-economic outcomes	Potential environmental outcomes
Unknown	No known options	To be assessed based on any specific opportunities	Additional environmental water could help support environmental outcomes in dry times

These scenarios are outlined as a conversation starter with regional communities. Importantly we will partner with Traditional Owners on the opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management through water recovery proposals. This will include consideration of how changes to water management can protect or enhance cultural values or contribute to Traditional Owner aspirations on their Country.

Adapting Victorian irrigation districts for the future



40

Vineyards in Robinvale
Credit: Darryl Whitaker

Irrigation districts form a critical part of Victoria's agricultural production. By providing a controlled water supply, irrigation districts allow consistent access to water for food and fibre producers, reducing dependence on rainfall and mitigating drought risks. This stability promotes higher productivity, a diverse range of industries and sustainable agriculture. Irrigation districts must adapt over time as farm businesses respond to a changing climate, competition for water and market demands. Irrigation communities across northern Victoria are adjusting to changes in water availability driven by factors such as: climate variability and change, commodity prices, water market trends, and environmental water recovery under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Previous water recovery in irrigation districts

Past water recovery efforts have had both positive and negative outcomes for the viability of irrigation districts and local irrigators. Through projects like the Connections Project, irrigation districts have been upgraded and modernised, providing higher levels of service for customers and setting farm businesses up to deal with variable water availability. Through water purchases and on-farm programs, some irrigators have benefited through Commonwealth Government funding, while negative flow-on impacts have increased the challenges for the long-term viability of irrigation districts.

Open tender water purchases

Water purchases benefit individuals who sell their entitlements to government, as the prices paid under water purchase programs typically exceed water market prices at the time. However, analysis from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) makes it clear that there is an impact on the market when there isn't a proportional reduction in the demand for irrigation water. This is more likely to be the case where irrigators sell their water entitlements without the irrigation infrastructure that supplies them being decommissioned at the same time. The on-going cost to maintain this underutilised infrastructure in the long-term can also create a challenge for water corporation customers that remain.

Where untargeted water purchase programs have occurred across northern Victoria in the past, they have resulted in a patchwork of reduced irrigation throughout districts. Because reductions in water use were dispersed throughout the system, targeted works to remove infrastructure and reduce costs were not possible. This is often referred to as the 'Swiss cheese effect'. This means that the infrastructure that supplies people in the district continues to attract the same costs for operations, maintenance and replacement of channels, pipes, and outlets, but are used less by landholders to support economic activity.

On-farm water use efficiency programs

On-farm projects, which allow participants to exchange water entitlements for farm infrastructure upgrades were once thought to be an effective water recovery mechanism that limited negative socio-economic impacts by off-setting reduced entitlements with greater water-use efficiency. These programs have been proven to have the largest effect on allocation prices in the water market, as irrigators that participated tended to increase their water use following on-farm upgrades, increasing the competition for remaining water allocations in the consumptive pool. ABARES estimate that on-farm programs have about double the effect on water market prices as that of water purchases, per unit of water recovered.

"ABARES estimate that on-farm programs have about double the effect on water market prices as that of water purchases, per unit of water recovered"

Off-farm water recovery programs

Off-farm water recovery, which occurs through irrigation upgrades that reduce losses, or rationalising infrastructure required to supply remaining customers, have a negligible effect on water allocation prices and should continue to be considered as part of any water recovery program.



Credit: Darryl Whitaker

Future water recovery in irrigation districts

The potential scale of Commonwealth Government water purchase means that rationalisation of irrigation areas needs to be considered and discussed with irrigators and the broader community. Undertaking rationalisation alongside water purchases can mitigate water market impacts as individuals that sell their water are no longer supplied for irrigation into the future. This means that the reduction in supply of water is matched with less irrigation customers in the system and less infrastructure that needs to be paid for in the future.

If this is done in a coordinated way, the flow-on impacts of local reduced agricultural production – including to downstream sectors or regional economies – are concentrated in a particular region, making it easier to design effective targeted government assistance to support transition.

We know from experience that irrigation rationalisation is hard and requires complex negotiations with affected landholders, but it can result in better outcomes than the alternatives. At the larger scale, we saw the community-led decision to decommission the Campaspe Irrigation District as part of the Connections Project. At a smaller scale, targeted rationalisation opportunities were taken up during Connections at the individual property or local channel level and was supported by broader district customers as a mechanism of last resort.

In the context of potential untargeted water purchase programs that could see significant volumes of water sold out of Victoria's irrigation districts, and the large and rapid consequences this will have, the relative benefits and costs of rationalising targeted areas must be carefully considered. This includes the need to proactively consider reducing the extent of irrigation infrastructure in northern Victoria, the costs of which are borne by a large group of users.

"We know from experience that irrigation rationalisation is hard and requires complex negotiations with affected landholders, but it can result in better outcomes than the alternatives."



The Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID)

The Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) is the largest irrigation system in Australia servicing over 840,000 ha of northern Victoria, stretching from Swan Hill to Yarrawonga, including Shepparton and Echuca. The GMID produces more of Australia’s fruit and dairy produce than any other region, with irrigated agriculture in Goulburn Broken and North Central generating an estimated \$1.4 billion of value per year in addition to production from non-irrigated land. The GMID supports a growing population of more than 173,000 people and a range of agricultural industries such as dairy, cropping, horticulture and grazing.

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have made significant investments in the GMID over the past 25 years through the Snowy Water Recovery and the nation’s largest water recovery project, the Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) Connections Project which invested over \$2 billion in modernising the GMID. Completed in 2020, Connections recovered 429 GL of water to benefit irrigators, urban water users and the environment and improved system efficiency providing greater security and service delivery for irrigators. In 2020, a further \$177.5 million in funding from the Commonwealth Government was secured to deliver the GMW Water Efficiency Project, which is improving system efficiency and service delivery to customers while recovering 15.9 GL for the environment.

In addition to water efficiency projects, large volumes of water have been recovered from the GMID through purchases. Between 2001 and 2015, there was a 540 GL reduction of high reliability water entitlements tied to land in the GMID. Changing water availability and other social and economic drivers have seen major land use transitions occur in the GMID over the past decade, most notably a reduction in dairy and dairy associated activity (agistment and fodder). This transition has seen a subsequent increase in cropping and grazing across the district.

The large and consistent effort of water recovery in the GMID over the last 30 years means that lower cost programs with positive outcomes which can recover water have already been completed. To secure the future of irrigated agriculture in the GMID for generations to come any further recovery needs to carefully consider the potential benefits and costs to individuals, regions and the broader customer base of the GMID which supports the ongoing costs of irrigation infrastructure.

Table 2: Summary of irrigation modernisation works in the GMID in the last decade

Project name	Date	Funding amount	Total water recovery	Area covered
Connections Project	2008–2020	\$2.06 B	433 GL	GMID (all districts)
GMW Water Efficiency Project	2021–2023	\$177.5 M	15.9 GL	GMID (all districts)



The Sunraysia pumped districts

The Sunraysia irrigation region in the Mallee produces the highest value of irrigated production in Victoria at almost \$1.3 billion in 2020–21, making up almost 25% of the irrigated agricultural value in the state. The Mallee produces 99.9 per cent of Victoria’s dried and table grapes, 99.6 per cent of Victoria’s almonds, 86.2 per cent of Victoria’s citrus fruit and 75.5 per cent of Victoria’s wine grapes. The Mallee is one of Australia’s major almond growing regions. There is a mix of new crops growing in the area such as pistachios, almonds, olives and avocados. Cereal hay is also a growing opportunity. The Mallee’s economy and agriculture sector supports a growing population of more than 89,500 people and has an established food processing industry in Mildura and Swan Hill.

The \$120 million Sunraysia Modernisation Project (SMP) began in early 2014 and improved the efficiency and quality of irrigation water delivery by replacing open irrigation channels with pipelines and automated pumping stations – recovering 7.8 GL for the environment. In 2019 a second stage of the project (SMP2) was completed that targeted the replacement of high loss spur pipelines and open channels to reduce seepage and evaporation losses.

In 2021, building on the successful delivery of the Sunraysia Modernisation Projects, Lower Murray Water (LMW) and the Victorian Government proposed the LMW Water Efficiency Project to upgrade remaining outdated infrastructure within the pumped districts, estimated to recover up to 2.5 GL of water savings. Of this, 1.8 GL will be provided to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, with further savings to be shared equally between delivering water for Traditional Owners and improving urban water security in the region.

Table 3: Summary of irrigation modernisation works in the Sunraysia region in the last decade

Project name	Date	Investment	Total water recovery	Area covered
Sunraysia Modernisation Project 1	2014–2016	\$120 M	7.8 GL	Merbein, Red Cliffs and Mildura
Sunraysia Modernisation Project 2	2019	\$7.8 M	Unverified	Merbein and Red Cliffs
LMW Sunraysia Water Efficiency Project	2022–2025	\$37.9 M	~2.5 GL	Merbein, Red Cliffs and Mildura



Planning the future of irrigation districts together

The Victorian Government wants to ensure Basin Plan water recovery happens in a way that supports irrigators and their communities to remain productive, resilient, and sustainable.

Commonwealth Government water purchase programs in the past have been voluntary, which means there is uncertainty about how much water entitlement holders in northern Victorian irrigation districts may be willing to sell to the Commonwealth Government, and where that water may come from.

The ‘Swiss cheese effect’ of historic water recovery from irrigation districts has made opportunities to rationalise infrastructure and recover conveyance losses hard to identify and achieve. This means the fixed costs of running the network must be maintained by customers who are producing less food and fibre from irrigation.

To avoid these impacts future water recovery programs must:

- Strategically consider opportunities to rationalise irrigation infrastructure and improve the efficiency and affordability of the system in the long-term,
- Avoid the ‘Swiss cheese effect’ of ad hoc purchases that undermine the long-term viability of irrigation districts.

This means taking a strategic approach, learning from the past and considering the scale of future irrigation infrastructure based on current and future utilisation, operating costs, and system loss requirements.

Opportunities to reduce the footprint of irrigation districts will be influenced by factors such as patterns in water use, water trade, infrastructure asset condition, agricultural activity, demographic trends, and land use change.

We need to work with irrigation district customers to identify where opportunities may exist to strategically align water purchase with reconfiguration or rationalisation of irrigation infrastructure to maintain the efficiency and affordability of irrigation systems.

Considering the outcomes of Commonwealth water purchase open tenders

The Commonwealth Government may choose to undertake a water purchase tender in Victoria to seek to understand irrigator interest in water purchase. This has recently been done in specific catchments of New South Wales and Queensland to work towards completing remaining water recovery under the ‘Bridging the Gap’ 2,750 GL target in areas where shortfalls remain.

While the previous requirement that water recovery towards the 450 GL must not have any negative impact on Basin communities has been removed, the new legislation requires that socio-economic impacts of any water purchase must be considered before the program is approved.

The Victorian Government is seeking assurances that if the Commonwealth Government undertakes any water purchase tenders, that opportunities for reducing socio-economic impacts, enhancing environmental outcomes, and securing the long-term viability of our irrigation districts are discussed with the Victorian Government before any contracts are signed.

This will enable opportunities to reduce socio-economic impacts by identifying potential additional water recovery through system savings, and targeting infrastructure works which reduce ongoing costs for remaining customers.



A planned, community-led approach

In-line with existing state policy, the Victorian Government will support community-led proposals to reconfigure or rationalise irrigation infrastructure that are identified as part of community consultation on this prospectus. Previous experiences in water recovery have shown that these types of proposals can work at a small scale (channels and pods), or a larger scale (whole irrigation networks or sub-systems).

To align with the principles for water recovery in the context of irrigation districts, we need to consider:

- alignment with strategic asset management planning
- opportunities to reduce whole-of-life costs for the network and bring down ongoing costs for remaining customers
- maximising opportunities to recover additional storage and delivery losses
- opportunities to maintain or improve customer access to supply infrastructure and channel capacity
- future water supply needs for affected customers (e.g. stock and domestic supply)

Estimates in Table 4 give an indication of the potential water recovery that could be achieved in the GMID through targeted programs of rationalisation/reconfiguration and voluntary water purchase.

Table 4: Initial estimates of water recovery ranges in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District from targeted water purchase and rationalisation/reconfiguration

Water recovery scenario	Percentage of district affected	Number of customers affected	Potential water recovery*
Low	15%	1,903	51 GL
Medium	20%	2,347	62 GL
High	25%	3,553	108 GL

*Note: These initial water recovery estimates assume the voluntary sale of 50% of the entitlements held in the affected area and recovery of 50% of existing channel losses due to infrastructure rationalisation.

If these volumes were recovered from the GMID through untargeted open tender water purchases, leaving no opportunity to rationalise or reconfigure the network, this would negatively impact customers in the district by exacerbating the 'Swiss cheese effect'. This could increase prices for remaining customers if those who sell their water also terminate their delivery share.

For instance, if the "high" scenario in Table 4 (108 GL) was recovered from the GMID through untargeted water purchases, and 50% of associated delivery shares were terminated, customer prices could be expected to increase by 9%. If 100% of associated delivery shares were terminated, customer price increases of 15% could be expected.

Case Study – The Campaspe Irrigation District

Irrigation distribution systems must adapt over time as farm businesses respond to a changing climate, competition for water and market demands.

In 2010, the Campaspe community led the decision to close their irrigation district after five years of very low or zero allocations. The community considered future prices to maintain the irrigation system under a climate of low water availability and compared that with the cost of a reticulated domestic and stock pipeline. A few existing Campaspe district irrigators moved to alternative irrigation supply arrangements sourced from the Goulburn system to maintain their production. This decision to rationalise part of the system brought down ongoing costs for other GMID customers.

Next steps



Working with Victorian communities

Putting communities at the centre is critical to achieving the best possible outcomes for the long-term. Engaging with our communities will help to identify what options there are to deliver improved outcomes for Victorian waterways and floodplain landscapes that could not be delivered just by buying water, and the support needed to achieve that change.

After thirty years of recovering water for the environment, there are no 'easy options' left. However, by working with the community, options can be identified which align with regional plans and set up towns, industries, and water-dependent landscapes for a future with less water in the context of climate change.

In the context of new legislation and the Commonwealth Government's position on open tender water purchases, the Victorian Government will work with communities on the principles for water recovery, and the process to develop and deliver projects that align with those principles. It is also crucial that the Commonwealth's implementation of its legislation does not disadvantage Victoria and that the Commonwealth remains committed to realising the benefits of the Plan across all Basin jurisdictions, including in the northern Basin.

This work will require extensive community engagement and planning and the Victorian Government will be working with the Commonwealth Government to seek funding to support this.

Delivering the 2,750 GL as the agreed Basin Plan target

The Victorian Government's priority is to develop and deliver projects to achieve the 2,750 GL target we signed up to in 2012. That includes, with the confirmation of funding from the Commonwealth Government, recommencing work on the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project.

The Victorian Government is also working with the Commonwealth Government to deliver other notified projects and to develop new projects that can maximise the environmental outcomes under the 2,750 GL and minimise any future shortfalls in Victoria achieving compliance with our Sustainable Diversion Limits.

Developing new environmental projects and working on recognition of environmental outcomes being achieved through the delivery of water through Victorian rivers will be a part of our ongoing conversations with the Commonwealth Government.

The Victorian Government has strongly advocated for all water recovery undertaken for the Basin Plan being counted first towards the primary, agreed target of 2,750 GL which delivers the objectives of the Basin Plan. Any further recovery above that target can then flow to the additional 450 GL.

We will always make this expectation clear.

Preventing the negative impacts of blunt water purchase programs

Building on our input to consultation so far, the Victorian Government will work with the Commonwealth Government on meeting the legislated requirement for water purchase programs to meaningfully consider socio-economic impacts.

This will aim to:

- avoid unnecessary socio-economic impacts,
- maximise the environmental benefits of any investment in Basin Plan water recovery through a strategic approach, and
- ensure meaningful and real opportunities to partner with Victorian Traditional Owners are not overlooked.



Credit: Mallee Catchment Management Authority 47

Endnotes

1. System entitlement volumes represent a maximum volume that can be taken in a one-year period. The volume available in a particular year is dependent on the rules for allocating water set out in the entitlement and the seasonal conditions in that year, which varies. The rules for allocating water under an entitlement can differ between entitlements and systems. This affects the ability and likelihood of water being taken in a particular year. Some entitlements, often held by the environment and water authorities, do not have a specified annual volume. Those entitlements still provide for a share of the resource, however there is no volume reported here for them.
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020-21), 'Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, 2020-21 – Gross and local value estimates by Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3 regions', <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/agricultural-commodities-australia/2020-21#data-downloads>, accessed 5 February 2023.
3. System entitlements for the Victorian Murray upstream and downstream of Nyah, excluding the Lower Broken Creek.
4. Includes private water share volumes for all of zone 7 (Victorian Murray – Barmah to South Australia), including areas not represented on the corresponding map, because entitlements may or may not be linked to land.
5. Based on annual water use volumes for the past 10 years.
6. Based on annual net trade volumes between this zone and other zones for the past 10 years. Positive numbers represent net trade out of the zone, while negative numbers represent net trade into the zone.





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8 URGENT BUSINESS

9 NOTICES OF MOTION

10 QUESTION TIME

Question Time provides an opportunity for members of the public to submit questions, in advance, to gain a response at the Council meeting.

QUESTIONS FROM THE GALLERY

Completed Question Time forms must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer via email council@gsc.vic.gov.au no later than 5:00pm on the day prior to the Council meeting.

A maximum number of two questions may be submitted in writing by any one person.

Questions will be read by the author, Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer may indicate that they require further time to research an answer. In this case, an answer will be provided in writing generally within ten (10) business days.

Questions will be answered at the meeting, or later in writing, unless the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the relevant question seeks confidential information defined in Section 3 of the *Local Government Act 2020* such as:

- Council business information
- security information
- land use planning information
- law enforcement information
- legal privileged information
- personal information
- private commercial information
- confidential meeting information
- internal arbitration information
- Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information
- an issue outside the Gannawarra Shire Council core business

or if the question is:

- defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance
- repetitive of a question already answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting)
- asked to embarrass a Councillor or Council officer.

No debate or discussion of questions or answers shall be permitted and all questions and answers shall be as brief as possible.

11 DELEGATES REPORTS

11.1 DELEGATES REPORTS

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to CEO

Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has memberships with peak Local Government associations, local and regional forums, along with statutory committees. Some memberships require that a Councillor be appointed to act as a delegates to formally represent Council, typically in a voting capacity.

This Agenda item provides an opportunity for Council appointed delegates to present a verbal update on any pertinent matters arising from Council's membership with the following associations.

COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES 2024	
COMMITTEE	COUNCILLOR
Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC)	Cr Ross Stanton, Mayor
Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils	Cr Ross Stanton, Mayor
Community Halls Community Asset Committee	Cr Kelvin Burt
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)	Cr Travis Collier
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC)	Cr Keith Link
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)	Cr Keith Link
Transport Committee Role including Rail Freight Alliance and Road Transport	Cr Keith Link
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA)	Cr Jane Ogden
Audit and Risk Committee (x 2)	Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Garner Smith
Rural Councils Victoria	Cr Garner Smith
Timber Towns Victoria	Cr Garner Smith

12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil