

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

A healthy Wimmera catchment where a resilient landscape supports a sustainable and profitable community.



Wimmera CMA

VICTORIA
State
Government

Report profile

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (Wimmera CMA) was established under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (VIC) (CaLP Act). The responsible Ministers for the period from 1 July 2022 to 4 December 2022 were the Hon Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water and Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Action. For the period 5 December 2022 to 30 June 2023 they were Hon Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water and Hon Ingrid Stitt MP, Minister for Environment.

The 2022-23 Annual Report of Wimmera CMA is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) (Formerly Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)) compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

Other Wimmera CMA information is available from the Wimmera CMA office and website:

- Previous Annual Reports
- Wimmera CMA Corporate Plans
- Regional Catchment Strategy

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Front cover photo: Community Engagement event during October 2022 floods

Acronyms

BGLC	Barengi Gadjin Land Council
CaLP Act	<i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i>
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
FOI	Freedom of Information
FRD	Financial reporting direction
FTE	Full-time equivalent
NRM	Natural resource management
PID Act	<i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012</i>
RCS	Regional Catchment Strategy
The Act	<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Report of operations

Responsible body declaration

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present Wimmera CMA's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2023.



Peter Hilbig
Chair - Wimmera CMA Board
31 August 2023



Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present our annual report. During the past 12 months our community has reset with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and been challenged by the La Nina weather pattern. The October floods reminded us of the threats presented by extremes of nature, with the silver lining that our water storages reached 25 year high volume levels, thereby providing the community increased water security.

We met all expectations as described by the Minister for Water's Letter of Expectations. Wimmera CMA successfully delivered \$6.8 million of natural resource management projects and outcomes. Financially the organisation is in a strong position, with internal and external audit results confirming sound processes and our balance sheet is in an excellent position going into 2023-24.

As a Board we continued to engage with and listen to our communities about natural resource management and sustainable rural enterprise.

Our organisation continues to excel in the People Matters Survey with its diverse and high performing culture.

As a key partner in the Horsham Rural City Council City to River Project, we were pleased that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was able to open a nature themed water splash park in Horsham and talk about the importance of waterway health.

In anticipation for the outlook of El Nino we have completed two significant projects that better prepare our community for any potential of drought.

An analysis of 15 recreational lakes across the Wimmera-Mallee to assess their environmental values was an important step in understanding the environmental benefits of recreation lakes filled by piped water. The assessment will inform future water allocation decisions involving a shared benefit approach, especially during drought conditions or low water allocation periods.

A partnership project with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder to protect the lower reaches of the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) has commenced. This project will build the resilience of the river during times of drought or low water allocation by connecting to the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline to deliver water at identified drought refuge areas.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our fellow board members who have decided to not renominate for the 2023 board positions.

On a personal note, as Chair of Vic Catchments for the past two years I will be stepping down and handing the leadership position to Catherine Jenkins from Corangamite CMA, I thoroughly enjoy the strong cohesion of working with CMA Chairs and key partners in the spirit of collaboration.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Pleasingly the Wimmera landscape has been a picture of health for the past 12 months on the back of well above average rainfall.

We continued to work closely with First Nations people to deliver meaningful, cultural, social, economic and environmental improvement. This includes supporting the Victorian Environmental Water Holders cultural water trial at the Ranch Billabong, co-designed investment bids and the joint delivery of projects.

We expanded the delivery of the Drought Fund project that established a farmer network of over 70 soil moisture probes throughout the region. Data from this network was analysed and used as part of the October floods emergency response where parts of the upper catchment experienced a 1 in 100 year flood. The flood recovery program continues as we work closely with agencies and affected members of our community.

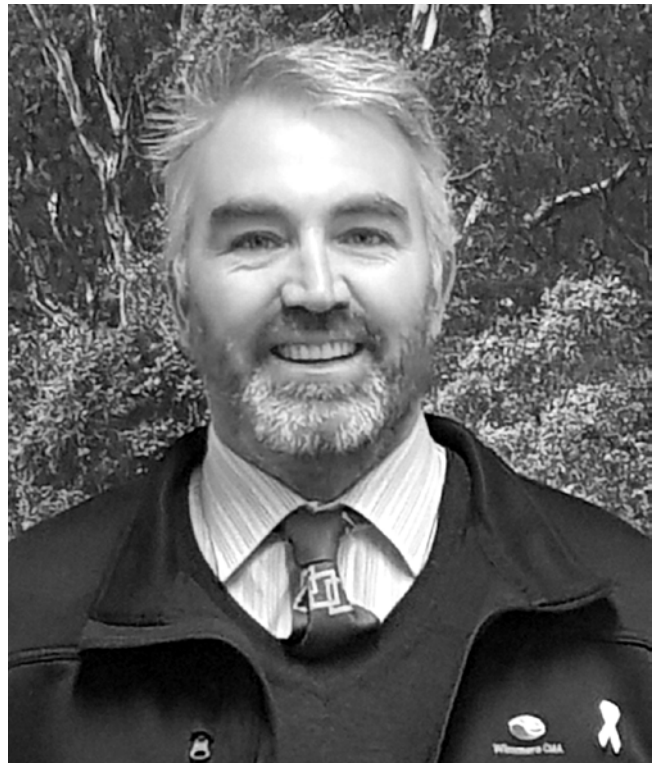
Our Catchments, Our Communities Program continued to deliver highly valued community projects. Our most high-profile project has been working with the Horsham Rural City Council, Wimmera River Improvement Committee, Barengi Gadjin Land Council and landholders on completing a riparian walking track at Riverside which will be opened in late 2023 subject to weather conditions.

As a member of the Soils CRC, in partnership with Federation University Australia we co-supervised a PhD student whose research is digitally mapping soil organic carbon for broad acre cropping. This exciting project uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to quantify and account for changes in soil carbon levels. This project has widespread application to the agriculture industry.

Pleasingly we finalised all projects and milestones for the conclusion of the 5 year National Landcare Program phase 2 and we now await the funding announcement on the future Program. We have submitted a tender application built upon a comprehensive engagement process including meeting with management of Limestone Coast to discuss cross boarder projects such as Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo and Malleefowl.

We are well prepared for the final year of project delivery of Environmental Contribution funding tranche 5 projects and are enthusiastically participating the potential design and development of EC tranche 6.

Significant time has been allocated to mineral sand mine developments and renewable energy projects in the region as that sector continues to build momentum and creates land use change.



As Chair of the Integrated Water Management forum, it was pleasing that a number of projects have been completed during the last 12 months. The largest project is the 10 million Agricultural Victoria and GWMWater Smart Water project that will transform watering recycling, secure the Wimmera as one of Australia's leaders in crop research trials and essentially drought proof highly valued green infrastructure in Horsham.

We continue to meet certification requirements for ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems requirements.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of staff during the past 12 months, support and leadership from the Board and various community members and partners that have offered advice, assistance and expertise. I look forward to working to delivering more environmental outcomes in 2023.

David Brennan

Chief Executive Officer

Manner of establishment

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (Wimmera CMA) commenced in July 1997 by order of the Minister for Agriculture and Resources, taking over the functions and obligations of the Wimmera Regional Catchment and Land Protection Board.

Responsible Ministers

Wimmera CMA is established under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (VIC) (CaLP Act). The responsible Ministers for the period from 1 July 2022 to 4 December 2022 were the Hon Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water and Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Action. For the period 5 December 2022 to 30 June 2023 they were Hon Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water and Hon Ingrid Stitt MP, Minister for Environment.

Objectives, functions, powers and duties

The objectives, functions, powers and duties of Wimmera CMA are largely contained within the following Victorian Acts:

- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Water Act 1989*
- *Financial Management Act 1994*
- *Audit Act 1994*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000*
- *Public Administration Act 2004*
- *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

The functions, powers and duties of Wimmera CMA under Section 12(1) – (4) of the *CaLP Act* are:

Each Authority has the following functions in respect of the region for which it has been appointed, to —

- Prepare a Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) for the region and to coordinate and monitor its implementation.
- Prepare special area plans for areas in the region and to coordinate and monitor their implementation.
- Promote the cooperation of persons and bodies involved in the management of land and water resources in the region in preparing and implementing the RCS and special area plans.

- Advise the Minister, and, if requested by any other Minister, that other Minister on —
 - Regional priorities for activities by, and resource allocation to, bodies involved in the management of land and water resources in the region; and
 - Guidelines for integrated management of land and water resources in the region; and
 - Matters relating to catchment management and land protection; and
 - The condition of land and water resources in the region.
- Promote community awareness and understanding of the importance of land and water resources, their sustainable use, conservation and rehabilitation.
- Make recommendations to the Minister about the funding of the implementation of the RCS and any special area plan.
- Make recommendations to the Minister and the Secretary about actions to be taken on Crown Land managed by the Secretary to prevent land degradation.
- Advise the Minister and provide information to the Minister on any matter referred to it by the Minister.
- Carry out any other functions conferred on the Authority by or under this Act or any other Act.

Each Authority has power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with, or as incidental to, the performance of its functions, including any function delegated to it.

Subsection (2) is not to be taken to be limited by any other provision of this Act that confers a power on the Authority.

Each Authority has the duties conferred on it by or under this or any other Act.

The Authority has additional objectives, functions, powers and duties for waterway management, floodplain management and regional drainage conferred under Part 7 and Part 10 of the *Water Act 1989*.

Nature and range of services provided

Our vision

Our vision is for a healthy Wimmera catchment, where a resilient landscape supports a sustainable and profitable community.

Our philosophy

We aim to achieve a triple-bottom-line approach to all areas of our business, in the absence of any firm government policy or objective.

Our mission

Wimmera CMA's mission is to bring out the best in our staff, community and environment.

To achieve this mission, we have an organisational culture that is dynamic, diverse, inclusive, accountable and promotes wellbeing.

Our approach

To assist in delivering our objectives we apply a framework of 'simpler, streamlined, smarter, stronger'.

Our role

Wimmera CMA's role is to deliver outcomes by working closely with the community, key stakeholders and government agencies. This includes developing plans, priorities and actions that increase opportunities environmentally, socially and economically whilst reducing risks to our key natural assets:

- Native vegetation
- Threatened plants and animals
- Wetlands
- River and streams
- Soils

Wimmera CMA sets out to mitigate threats and increase the quality, extent and connectivity of Wimmera's natural assets as described in the RCS and accompanying Action Plans.

Who we are

Wimmera CMA is a statutory body that works with the community to achieve a healthy and sustainable environment. Wimmera CMA provides advice to the Australian and Victorian Governments about environmental conditions, directions and priorities in the Wimmera region.

Currently eight community representatives make up the Wimmera CMA Board. The Board sets the organisation's strategic direction, ensures that Wimmera CMA meets statutory and financial responsibilities and that its activities reflect community values and expectations.

Our values and behaviours

The values and behaviours at Wimmera CMA represent an understanding between all staff about how they conduct themselves both professionally and personally. Staff members expect these values and behaviours to be demonstrated internally and externally. This will ensure that staff act professionally and courteously and, as a consequence, the organisation is respected through the demonstration of these values.

Wimmera CMA staff value:

Commitment to the organisation, demonstrated by

- Doing what we say we are going to do
- Representing the organisation in a proactive, fair and positive manner
- Adapting to organisational needs

Integrity, by

- Acting impartially, treating all parties fairly and equally
- Behaving transparently and openly, free from pretence or deceit

Respect, by

- Treating people with consideration and understanding, having regard for their feelings, wishes and rights

Teamwork, by

- Striving to bring the best out of others by working in a collaborative and positive manner
- Helping each other to achieve a common understanding, outcome or goal

Our region

The Wimmera is in western Victoria and extends from the Pyrenees ranges to the east to Ngalpaktia/Ngelpagutya (Lake Albacutya) and the Big Desert National Park to the north and the South Australian border to the west (Figure 1). The region has a population of approximately 50,000 and around one-quarter of its residents rely directly on agriculture for income. The region is predominantly made up of cleared agricultural land.

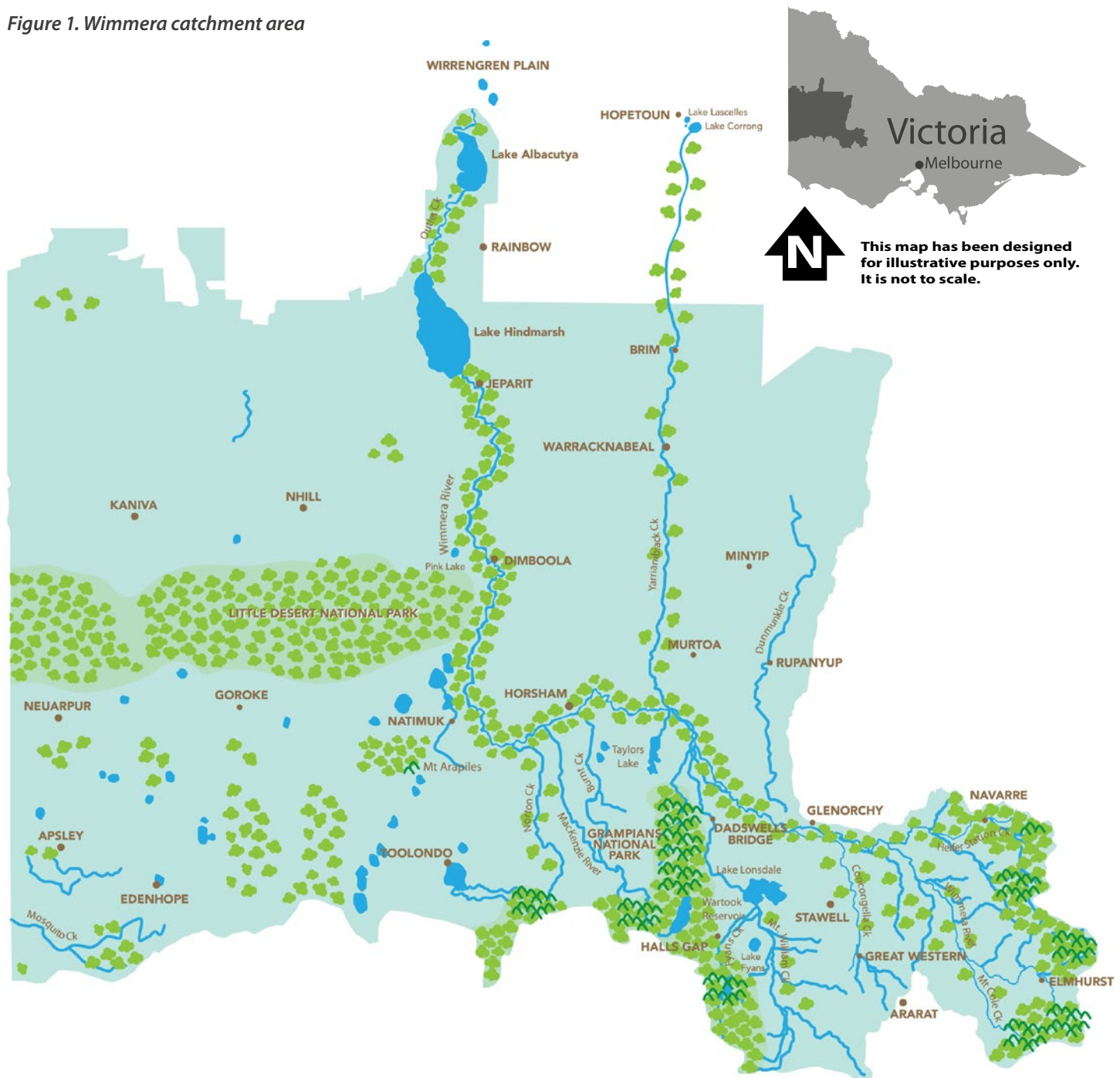
Natural Wimmera features include more than 3,000, or 25% of Victoria's wetlands, Gariwerd (Grampians) and Little Desert

National Parks and the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) system, which all support a diverse range of plants and animals. The region also has productive agricultural soils and valuable groundwater.

The Wimmera catchment includes many cultural and environmental heritage sites. More than 2,000 sites of Indigenous archaeological significance are associated with the catchment's reserves, waterways, floodplains and wetlands.

The region is home to approximately 1,500 species of native plants and 420 species of native animals. These include 20 mammals, 40 reptiles and more than 250 bird species.

Figure 1. Wimmera catchment area



Our stakeholders

A commitment from communities, agencies and industries to achieve sustainable natural resource management outcomes in the region is vital.

Wimmera CMA engages a community that is broad and diverse. This includes land managers, Aboriginal communities, local government and Australian and Victorian government investors (Table 1).

Table 1. Wimmera CMA's stakeholders and their characteristics

Group	Characteristics	Relationship
Landholders	Rural property holders, farmers, absentee landowners and corporate farms.	Partners
Government departments and agencies	<p>Victorian Government: Environmental Protection Authority Victoria, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Victorian Environmental Water Holder, GWMWater, Parks Victoria, Emergency Management Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Agriculture Victoria, VicRoads, Trust for Nature.</p> <p>Australian Government: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Murray-Darling Basin Authority, Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.</p>	Partners, compliance and investors
Community and Landcare networks, groups and members	Project Platypus, Hindmarsh Landcare Network, Yarrilinks, Kowree Farm Tree Group, Perennial Pasture Systems, Native Fish Australia, Wimmera River Improvement Committee, 'Friends of' groups, Horsham Apex Club 15, Horsham Fishing Competition Committee, Horsham Angling Club, Dimboola Angling Club, Jeparit Angling Club, Edenhope Angling Club, Stawell Angling Club, VR Fish, Centre for Participation, Wimmera Southern Mallee Development, Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnerships.	Partners, grant recipients, education and capacity building
Local government	Ararat, Buloke, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack.	Partners, customers and investors
Natural resource management organisations	Victorian No-Till Farmers Association, Birchip Cropping Group, Partners in Ag, Greening Australia, Birdlife Australia, Trust for Nature, Conservation Volunteers Australia and Soils CRC.	Contractors, partners
First Nations community groups	Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations, Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-Operative.	Partner, advice
Wimmera CMA Board	The eight member Board appointed by the Minister for Water.	Governance, policy, strategy
Community monitors	River monitoring activities for birds, frogs, water, and fish.	Volunteers
Education sector	Department of Education network, local teachers and schools, Federation University Australia, Charles Sturt University, Southern Cross University, Longerenong College.	Education partner, capacity building
Consultants and contractors	Are used when internal expertise gaps exist.	Service providers

Operational performance

Performance targets and measures

The Wimmera CMA's performance indicators and targets which follow in Table 2 are based on our commitment to deliver on legislative compliance requirements. These include the *CalP Act* Statement of Obligations (commenced on 1 July 2007), and the *Water Act* Statement of Obligations (commenced on 19 October 2006), as well as our business objectives identified in the 2022-27 Corporate Plan and Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-27.

For a comprehensive overview please read our 2022-27 Corporate Plan. Operational performance is provided against each RCS theme and is reported in the Catchment Condition and Management Report and Initiatives and Key Achievements sections of this report.

Key to performance results:

- ✓ = performance target achieved or exceeded or expected to be achieved
- = performance target not achieved — within 5% variance
- = performance target not achieved — exceeds 5% variance. This is a significant variance that requires an explanation.

Table 2. Corporate Plan - Business Objectives and Outcomes

Strategic domain	Outcome (1-5 year ambitions)	Result	Comments
COVID-19 Ability to respond – organisational and community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wimmera CMA is a high performing, well governed and managed organisation. Innovation is embraced to improve effectiveness of outcomes and service delivery. Health, safety and wellbeing is a priority. Demonstrate outcomes of government investment into waterways and catchment health. 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complied fully with standing directions of the Minister for Finance – the Financial Management Act 1994. Clean internal and external audit results. Implementation of Wide Area Network. Substantial reduction in carbon emissions throughout the year. Maintained ISO 2015 Quality Assurance certification. No lost days due to staff injuries.
Climate change Provide services that mitigate and adapt to climate change and climate variability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wimmera CMA becomes carbon neutral by 2025. Explore opportunities to strengthen adaptation and mitigation strategies with regional partners. CMA recognised as a leader in pragmatic climate change solutions and outcomes. 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wimmera CMA has been a leading partner in the Grampians Regional Climate Action Group. Wimmera CMA in partnership with Wimmera Southern Mallee Development has advocated for the formations of a Wimmera Southern Mallee Climate Action group aimed at delivering local action. Continued to implement actions through a sustainability committee to move Wimmera CMA towards carbon neutral status.
Waterway and catchment health Provide leadership in delivery of programs to improve the health of priority waterways and catchments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wimmera community acting to protect their environment (Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037). Improve the condition and trend of the Wimmera's waterways. Implement the region's waterway strategy. Improve community's water literacy 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Floodplain Management Strategy steering group met regularly to provide effective governance. Continued to provide flood advice, approvals and referral responses. Assisted local government to establish new planning schemes. Implemented Integrated Water Management Strategic Directions Statement. Developed a set of information resources to help improve water literacy. Partnered with the Geography Teachers Association of Victoria to develop teaching resources

Strategic domain	Outcome (1-5 year ambitions)	Result	Comments
Water for agriculture Support a productive and profitable irrigation sector and vibrant and resilient regional communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural sector is adapting to climate change. Landholders building capacity to implement actions to maintain or enhance soil resilience. 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented Future Drought Fund project activities. Continued to develop partnerships to support water for agriculture including Smart Water project with the Agriculture Victoria and GWMWater. Continued to support farmer-driven trials and demonstrations focused on soil moisture. Continued to support forums aimed at improving support for the agricultural sector. Continued to partner on Soils CRC activities including Visualising Australasian Soils led by the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation at Federation University Australia.
Community engagement and partnerships All aspects of service delivery will be customer and community centred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen community engagement in regional planning and implementation. 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered the latest iteration of Australia's longest running natural resource management (NRM) and landholders longitudinal survey. Supported consultation with Wimmera Landcare community in relation to challenges and opportunities in the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. Supported local NRM practitioners to undertake professional development, including cross-regional training with Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Mallee CMA. Established various formal working groups.
Recognise and support Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion Recognise and support Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the water sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising and managing Aboriginal values in water management and planning (Water for Victoria). Support Victoria's Traditional Owners participation in biodiversity management (Protecting Victoria's Environment Biodiversity 2037). 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued employment of an Aboriginal Water Officer position and support of the statewide Aboriginal Water Officer Network. Continued partnership-based activities to rehabilitate and improve access to a culturally significant billabong in Dimboola in line with Barengi Gadjin Land Council's (BGLC) Country Plan. Engaged with BGLC's nursery enterprise. Supported BGLC and DEECA to establish a Landcare for Country officer position in the region. Supported BGLC and Landcare groups to test and build partnerships focused on cultural burning activities.
Recognise recreational values Support the wellbeing of communities by considering recreational values of waterways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising recreational values in water management and planning (Water for Victoria). Increase opportunities for all Victorians to have daily connections with nature (Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037). 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved public access across 26 ha of public land through the opening up and rehabilitation of Crown water frontages. Commissioned the construction of 2 pedestrian bridges linking over 20 km of walking/cycling tracks. Developed more than 9 km of walking/cycling trails along the Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River).
Resilient and liveable cities and towns Contribute to healthy communities and support resilient, liveable environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved waterway health of the Wimmera waterways (Water for Victoria). Increase opportunities for all Victorians to have daily connections with nature (Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037). 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented Future Drought Fund project activities. Continued to develop partnerships to deliver educational and capacity building events with organisations including Agriculture Victoria and industry groups. Continued to support farmer-driven trials and demonstrations. Continued to support statewide Dryland Managers Forum and other forums aimed at improving support for the agricultural sector.
Leadership, diversity and culture Reflect the diverse needs of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support gender equality (Water for Victoria) Champion Aboriginal inclusion in the water sector (Water for Victoria) (Barring Djinang). Promote the use of social procurement organisations. 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained 10% of people who identify as Aboriginal people in the organisation. Women provided the opportunity to act in leadership roles as and when opportunities arose. Implemented 'Leading the Way'. Used disability service providers when applicable.

Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy

Wimmera CMA worked with regional stakeholders and the community to implement the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) 2021-27, which was approved by the Victorian Minister for Water in 2021. The strategy is published on the statewide RCS website (rcs.vic.gov.au).

The RCS sets the long-term vision for integrated catchment management in the Wimmera and establishes 20 and 6-year outcomes for water, land, biodiversity and community. The RCS describes the outcomes sought by local communities for the region's five local areas.

There is strong recognition throughout the strategy of the deep and continuing connection of First Nations people to the Wimmera's landscapes. The strategy also recognises the significant role of partner organisations, community groups and individuals in achieving outcomes by collaborating and working together.

The strategy highlights the importance of integrated catchment management for enhancing and underpinning regional liveability, contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities and the regional economy. Several themes are integrated throughout the RCS including community wellbeing, climate change, innovation and stewardship of the land, water and biodiversity.

Addendums were developed for the RCS to explain the regional priorities relating to the Australian Government's programs and the Victorian Government's Biodiversity Strategy.

Initiatives and key achievements

Flood recovery

Following the October 2022 floods which saw part of the region experience 1 in 100 year flooding we have worked closely with our community and partner agencies to deliver over \$450,000 of flood recovery works on-ground including the repair or reinstatement of over 30 kilometres of riparian fencing, the removal of debris against public infrastructure and repairs to erosion control and environmental water infrastructure.

In addition to the on-ground works, the recovery efforts and community were supported through our involvement in regional recovery groups and attendance at community meetings and information sessions.

Wild to wild translocations

In November 2022, the Mitchell's Hopping Mouse was returned to the Little Desert region for the first time in over half a century. Seven animals were captured in the Wyperfeld National Park west of Lake Albucutya, and translocated to the Little Desert, as part of a small-scale pilot study to test and refine translocation techniques and methods. The animals were fitted with radio transmitters and released at two sites - one within the Little Desert Nature Lodge's predator proof fence and the second in the Little Desert National Park adjoining the Nature Lodge.

Using the radio-transmitters and remote cameras, we were able to track the animal's movements following the release. We found that animals commenced digging their own burrows within days and moved up to 400m from the release sites. In April 2023, one individual was captured during routine surveys undertaken in conjunction with La Trobe University. Most recently, camera surveys have detected another individual in June 2023.

Overall, the pilot study was a resounding success. The information gained through the study has enabled us to further refine the translocation methods prior to commencing larger-scale releases in October-December this year.

Landcare facilitator hosting

Wimmera CMA supported volunteer groups and DEECA to transition to new hosting arrangements to secure and bolster the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program facilitator positions in the West Wimmera and Yarriambiack Shire areas.

The Yarriambiack Shire area Landcare Facilitator position is now hosted within the Wimmera CMA. The new arrangement is working effectively to support Landcare and environmental groups and networks to build capacity and resilience, and undertake works for the protection, enhancement and restoration of the land and natural environment in that important part of our region. Previously, Yarrilinks had responsibility for hosting the position and struggled to recruit for the role. The administrative load had contributed to significant burnout among volunteer committee members.

Volunteer members of Kowree Farm Tree Group faced similar challenges in relation to the West Wimmera Shire area Landcare Facilitator position. Wimmera CMA led a process for DEECA and Landcare whereby responsibility for hosting this position will now transition to West Wimmera Shire Council.

Natural resource management landholder survey

Wimmera CMA delivered the latest iteration of Australia's longest running rural landholder survey. Dr Hannabeth Luke led the fifth survey for us, which is now part of a national

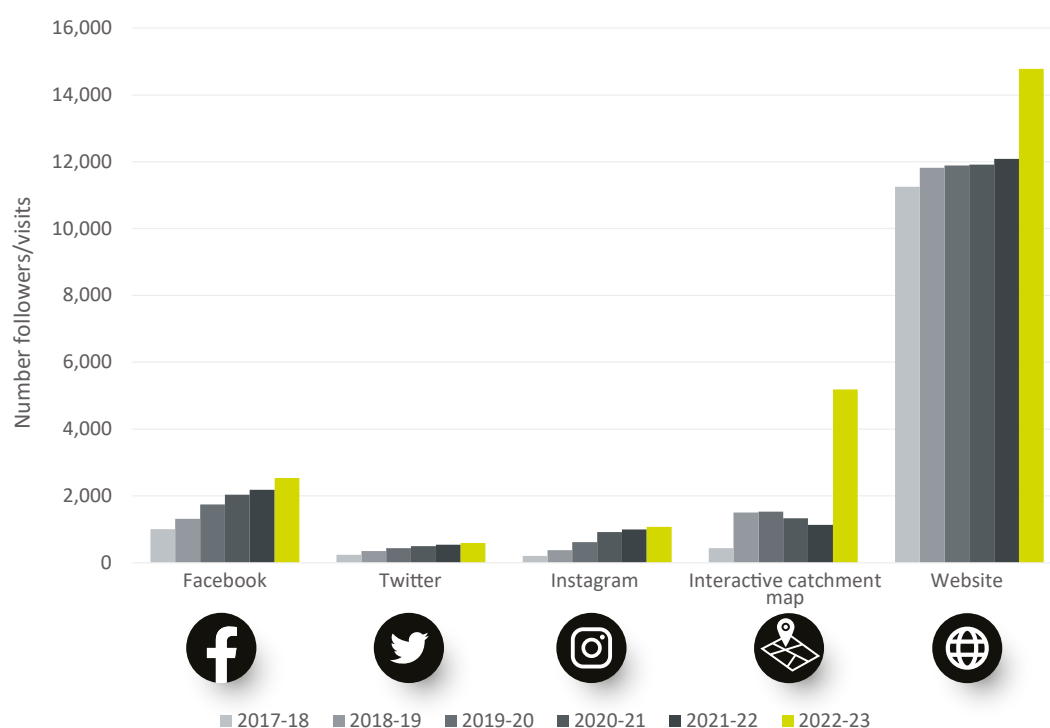
project 'Surveying On-Farm Practices Across Australia' being undertaken by the Soil CRC. Project partners, Southern Cross University, Wimmera CMA, and Charles Sturt University are all participants in the Soil CRC. In addition to the Wimmera, the national survey also covers North Central Victoria, the Eyre Peninsula of SA, the WA Wheatbelt, Central West NSW and Tasmania.

Dr Luke has worked closely with leaders of the four previous Wimmera surveys, Professor Allan Curtis and Dr Emily Mendham from Charles Sturt University, which assists greatly in ensuring continuity and consistency.

Community flood information

Wimmera CMA supported emergency services organisations, providing information on likely flood timing and extent during the October 2022 Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) floods. Wimmera CMA also supported community members to access flood information, providing updates via media networks and platforms and establishing a 'pop-up' information site at Horsham Weir parkland. Wimmera CMA staff members used computer screens to show people the flood depth of individual properties and explain what they might see as the flood passed through. This gave many people information and reassurance about how flooding may impact them personally. Wimmera CMA's online interactive catchment map received a record number of visits during the flooding event. There was also a big increase in people accessing Wimmera CMA's website for flood maps and information (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of social media followers and visitors to Wimmera CMA's website, showing a spike in visitation during 2022-23



Victorian CMAs collaborating on climate change

Victorian CMA's continued to collectively fund a Climate Change Coordinator to facilitate joint projects, enhance knowledge exchange, and provide coordinated input into policy and program design at state and federal government levels. Wimmera CMA participated in the quarterly Victorian CMA Climate Change Forum.

During 2022-23 significant progress was made to improve understanding of carbon offsets in the water sector. A statewide project officer supported the Climate Change Coordinator, working on blue and teal carbon opportunities, focusing on integrating efforts in supporting delivery of regional catchment strategies, and the Victorian Government's Biodiversity 2037 plan, and Natural Environment Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan.

Ranch billabong partnership

Wimmera CMA is partnering with Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Arthur Rylah Institute and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change to enhance the cultural and environmental values of the Ranch Billabong, on the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) near Dimboola. Together we are removing carp, improving environmental watering infrastructure and other visitor infrastructure to improve the environmental values of the Ranch and the social and cultural outcomes for the Traditional Owner community.

Community events return

As COVID-19 restrictions lifted Wimmera CMA was able to again drive and support several high-profile community events. Wimmera CMA supported the Horsham Fishing Competition where over 200 people attended a waterway wildlife exhibition by Chris Humfrey. We were able to deliver the long awaited Landcare and Harmony Day Celebration with Sophie Thomson which had originally been planned pre-pandemic. We returned to the Wimmera Machinery Field days to talk with visitors about how the CMA can support them in integrated catchment management. We also supported events for schools including the Western Victoria Careers Expo and Goolam Goolam Aboriginal Cooperative's annual Pathways and 'Try-A-Trade' Expo.

Waterbirds take off

Wet conditions in the Wimmera have led to many wetlands springing to life. A bird survey at Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) observed several migratory shorebirds, including Red-necked Stints which are Palaearctic migrants and covered under international migratory bird agreements. The Double-banded Plover was also observed and is a migrant from New Zealand. Five species recorded at Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) during the surveys are listed under the *Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (1988). These were Eastern Great Egret (Vulnerable), Australasian Bittern (Critically Endangered), Hardhead (Vulnerable), Musk Duck (Vulnerable) and Australasian Shoveler (Vulnerable). Australasian Bittern is listed under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999) as Endangered. This demonstrates the importance of Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) for bird habitat.

Corporate initiatives

Teams calling

The migration of our telephony system to a fully online Microsoft integrated system has provided greater flexibility for staff to work from any location and still remain connected to the office. The move to an online based system has also provided us with significant savings, with handsets no longer required and a reduction in monthly connection and call costs.

SharePoint online

We have commenced an incremental migration of our document management system to the cloud. This has allowed for us to review and redesign the structure and some elements of our system to utilise the greater functionality now available. This has included a new online Quality Assurance and Occupational Health and Safety incident reporting process with associated workflows. This migration will continue next year with the focus on continual improvement.

CMA joint procurement initiative

In line with the business efficiency review objectives, a collective of CMA's have taken the opportunity to explore and enter into a joint procurement agreement to deliver Internal Audit Services for the next three years commencing 1 July, 2023. Potential benefits identified as part of the shared procurement include optimal pricing resulting from a larger scale contract, less duplication of effort on audits that have considerable industry elements and sharing of internal audit information including plans and scopes. Working together in identifying emerging risk areas and innovative shared solutions will support and strengthen our internal audit function.

Catchment condition & management report

Introduction

Wimmera CMA monitors catchment condition to help identify opportunities for adapting and improving the way we manage the region's water, land and biodiversity and engage with regional communities and stakeholder organisations.

This section of the annual report is based around five catchment condition themes: water, land, biodiversity, community, and integrated catchment management. It provides:

1. A brief description of regional environmental context
2. An assessment of the condition of each theme during 2022-23
3. An overview of the evidence of changes to catchment condition brought about by actions and events that occurred during 2022-23
4. A summary of catchment and natural resource management actions achieved by Wimmera CMA and contributing partner organisations and groups during 2022-23.

Assessment method

The condition and trend assessment for each theme indicates the level of confidence or concern catchment managers have about the future of the Wimmera's environment. The assessment uses available data, expert advice and evidence gained during 2022-23 to determine catchment condition and trends based on the criteria detailed in Table 3 and Table 4.

The trend rating in Table 3 describes the observed change during 2022-23 in the environmental asset. A 'positive' assessment indicates a level of optimism about the future direction of condition and a 'concerned' assessment indicates a more pessimistic view of the direction of change in condition.

The condition rating in Table 4 describes whether available evidence suggests catchment condition during 2022-23 was good, moderate, or poor.

Table 3. Assessment criteria for annual catchment trend reporting




Condition rating	Assessment criteria
Positive 	An optimistic future with evidence that events during the year will have a positive impact in the longer term.
Neutral 	A largely neutral state, where events during the year might have been significant but are within expected variation and will have little impact in the longer term.
Concerned 	A level of concern that significant events during the year might have an adverse impact in the long term.
Unknown	The trend is unknown

Table 4. Assessment criteria for annual catchment condition reporting.

Condition rating	Assessment criteria
Good	The condition is classified as good
Moderate	The condition is classified as moderate
Poor	The condition is classified as poor
Unknown	The condition for this indicator is not known or not assessable.

Overview of catchment condition for 2022-23

Climatic conditions strongly influence annual catchment condition. A wet 2022-23 had a positive influence on catchment condition, benefiting waterways, native vegetation, agricultural land, and many plant and animal species.

Annual rainfall was 'very much above average' across the Wimmera catchment during the 2022-23 financial year (Figure 3). Most of the Wimmera recorded its highest spring rainfall on record (Figure 4). Rainfall levels declined in December, returning to average to slightly below average conditions throughout summer and early autumn. 'Above average' rainfall conditions returned during April and June rainfall was 'very much above average' for most of the Wimmera.

Figure 3. Victorian rainfall deciles from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 (Bureau of Meteorology, 2023).

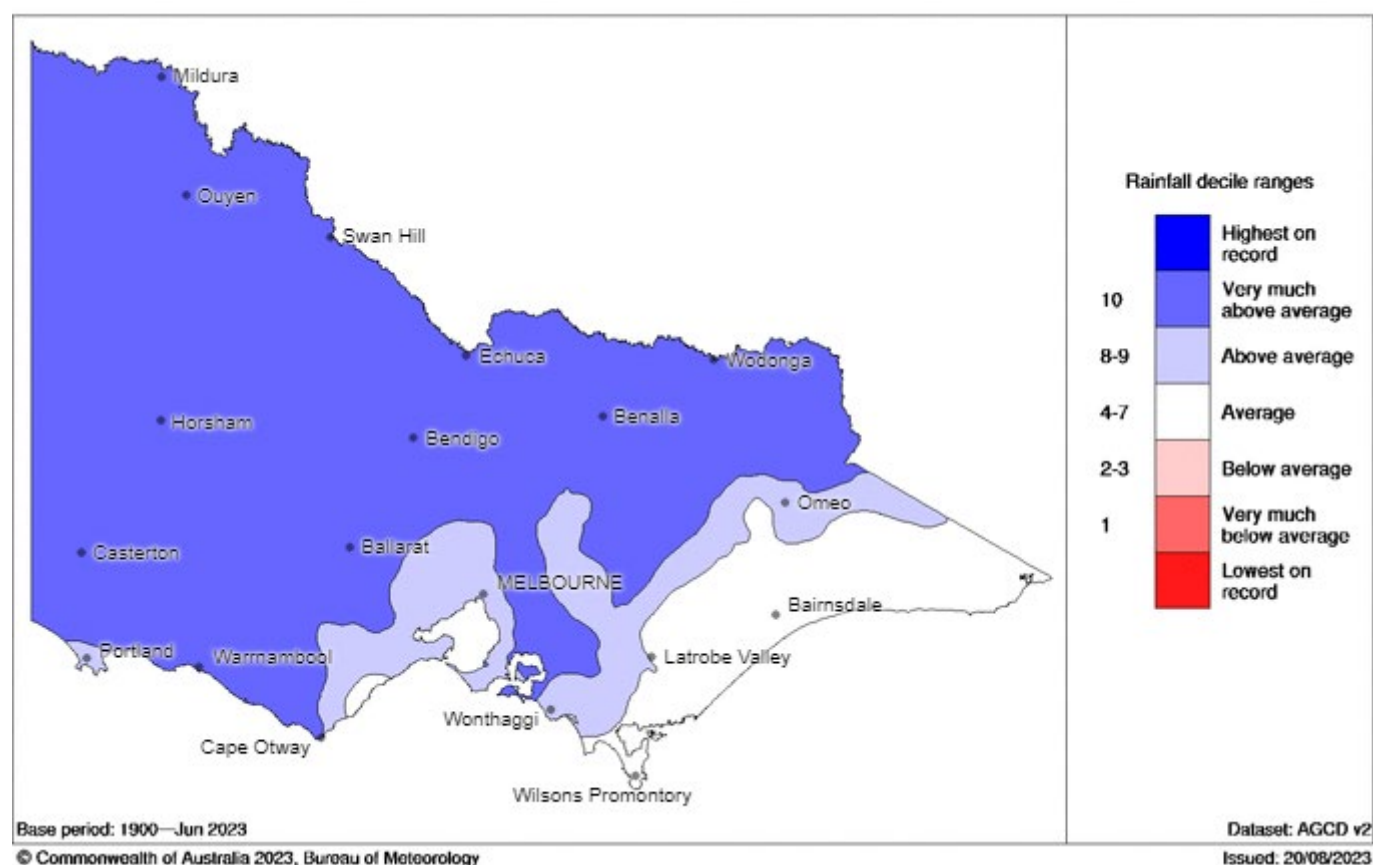
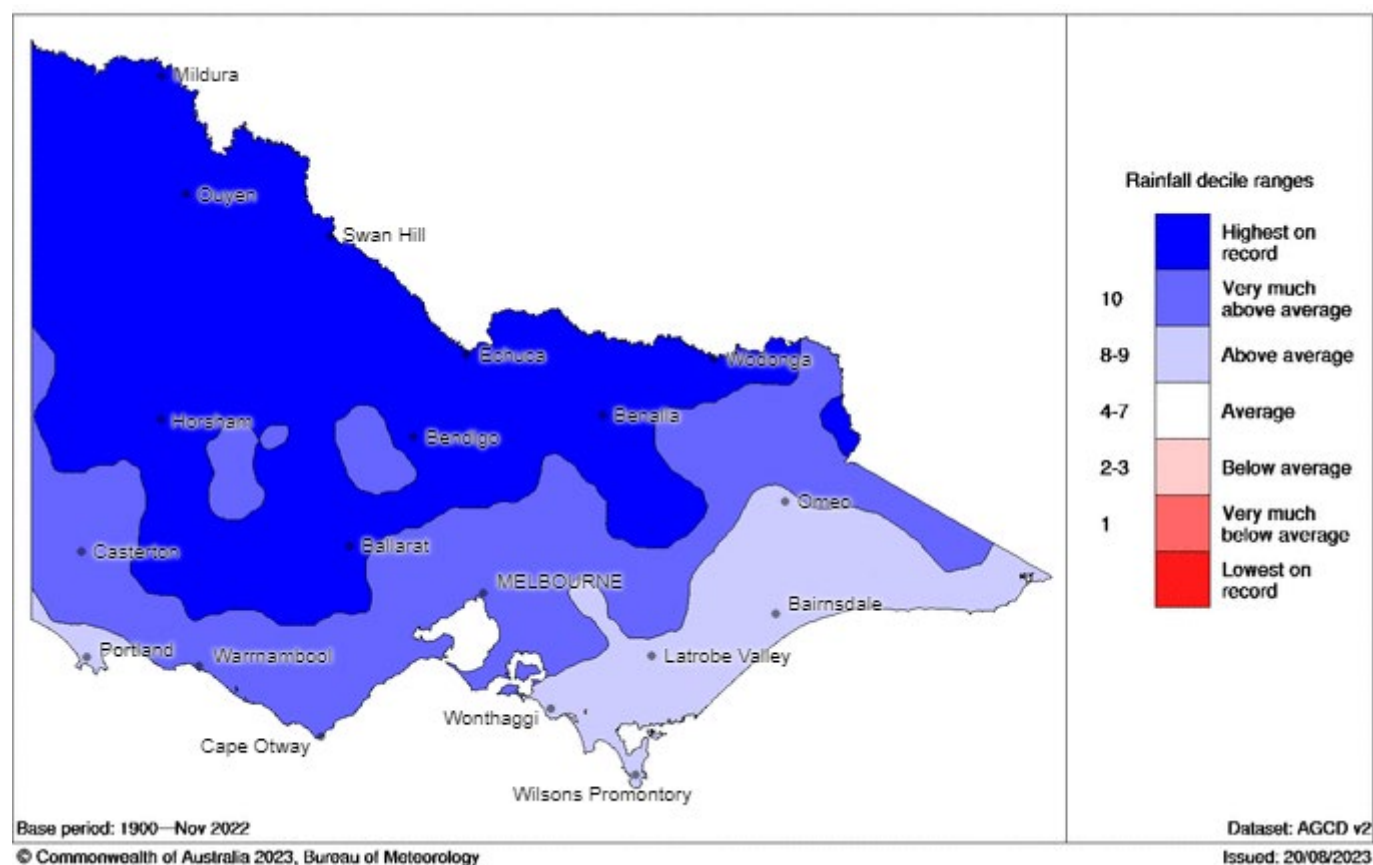


Figure 4. Victorian rainfall deciles from 1 September 2022 to 30 November 2022 (Bureau of Meteorology, 2023).



Above average rainfall contributed to high river and streamflow, filled many lakes and wetlands, boosted native vegetation, and provided good breeding conditions for a range of species. There was an influx of waterbirds to recently filled lakes and wetlands such as Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) and the Natimuk-Douglas chain of lakes, including endangered and international migrant species. The wet conditions also benefited invasive weeds, threatening biodiversity values.











Barrnggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) flooding in October 2022 affected many broadacre crops in floodplain and low-lying areas, resulting in substantial losses to agricultural production.

The floods also led to extensive weed spread and growth in riparian and floodplain areas.

It was the first financial year since 2019-20 where community and stakeholder events could go ahead without restriction, following the removal of COVID-19 pandemic health restrictions. Wimmera CMA observed increased participation in events and Landcare volunteering activities, although overall participation was still below pre-COVID-19 levels.

Table 5 provides a summary of catchment condition and the trend for 2022-23 and during the past 5 years.

Table 5. Summary catchment condition assessment

Theme	Trend		Condition	Summary comment
	2022-2023	Over last 5 years		
Water	 Positive	 Concerned	Moderate	The trend in waterway condition was positive due to well-above average rainfall contributing to high flows in rivers and streams and filling wetlands. Biota benefited substantially from the wet conditions. Fish surveys observed that native fish populations appeared strong in target reaches, although exotic carp numbers were also high. Platypus monitoring indicated the Wimmera's remnant population has slowly grown in distribution and abundance. Bird surveys recorded large numbers of wetland birds at recently filled lakes including Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) and Natimuk Lake.
Land	 Neutral	 Neutral	Moderate	Ground cover provided by plants and organic matter protects soil from erosion and contributes to soil organic carbon. Analysis of satellite imagery and Wimmera CMA's transect surveys indicated relatively high levels of ground cover in autumn, minimising the risk of soil erosion by wind and water. More than 80% of farmers completing a 2023 survey self-reported good knowledge of practices that maintain ground cover. A Wimmera-wide sample of 30 paddocks found variable soil organic carbon, with half of sites measuring levels below 1%, a level at risk of constraining soil health and yield potential. Crop yields were generally good, with some areas producing lower yields or quality due to flooding, water logging and disease.
Biodiversity	 Neutral	 Neutral	Moderate	The Wimmera's monitored biodiversity values appeared to have a neutral overall trend, with both values and threats benefiting from the high rainfall year. Wimmera CMA and stakeholder organisations staff observed that the high rainfall year boosted native vegetation growth, benefited river and streamflow, filled lakes and wetlands, and provided breeding conditions for some species. Monitoring results and stakeholder observations suggested encouraging signs for endangered species like Malleefowl, Growling Grass Frogs, Platypuses, and waterbirds. Fox and cat abundance and distribution remained high, and deer continued to expand their distribution. Native vegetation and weeds both benefited from high rainfall, with Barrnggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) flooding contributing to weed spread and growth in the riparian corridor. Weed control works were effective, but there remain large areas untreated. Habitat removal and loss of paddock trees continued to be of concern in the Wimmera's highly fragmented natural landscapes.
Community	 Neutral	 Neutral	Moderate	Wimmera CMA observed increased community participation in events, Landcare groups and recreation in nature, although numbers were below pre-COVID-19 levels. Participation in Landcare Groups was variable across the catchment. Some members and groups suffering 'volunteer burnout' were less active. Some of these groups began a reinvigoration process, refreshed by new committee members and Landcare facilitators. A new Horsham Regional Landcare Network and Dimboola Urban Landcare Group were established in response to local interest. Wimmera CMA and Barngi Gadjin Land Council continued their well established and strong relationship, working cooperatively on mutual outcomes. An annual socio-economic assessment found most community events associated with rivers and lakes returned in 2022-23 after a pause due to COVID-19 pandemic health restrictions. Attendance and participation tended to be lower than before the pandemic.
Integrated Catchment Management	 Positive	 Positive	Good	Wimmera CMA's partnerships provided opportunities to work collaboratively with industry, the community and government agencies to achieve integrated catchment management outcomes. Wimmera CMA has well established partnerships with a range of organisations and groups. Collective forums, individual meetings, and agreements provided opportunities to collaborate and progress joint outcomes. Wimmera CMA's on-ground works resulted in more than 268,000 hectares, representing more than 9% of the region under active stewardship during 2022-23. This includes more than 33,800 hectares of on-ground works and 235,000 hectares of assessments to inform future stewardship activities.

Water

Wimmera rivers, streams and wetlands provide valuable recreation and tourism opportunities, water supply for towns and farms, are a base for rich cultural history, and habitat for a variety of wildlife and plants.

Many factors influence the environmental condition of the region's waterways. These include water regimes, water quality, pest plants and animals, habitat connectivity, land management practices, recreation, developments, and natural events such as drought, floods, and bushfires. Climate change poses a major risk due to declines in rainfall and reduced flows. Climate change is also predicted to increase the intensity of rainfall events and floods. Land management practices can also influence localised runoff.

Waterway condition assessment 2022-23

Trend		Condition
22-23	Over last 5 years	
		Moderate
Positive	Concerned	

The trend in waterway condition was positive due to well-above average rainfall contributing to high flows in rivers and streams and filling wetlands. Biota benefited substantially from the wet conditions. Fish surveys observed that native fish populations appeared strong in target reaches, although exotic carp numbers were also high. Platypus monitoring indicated that the Wimmera's remnant population has slowly grown in distribution and abundance. Bird surveys recorded large numbers of wetland birds at recently filled lakes including Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) and Natimuk Lake.

River flows and wetland filling

Heavy and persistent rain throughout the catchment generated major river and stream flows during late winter and spring 2022. The Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) and tributaries flowed naturally until late December 2022. The Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) experienced flooding flows in October 2022, with water flowing into the previously dry Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) and filling it to an estimated 50% of capacity. Many lakes and wetlands across the region filled fully or partially from rainfall runoff.

Figure 5 shows annual Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) flows at Glynwyll in the upper catchment were the highest in more than ten years. Flows in Mount William Creek at Mokepilly were the highest recorded since before the year 2000.

There were substantial inflows into headworks water storages managed by GWMWater, with many reaching capacity and spilling. Figure 6 shows it was the third time in the past 25 years that inflows exceeded the historic average. This followed a sequence of five years of well-below average inflows.

High flows provided the opportunity for GWMWater to fill Green Lake in September 2022, which then allowed Wimmera CMA to direct GWMWater to release water into Dock Lake, filling it for the first time since 2016.

Plentiful water across the catchment supported Platypus breeding, movement of species downstream, fish breeding, water-bird breeding, and vegetation and habitat enhancement.

Rainfall declined and flows dropped away during November and December. Dissolved oxygen levels in the Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) declined significantly following the flooding flows. Environmental water releases from January until June 2023 maintained water quality and habitat in the Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River), Burnt Creek and MacKenzie River. Environmental flows improved Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) dissolved oxygen levels enough to prevent fish deaths and sustain biota during the drier summer months and into early autumn. Natural flows occurred again, arising from high April and June 2023 rainfall

Figure 5. Annual river flow in megalitres per year at 3 river and stream locations (Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, 2023)

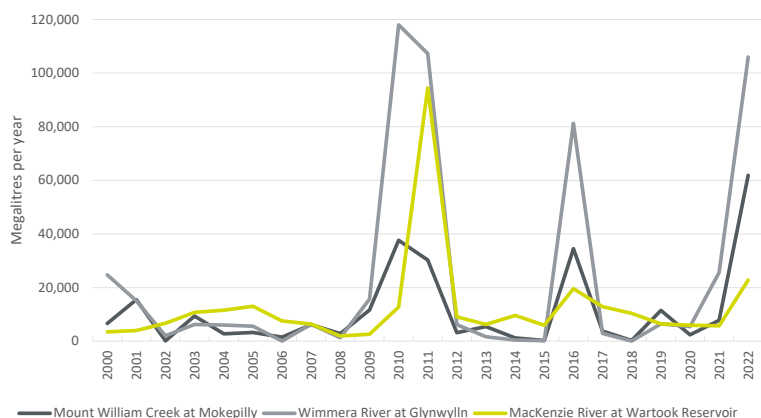
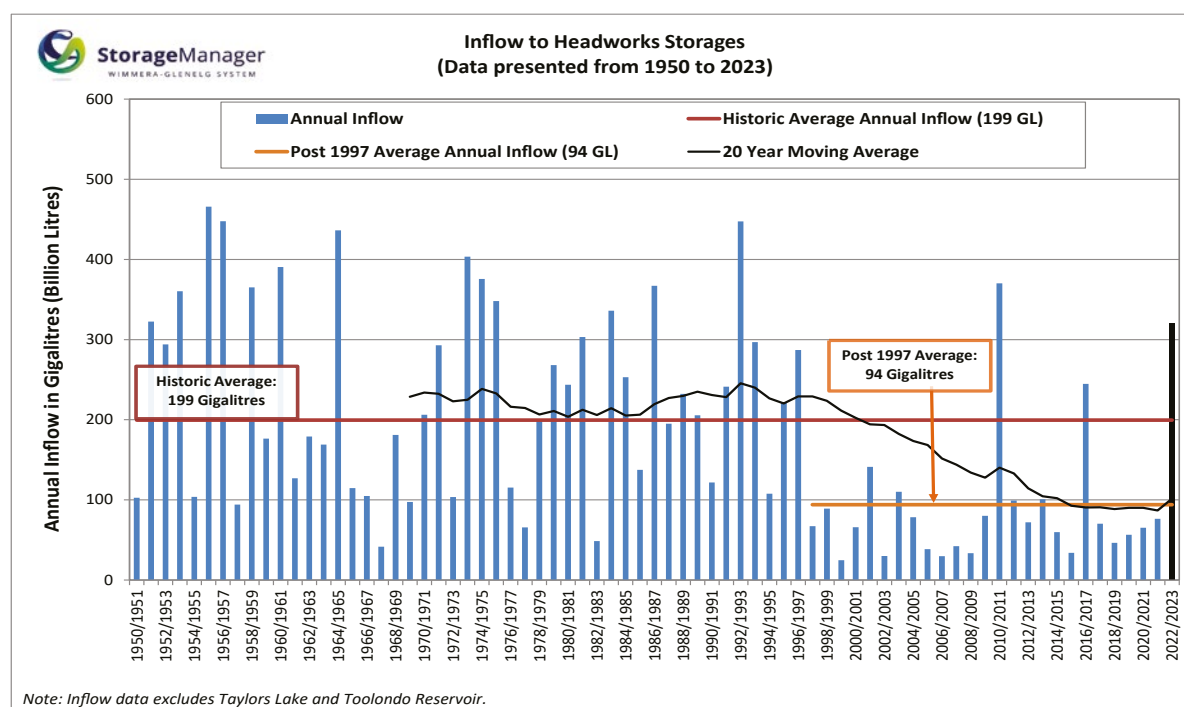


Figure 6. Annual inflows to headworks storages (GWMWater, 2023)



The Ranch Billabong beside the Barringi Gadyin (Wimmera River) at Dimboola continued its trajectory of improvement after naturally filling from catchment runoff, with enhanced water quality and vegetation attracting birdlife. Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council staff remedied low dissolved oxygen levels observed in November 2022 by installing aerators, with improvements to water quality immediately evident.

Water quality

Wimmera CMA's monthly field sampling of water quality at 23 sites in the Barringi Gadyin (Wimmera River) and tributaries found all sites met water quality objectives for total nitrogen and total phosphorus set out in *Victoria's Environment Reference Standard for Water*. Salinity and pH showed moderate compliance with the standard, improved on previous years due to increased flows having a diluting and flushing effect. High river flows contributed to low compliance with dissolved oxygen and turbidity standards across the catchment (Wimmera CMA, 2023).

Blue-green algae was recorded in some recreational lakes and water storages, including Green Lake, Dock Lake, Lake Wallace, Taylor's Lake, and Lake Toolondo (GWMWater, 2023).

Native fish

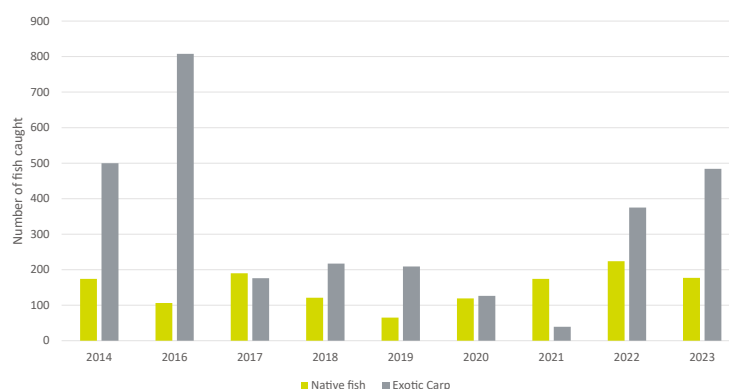
December 2022 and Autumn 2023 fish surveys observed:

- Southern Pygmy Perch, Obscure Galaxias and Western Swamp Crayfish populations appeared to be strong in Burnt Creek, lower and mid-MacKenzie River, and Mount Cole Creek, with recruitment evident. Researchers did not detect River Blackfish.

- Pest species including Exotic Redfin and Carp dominated large-bodied fish captured in the Barringi Gadyin (Wimmera River) upstream and downstream of Horsham and Dimboola weir pools. Researchers detected juvenile Golden Perch downstream of Horsham Weir and upstream of Dimboola Weir December 2022 (Bloink, et al., 2023).
- Fyan's Creek remained an important stronghold for River Blackfish. High abundance of Rainbow and Brown Trout are a concern as they compete with and likely prey upon young-of-year River Blackfish (Walker, et al., 2023).

Anglers caught more than 170 native fish and 480 carp in the annual Horsham Fishing Competition in March 2023. Figure 7 shows the number of Carp caught during the competition rose more than tenfold following a low catch in 2021.

Figure 7. Horsham Fishing Competition results (Horsham Fishing Competition Committee, 2023).



Platypus

The MacKenzie River supports the Wimmera catchment's last known Platypus population. Wimmera CMA has monitored the population since 2001.

Researchers caught and released six Platypuses during October 2022 and May 2023 surveys. Four of the Platypuses had not been caught during previous surveys. The capture of new individuals, including juveniles and subadults, indicated the population has slowly grown.

Environmental DNA analysis of water samples indicated Platypus distribution throughout the MacKenzie River as far downstream as Distribution Heads.

These results indicated that the MacKenzie River Platypus population has slowly grown in distribution and abundance. The population remains highly vulnerable due to its isolation, small population size, and lack of genetic diversity (Blink, 2022; EnviroDNA, 2023).

Wetland birds and frogs

Wimmera CMA estimated water in Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) was around 50% of capacity by January 2023. Water levels were sufficient to trigger algal blooms, plankton blooms, aquatic invertebrate breeding, and fish spawning. Bird surveys suggested the lake is an important wetland for waterbirds, with 32 different species recorded across 3 surveys in late 2022 and early 2023. Notable birds included two international migratory species, the Red-Necked Stint and Double-Banded Plover (Starks, 2023).

Water bird surveys at seven wetlands during April 2023 found abundant birdlife at all lakes, including 10 species listed under the *Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. Notable observations included more than 6,000 waterbirds at Bitter Swamp; 4,500 at Lake Natimuk; 4,000 at Lake Wallace; 3,600 at Saint Mary's Lake; and 1,100 at Dock Lake (Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, 2023).

Wimmera CMA and stakeholder organisations staff noted observations of Broilgas raising chicks at wetlands protected and managed under CMA or stakeholder programs. Stakeholders also reported Growling Grass Frog breeding and sightings at wetlands in west Wimmera reserves.

Groundwater

Groundwater levels reflect differences between the amount of water flowing into and out of an aquifer. They are influenced by the amount of water extracted for consumptive purposes such as irrigation and stock and domestic uses and the amount of recharge from rainfall.

GWMWater's groundwater monitoring indicates that the rate of direct recharge from rainfall in the West Wimmera Groundwater Management Area is very low except where the water table is relatively shallow. During 2022-23 groundwater levels were stable in four out of five of the management area's zones. The Neuarpur Zone experienced a decline in levels.

Wimmera Groundwater Catchment aquifers were relatively stable.

Management of Wimmera waterways

Table 6. Management activities for rivers and streams and wetlands carried out in the Wimmera during 2022-23.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
<p>Wimmera CMA continued to manage environmental water in the region. Actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering environmental water to river and stream reaches, and wetlands in the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline's footprint. • Surveying waterways for native fish, platypuses, waterbirds, and vegetation to assess responses to management and inform future actions. • Developing and submitting Seasonal Watering Plans for the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) system and wetlands to the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. • Informing the community via an annual forum, quarterly newspaper, and social media updates. • Supporting the Geography Teachers Association of Victoria to develop student curriculum on environmental water in the Wimmera. • Progressing development of a water literacy program. • Supporting Wimmera Development Association's annual socio-economic assessment of environmental and recreational water in the Wimmera Southern Mallee. • Collaborating with Barengi Gadjin Land Council on a project plan to enhance cultural values through the management of water for the environment. 	<p>Delivered almost 8,900 megalitres of water to 8 reaches and 23 megalitres to 10 wetlands.</p> <p>Surveyed 12 sites for native fish.</p> <p>Completed 2 surveys for Platypuses.</p> <p>Surveyed 2 lakes for waterbirds.</p> <p>Developed 2 seasonal watering plans.</p> <p>Engaged 19 participants in 1 forum.</p> <p>Published 4 media updates.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA delivered projects seeking to ensure Wimmera rivers, streams and wetlands continued to provide substantial economic, social, cultural, recreational, and environmental values to Wimmera and Victorian communities. Actions to improve the health and condition of wetland and riparian areas and increase the cover of native vegetation, included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing management agreements with private landholders. • Revegetating areas with native species. • Controlling weeds, rabbits and foxes. • Installing fences to control stock access. • Installing rock chutes to mitigate erosion. • Assessing sites to prioritise future erosion control works. 	<p>Established 23 management agreements covering 560 ha.</p> <p>Revegetated 21 ha.</p> <p>Controlled weeds over 1,300 ha.</p> <p>Controlled rabbits and foxes over 680 ha.</p> <p>Installed 28 km of fencing.</p> <p>Installed 1 erosion control structure.</p> <p>Assessed 11 sites for erosion control priorities.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA and Parks Victoria partnered to maintain and improve the ecological character of Ngalpaktia/Ngelpagutya (Lake Albacutya), an internationally significant Ramsar Wetland. Actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling weeds and rabbits to maintain and improve regeneration and recruitment opportunities for eucalypt woodlands. • Developing the 2022-23 Lake Albacutya Ramsar Site Management Plan. 	<p>Controlled weeds over 1,600 ha.</p> <p>Controlled rabbits over 1,100 ha.</p> <p>Developed 1 management plan.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.</p>



Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
<p>Wimmera CMA delivered its statutory and regulatory obligations under Victorian Government legislation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing floodplain advice and responding to floodplain and wetland related planning scheme referrals. • Issuing works on waterways permits. • Undertaking monthly water quality assessments. • Engaging with the Wimmera community, including Chris Humfrey's Wild Action Zoo presentation at Horsham's annual fishing competition. • Media campaigns promoting how Wimmera CMA could help the community with meeting legal obligations when undertaking works on waterways and developments on floodplains. • Working with DEECA and Victorian CMAs to deliver government policy. • Contributing advice to regional developments and partnerships such as Horsham's River to City Masterplan, the DEECA-led Grampians Regional Climate Adaptation Group, water-supply pipelines, the Western Victorian transmission line, the Western Highway bypass of the Great Western township, potential mineral sand mines, and leading the Wimmera's Integrated Water Management Forum. • Commencing implementation of the Wimmera Native Fish Management Plan, including assessing the Mount Zero channel and Upper Mackenzie River for River Blackfish to inform future management actions. 	<p>Responded to 93 requests for floodplain advice and 142 floodplain referrals.</p> <p>Responded to 13 requests for wetland advice.</p> <p>Issued 22 works on waterways permits.</p> <p>Completed 99.6% of responses on time.</p> <p>Monitored water quality at 23 locations.</p> <p>Engaged 200 participants in CMA events.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA completed flood recovery activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting landholders to repair and reinstate riparian fencing damaged during October 2022 Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) flooding. • Repairing damaged erosion control structures. 	<p>Reinstated 30 km of riparian fencing.</p> <p>Repaired 3 erosion control structures.</p>	<p>Victorian Government Flood Recovery.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA's Delivering Our Catchments, Our Communities Project delivered a range of strategic and on-ground activities, seeking to ensure land, water, biodiversity, and community values remained healthy, sustainable, and resilient. The project delivered strategic integrated catchment management priorities that were collaborative, and community based. Actions included collaborating with local government and other agencies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove ribbon weed from Lake Wallace to improve the lake for recreation. • Remove exotic carp from Lake Toolondo to promote native fish species. • Assess the viability of removing sediment from Yarriambiack Creek at Warracknabeal weir pool. • Assess the Green Lake catchment in preparation for developing a Waterway Action Plan in 2023-24. • Water Dock Lake and Nhill Lake. • Take a lead role in a range of high-level forums to maintain and strengthen existing partnerships, including a Natural Resource Management Stakeholders Roundtable. 	<p>Improved catchment stewardship across almost 6,019 ha comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 989 ha of on ground works. • 5,030 ha of assessments to inform potential future actions. 	<p>Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA coordinated implementation of the Wimmera Regional Floodplain Management Strategy by partner organisations, and relevant actions set out in the Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy. Actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinvigorating the Wimmera Strategic Water Management Working Group partnership. • Completing a mid-term review of the Wimmera Floodplain Management Strategy and updating the strategy's workplan. 	<p>Reviewed 1 strategy.</p> <p>Updated 1 workplan.</p> <p>Established 1 partnership group.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Floodplain Management Program.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA assessed water sharing options at Lake Wartook to maximise environmental watering over a range of climatic conditions while avoiding impacts on other stakeholder entitlements.</p>	<p>Completed 1 report.</p>	<p>Victorian Environmental Water Holder.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA coordinated an analysis of the environmental values of Wimmera-Mallee waterbodies supplied with piped recreational allocations of water from GWMWater.</p>	<p>Completed 1 assessment and report.</p>	<p>Victorian Government.</p>

Land

The land theme reports on how government agencies and the community are working together to protect the state's natural capital while also maintaining long-term agricultural productivity, access and opportunities for recreation and protection of important cultural values.

Wimmera land and soils support the region's economy, agricultural productivity and the biodiversity and vitality of native plants and animals. Ecosystem services provided by land include water infiltration and storage, soil stability, nutrient cycling, and availability for plant growth.

Land condition assessment 2022-23

Trend		Condition
22-23	Over last 5 years	
		Moderate
Neutral	Neutral	

Ground cover provided by plants and organic matter protects soil from erosion and contributes to soil organic carbon. Analysis of satellite imagery and Wimmera CMA's transect surveys indicated relatively high levels of ground cover in autumn, minimising the risk of soil erosion by wind and water. More than 80% of farmers completing a 2023 survey self-reported good knowledge of practices that maintained ground cover. A Wimmera-wide sample of 30 paddocks found variable soil organic carbon, with half of sites measuring levels below 1%, a level at risk of constraining soil health and yield potential. Crop yields were generally good, with some areas producing lower yields or quality due to flooding, water logging and disease.

High winter and spring rainfall meant accessing paddocks for spraying and fertilising was challenging, if not impossible due to saturated soils. This resulted in high levels of disease across all crop types. Increased moisture also led to increased crop pests such as slugs and snails, and increased stubble biomass after harvest.

Spring 2022 transect observations found crop failure was observed across 1.5% of the southern Wimmera survey area due to factors related to wet conditions, including waterlogging and plant disease. Crop yield was generally adequate, although some paddocks produced lower-than-usual yields and quality was down in some areas. Hay production was also observed to be lower than usual due to ongoing rain and high risk of machinery bogging (Wimmera CMA, 2023). Rainfall events continued well into spring and caused harvest delays during summer.

Wet conditions in April and June 2023 signified a positive start to the 2023 growing season.

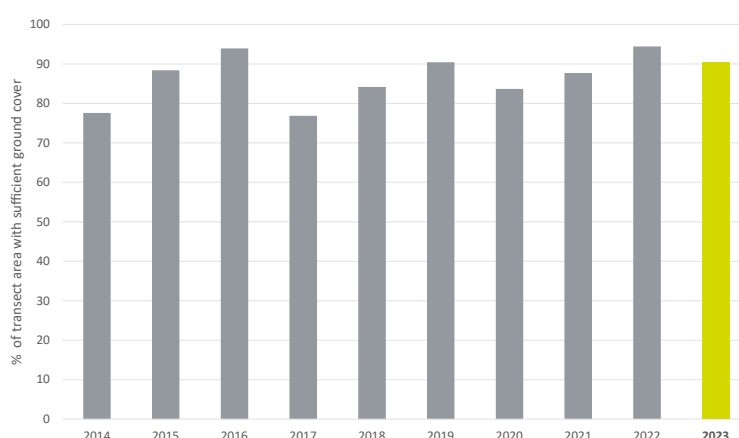
Ground cover

Ground cover provided by plants and organic matter protects soil, making it a good indicator of the risk of soil erosion by wind and water. Ground cover also contributes to carbon sequestration, water infiltration, agricultural production, and healthy native vegetation.

National ground cover thresholds for preventing erosion on agricultural land recommend 50% cover to control soil loss by wind erosion and 70% cover or greater for water erosion (Leys, et al., 2020). Remotely sensed mapping indicated 100% of Wimmera agricultural land was protected from wind erosion in April 2023, the highest risk month for low ground cover. In comparison, 1% of agricultural land comprising 19,000 hectares was vulnerable to wind erosion at the same time last year (GeoGlam RaPP, 2023). It is likely rainfall events boosted ground cover levels by promoting growth of weeds, grasses, and volunteer crops. Adequate ground cover was also retained in upper catchment areas susceptible to water erosion (GeoGlam RaPP, 2023).

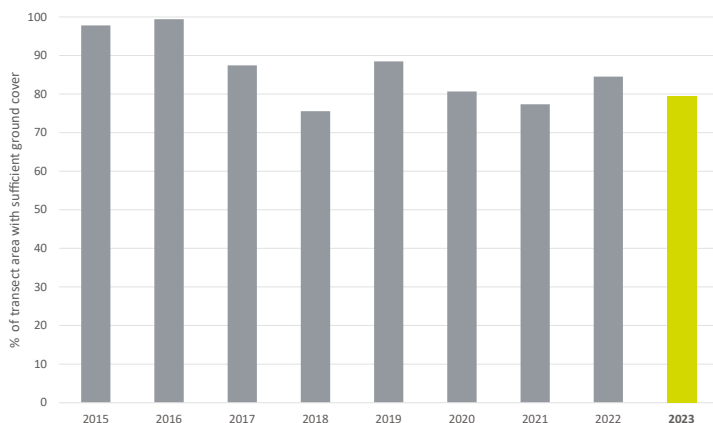
Wimmera CMA's biannual land use and management survey observed similar results for the northern Wimmera. Monitoring staff observing agricultural land along a northern Wimmera transect in April 2023 recorded sufficient ground cover to reduce the likelihood of wind erosion occurring over 90% of the area. This was 5% less than the previous year (Figure 8). Stubble retention continued to be the major stubble management practice, accounting for 77% of the northern transect survey area. Land managers burnt stubble across almost 4% of the transect area, representing a small increase from previous years. Possible reasons for this were the wet conditions leading to increased snails and slugs, herbicide resistant weeds and stubble loads.

Figure 8. The percentage of the northern Wimmera transect survey area where ground cover was sufficient to reduce the risk of erosion (Wimmera CMA, 2023).



Monitors reported 79% of the southern Wimmera transect area contained adequate ground cover, reducing vulnerability to wind and water erosion. This was an almost 6% decrease from the previous autumn (Figure 9). Land managers burnt stubble across 13% of the area, increasing 3% from 2022 observations. Stubble retention was recorded for 42% of the southern transect. High levels of biomass, and an increase in the distribution and abundance of slugs, were likely causes for increased stubble burning and cultivation practices (Wimmera CMA, 2023).

Figure 9. The percentage of the southern Wimmera transect survey area where ground cover was sufficient to reduce the risk of erosion (Wimmera CMA, 2023).



A 2023 survey of Wimmera rural landholders indicated most farmers had good knowledge of practices that maintained ground cover (>80%) (Luke, et al., 2023). Findings provided a positive indication that Wimmera farmers managed stubble and ground cover to reduce erosion, enhance soil organic carbon and boost soil moisture.

Soil organic carbon

Soil organic carbon is a measure of the amount of carbon in soils derived from organic matter from living organisms. It includes undecomposed plant litter, soil organisms and humus. Soil organic carbon stores important nutrients, stabilises soil structure and feeds soil microbes. Total organic carbon in Australian soils under rainfed farming is typically 0.7 to 4% (Hoyle, et al., 2011). Soil organic carbon levels below 1% can constrain soil health and yield potential (depending on rainfall) (Kay & Angers, 1999). Soil testing by Wimmera CMA of 30 paddocks spread across the region in March 2023 found levels ranging from 0.4% to 2.2%. Half of these sites measured soil organic carbon levels below 1%.

Management of Wimmera land

Government agencies, conservation groups, industry groups and community groups worked together to protect the region's land and soils while also supporting a sustainable and profitable community. Industry groups continued to build knowledge and support farmers to build capacity and implement practices that improve resilience in agricultural land.

Table 7. Management activities led by Wimmera CMA during 2022-23 to benefit Wimmera agricultural land and soils and support farmers.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
<p>Wimmera CMA's Building Carbon and Capacity Project engaged partners and supported farmers to capture and retain soil carbon. Actions were delivered in partnership with Agriculture Victoria, Birchip Cropping Group, Perennial Pasture Systems, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Partners in Ag, and Landcare. Actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminating information to farmers via workshops, paddock walks, Perennial Pasture Systems' Annual Conference, fact sheets, podcasts, and media campaigns. Autumn and spring surveys of land management practices, Strategic soil sampling of agricultural land sites across the catchment. A survey of rural landholders to increase understanding of challenges, concerns, practices, and demographics. 	<p>Engaged 354 participants in 15 events.</p> <p>Produced 1 fact sheet, 4 podcasts and many social media posts.</p> <p>Completed 4 farm management surveys.</p> <p>Surveyed rural landholders.</p> <p>Sampled soil at 30 sites.</p>	<p>Australian Government's National Landcare Program.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA's Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator supported the adoption and awareness of sustainable agriculture in the Wimmera by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a soil moisture monitoring network on Wimmera farms. Building partnerships, including cross-regional partnerships and the Wimmera Partnership Group involving agriculture stakeholders. Supporting activities associated with the Wimmera's National Landcare Program and Future Drought Fund projects. Disseminating information to farmers and stakeholders. 	<p>Supported installation of 72 soil moisture probes.</p> <p>Facilitated 5 partnership group meetings.</p> <p>Engaged landholders via social media posts.</p>	<p>Australian Government's National Landcare Program.</p>

Table 8. Management activities led by partner organisations and groups during 2022-23 to benefit Wimmera agricultural land and soils and support farmers.

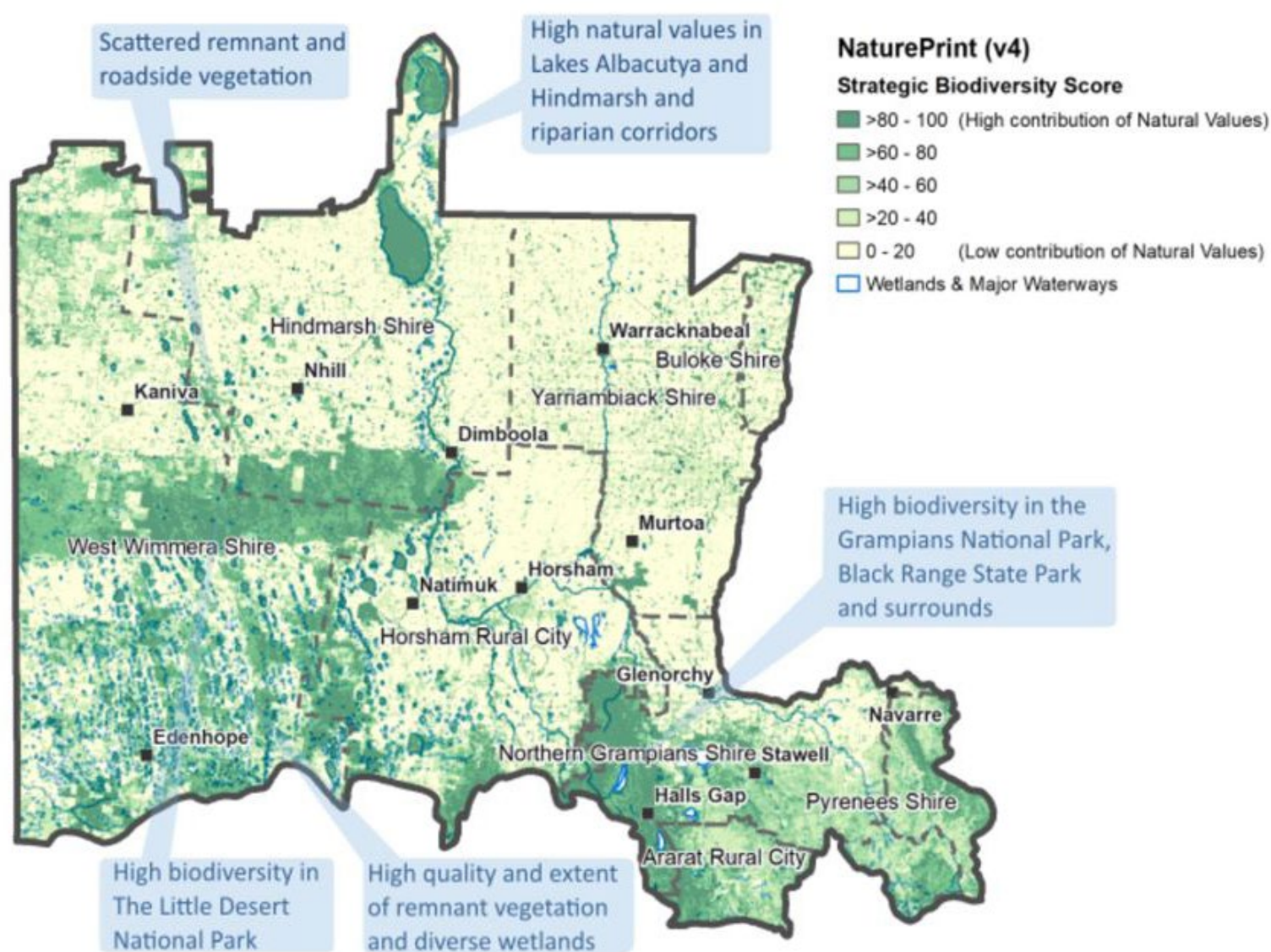
Management activities led by partner organisations	Achievements
<p>Perennial Pasture Systems continued to conduct perennial pasture research and provide information on productive pasture management to its members in the upper Wimmera catchment. Actions included managing demonstration paddocks and disseminating information to member farmers via workshops, paddock walks, annual conference, Girls and Grass Group, case studies, quarterly newsletter, and reports.</p>	<p>Implemented projects to trial and demonstrate methods of growing perennial pastures for production, soil health and sustainability outcomes.</p> <p>Engaged more than 470 people via events, newsletters, research reports and newsletters.</p>

Biodiversity

The Wimmera supports large areas of high biodiversity value, especially northern Gariwerd (Grampians National Park) and Burrunj (Black Range State Park), Little Desert National Park, upper Wimmera catchment area, and Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh). The Wimmera is home to Ngalpaktia/Ngelpagutya (Lake Albacutya), recognised as an internationally important wetland under the Ramsar Convention. Riparian corridors along the Baringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River), MacKenzie River, Yarriambiack Creek and upper catchment streams provide narrow but important connections through the landscape. The south-west Wimmera retains many patches of native vegetation and wetlands, supporting a diverse array of plants and animals (Figure 10).

Threatened species include the Malleefowl, South-Eastern Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo, Growling Grass Frog and the Wimmera's remnant Platypus population.

Figure 10. Strategic biodiversity values in the Wimmera based on NatureKit 2.0 and Strategic Management Prospects (Department of Environment and Primary Industries, 2014).



Biodiversity condition assessment 2022-23

The biodiversity condition assessment reports on the health of native species and native vegetation, for the areas where it is monitored and assessed. This assessment also reports on the status of threats to biodiversity, relying on available data as well as the observations of staff from various natural resource management organisations working in the region.



The Wimmera's monitored biodiversity values appeared to have a neutral overall trend, with both values and threats benefiting from the high rainfall year. Wimmera CMA and stakeholder organisations staff observed that the high rainfall year boosted native vegetation growth, benefited river and streamflow, filled lakes and wetlands, and provided breeding conditions for some species. Monitoring results and stakeholder observations suggested encouraging signs for endangered species like Malleefowl, Growling Grass Frogs, Platypuses, and waterbirds. Fox and cat abundance and distribution remained high, and deer continued to expand their distribution. Native vegetation and weeds both benefited from high rainfall, with Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) flooding contributing to weed spread and growth in the riparian corridor. Weed control works were effective, but there remained large areas untreated. Habitat removal and loss of paddock trees continued to be concerns in the Wimmera's highly fragmented natural landscapes.

The evidence that follows is derived from areas where we have funding and resources to monitor aspects of catchment condition.

Biodiversity indicators

Malleefowl

Forty-six of 191 Malleefowl mounds monitored during 2022-23 showed signs of breeding, up from 31 active mounds the previous year. Long-term monitoring data suggested a general increase in Wimmera Malleefowl breeding activity of about 6% per year over the last 20 years. In contrast, the Victorian 30-year trend showed a decline in breeding activity (National Malleefowl Recovery Group, 2023).

South-Eastern Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo

The 2023 annual count recorded close to 1200 birds. This was a similar number detected during the previous two years. The long-term trend indicated that recruitment of birds into the population had declined (Hill, et al., 2023).

Platypus

Wimmera CMA's monitoring program indicated that the Mackenzie River Platypus population was slowly growing in distribution and abundance. However, the population remained highly vulnerable due to its isolation, small population size, and lack of genetic diversity (Bloink, 2022; EnviroDNA, 2023).

Waterbirds and Growling Grass Frogs

Wet conditions boosted habitat for some species, with reports of endangered Growling Grass Frogs sighted in large numbers at some west Wimmera wetland reserves, and an influx of waterbirds including endangered and migratory species to recently filled lakes (Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, 2023; Starks, 2023).

Southern Brown Bandicoot

Trust for Nature maintained and managed a healthy Southern Brown Bandicoot population on covenanted private land through pest animal control activities and careful monitoring (Blake, 2023).

Endangered orchid species

Trust for Nature controlled threats to endangered wild populations of various Caladenia orchid species across several Wimmera private land covenant locations and observed natural recruitment at these sites (Blake, 2023).

Trust for Nature observed endangered Caladenia orchid species surviving and recruiting naturally at former translocation sites, following careful management, monitoring and conducive seasonal conditions (Blake, 2023).

Silky Mouse

Comprehensive formal surveys of Bank Australia's private land Conservation Reserve site in the west Wimmera recorded Silky Mouse for the first time (Blake, 2023).

Threat indicators:

Invasive weeds

Wimmera CMA staff and partner organisations reported observations of increased weed growth across the catchment due to high rainfall. Barraggi Gadyin (Wimmera River) flooding in October 2022 contributed to extensive weed spread and growth in floodplain areas. Organisations such as Landcare groups, Parks Victoria, DEECA, Greening Australia, Trust for Nature, and local municipal councils continued to target and manage weeds across the region.

Foxes and feral cats

A monitoring program in the Little Desert National Park and Tooan State Park indicated stable numbers of foxes and feral cats following baiting activities, while fox numbers were higher than usual at a Nurcounj unbaited reserve. Researchers found fox activity was lower where baiting was present (Lefoe & Ritchie, 2023).

Rabbits

Rabbit numbers appeared to be low to moderate across the region. Parks Victoria reported that long-term rabbit control works at Lake Albacutya were successful in maintaining low rabbit numbers. Agriculture Victoria reported that a long-term monitoring site at Telopea Downs typically recorded moderate abundances of rabbits, averaging just over one rabbit per square kilometre. Stakeholder and community groups continued to conduct rabbit control in their areas of responsibility or interest.

Deer and goats

Parks Victoria continued to control deer and goats across Gariwerd (Grampians National Park) and Burrunj (Black Range State Park). Deer and goats continued to impact native vegetation in other parts of the catchment where control efforts have not occurred.

Over abundant native herbivores

Kangaroos and wallabies were in large numbers in parts of the catchment, impacting on native vegetation. This was particularly evident at the interface between public reserves and agricultural land where pasture and artificial water sources can sustain higher than natural populations. Camera trap surveys in Little Desert National Park, Tooan State Park and a Nurcounj reserve found all sites exhibited high kangaroo activity, raising concern regarding the threat of overgrazing (Lefoe & Ritchie, 2023).

Paddock trees

Wimmera CMA staff carrying out an annual autumn 2023 Wimmera Land Use and Land Management transect survey recorded 116 paddocks across more than 6,000 hectares containing trees damaged by stubble burning fires. Staff observed that land managers had prepared fire breaks around the perimeter of paddocks, however the same preparation was not evident around isolated paddock trees. Paddock trees suffered heat and fire damage. Repeated burns can result in tree loss from the landscape, impacting biodiversity and productivity (Wimmera CMA, 2023).

Fire

Wildfires can be highly destructive and cover large areas, often occurring in extreme weather conditions. No large-scale wildfires impacted on biodiversity during 2022-23.

Management of Wimmera biodiversity

Biodiversity management aims to maintain and improve habitat, restore ecosystems, stabilise populations of native plants and animals and connect people with nature. Wimmera CMA worked with a range of partner organisations to deliver biodiversity outcomes.

Table 9. Management activities for biodiversity carried out by Wimmera CMA in 2022-23.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
The Wild-to-Wild Translocation Project aimed to develop and test low-risk and cost-effective methods for undertaking wild-to-wild translocations of dispersal limited mammal species in fragmented landscapes. During 2022-23 Wimmera CMA translocated Mitchell's Hopping Mouse (<i>Notomys mitchellii</i>) to sites at Little Desert Nature Lodge and Wyperfeld National Park and undertook subsequent monitoring surveys.	Translocated Mitchell's hopping mouse to 2 sites. Surveyed sites following translocations.	Victorian Government, DEECA Biodiversity Funding.
The Food for Future Project delivered in partnership with BirdLife Australia and Trust for Nature aimed to improve the South-Eastern Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo's (<i>Calyptorhynchus banksia graptogyne</i>) habitat and trajectory of recruitment. The project supported land managers and the community to protect and enhance existing habitat and create new nesting and feeding habitat. The project also monitored the population's estimated size and trajectory by engaging the community in an annual count across about 400,000 ha of feeding habitat and undertaking a flock count to estimate age structure.	Protected 258 ha of habitat with a Trust for Nature Conservation covenant. Protected 19 ha of habitat via a management agreement. Installed nest boxes at 2 sites. Treated more than 600 ha for pest animals. Monitored population size, age structure and food availability. Engaged more than 45 Wimmera volunteers in an annual flock count. Produced 2 monitoring and research reports and 2 newsletters.	Australian Government's National Landcare Program.
The Protecting Our Malleefowl Project is a large-scale, tenure-blind project delivered in partnership with stakeholders including Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, and the National Malleefowl Recovery Team. The project aimed to conserve Malleefowl (<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>) in the Wimmera and improve the trajectory of this iconic species by protecting and improving habitat and reducing the impact of predators.	Protected 648 ha of habitat with a Trust for Nature Conservation covenant. Controlled foxes over more than 26,000 ha. Revegetated 25 ha of native vegetation across 12 sites. Controlled weeds across 225 ha. Monitored 191 Malleefowl mounds across 100,000 ha. Monitored pest animals across 43,500 ha.	Australian Government's National Landcare Program.
The Habitat Tender Project protected, enhanced, restored, and improved the management of areas of native vegetation.	Protected and enhanced 17 ha of native vegetation.	Victorian Government.

Table 10. Management activities led by partner organisations for biodiversity during 2022-23.

Management activities led by partner organisations	Achievements
<p>Agriculture Victoria's Invasives Program worked in partnership with industry and the community to protect agriculture, the environment, the economy, health and the lifestyle of the community by stopping pests and diseases from entering, establishing and spreading within the Wimmera catchment. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treating high-risk invasive plants. • Monitoring and ensuring treatment of regionally prohibited weeds targeting Serrated Tussock, English Broom, Spiny Emex, Buffalo Burr, and Noogoora Burr. • Assisting the state-wide red fox and wild dog bounty collection program. • Preparing for and responding to reports of high-risk invasive species, including plants, red imported fire ants and other tramp ant infestations. • Continuing a long-term program of monitoring European rabbits at Telopea Downs. 	<p>Treated 10 sites to eradicate State prohibited weeds, Mesquite and Water Hyacinth.</p> <p>Inspected 58 properties for regionally prohibited weeds, ensuring infestations were treated by land managers.</p> <p>Collected almost 11,000 fox and 1 wild dog.</p> <p>Surveyed 7 sites for red imported fire ants and other tramp ant infestations.</p> <p>Completed 1 rabbit monitoring survey.</p>
<p>Trust for Nature continued to work with private landowners to protect habitat and wildlife on private land in perpetuity. Trust for Nature delivered a range of projects to protect and enhance the Wimmera's biodiversity values, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Iconic Estates Project and Leaving a Land Legacy Project, permanently protecting priority Wimmera habitat through conservation covenants. • The Stewardship Program, providing support to existing Wimmera covenant holders. • Ongoing maintenance and improvement of Wimmera Reserves with the Mt Elgin Swamp and Snape Reserve Committees of Management. Mt Elgin Swamp celebrated 25 years since establishment in 2022-23. • Working with Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Country Fire Authority to plan for future cultural burns at Snape Reserve. 	<p>Permanently protected 324 ha of habitat with a conservation covenant.</p> <p>Developed, reviewed, or updated an additional 24 management plans.</p> <p>Supported landholders via 14 formal visits and assessments, and 100 informal engagements.</p> <p>Protected and managed biodiversity over 1100 ha at Snape Reserve and Mt Elgin Swamp. Achievements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revegetating 16 ha with native vegetation. • Fencing 6 ha to protect revegetation sites and 1.5 km to maintain boundary fencing. • Managing native vegetation and controlling pest animals and weeds over 1,100 ha across the 2 sites. • Holding multiple engagement events including school visits, volunteer meetings, revegetation days and open days. • Monitoring native vegetation and fauna. • Establishing 20 nesting boxes at Mt Elgin Swamp.
<p>Greening Australia continued to achieve long-term responses to restore Wimmera landscapes and to provide strong environmental benefits for future generations through a range of projects. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued management of the Bank Australia Conservation Reserve's 2,130 ha of native remnant and restored vegetation to improve condition and protect and enhance threatened species. The management partnership with Trust for Nature, Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Country Fire Authority continued, providing meaningful opportunities for Indigenous co-management. • Management of the Nurcoun Biodiverse Carbon Demonstration Property, a demonstration site for a biodiverse carbon project while also improving habitat connectivity for endangered Malleefowl. • Great Southern Landscapes - 25 Million Trees Project to establish biodiverse plantings across southern Australia to increase available habitat and habitat connectivity. 	<p>Conducted 1,000 ha of weed control.</p> <p>Conducted 2,130 ha of rabbit, feral cat and fox control.</p> <p>Assessed 2,130 ha for progress toward a 10-year conservation reserve goal.</p> <p>Engaged 25 Bank Australia staff through field based presentations at the reserve.</p> <p>Hosted 30 Country Fire Authority members at an annual statewide training camp.</p> <p>Conducted an 8 ha fuel reduction and weed control burn.</p> <p>Replaced a 1 km section of boundary fence to protect habitat from stock.</p> <p>Revegetated 186 ha with native species.</p> <p>Conducted rabbit control across 130 ha.</p>

Management activities led by partner organisations

Achievements

Parks Victoria (Wimmera) continued weed and rabbit control works in Wimmera parks and reserves, including:

- Controlling gorse at Centre Lake.
- Assessing a Noogoora Burr infestation at Newlands Lake.
- Implementing Good Neighbour Projects including:
 - Controlling weeds across the Wimmera River Heritage Area Park.
 - Controlling rabbits at various locations in the Natimuk-Douglas area.
 - Controlling foxes across the Little Desert National Park to benefit Malleefowl.

Controlled gorse across 1,405 ha.

Assessed Noogoora burr across 4 ha.

Controlled weeds across approximately 200 ha.

Controlled rabbits across 829 ha.

Controlled foxes across 36,487 ha.

Birdlife Australia implemented a project called 'Environment Restoration Fund Renovation Revival for the South-Eastern Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo'. The project sought to improve the safety, function, and longevity of nest boxes, improve understanding of nest box use and breeding success, and increase nesting opportunities.

Maintained nest boxes to increase nesting opportunities and improve breeding success for the South-Eastern Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo.

Horsham Rural City Council aimed to achieve an overall reduction in the number of roadside weeds and pests across the municipality by developing priority actions for priority areas.

Eradicated 590 rabbit warrens.

Supported landholders to plant 22,000 trees on private property.

Planted 2,300 native trees in the municipal area.

Community

The community theme reports on the community's level of contribution to and participation in environmental management and environment-based recreational activities.

Many Wimmera community members and groups are active catchment stewards and participants in environmental activities and events, helping improve the condition of the region's biodiversity, waterways and land.

People derive health and wellbeing benefits from participating in environmental activities and recreation associated with waterways, parks, reserves, and other natural areas. The Wimmera's parks, reserves, waterways, and lakes attract many visitors to the region annually.

Community assessment 2022-23

Trend		Condition
22-23	Over last 5 years	
		Moderate
Neutral	Neutral	

Wimmera CMA observed increased community participation in events, Landcare groups and recreation in nature, although numbers were below pre-COVID-19 levels. Participation in Landcare Groups was variable across the catchment. Some members and groups suffering 'volunteer burnout' were less active. Some of these groups began the process of reinvigoration, refreshed by new committee members and Landcare facilitators. A new Horsham Regional Landcare Network and Dimboola Urban Landcare Group established in response to local interest. Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council continued their well established and strong relationship, working cooperatively on mutual outcomes. An annual socio-economic assessment found most community events associated with rivers and lakes returned in 2022-23 after a pause due to COVID-19 pandemic health restrictions. Attendance and participation tended to be lower than before the pandemic.

Community participation in events

This was the first financial year since 2019-20 where there were no government health restrictions affecting gatherings and events because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wimmera CMA staff observed increased participation in events during 2022-23 since the easing of COVID-19 public health restrictions. However, the trajectory was not smooth, with participation numbers fluctuating and not yet back to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Many regular annual community events organised or supported by Wimmera CMA and partner organisations returned. More events were in-person than online. This included Harmony Day events, Chris Humfrey and the Wild Action Zoo presenting at the Horsham Fishing Competition, Perennial Pasture System's annual conference, Landcare native vegetation planting events, River Detectives, the Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar, and nature-connection field activities with local schools.

Wimmera CMA continued to use online engagement materials such as webinars and podcasts after experiencing the benefits during COVID-19 restrictions. Benefits included reduced travel, ease for people to access materials in their own time, and longevity with materials available on Wimmera CMA's website. It proved particularly valuable for disseminating farmer educational materials as part of the sustainable agriculture program.

Factors impacting attendance at events included participants or their family members getting sick at short notice, and ongoing concern among some community members about catching COVID-19, particularly when there were high infection rates in the general community. Wimmera CMA's ability to hold events was impacted at times with presenters getting sick at short notice. A busy broader community event schedule has increased competition for people's time, as many organisations and sections of the community seek to re-engage following COVID-19.

Landcare, community groups and community volunteering

Wimmera CMA staff and local Landcare facilitators observed participation in Landcare Groups was variable across the catchment, with levels below where they were before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Landcare Facilitators reported volunteer burnout for some groups. While some groups struggled with membership and motivation, new individuals joined the committees of some groups, re-energising activities and causing groups to revisit their focus and take time to get new activities happening. There are positive examples of new groups emerging and other groups reactivating after a period of inactivity caused by COVID-19. Positive examples include a new Dimboola Urban Landcare Group formed and representatives from the Horsham area's Landcare Groups established the Horsham Regional Landcare Network to provide overarching support for large-scale activities.

Following a hiatus due to COVID-19, Landcare and environmental community groups involved community members in native vegetation planting events, including Project Hindmarsh and Project Platypus's annual events. These events had funding support from Wimmera CMA through DEECA's Victorian Landcare Program. Wimmera projects funded under the Victorian Government's Landcare Grants Program engaged 685 volunteers and landholders in a range of projects such as weed and pest animal management and revegetation.

First Nations People

Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) have a trusting and respectful relationship established over many years of working together to achieve outcomes including on-ground works, environmental watering to maximise cultural benefits, cultural surveys, education, and training. We focus on creating tangible change that people value by working together on long-term planning, co-designing projects, and taking a flexible approach to training, employment, and on-ground action.

For example, Wimmera CMA and BGLC maintain a Water Officer Roles Partnership Statement. This statement sets out a coordinated approach to Aboriginal Water Officer positions hosted by each organisation and funded by DEECA's Water, Country, and Community Program. Aboriginal Water Officers collaborated on high-priority actions at the Ranch Billabong near Dimboola during 2022-23 to improve access to and the condition of this Special Place for First Nations People. Actions included installing interpretive signage around a walking track, a scoping study for restoring flow regimes, surveying for fish, removing exotic carp, and preparing for native fish restocking to improve water quality and ecological condition.

Wimmera CMA staff supported BGLC to establish a Landcare for Country Officer position in 2022-23 as part of a statewide pilot program funded by DEECA's Victorian Landcare Program.

Wimmera CMA has supported Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative to deliver community events for many years. Events and activities returned in 2022-23, including the Wimmera River Challenge and 'Try-a-Trade' events after a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) is the registered Aboriginal party for a small part of the Wimmera's upper catchment. Wimmera CMA's relationship with EMAC staff is building, particularly through joint activities of the Victorian Aboriginal Water Officer Network and the respective water officer positions. During 2022-23, EMAC staff undertook a site visit and provided advice on actions needed to register and protect cultural heritage before progressing waterway works at a Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) upper catchment site.

Documentation that demonstrates Wimmera CMA's partnerships with BGLC and EMAC includes Country Plans, project plans, the Wimmera CMA and BGLC Water Officer Roles Partnership Statement, Aboriginal Water Officer Network terms of reference, email correspondence, meeting records and agreements, and the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy.

Recreation in nature

An annual assessment of the social and economic contribution of Wimmera and Southern Mallee waterways found most community events returned in 2022-23 after a pause due to COVID-19 pandemic health restrictions. Attendance and participation tended to be lower than before the pandemic. There were also new events and programs such as a VicSwim School Holiday program at Green Lake.

High rainfall had both positive and negative impacts on participation. High rainfall was positive for recreation at most waterways after the risk of flooding subsided. Some previously dry or low lakes became usable including Lonsdale, Ratzcastle, Bringalbert, Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh), Green, and Dock. Fishing and yabbing results were excellent in some locations, including where it had been poor or absent in previous years. Rare water levels in Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) created a new visitor experience for residents and visitors. Flooding along the Murray River prompted many recreational water participants to instead visit the Wimmera and southern Mallee.

High rainfall and instances of flooding in late spring 2022 led to reduced participation during the wet October to early December period. Wet conditions led to a late grain harvest with many families delaying or making other arrangements for their normal breaks at Wimmera-Southern Mallee waterways (Street Ryan, 2023).

Actions supporting the Wimmera community

Wimmera CMA informs, consults, partners with, and empowers the community, and supports the region's natural resource management organisations and community groups. Table 11 describes the actions and achievements for 2022-23.

Table 11. Management activities carried out to support the Wimmera community during 2022-23.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
<p>Wimmera CMA's Landcare Support Project aims to support Landcare and environmental volunteering groups to build capacity, promote and celebrate natural resource management activities. Achievements in 2022-23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided regional support for Wimmera Landcare facilitators employed under the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. • Supported strategic actions of the Victorian Landcare Team. • Supported Landcare and community group leadership and governance activities. • Hosted the 'Best of the West' cross-regional Landcare facilitator professional development event in Halls Gap. • Educated school children, providing opportunities to connect to nature. • Contributed to the annual Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar's organising committee, educating the community about the Wimmera's biodiversity. • Organised a Harmony Day and Landcare Celebration community event highlighting backyard Landcare opportunities and health benefits of gardening and connecting with nature. • Presented at the Western Victorian Careers Expo, encouraging high school-aged students to consider a career in natural resource management. <p>Partners included Landcare, Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Agriculture Victoria.</p>	<p>Supported 50 groups.</p> <p>Engaged 214 participants in community events.</p> <p>Engaged 30 participants in education and training events.</p> <p>Engaged 565 school children via 5 excursions, 2 native vegetation planting events and 1 careers expo.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Victorian Landcare Program.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA delivered the Victorian Landcare Grants Program in the Wimmera region. This devolved grants program aims to provide opportunities for Landcare and environmental volunteering groups to address local priorities through on-ground works, education and community capacity building.</p>	<p>Supported 21 Landcare Groups to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76 ha of revegetation. • 10 km of fencing. • 52 events engaging 685 people. • 533 ha of weed control. • 860 ha of rabbit control. • 8 assessments. <p>Provided 3 group support grants.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Victorian Landcare Program.</p>
<p>Wimmera CMA employed an Aboriginal Water Officer in partnership with Barengi Gadjin Land Council to promote Aboriginal values and participation in water management. Partners included Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative, Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations and DEECA. The Aboriginal Water Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated opportunities to align environmental watering and cultural objectives through on-ground works. • Undertook professional development and training. • Supported rehabilitation works at the Ranch Billabong. • Supported the statewide Aboriginal Water Officer Network. • Coordinated services, providing a mini careers expo called 'Try-A-Trade' to Wimmera Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students. 	<p>Engaged more than 120 participants in events and actions.</p> <p>Supported First Nations Groups to achieve desired outcomes.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Water, Country, and Community Program.</p>
<p>A new Landcare Facilitator for Yarriambiack area started in late April 2023. Hosted by Wimmera CMA, the facilitator supported the Yarrilinks Committee and three Landcare groups and commenced reviewing and renewing the Yarrilinks Strategic Plan scheduled for completion in late 2023.</p>	<p>Engaged 1 Landcare network and 3 groups in strategic plan renewal.</p>	<p>Victorian Government's Victorian Landcare Program.</p>
<p>The River Detectives program is an education initiative of Victorian Catchment Management Authorities to inspire teachers and students to understand, appreciate and care for local waterways through citizen science activities.</p>	<p>Engaged 6 schools.</p>	<p>Philanthropic sponsorship. North Central CMA.</p>

Table 12. Management activities led by partner organisations for community during 2022-23.

Management activities led by partner organisations	Achievements
<p>DEECA led the Adapt Grampians (Supporting Our Regions to Adapt) Project in partnership with Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Group. The project aimed to work with the community to implement the Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy. Activities during 2022-23 included supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Group including monthly meetings. • The Climate Eyes Project including the October 2022 report launch at Natimuk. The project documented lived experiences of communities during drought. • The Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network's climate adaptation project which revegetated a section of the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) to raise student awareness of climate change. • Developed the Grampians Climate Scorecard to track regional adaptation progress, and share issues and regional achievements. • Increased community and stakeholder awareness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting on climate adaptation and biodiversity as part of DEECA's SWIFFT online seminar series. - Contributing to a local government planning workshop in Ararat. - Supporting Contemporary Grazing workshops held as part of the Kaniva based Risk, Profitability and Resilience in a Changing Climate Project. - Developing case study videos made available on the Adapt Grampians website. 	<p>Held Regional Climate Adaptation Group meetings involving 23 members.</p> <p>Engaged more than 190 people in workshops and forums.</p> <p>Engaged 1,500 Adapt Grampians Newsletter subscribers.</p> <p>Developed 2 case study videos.</p>
<p>The Horsham Landcare Facilitator supported Landcare groups, landholders, and the wider community to participate in natural resource management activities. During 2022-23, the facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Landcare groups to deliver Victorian Landcare Grants. This included revegetation on private property, revegetation of Natimuk Creek and delivering workshops on sustainability and community. • Supported schools to deliver Junior Landcare funding to increase biodiversity at schools and provide an opportunity for students to engage with nature. • Upgraded infrastructure at The Patch Community Garden in Horsham. • Supported representatives from Horsham area Landcare groups to establish a Horsham District Landcare Network to provide overarching coordination for large-scale activities. • Contributed to the running of Landcare and community events. 	<p>Supported 11 Landcare groups.</p> <p>Supported 6 Landcare groups and 3 schools to deliver grant funding.</p> <p>Upgraded infrastructure at The Patch Community Garden.</p> <p>Supported establishment of a Landcare network.</p> <p>Engaged more than 1,100 people in 44 events.</p>
<p>The Project Platypus Landcare Facilitator provided support to Landcare groups and the Project Platypus Landcare Network. Events included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural awareness training to help Landcare members improve relationships with First Nations People. • Field days for Landcare members to explore opportunities to improve farm dams and associated wetlands as habitat. 	<p>Supported Landcare groups and 1 Landcare network.</p> <p>Engaged Landcare members in 3 events.</p>
<p>The Hindmarsh Landcare Facilitator provided support to Landcare groups and the Hindmarsh Landcare Network in the Hindmarsh shire area. Actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Hindmarsh's annual community planting event at Snape Reserve in July 2022 funded under the Victorian Landcare Grants Program. • Planting a shelterbelt to screen the Dimboola Feedlot. 	<p>Supported Landcare groups and 1 Landcare network.</p> <p>Planted 10,000 native plants at Snape Reserve.</p> <p>Engaged Landcare and community members in 2 planting events.</p>

Integrated catchment management

Integrated catchment management is the coordinated management of land, water and biodiversity based on catchment areas. It involves Wimmera CMA, the regional community and other organisations partnering to ensure the long-term viability of natural resource systems and human needs across current and future generations. Integrated catchment management means working together to look after waterways and water resources, prevent or reverse land degradation, build the resilience of natural ecosystems, minimise damage from flooding and erosion, and decrease the impacts of pest plants and animals.

Integrated catchment management assessment 2022-23



Wimmera CMA's partnerships provided opportunities to work collaboratively with industry, the community and government agencies to achieve integrated catchment management outcomes. Wimmera CMA has well established partnerships with a range of organisations and groups. Collective forums, individual meetings, and agreements provided opportunities to collaborate and progress joint outcomes. Wimmera CMA's on-ground works resulted in more than 268,000 hectares, representing more than 9% of the region under active stewardship during 2022-23. This includes more than 33,800 hectares of on-ground works and 235,000 hectares of assessments to inform future stewardship activities.

Partnerships for integrated catchment management

Wimmera CMA's partnerships provided opportunities to work collaboratively with industry, community groups, and government agencies to achieve integrated catchment management outcomes. Wimmera CMA has well established partnerships with a range of organisations and groups, including First Nations groups, Landcare networks and groups, farmer-led agriculture groups, biodiversity-focused organisations, local government, nature-based recreation groups, and government agencies.

Wimmera CMA maintained strong working relationships with partner organisations and groups by leading and participating in collective meetings and forums, one-on-one discussions, and service level or other written agreements for joint projects.

Wimmera CMA-led forums provided opportunities to develop and implement strategies, progress joint projects, collaborate and value-add. Regular forums and meetings included:

- Wimmera Partnerships Forum involving Landcare facilitators, agriculture government agencies and farmer-led groups.
- Wimmera Natural Resource Management Roundtable involving regional biodiversity stakeholder organisations and groups.
- Regular collaboration meetings with Barengi Gadjin Land Council.
- Wimmera Strategic Water Management Working Group involving DEECA, VICSES, GWMWater and local councils.
- Individual meetings with delivery partners and stakeholders to discuss project proposals.

Wimmera CMA staff also contributed to stakeholder-led forums such as the Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Group led by DEECA, and forums related to environmental water management and regional development.

Wimmera CMA's strong partnerships leveraged significant investment through cash and in-kind contributions from the organisations and community groups we work with. For example, Horsham Rural City Council's City to River Project improved access to waterways and enabled sustainable recreation with contributions and collaborative effort from council, Wimmera CMA, community groups, the Australian Government and Victorian Government.

Stewardship

Catchment stewardship involves managing land, water and biodiversity in a way that provides benefits beyond basic duty of care. Catchment stewards are people who take action to improve the condition of natural resources. Good stewardship uses integrated catchment management and strong partnerships to build capacity and achieve action on the ground (DEECA, 2021).

Wimmera CMA's projects resulted in more than 268,000 hectares representing more than 9% of the region under active stewardship during 2022-23 in collaboration with delivery partner organisations, community groups and private landholders. The area under stewardship includes:

- More than 33,800 hectares of on-ground works including weed control, pest animal control, revegetation with native species, actions to benefit threatened species, and stock grazing management.
- More than 235,000 hectares of assessments to inform future stewardship activities.

It is likely that the total area under active stewardship in the Wimmera is higher than this as it does not include work done by all organisations and groups or undertaken voluntarily by private landholders.

Summary of the financial results for 2022-23

Five-year financial summary ('000)

	2022-23 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2018-19 \$'000
Government Contributions	6,934	7,172	9,571	7,143	6,942
Other Revenue	361	99	43	132	248
Total Revenue	7,295	7,271	9,614	7,275	7,190
Expenses	6,842	5,294	7,720	8,546	8,809
Net Operating Result	453	1,977	1,894	(1,271)	(1,619)
Net Gain/(loss) on Non-financial Assets	0	17	34	17	34
Comprehensive Result	453	1,994	1,928	(1,254)	(1,585)
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash & Deposits Held	617	2,174	1,801	(1,069)	1,160
Total Assets	11,656	11,191	9,507	7,788	8,081
Total Liabilities	1,614	1,602	1,913	2,122	1,160
Total Equity	10,042	9,589	7,594	5,666	6,921

Overview

Significant changes in financial position during the year

The Authority was able to secure \$1.2 million of funding in advance which will be carried over to the 2023-24 financial year. This has increased assets and the net operating result for this period. We also have additional carry forward funds due to the delay in on-ground works.

Significant changes or factors affecting performance

There were no significant changes or factors affecting our performance during the reporting period.

Subsequent events

There were no events occurring after balance date which significantly affect Wimmera CMA's operations in subsequent reporting periods. The Authority has on 1 July 2023 entered into a new lease arrangement for the Depot. This lease arrangement is not a new lease, it replaces the existing lease. The changed lease arrangement is for 5 years with a further option of 5 years.

Capital projects

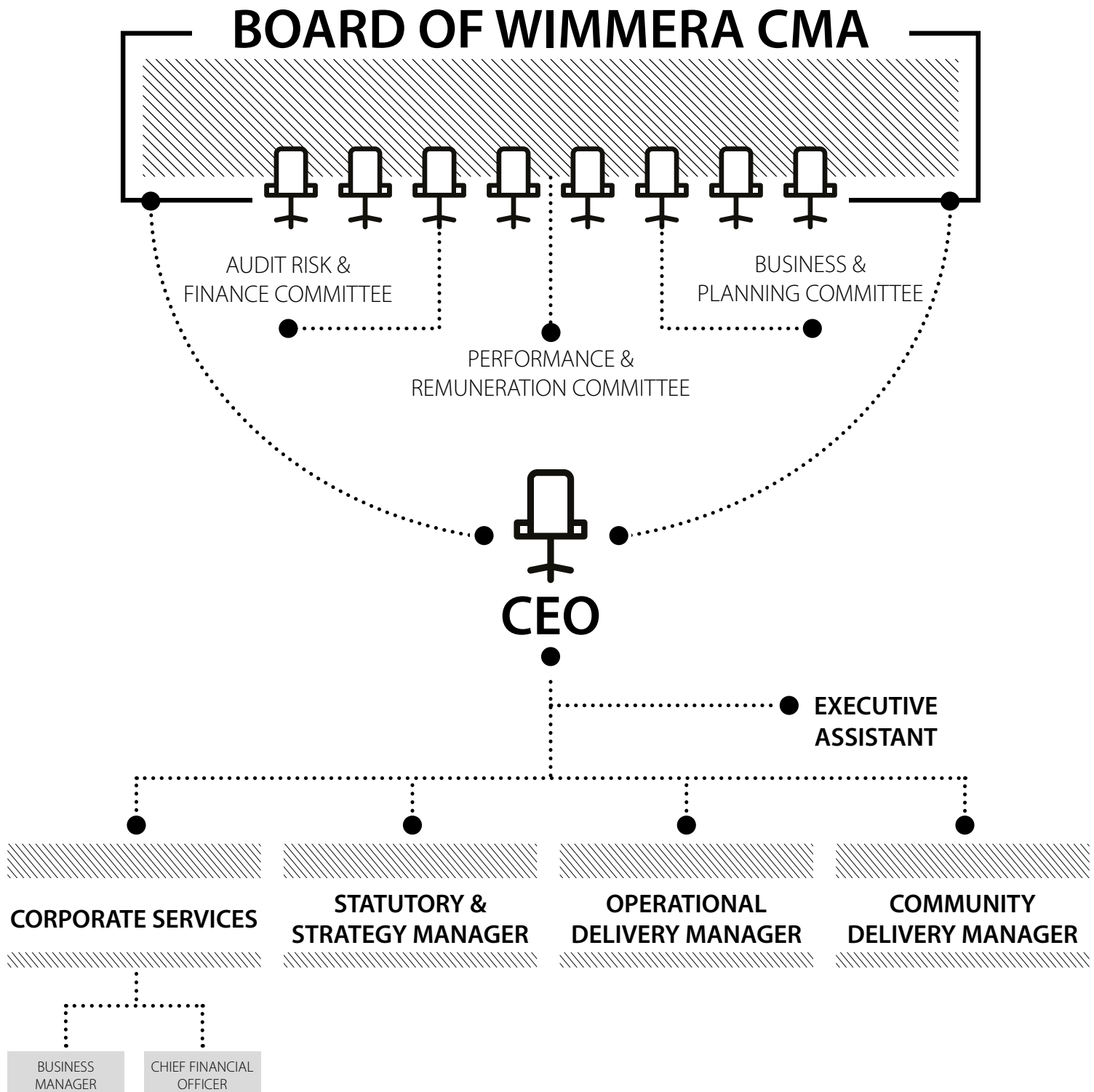
Wimmera CMA does not manage any capital projects.

Victorian Landcare Grants 2022-23 successful recipients

Recipient	Project title	Grant amount \$
Kaniva District Landcare	Trees, trees and more trees	4,770
Concongella Landcare Group	Revegetation and remnant protection in the Concongella area	12,500
Arapiles South Ag Group	Supporting Arapiles South Ag Group capacity	2,800
Project Platypus	Upper Wimmera Landcare action 2023	17,000
Black Range Land Management Group	Improving biodiversity and resilience in the Black Range	18,500
Black Range Land Management Group	A Cool Cultural Burning Approach to Black Range Land Management led by Traditional Owners	16,300
Crowlands Warrak Landcare Group	Community based weed control	19,999
Stawell Urban Landcare Group	Stawell weeds, walking tracks and people	17,420
Moyston Landcare Group	Weedy Whoas	5,700
Hindmarsh Landcare Network	Restoring the Rainbow Rises	19,950
Laharum Landcare Group	Supporting new Landcarers in Laharum and Wartook	18,000
Halls Gap Landcare Group	Halls Gap pest plant management and community awareness	19,550
Jallukar Landcare Group	Jallukar Weed and Revegetation Works	19,980
Kowree Farm Tree Group	Kowree Private Conservancy Network Fauna survey for management appraisalment	15,000
Kowree Farm Tree Group	Charam Farmland Habitat linkage project	18,000
Wonwondah Landcare Group	Protecting vegetation in Wonwondah	3,750
Kowree Farm Tree Group	West Wimmera Farmland Revegetation project	18,082
Natimuk Urban Landcare Group	Revegetating Natimuk Creek	9,700
Perennial Pasture Systems	Sustainable pasture grazing management through feed quality measurement Stage 2	10,924
Horsham Urban Landcare	Mind, body and earth: Sustainability across the community	15,000
Landsborough Landcare Group	Support grant awarded	500
Woorak Community and Land Management Group	Support grant awarded	500
Wimmera River Improvement Committee	Support grant awarded	500
Kadnook Landcare Group	Support grant awarded	500
Murrandarra Landcare Group	Support grant awarded	500
Northern Grampians Landcare Group	Support grant awarded	500
Elmhurst Landcare Group Inc.	Support grant awarded	500
TOTAL AMOUNT		\$286,425

Projects funded through the Victorian Landcare Grants process are delivered by Landcare and environmental volunteering groups over a timeframe of up to 18 months in line with Victorian Landcare Program guidelines. Eighty percent of payments have been made with the remaining 20% to be made on completion of projects by December 2023

Governance and organisational structure



Board

The Wimmera CMA Board is appointed by the Victorian Government's Minister for Water.

Board members have experience and knowledge in Land Management, Water Resources Management, Natural Resource Management, Primary Industry, Business Management and Community Engagement. The Wimmera CMA Board is accountable for the overall performance of Wimmera CMA. Its role is to guide, govern and provide professional and strategic advice regarding the development of Wimmera CMA's strategic direction for land, biodiversity and water management.

Board member	Term of appointment
Peter Hilbig	Appointed Chair 1 October 2017 – 30 September 2021 Reappointed 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2025
David Drage	14 October 2013 – 30 September 2021 Reappointed 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2025
Michelle Graymore	1 October 2017 – 30 September 2021 Reappointed 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2025
La Vergne Lehmann	1 October 2017 – 30 September 2021 Reappointed 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2025
Emelia Sudholz	1 October 2011 – 30 September 2019 Reappointed 1 October 2019 – 30 September 2023
Michael Porter	27 October 2015 – 30 September 2019 Reappointed 1 October 2019 – 30 September 2023 Appointment Deputy Chair – 9 December 2022
Julie Slater	1 October 2019 – 30 September 2023 Appointment Deputy chair – 13 December 2019 - 9 December 2022
Angela Enbom	1 October 2019 – 30 September 2023



Julie Slater

Julie Slater was appointed to the Wimmera CMA Board in October 2019, having previously been a Board member at North Central CMA for eight years.

Julie is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is self-employed in a consulting practice,

JLS Consulting, specialising in public relations and marketing, strategic planning, and community engagement.

Julie holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Relations and is Managing Director and Business Manager of a mixed cropping/livestock farming enterprise located within the Buloke Shire in north-west Victoria. She is also Chair of Women's Health Loddon Mallee and co-founder of Buloke Women's Network.



Peter Hilbig - Chair

Peter Hilbig was appointed Chair in October 2017 and reappointed in October 2021. He has lived at Halls Gap for more than thirty years, employed as a teacher, education consultant and principal.

He has worked in Malaysia and Northern Territory as a teacher and school leader, and locally as a teaching and leadership adviser and coach.

He currently facilitates organisational reviews and strategic planning. Peter's interest in the Wimmera and passion for sustainable catchment management developed through six years as Manager of Project Platypus - Upper Wimmera Landcare, where he was inspired by the commitment of a diverse range of stakeholders using science to monitor and inform improvement in land and water quality, agriculture and biodiversity.

Peter is currently Deputy Chair of Vic Catchments, the peak body for Catchment Management Authorities in Victoria. He is a volunteer firefighter and a Justice of the Peace.

Peter is keen for Wimmera CMA to engage effectively with all stakeholders to achieve a healthy and sustainable catchment community.



Angela Enbom

Angela Enbom was appointed to the Wimmera CMA Board in October 2019. Angela is a commercial beekeeper running her own business and a sustainable small-scale food-producer.

As an apiarist, Angela has experience with a vast array of natural resources and landscapes. Angela is an executive on the Central Victorian Apiary Association and provides community bee and sustainable bee practices education to a range of community groups regularly.

Angela is a permaculture professional who has developed a sustainable organic integrated plant and animal system. One of the tenets of permaculture is to value the marginal and this includes our remote and regional communities. Angela is passionate about planning for the future of our rural communities and ensuring their sustainability now and into the future.

Angela brings to the Board a wholistic, macro perspective and her experience in teaching, primary production, small business and the apiculture industry.



Emelia Sudholz

Emelia Sudholz was appointed to the Wimmera CMA Board in October 2011. Emelia is an agricultural scientist, teacher, and partner with her husband in a cropping and sheep farm business at Rupanyup South.

Emelia has a strong background in water management, a member of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnerships Committee, and on the Murray Darling Basin Authority Community Committee.

Emelia brings experience in natural resource management, stakeholder engagement, governance, farming expertise and involvement to the Board.

Emelia is committed to the Wimmera after moving here over 20 years ago and is heavily involved in local community groups.



David Drage

David Drage was appointed to the Board in October 2013 and reappointed for a third term in October 2021. David brings a diverse mix of farming, Landcare, community, and waterway experience and involvement to the Board.

David lives on the family farm with his wife and two children. The farm grows winter cereals and legumes and they run a small flock of Merino ewes for wool and prime-lamb production. There is also a strong focus on preserving and conserving the remaining remnant buloke and box vegetation on the farm.

David's long term goals are utilising his land based resources for food production, and his family's livelihood, while preserving the farm to ensure it is handed on to the next generation in the best possible condition.

David is a member of several community groups including Warracknabeal Rotary Club and Lah Landcare Group.



La Vergne Lehmann

La Vergne Lehmann was appointed to the Wimmera CMA Board in October 2017. La Vergne lives near Dimboola and brings a broad range of experience including natural resource management, community engagement, research, communications and media and tourism.

La Vergne is now working at Yarriambiack Shire Council, coordinating the waste and sustainability functions of the council.

She is passionate about sustainability and environmental issues in the region and is a regular contributor to several media and social media forums. La Vergne is also co-chair of the Grampians Regional Climate Adaptation Group.



Michael Porter

Michael Porter was appointed to the Board in November 2015 and is a past Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, and currently serves on the Business Planning Committee. Michael has experience farming land in Victoria's Western District, near Ballarat. He has had extensive experience in the Agricultural sector where he was the CEO of Southern Quality Produce (SQP) Co-operative for almost four years. He has a particular interest in soil regeneration and making the best use of our limited water resources. Before working for SQP, he held Senior Management roles within ASX listed companies.

Michael holds a Bachelor of Business Studies with a major in Enterprise Development, a Post Graduate Qualification in Change Management and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He has had previous Board Positions including Directorships with ASX Listed Companies. He is a past Member and Chairman of the Audit Advisory Committee for the City of Ballarat. He also has extensive experience in the Defence sector where he held the rank of Commander in the Royal Australian Navy.



Michelle Graymore

Michelle Graymore was appointed to the Board in October 2017. Michelle is an Environmental Sociologist with Monash Sustainable Development Institute Water team.

She is passionate about helping rural and regional communities be sustainable and resilient, particularly in the Wimmera. Michelle works with environmental scientists, natural resource managers and the community to enable place-based knowledge, Indigenous knowledge, community needs and values, and the best available science are considered in planning, policy and decision making for natural resource management.

As well as a family connection to the Wimmera, Michelle spent four years leading the Wimmera Research Group (formerly known as Horsham Campus Research Precinct) at Federation University in Horsham.

Michelle brings to the board expertise in sustainability, water management, climate change adaption, social change processes, community engagement and community resilience. In her role on the Board Michelle is keen to use her skills to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the region

Board attendance

Board member	Meetings Attended
1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023	
Peter Hilbig	6
Angela Enbom	6
David Drage	6
Emelia Sudholz	6
Julie Slater	4
La Vergne Lehmann	4
Michael Porter	6
Michelle Graymore	6
Total Meetings	6

As part of increasing the Board's understanding and knowledge of Integrated Catchment Management and Wimmera CMA projects, it took part in a field tour/information day. As part of the ongoing strategic planning process, the Board conducts a strategic planning workshop each year.

Board governance committees

The Board has three governance committees; Audit, Risk and Finance; Business and Planning and Performance and Remuneration.

Audit, Risk and Finance committee

This committee meets at least four times a year. The committee's role is to monitor, review and make recommendations to the Board regarding:

- All financial matters affecting Wimmera CMA.
- Oversight and management of financial and organisational risks.
- Appropriate investment management arrangements and delegations are in place.
- Relevant policies that fall within the purpose of the Committee are current.
- Financial reporting, compliance with relevant laws and regulations and maintenance of an efficient and effective audit function.

Committee members

- **La Vergne Lehmann – Committee Chair**
- Angela Enbom
- David Drage
- Peter Hilbig (Ex Officio)
- * Simon Coutts - 1 July 2022-06 April 2023
- * Bernard Young – 28th June 2023

*Independent Member

Business and Planning committee

This committee meets as required to meet statutory reporting requirements. The committee's role is to monitor, review and recommend to the Board regarding:

- Oversight of the development and review of the RCS and the Authority's Annual Report.
- Investment Proposals and Annual Corporate Planning including monitoring, evaluation, governance, compliance requirements and strategic alignment to organisational objectives.
- Oversight of the Authority's major communications, community capacity building and engagement activities and strategies.
- Relevant policies that fall within the purpose of the Committee are current.

Committee members

- **Julie Slater – Committee Chair**
- Michelle Graymore
- Michael Porter
- Peter Hilbig – Ex Officio

Performance and Remuneration committee

This committee's role is to monitor, review and make recommendations to the Board regarding:

- Recruitment and appointment of the Chief Executive Officer.
- Performance appraisals of the CEO.
- Performance and development of the board.
- Succession planning.

Committee members

- **Peter Hilbig – Committee Chair**
- Emelia Sudholz
- Michelle Graymore

Employment and conduct principles

Our staff

Providing a safe working environment and investing in people and efficient systems is an important part of Wimmera CMA's responsibilities. Wimmera CMA adheres to the employment and conduct principles as contained in the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

Employment principles

Wimmera CMA continues to undertake recruitment to our organisation based upon public sector employment principles where:

- Employment decisions are based on merit.
- Public sector employees are treated fairly and reasonably.
- Equal employment opportunity is provided.
- Human rights as set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities are upheld.
- Public sector employees have a reasonable avenue of redress against unfair or unreasonable treatment, with the flexibility to tailor the campaigns to the individual positions.

Training and development

Wimmera CMA strongly advocates for the development of staff to meet the current and forecast business objectives of the organisation.

Professional development, staff training and career goals are incorporated into the Wimmera CMA annual workplan review process. Through this process, individual staff training is discussed and developed to not only ensure that staff have access to training to undertake their role but also the next step in their career progression.

New employees are inducted into the organisation, with the content including public sector Code of Conduct; organisational values and behaviours; organisational policies including conflict of interest, outside employment; conflict resolution and training and development opportunities.

Whole-of-organisation training provided

We have continued to make online training accessible for all staff through our online training portal. We have also maintained a focus on our training to align with the public sector values; undertaken our Workplace Obligations training covering the key areas including fraud, conflict of interest, code of conduct, gifts and hospitality, OH&S, bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, misconduct, fraud, and human rights charter.

Employment support program

We have renewed our shared contract with three other CMAs with Lifeworks by Morneau Shepell. This includes professional, confidential counselling services. The employment support program provides counselling and support to employees and managers to manage challenges both within and outside the workplace.

This contract includes access to a shared platform that provides additional support information to all staff, with a range of wellbeing resources and self-help tools. It also includes access to an online app. The support provided continues to be available with specialist services and delivered via phone, face-to-face or virtually.

Conduct principles

The conduct principles mean the public sector values in section 7 of the PAA which are Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership and Human Rights.

Occupational health and safety disclosure

Wimmera CMA has an internal Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OH&S) which is charged with oversight of the organisation's health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

The safety of our staff as we have transitioned through the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be a major focus of the committee this year. Ensuring compliance with government obligations and a local risk based approach. We continue to ensure staff needs are supported and considered in the process. We have all staff working from the office; with flexibility maintained to allow for staff who are symptomatic to elect to work from home or take leave.

Staff working remotely, have undertaken an annual self-assessment for home offices and online ergonomic training to ensure their home office space was set up as per guidelines. We continue to make staff meetings available online, and are also recorded for those unable to attend.

Staff have been supported with regards to their health and wellbeing, with annual flu vaccinations offered to all staff along with time off to attend appointments for both flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. Health checks which involved a range of age appropriate blood tests were also made available.

We have 13 staff accredited in level 2 first aid and enrolled in the continuous learning program. We have also had 5 staff complete 4WD training, 6 trailer towing training and 9 4WD recovery training this financial year.

Incident management

We had one incident among staff, which resulted in a minor claim due to soft tissue damage (Table 13). The other incidents involved a near miss in the field and two reports of hazards related to building security. This was compared with the previous year when there was one hazard reported.

We had one minor Workcover claim across the organisation.

Table 13. Incident report summary.

Measure	Key Performance Indicators	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Full-time equivalent		19.22	19.18	20.09
Hazards	Hazards identified	3	1	0
	Rate per 100 FTE	15.61	5.21	0.00
Incidents	Total no. of incidents - staff	1	0	2
	No. of reportable incidents requiring medical treatment - staff	1	0	0
	Incident rate per 100 FTE staff	5.20	0	9.96
	No incidents - Employment Programs	0	0	7
	No. of reportable incidents requiring medical treatment - Employment Programs	0	0	3
	Incident rate per 100 FTE - Employment Programs	0	0	34.84
Claims	No. of standard claims	1	0	0
	Rate per 100 FTE	5.20	0	0
	No. of lost time claims	1	0	0
	Rate per 100 FTE	5.20	0	0
	No. of claims exceeding 13 weeks	0	0	0
	Rate per 100 FTE	0	0	0
Fatalities	Fatality claims	0	0	0
Claim costs	Average cost per standard claim	\$763	0	0
Return to work (RTW)	Percentage of claims with RTW plan <30 days.	100%	0%	0%
OH&S Meetings	Meetings held	10	10	11

Workforce data

The following table discloses the head count and full-time equivalent (FTE) of all active employees of Wimmera CMA employed in the last full pay period in June of the current reporting period, and in the last full pay period in June 2023 and the previous reporting period (2022).

Employees are classified in accordance with Wimmera CMA Enterprise Agreement 2020-24 in bands 1-5 and senior managers employed under flexibility agreements under the Agreement. Senior Executive Service Officers are employed under a PEERS contract.

We have had an overall increase of 0.04 FTE, with no change in staff numbers (Table 14). This has been brought about by minor adjustments in staff hours to meet worklife balance requests.

Table 14. Details of employment levels in 2022 and 2023.

Classification	2022-23		2021-22	
	Number (headcount)	FTE	Number (headcount)	FTE
Executive officers	1	1	1	1
Senior managers	5	4.8	5	5
Administration staff	3	2	3	2.2
Field staff	14	11.42	14	10.98
Total	23	19.22	23	19.18

Workforce inclusion policy

The Wimmera CMA has a balanced working environment where equal opportunity and diversity are valued. As part of the diversity and inclusion policy, Wimmera CMA has a target of maintaining the average percentage of its employees who identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) at 10% (Table 15).

Table 15. Workforce inclusion details.

Workforce inclusion policy initiative	Target	Actual progress in 2022-23	Actual progress in 2021-22	Actual progress in 2020-21
Maintain employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander at 10%	Maintain employees who identify as being ATSI at an average of 10%	Employees who identify as being ATSI 13%	Employees who identify as being ATSI 12 %	Employees who identify as being ATSI 12 %

Other disclosures

Local Jobs First Act 2003

The Victorian Local Jobs First Policy applies to tenders of over \$1 million in regional Victoria. During the 2022-23 reporting period, Wimmera CMA had no tenders of this size.

Social Procurement Framework (SPF Reporting Guidelines)

Wimmera CMA continued its commitment to social procurement in 2022-23. Social procurement practices and planning were undertaken to support a range of local organisations and generate social value consistent with Victoria's Social Procurement Framework.

In addition to seeking opportunities for direct purchasing of goods and services from social enterprises, Aboriginal enterprises and other social benefit suppliers including disability enterprises, Wimmera CMA also continued to support capability development. Examples include:

- Governance and leadership development support for Centre for Participation, SENVIC Local Lead working to enhance the social enterprise sector across the Grampians region
- Continuation of a partnership project with Barengi Gadjin Land Council to rehabilitate and improve access to the Ranch Billabong which intends to build skills and capability within BGLC to better position the organisation to provide related services to other organisations in future years.
- Ongoing engagement of AXIS Worx in Natural Resource Management project delivery including tree guard services. AXIS Worx is a social enterprise providing supported employment for people with disabilities who are unable to work in the open employment sector.

Government advertising expenditure

Wimmera CMA's expenditure in the 2022-23 reporting period on government campaign expenditure did not exceed \$100,000.

Consultancies

Details of consultancies valued at \$10,000 or greater:

- In 2022-23 there were nine consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were \$10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred in 2022-23 in relation to these consultancies was \$240,824 excl. GST.
- Details of individual consultancies are outlined on Wimmera CMA's website, at www.wcma.vic.gov.au.

Details of consultancies valued at less than \$10,000:

- In 2022-23 there were nine consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than \$10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2022-23 in relation to these consultancies was \$39,604 excl. GST.

Information and communication technology expenditure

Table 16. Wimmera CMA ICT expenditure during 2022-23, totalling to \$333,000.

All Operational ICT Expenditure	ICT expenditure relating to projects to create ICT capabilities		
All ICT operational Expenditure (\$000)	Non-BAU ICT Expenditure (\$000)	Operational Expenditure (\$000)	Capital Expenditure (\$000)
Total	Total A+B	A	B
301	32	13	19

Note: ICT expenditure refers to Wimmera CMA's costs in providing business enabling ICT services within the current reporting period. It comprises Business As Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure and Non-Business As Usual (Non-BAU) ICT expenditure.

Non-BAU ICT expenditure relates to extending or enhancing Wimmera CMA's current ICT capabilities.

BAU ICT expenditure is all remaining ICT expenditure, which primarily relates to ongoing activities to operate and maintain the current ICT capability.

Disclosure of major contracts

Wimmera CMA has not entered into any major contracts during 2022-23.

A 'major contract' is a contract entered into during the reporting period valued at \$10 million or more.

Compliance with Building Act 1993

Wimmera CMA does not own or control any government buildings and consequently is exempt from notifying its compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

Competitive neutrality policy

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure where services compete, or potentially compete with the private sector, any advantage arising solely from their government ownership be removed if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses are required to cost and price these services as if they were privately owned. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service.

Wimmera CMA continues to comply with the requirements of the Competitive Neutrality Policy.

Compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (PID Act)* enables people to make a disclosure about corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body.

Wimmera CMA is a public body for the purposes of the *PID Act*.

What is a public interest disclosure?

A public interest disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body.

'Improper or corrupt conduct' involves substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health or safety or the environment, or corruption.

Detrimental action is action taken against a person in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

How do I make a public interest disclosure?

You can make a public interest disclosure about Wimmera CMA or its board members, officers or employees by contacting IBAC (details below).

Wimmera CMA is not able to receive public interest disclosures.

Wimmera CMA has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about Wimmera CMA, its board members, officers or employees. You can access Wimmera CMA's procedures on its website at: www.wcma.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Wimmera-CMA-Protected-Disclosure-Procedure-IBAC.pdf

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000.

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001

Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: See the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 1982

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by Wimmera CMA. The purpose of the Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by Wimmera CMA. This comprises documents both created by Wimmera CMA or supplied to Wimmera CMA by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes. Information about the type of material produced by Wimmera CMA is available on Wimmera CMA's website under its Part II Information Statement.

The Act allows Wimmera CMA to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include: cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to Wimmera CMA in confidence and information that is confidential under another Act.

Under the Act, the Freedom of Information (FOI) processing time for requests received is 30 days. However, when external consultation is required under ss29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, the processing time is 45 days. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur any number of times. However, obtaining an applicant's agreement for an extension cannot occur after the expiry of the timeframe for deciding a request.

If an applicant is not satisfied with a decision made by Wimmera CMA, under section 49A of the Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

Making a request

FOI requests can be lodged online at www.foi.vic.gov.au. An application fee of **\$30.60** applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material, time consuming.

Access to documents can also be obtained through a written request to Wimmera CMA's Freedom of Information officer, as detailed in s17 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

When making an FOI request, applicants should ensure requests are in writing, and clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought.

Requests for documents in the possession of Wimmera CMA should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Officer

Wimmera CMA
PO Box 479
Horsham, Vic 3402

FOI statistics/timeliness

During 2022-23 Wimmera CMA received no applications from the general public.

Further information

Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the Act; regulations made under the Act; and foi.vic.gov.au.

Disclosure of emergency procurement

Wimmera CMA did not activate emergency procurement in the 2022/23 financial year.

Additional information available on request

In compliance with the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by Wimmera CMA and are available in full on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*:

- A declaration of pecuniary interests have been duly completed by all relevant officers;
- Details of publications produced by Wimmera CMA about itself, and how these can be obtained;
- Details of any other external reviews carried out on Wimmera CMA;
- Details of major research and development activities undertaken by Wimmera CMA;

- Details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by Wimmera CMA to develop community awareness of the entity and its services; and
- Details of changes in prices, fees and charges.

The information is available from:

The CEO

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
Phone: 03 5382 1544
Email: wcma@wcma.vic.gov.au

Additional information included in the annual report

Details in respect of the following item have been included in the Wimmera CMA's annual report, on the pages indicated below:

- Details of assessments and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees. Also refer to occupational health and safety in this report in 'Occupational health and safety' on page 42;
- A statement on industrial relations within the Wimmera CMA, and details of time lost through industrial accidents and disputes. Also refer to employment and conduct principles in this report in 'Employment and conduct principles' on page 41.
- A list of Wimmera CMA major committees, the purposes of each committee and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved. Also refer to Board governance committees in this report in 'Board governance committees' on page 40;

Information that is not applicable to Wimmera CMA

The following information is not relevant to Wimmera CMA for the reasons listed below:

- A declaration of shares held by senior officers (No shares have ever been issued by Wimmera CMA).
- Details of overseas visits undertaken (No Board members or senior executives took overseas work related trips).

Environmental reporting

Office based environmental impacts

Actions in addition to solar panel installation in recent years have included recycling batteries and other e-waste, fluorescent tubes, glass, cardboard and paper, as well as use of energy efficient office lighting, composting, double sided printing and water saving devices.

Table 17. Demonstrates results of the annual waste audit conducted at Wimmera CMA. Full-time equivalent (FTE) based indicators are adopted for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

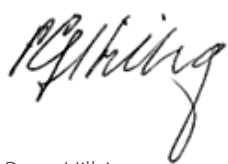
Per full-time equivalent	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Electricity consumption kWh (associated with electricity consumption)	738.36 (2658.09 MJ)	857.10 (3085.56 MJ)	4082.63 (1134.06 MJ)
Estimated greenhouse emissions tonnes	0.85	1.00	3.94
Water consumption kL	16.24	17.61	12.59
Total waste production kg	32.37	50.76	36.04
General waste production kg	16.29	22.21	17.06
Recycling rate %	49.7	56.2	52.7
Estimated greenhouse emissions	0.38	0.77	0.59

Megajoules (MJ)

Wimmera CMA continues to follow recommendations of Sustainability Victoria as part of our commitment to contribute to Victoria's target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Financial management compliance attestation statement

I, Peter Hilbig, on behalf of the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority Board, certify that the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority has no Material Compliance Deficiencies with respect to the applicable Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and instructions.



Peter Hilbig
Chairman Wimmera CMA Board

Financial statements

How this report is structured

The Wimmera Catchment Management Authority has presented its audited general purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2023 in the following structure to provide users with the information about the Authority's stewardship of resource entrusted to it.

Financial statements

Comprehensive operating statement

Balance sheet

Cash flow statement

Statement of changes in equity

Notes to the financial statements

1. About this report

The basis on which the financial statements have been prepared and compliance with reporting regulations

2. Funding delivery of our services

Income recognised in respect of Government contributions and other income sources

2.1 Summary of income that funds the delivery of our services

2.2 Income from transactions

3. The cost of delivering services

Operating expenses of the Authority

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

3.2 Program delivery expenses

3.3 Other operating expenses

4. Key assets available to support output delivery

Leasehold improvements, plant and equipment, and motor vehicles

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

5. Other assets and liabilities

Working capital balances, and other key assets and liabilities

5.1 Receivables

5.2 Payables

5.3 Other non-financial assets

6. How we financed our operations

Borrowings, cash flow information, leases and commitments for expenditure

6.1 Cash flow information and balances

6.2 Carry forward project funding

6.3 Leases

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

7. Risks, contingencies and valuation judgements

Financial risk management, contingent assets and liabilities as well as fair value determination

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

7.3 Fair value determination

8. Other disclosures

8.1 Ex-gratia expenses

8.2 Reserves

8.3 Responsible persons

8.4 Remuneration of executive officers

8.5 Related parties

8.6 Remuneration of auditors

8.7 Subsequent events

8.8 Economic dependency

8.9 Australian accounting standards issue that are not yet effective

Declaration in the Financial Statements

The attached financial statements for the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including Interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement, statement of changes in equity, and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2023 and financial position of the Authority at 30 June 2023.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 26 September, 2023.



Peter Hilbig
Chairperson



David Brennan
CEO and Accountable Officer



Camille Pope
Chief Finance Officer

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT (a)

for the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Income from transactions			
Government/partnership contributions	2.2.1	6,934,236	7,171,568
Interest	2.2.2	313,161	32,880
Other income	2.2.3	47,655	66,427
Total income from transactions		7,295,052	7,270,875
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses	3.1.1	2,402,570	2,286,303
Depreciation	4.1.1	192,983	193,269
Interest expense	6.3	17,382	19,599
Program delivery expenses	3.2	3,666,230	2,353,017
Other operating expenses	3.3	562,667	441,292
Total expenses from transactions		6,841,832	5,293,480
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		453,220	1,977,395
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain on non-financial assets (b)	4.1.3	(109)	16,506
Net result		453,111	1,993,901
Comprehensive result		453,111	1,993,901

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

(b) 'Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets includes realised gains/(losses) from disposals of all physical assets.

BALANCE SHEET (a)

as at 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.1	10,011,742	9,394,374
Receivables	5.1	672,708	712,772
Total financial assets		10,684,450	10,107,146
Non-financial assets			
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	207,033	169,375
Property, plant and equipment (ROU)	4.1	726,100	861,681
Other non-financial assets	5.3	38,386	52,725
Total non-financial assets		971,519	1,083,781
Total assets		11,655,969	11,190,927
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	254,712	121,793
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	609,508	597,185
Leases	6.3	750,211	883,522
Total liabilities		1,614,431	1,602,500
Net assets		10,041,538	9,588,427
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		7,889,673	7,545,107
Committed funds reserve	8.2	428,166	319,621
Contributed capital		1,723,699	1,723,699
Net worth		10,041,538	9,588,427

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Note:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT (a)

for the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		6,974,300	7,468,245
Interest received		313,161	32,880
Goods and services net amount from the ATO (b)		95,804	67,366
Other receipts		47,655	66,427
Total receipts		7,430,920	7,634,918
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(6,567,690)	(5,346,432)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(17,382)	(19,599)
Total payments		(6,585,072)	(5,366,031)
Net cash flows provided/(used in) by operating activities	6.1.1	845,848	2,268,887
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchases of non-financial assets		(102,582)	-
Proceeds from the sale of non-financial assets		-	26,661
Net cash flows (used in)/provided by investing activities		(102,582)	26,661
Cashflows from financing activities			
Repayment of borrowings and principal portion of lease liabilities		(125,898)	(121,818)
Net cash flows used in financing activities		(125,898)	(121,818)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		617,368	2,173,730
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		9,394,374	7,220,644
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	6.1	10,011,742	9,394,374

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

(b) GST received from the Australian Taxation Office is presented on a net basis.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY (a)

for the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Accumulated surplus	Committed funds reserve	Contributed capital	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2021	5,638,123	232,704	1,723,699	7,594,526
Net result for the year	1,993,901	-	-	1,993,901
Transfers (from)/to reserves (b)	(86,917)	86,917	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2022	7,545,107	319,621	1,723,699	9,588,427
Net result for the year	453,111	-	-	453,111
Transfers to/(from) reserves (b)	(108,545)	108,545	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2023	7,889,673	428,166	1,723,699	10,041,538

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Note:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

(b) The net amount transferred from accumulated surplus to committed funds reserve consists of carry forward unspent project funds that have been set aside for the purpose of completion of specific projects.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the financial year ended 30 June 2023

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Wimmera Catchment Management Authority is a government authority of the State of Victoria, established on 1 July 1997 by the state government.

Its principal address is: Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
24 Darlot Street
Horsham VIC 3400

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities is included in the report of operations, which does not form part of these financial statements.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore do not form part of the income and expenses of the Authority.

Additions to net assets which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contribution by owners.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AASs that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading: 'Significant judgement or estimates', and relate to:

	Note
•determining whether the performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether the arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 or AASB 1058;	2.1
•employee benefit provisions;	3
•useful lives of assets;	4
•estimating discount rate when no implicit in the lease;	6.3
•fair value measurements of assets and liabilities;	7.3

Rounding

Unless otherwise stated, amount in the report have been rounded to the nearest dollar. Figures in the financial report may not equate due to rounding.

Compliance information

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA) and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASs) which include Interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). In particular, they are presented in a manner consistent with the requirements of AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Where appropriate, those AASs paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT (cont'd)

From a financial perspective, as the Authority's funding is predominantly through State and Commonwealth Government Contributions, and the majority of the Authority's dealings are with other Government Departments and Agencies, management does not currently consider COVID-19 to have a material affect on any judgements or assumptions applied in the preparation of these financial statements. The Authority received \$500,000 additional State money for the October 2022 flood recovery.

2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

Introduction

The Authority's overall objective is for the co-ordinated control of natural resource management within the broader catchments of the Wimmera region. The role of the Authority is to ensure effective implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy. Associated with this role the Authority carries out strategic planning and advises Government.

To enable the Authority to deliver on its objectives, it receives income predominantly through State and Commonwealth Government contributions.

Structure

2.1 Summary of income that funds the delivery of our services

2.2 Income from transactions

2.1 Summary of income that funds the delivery of our services

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Government/Partnership contributions	2.2.1	6,934,236	7,171,568
Interest	2.2.2	313,161	32,880
Other income	2.2.3	47,655	66,427
Total income from transactions		7,295,052	7,270,875

Revenue and income that fund delivery of the Authorities services are accounted for consistently with the requirements of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes.

Significant judgement: Grants Contributions

The Authority has made judgement on the recognition of grant revenue as income of not-for-profit entities where they do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations. Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations and accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers is recognised when the authority satisfies the performance obligation by providing the relevant service to the investor.

2.2 Income from transactions

2.2.1 Government/Partnership contributions

Grants recognised under AASB 1058

	2023 \$	2022 \$
State Government	5,723,759	5,912,104
Commonwealth Government/Partnerships	1,210,477	1,259,464
Total Government/Partnership contributions	6,934,236	7,171,568

Grants recognised under AASB 1058

The Authority has determined that the grant income included in the table above under AASB 1058 has been earned under arrangements that are either not enforceable and/or linked to sufficiently specific performance obligations.

Income from grants, without any sufficiently specific performance obligations, or that are not enforceable, is recognised when the Authority has unconditional right to receive cash which usually coincides with receipt of cash. On initial recognition of the assets, the Authority recognises any increase in liabilities, decrease in assets, and revenue ('related amount') in accordance with other Australian Accounting Standards. Related amounts may take the form of:

- * revenue or a contract liability arising from a contract with a customer, in accordance with AASB 15;
- * a lease liability in accordance with AASB 16;
- * a financial instrument, in accordance with AASB 9; or
- * a provision, in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assts.*

Grants recognised under AASB 15

Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations are accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers under AASB 15. The Authority has no income accounted for under AASB 15.

2.2.2 Interest

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Interest on bank deposits	<u>313,161</u>	<u>32,880</u>

Interest income includes interest received on bank accounts. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method which allocates the interest over the relevant period.

2.2.3 Other income

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Other income	<u>47,655</u>	<u>66,427</u>
Total other income	<u>47,655</u>	<u>66,427</u>

All other income is recognised when the right to receive payment is established.

3. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Authority in delivering services. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the cost association with the provision of services are recorded.

Significant judgement: Employee benefit provisions

In measuring employee benefits, consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using a single weighted average discount rate based on market yields of national government bonds in Australia that reflects the estimated timing and amount of benefit payment.

Structure

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

3.2 Program delivery expenses

3.3 Other operating expenses

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Employee expenses	3.1.1	2,402,570	2,286,303
Program delivery expenses	3.2	3,666,230	2,353,017
Other operating expenses	3.3	562,667	441,292
Total expenses incurred in the delivery of services		6,631,467	5,080,612

3.1.1 Employee benefit expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Salaries & wages	1,707,744	1,631,712
Annual leave	211,569	190,938
Long service leave	51,784	22,012
Other leave	134,848	169,720
Superannuation	219,977	205,837
Other	76,648	66,084
Total employee benefit expenses	2,402,570	2,286,303

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, payroll tax, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, termination payments and WorkCover premiums.

3.1.2 Employee related provisions in the balance sheet

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave (LSL) for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Current provisions		
Annual leave:		
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months	136,654	123,194
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months	33,004	29,861
Long service leave:		
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months	49,761	39,534
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months	310,964	312,921
	<u>530,383</u>	<u>505,510</u>
Provisions for on-costs		
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months	6,932	5,010
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months	43,319	60,388
Total current provisions for employee benefits	<u>580,634</u>	<u>570,908</u>
Non-current provisions		
Long service leave:		
Employee benefits	25,344	23,322
Provisions for on-costs		
On-costs	3,530	2,955
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	<u>28,874</u>	<u>26,277</u>
Total provisions for employee benefits	<u>609,508</u>	<u>597,185</u>
	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Reconciliation of movement in on-cost provision		
Opening balance	68,353	45,760
Additional provisions recognised	12,323	22,593
Closing balance	<u>80,676</u>	<u>68,353</u>
Current	78,981	65,398
Non-current	1,695	2,955
	<u>80,676</u>	<u>68,353</u>

Wages and salaries annual leave and sick leave:

Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities, because the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages are recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As the Authority expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability as the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period. Annual leave expected to be taken within the next 12 months is measured at the undiscounted amount while annual leave expected to be settled after 12 months is measured at present value.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income as it is taken.

3.1.2 Employee related provisions in the balance sheet (cont'd)

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

Long service leave (LSL):

Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability; even where the Authority does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement would an employee take leave within 12 months.

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at:

- undiscounted value - if the Authority expects to wholly settle within 12 months; or
- present value - if the Authority does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Unconditional LSL represents long service leave entitlements accrued for employees with more than 7 years of continuous service.

Conditional LSL is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current LSL is measured at present value.

3.1.3 Superannuation contributions

Employees of the Authority are entitled to receive superannuation benefits and the Authority contributes to defined contribution plans. The Authority does not contribute to any defined benefit plans.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to Superannuation is employer contributions for members of defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period.

The name, details and amounts expended in relation to the major employee superannuation funds and contributions made by the Authority are as follows:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Contribution plans:		
Vision super	34,800	45,062
Other funds/private schemes	185,177	160,775
	219,977	205,837

There was \$0 in contributions outstanding to the above schemes as at 30 June 2023 (2022: \$0).

3.2 Program delivery expenses

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Materials	307,548	145,304
Repairs and maintenance	22,654	17,223
Grants paid	715,774	757,321
Contractors	2,339,826	1,172,179
Consultants	280,428	260,990
Total program delivery expenses	3,666,230	2,353,017

Program delivery expenses are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

3.3 Other operating expenses

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Promotions and marketing	116,789	76,941
Business and project administration	348,089	258,394
Travel and vehicle expenses	56,822	50,213
Audit, finance and bank expenses	40,967	55,744
Total other operating expenses	562,667	441,292

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations and are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

The following lease payments are recognised on a straight-line basis:

- Short-term leases - leases with a term less than 12 months used for the Working for Victoria projects (2021); and
- Low value leases - leases with the underlying asset's fair value (when new, regardless of the age of the asset being leased) is no more than \$10,000. Refer Note 6.3 for short term leases practical expedients.

Variable lease payments that are not included in the measurement of the lease liability (i.e. variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate and which are not, in substance fixed) such as those based on performance or usage of the underlying asset, are recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement (except for payments which has been included in the carrying amount of another asset) in the period in which the event or condition that triggers those payments occur.

4. KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OUTPUT DELIVERY

Introduction

The Authority controls property, plant and equipment that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. They represent the key resources that have been entrusted to the Authority to be utilised for delivery of those outputs.

Significant judgement: Fair value measurement

Where the assets included in this section are carried at fair value, additional information is disclosed in Note 7.3 in connection with how those fair values were determined.

Significant judgement: Estimation of useful lives

All non-current physical assets that have a limited useful life are depreciated. Where assets have separate identifiable components that have distinct useful lives and/or residual values, a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Structure

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Leasehold improvements at fair value	805,725	805,725	(760,846)	(752,548)	44,879	53,177
ROU building at fair value	1,097,502	1,083,868	(429,925)	(322,359)	667,577	761,509
Plant and equipment at fair value	264,137	249,367	(247,297)	(239,743)	16,840	9,624
Motor vehicles at fair value	295,358	207,656	(150,044)	(101,081)	145,314	106,574
ROU motor vehicles at fair value	118,238	156,169	(59,715)	(55,997)	58,523	100,172
Net carrying amount	2,580,960	2,502,785	(1,647,827)	(1,471,728)	933,133	1,031,056

Initial recognition:

Items of property, plant and equipment, are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

The cost of leasehold improvements are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the remaining term of the lease of their estimated useful lives.

Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees (under AASB 16 Leases) - initial measurement

The Authority recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentive received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

Refer Section 7.3.2 for measurement of fair value.

4.1 Property, plant and equipment (cont'd)

Subsequent measurement:

Property, plant and equipment as well as right-of-use assets under lease are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Fair value is determined with regard to the asset's highest and best use (considering legal or physical restrictions imposed on the asset, public announcements or commitments made in relation to the intended use of the asset) and is summarised on the following page by asset category.

Right-of-use asset - subsequent measurement

The Authority depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The right-of-use assets are also subject to revaluation.

In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any and adjusted for certain remeasurements of the lease liability.

Note 7.3 includes additional information in connection with fair value determination of property, plant and equipment.

Impairment of property, plant and equipment

The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash-generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

4.1.1 Depreciation and amortisation

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Charge for the period		
ROU buildings	107,566	106,530
Leasehold improvements	8,297	8,298
Plant and equipment	7,555	12,426
Motor vehicles	48,963	44,049
ROU motor vehicles	20,602	21,966
Total depreciation and amortisation	192,983	193,269

All buildings, plant and equipment and other non-financial physical assets that have finite useful lives are depreciated. Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight-line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

Asset	Years Useful life
Buildings (right-of-use)	5 to 10
Leasehold improvements	5 to 10
Plant and equipment	3 to 10
Motor vehicles (including right-of-use vehicles)	1 to 4

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Right-of-use assets are generally depreciated over the shorter of the asset's useful life and the lease term. Where the Authority obtains ownership of the underlying leased asset or if the cost of the right-of-use asset reflects that the entity will exercise a purchase option, the entity depreciates the right-of-use asset over its useful life.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives.

4.1.2 Reconciliation of movements in carrying values of property, plant and equipment

	Leasehold improvements at fair value \$	Buildings (ROU) \$	Plant and equipment at fair value \$	Motor vehicles at fair value \$	Motor vehicles (ROU) \$	Total \$
2023						
Opening balance	53,176	761,509	9,625	106,574	100,172	1,031,056
Additions	-	-	14,770	87,703	-	102,473
Remeasurement	-	13,634	-	-	-	13,634
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(21,047)	(21,047)
Depreciation	(8,297)	(107,566)	(7,555)	(48,963)	(20,602)	(192,983)
Closing balance	44,879	667,577	16,840	145,314	58,523	933,133
2022						
Opening balance	61,474	855,273	22,051	160,778	122,138	1,221,714
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Remeasurement	-	12,766	-	-	-	12,766
Disposals	-	-	-	(10,155)	-	(10,155)
Depreciation	(8,298)	(106,530)	(12,426)	(44,049)	(21,966)	(193,269)
Closing balance	53,176	761,509	9,625	106,574	100,172	1,031,056

4.1.3 Other economic flows included in net result

Other economic flows measure the change in volume or value of assets or liabilities that do not result from transactions.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Net gain on disposal of non-financial assets		
Proceeds from sale of non-financial assets	(109)	26,661
Less written down value	-	(10,155)
Total net gain on disposal of non-financial assets	(109)	16,506

5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Introduction

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Authority's operations.

Accrued expenses

Accrued expenses represent goods or services that have been supplied but have not been invoiced by the supplier.

In estimating the amount of an accrued expense, consideration is given to the stage of completion of the services being performed.

Structure

5.1 Receivables

5.2 Payables

5.3 Other non-financial assets

5.1 Receivables

Current receivables

Contractual

Trade receivables

2023	2022
\$	\$
619,373	712,772
<u>619,373</u>	<u>712,772</u>

Statutory

GST input tax credits recoverable

53,335	-
<u>672,708</u>	<u>712,772</u>

Total current receivables

Contractual receivables are classified as financial instruments and categorised as financial assets at amortised cost. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial measurement they are measured at amortised cost less any impairment.

Statutory receivables do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment), but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes.

Details about the Authority's impairment policies, the Authority's exposure to credit risk, and the calculations of the loss allowance are set out in note 7.1.

5.2 Payables

	2023	2022
Current Payables		
Contractual	\$	\$
Trade payables	160,018	47,612
Accrued expenses	82,925	47,312
	<u>242,943</u>	<u>94,924</u>
Statutory		
FBT payable	9,463	8,968
Group tax	2,306	17,901
	<u>11,769</u>	<u>26,869</u>
Total current payables	<u>254,712</u>	<u>121,793</u>

Contractual payables are classified as financial instruments and are measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Authority prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid.

Statutory payables are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but are not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Maturity analysis of contractual payables (a)

2023	Carrying amount	Nominal amount	Less than 1 month	Maturity dates			
				1-3 months	3 months - 1 year	1-5 years	5+ years
Supplies and services	154,422	154,422	154,422				
Amounts payable to government and agencies	46,627	46,627	46,627				
Other payables	41,894	41,894	41,894				
Total	242,943	242,943	242,943				

2022							
Supplies and services	58,602	58,602	58,602	-	-	-	-
Amounts payable to government and agencies	3,764	3,764	3,764	-	-	-	-
Other payables	32,558	32,558	32,558	-	-	-	-
Total	94,924	94,924	94,924	-	-	-	-

Note: (a) Maturity analysis is presented using the contractual undiscounted cash flows

5.3 Other non-financial assets

	2023	2022
Current other non-financial assets	\$	\$
Prepayments	38,386	52,725
Total current other non-financial assets	<u>38,386</u>	<u>52,725</u>

Other non-financial assets include prepayments which represent payments in advance of receipt of goods or services or that part of expenditure made in one accounting period covering a term extending beyond that period.

6. HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by the Authority during its operations and other information related to financing activities of the Authority.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments, such as cash balances. Note 7 provides additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

Structure

- 6.1 Cash flow information and balances
- 6.2 Carry forward project funding
- 6.3 Leases
- 6.4 Commitments for expenditure

6.1 Cash flow information and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank, which are held for the purpose of meeting short-term cash commitments rather than for investment purposes, and which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

	2023	2022
Cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet:	\$	\$
Cash on hand	500	500
Cash at bank	10,011,242	9,393,874
Balance as per cash flow statement	10,011,742	9,394,374

6.1.1 Reconciliation of net result to cash flow from operating activities

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Net result for the period	453,111	1,993,901
Non-cash movements:		
Gain on disposal of non-current assets	109	(16,506)
Depreciation of non-current assets	192,983	193,269
	193,092	176,763
Movements in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	40,064	296,676
(Increase) in other non-financial assets	14,339	2,889
(Decrease)/increase in payables	132,919	(158,604)
(Decrease)/increase in employee related provisions	12,323	(42,738)
Net cash flows provided by/(used in) operating activities	845,848	2,268,887

6.2 Carry forward project funding

Catchment Management Authorities are responsible for the facilitation and coordination of catchments in an integrated and sustainable manner. This is achieved by undertaking projects funded by Victorian and Australian Government programs. The Authority received funding for specific projects which are guided by the Regional Catchment Strategy and delivered in line with the Authority's Corporate Plan approved by the Minister for Water.

The projects funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments can be undertaken over multiple financial years and is received at various stages of the project life based on contractual agreements. At the end of the financial year there are some projects that have not reached completion but will be completed within the contractual terms in future financial periods. At balance date the Authority has cash and cash equivalents that will be utilised to complete these projects in future financial years.

6.3 Leases

Information about leases for which the Authority is a lessee is presented below.

The Authorities leasing activities

The Authority leases various properties, photocopiers and motor vehicles. The lease contracts are typically made for fixed periods of 1-10 years with an option to renew the lease after that date. Lease payments for properties are renegotiated at the time of expiry.

Leases of photocopier leases are of low-value items. The Authority has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for these leases.

At 30 June 2023, the Authority was committed to low value leases and the total commitment at that date was \$18,540 See note 6.4.

6.3 (a) Right-of-use assets

Right-of-use assets are presented in note 4.1.

6.3 (b) Amount recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement

The following amounts are recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement for the year ending 30 June 2023 relating to leases:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Interest expense on lease liabilities	17,382	19,599
Expenses relating to short term leases	0	0
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Statement	17,382	19,599

6.3 (c) Amounts recognised in the Statement of Cash Flows

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Payments for principal	125,898	121,818
Interest expense on lease liabilities	17,382	19,599
Total cash outflows for leases	143,280	141,417

For any new contracts entered into, the Authority considers whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use as asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'. To apply this definition the Authority assesses whether the contract meets three key evaluations:

- Whether the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to the Authority and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights;

6.3 Leases (cont'd)

- Whether the authority has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and the authority has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use; and
- Whether the authority has the right to take decisions in respect of 'how and for what purpose' the asset is used throughout the period of use.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

Separation of lease and non-lease components

At inception or on reassessment of a contract that contains a lease component, the lessee is required to separate out and account separately for non-lease components within a lease contract and exclude these amounts when determining the lease liability and right-of-use asset amount.

Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

Lease Liability - initial measurement

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily determinable or the Authorities incremental borrowing rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments) less any lease incentive receivable;
- variable payments based on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- payments arising from purchase and termination options reasonably certain to be exercised.

Lease Liability - subsequent measurement

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes in-substance fixed payments.

When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or profit and loss if the right-of-use asset is already reduced to zero.

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The Authority has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Below market/Peppercorn lease

The Authority has no below market/peppercorn leases.

6.3 Leases (cont'd)

Presentation of right-of-use assets and lease liabilities

The Authority presents right-of-use assets as 'right-of-use assets' unless they meet the definition of investment property, in which case they are disclosed as 'investment property' in the balance sheet. Lease liabilities are presented as 'lease liabilities' in the balance sheet.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Current borrowings		
Lease liabilities	126,637	126,403
Total current borrowings	126,637	126,403
Non-current borrowings		
Lease liabilities (a)	623,574	757,119
Total non-current borrowings	623,574	757,119
Total borrowings	750,211	883,522

(a) Secured by the assets leased. Lease liabilities are effectively secured as the rights to the leased assets never to the lessor in the event of default.

Borrowings refer to interest bearing liabilities raised from lease liabilities.

Borrowings are classified as financial instruments. Interest bearing liabilities are classified at amortised cost unless the Authority elects to irrevocably designate them at fair value through profit or loss at initial recognition. The election depends on the nature and purpose of the interest-bearing liabilities.

The Authority has designated certain financial liabilities at fair value through net result to eliminate or significantly reduce the accounting mismatch that would otherwise arise. All other interest-bearing borrowings and other liabilities are initially recognised at the fair value of the consideration received less directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value relating to the Authorities own credit risk recognised in other comprehensive income and the remaining amount of changes in fair value recognised in net result. Amounts in other comprehensive income related to credit risk are not subject to recycling in profit loss but are transferred to retained earnings when realised.

6.3 Leases (cont'd)

Maturity analysis of leases

	Carrying amount	Nominal amount	Less than 1 month	1-3 months	3 months - 1 year	1-5 years	5+years
2023							
Lease liabilities	750,211	728,492	-	31,195	76,598	492,932	127,767
Total	750,211	728,492	-				
2022							
Lease liabilities	883,522	852,262	-	39,827	95,282	591,081	126,072
Total	883,522	852,262	-	39,827	95,282	591,081	126,072

Interest expense

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Interest on leases liabilities	17,382	19,599
Total interest expense	17,382	19,599

Interest expense' includes costs incurred in connection with the interest component of lease repayments. Interest expense is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments

As at 30 June 2023, the Authority has \$18.540 (2022:\$3,960).

7. RISKS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

Introduction

The Authority is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, (including exposures to financial risks) as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Authority relate mainly to fair value determination.

Structure

- 7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures
- 7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities
- 7.3 Fair value determination

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of the Authority's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than a contract, and as such, do not meet the definition of financial instruments.

Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- * the assets are held by the Authority to collect the contractual cash flows; and
- * the assets contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interests.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Authority recognised the following assets in this category:

- * cash and deposits; and
- * receivables (excluding statutory receivables).

Categories of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities at amortised cost

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they originated. They are initially measured at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest-bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. The Authority recognised the following liabilities in this category:

The Authority recognises the following liabilities in this category:

- payables (excluding statutory payables); and
- lease liabilities

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures (cont'd)

Financial instruments: Impairment of financial assets

The Authority records the allowance for expected credit loss for the relevant financial instruments, applying AASB 9's Expected Credit Loss approach. Subject to AASB 9 impairment assessment include the Authority's contractual receivables and statutory receivables.

While cash and cash equivalents are also subject to the impairment of AASB 9, there was no identified impairment loss.

Contractual receivables at amortised cost

The Authority applies AASB 9 simplified approach for all contractual receivables to measure the expected credit losses using a lifetime expected loss allowance base on the assumptions about the risk of default and the expected loss rates. The Authority has grouped contractual receivables on shared credit risk characteristics and days past due, and select the credit loss rate based on the Authority's past history, existing market conditions, as well as forward-looking estimates at the end of the financial year.

Under this approach, the expected loss rate for the year ending 30 June 2022 has been calculated at 0%, and as such no loss allowance has been recognised.

Statutory receivables at amortised cost

The Authority's non-contractual receivables arising from statutory requirements are not financial instruments. However, they are nevertheless recognised and measured in accordance with AASB 9 requirements as if those receivables are financial instruments.

Statutory receivables are considered to have low credit risk, taking into account the counterparty's credit rating, risk of default and capacity to meet contractual cash flow obligations in the near term. As a result, the loss allowance recognised for these financial assets during the period was limited to 12 months expected losses. There was no loss allowance recognised at the end of the financial year.

7.1.1 Financial instruments: Categorisation

	Note	Contractual financial assets at amortised cost \$	Contractual financial liabilities at amortised cost \$	Total \$
2023				
Contractual financial assets				
Cash and deposits	6.1	10,011,742	-	10,011,742
<i>Receivables: (i)</i>				
Trade receivables	5.1	619,373	-	619,373
Total contractual financial assets		10,631,115	-	10,631,115
Contractual financial liabilities				
<i>Payables: (i)</i>				
Trade payables	5.2	-	160,018	160,018
Accrued expenses	5.2	-	82,925	82,925
Lease liabilities	6.3	-	750,211	750,211
Total contractual financial liabilities		-	993,154	993,154
2022				
Contractual financial assets				
Cash and deposits	6.1	9,394,374	-	9,394,374
<i>Receivables: (i)</i>				
Trade receivables	5.1	712,772	-	712,772
Total contractual financial assets		10,107,146	-	10,107,146
Contractual financial liabilities				
<i>Payables: (i)</i>				
Trade payables	5.2	-	47,612	47,612
Accrued expenses	5.2	-	47,312	47,312
Lease liabilities	6.3	-	883,522	883,522
Total contractual financial liabilities		-	978,446	978,446

(i) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts.

7.1.2 Financial risk management objectives and policies

The Authority's main financial risks include credit risk, liquidity risk and interest rate risk. The Authority manages these financial risks in accordance with its financial risk management policy.

The Authority uses different methods to measure and manage the different risks to which it is exposed. Primary responsibility for the identification and management of financial risks rests with the financial risk management committee of the Authority.

Financial instruments: Credit risk

Credit risk refers to the possibility that a borrower will default on its financial obligations as and when they fall due. The Authority's exposure to credit risk arises from the potential default of a counter party on their contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to the Authority. Credit risk is measured at fair value and is monitored on a regular basis.

Credit risk associated with the Authority's contractual financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is the Victorian Government. For debtors other than the Government, the Authority has adopted a policy of only dealing with creditworthy counterparties and obtaining sufficient collateral where appropriate. For cash assets, the Authority's policy is to only deal with banks who are an Authorised Deposit Taking Institution. All cash and deposits are held with the Central Banking System (Westpac) and National Australia Bank.

Ageing analysis of contractual receivables

	Note	Gross carrying amount \$	Not past due and not impaired \$	Past due but not impaired - Less than 1 month \$
2022				
Receivables:				
Trade receivables	5.1	712,772	712,772	-
Total		712,772	712,772	-
2023				
Receivables:				
Trade receivables	5.1	619,373	619,373	-
Total		619,373	619,373	-

Trade and other receivables are due for settlement 7 days from invoice date. There are not material financial assets that are individually determined to be impaired.

7.1.2 Financial risk management objectives and policies (cont'd)

Financial instruments: Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk arises from being unable to meet financial obligations as they fall due. The Authority operates under the Government fair payments policy of settling financial obligations within 30 days and in the event of a dispute, making payments within 30 days from the date of resolution.

The Authority's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk. The Authority does have borrowings which only relate to lease liabilities, and maintains high levels of cash and deposits readily available to meet its financial obligations. The Authority manages its liquidity risk by maintaining adequate cash reserves and continually monitoring the Authority's expenditure commitments, borrowings and cash flow needs.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days. The credit period was reduced to 7 days during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Financial instruments: Market risk

The Authority's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with significant surplus funds held in deposits at call in the Central Banking System. The Authority has no exposure to foreign exchange risk or other price risk.

Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Authority manages its cash flow interest rate risks by investing surplus funds into fixed rate financial instruments. Management has concluded cash at bank that can be left at floating rates without necessarily exposing the Authority to significant risk.

The carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities that are exposed to interest rates and the Authority's sensitivity to interest rate risk are set out in the table that follows.

7.1.2 Financial risk management objectives and policies (cont'd)

Interest rate exposure of financial instruments

	Weighted average interest rate %	Carrying amount	Interest rate exposure		
			Fixed interest rate	Variable interest rate	Non-interest bearing
			\$	\$	\$
2023					
Financial assets					
Cash and deposits	3.13	10,011,742	-	10,011,242	500
Contractual receivables		619,373	-	-	619,373
Total financial assets		10,631,115	-	10,011,242	619,873
Financial liabilities					
Contractual payables		242,943	-	-	242,943
Lease liability	2.22	750,211	750,211	-	-
Total financial liabilities		993,154	750,211	-	242,943
2022					
Financial assets					
Cash and deposits	0.42	9,394,374	-	9,393,874	500
Contractual receivables	-	712,772	-	-	712,772
Total financial assets		10,107,146	-	9,393,874	713,272
Financial liabilities					
Contractual payables	-	94,924	-	-	94,924
Lease liability	2.22	883,522	883,522	-	-
Total financial liabilities		978,446	883,522	-	94,924

Interest rate risk sensitivity

The sensitivity analysis below shows the impact on the Authority's net result and equity for a movement of 100 basis points up and down in market interest rates.

	Carrying amount	Interest rate			
		-100 basis points		+100 basis points	
		Net result	Equity	Net result	Equity
		\$	\$	\$	\$
2023					
Cash and deposits (i)	10,011,242	(100,112)	(100,112)	100,112	100,112
2022					
Cash and deposits (i)	9,393,874	(93,939)	(93,939)	93,939	93,939

(i) Cash and deposits includes \$10,011,242 (2022: \$9,393,874) that is exposed to floating rates movements. Sensitivities to these movements are calculated as follows:

- 2023: $\$10,011,242 \times -0.010 = -\$100,112$; and $\$10,011,242 \times 0.010 = \$100,112$
- 2022: $\$9,393,874 \times -0.010 = -\$93,939$; and $\$9,393,874 \times 0.010 = \$93,939$

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets

As at 30 June 2023, the Authority has no known contingent assets. (2022: nil)

Contingent liabilities

As at 30 June 2023, the Authority has no known contingent liabilities. (2022: nil)

7.3 Fair value determination

Significant judgement: Fair value measurements of assets and liabilities

Fair value determination requires judgement and the use of assumptions. This section discloses the most significant assumptions used in determining fair values. Changes to assumptions could have a material impact on the results and financial position of the Authority.

The Authority's property, plant and equipment is carried at fair value.

In addition, the fair values of other assets and liabilities which are carried at amortised cost, also need to be determined for disclosure purposes.

The Authority determines the policies and procedures for determining fair values for both financial and non-financial assets and liabilities as required.

Fair value hierarchy

In determining fair values a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

The Authority determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by reassessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

7.3.1 Fair value determination of financial assets and liabilities

The Authority currently holds a range of financial instruments that are recorded in the financial statements where the carrying amounts are a reasonable approximation of fair value, either due to their short-term nature or with the expectation that they will be paid in full by the end of the 2022-23 reporting period.

These financial instruments include:

Financial assets

Cash and deposits

Receivables:

- Trade receivables

Financial liabilities

Lease liabilities

Payables:

- Trade payables
- Accrued expenses

7.3.2 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

Fair value measurement hierarchy

	Carrying amount as at 30 June 2023 \$	Fair value measurement at end of reporting period using:		
		Level 1 (i) \$	Level 2 (i) \$	Level 3 (i) \$
2023				
Leasehold improvement at fair value				
Leasehold improvement	44,879	-	-	44,879
Total leasehold improvement at fair value	44,879	-	-	44,879
Building (ROU) at fair value				
Building (ROU)	667,577	-	-	667,577
Total building (ROU) at fair value	667,577	-	-	667,577
Plant and equipment at fair value				
Plant and equipment	16,840	-	-	16,840
Total plant and equipment at fair value	16,840	-	-	16,840
Motor vehicles at fair value				
Motor vehicles	145,314	-	-	145,314
Total motor vehicles at fair value	145,314	-	-	145,314
Motor vehicles (ROU) at fair value				
Motor vehicles (ROU)	58,523	-	-	58,523
Total motor vehicles (ROU) at fair value	58,523	-	-	58,523
	Carrying amount as at 30 June 2022 \$	Fair value measurement at end of reporting period using:		
		Level 1 (i) \$	Level 2 (i) \$	Level 3 (i) \$
2022				
Leasehold improvement at fair value				
Leasehold improvement	53,177	-	-	53,177
Total leasehold improvement at fair value	53,177	-	-	53,177
Building (ROU) at fair value				
Building (ROU)	761,509	-	-	761,509
Total building (ROU) at fair value	761,509	-	-	761,509
Plant and equipment at fair value				
Plant and equipment	9,625	-	-	9,625
Total plant and equipment at fair value	9,625	-	-	9,625
Motor vehicles at fair value				
Motor vehicles	106,574	-	-	106,574
Total motor vehicles at fair value	106,574	-	-	106,574
Motor vehicles (ROU) at fair value				
Motor vehicles (ROU)	100,172	-	-	100,172
Total motor vehicles (ROU) at fair value	100,172	-	-	100,172

Note:

(i) Classified in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, see Note 7.3.

There have been no transfers between levels during the period.

The following methods and assumptions were used to estimate the fair value:

Leasehold improvements

Leasehold improvements are held at fair value and are depreciated over 10 years. As depreciation adjustments are considered as significant, unobservable inputs in nature, these assets are classified as level 3 fair value.

7.3.2 Fair value determination non-financial physical assets (cont'd)

Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is held at fair value. When plant and equipment or office furniture and equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method. As depreciation adjustments are considered as significant, unobservable inputs in nature, these assets are classified as level 3 fair value.

Motor vehicles

Motor vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method for owned vehicles and market rental value for leased vehicles. The Authority acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. Leased vehicles are disposed of on completion of the lease term. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers in the Authority who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the motor vehicles. As depreciation adjustments are considered as significant, unobservable inputs in nature, these assets are classified as level 3 fair value.

Buildings

For the Authority's buildings, the market rental with CPI increases method is used, adjusting for the associated depreciations. As depreciation adjustments are considered as significant, unobservable inputs in nature, buildings are classified as Level 3 fair value.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2023.

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

Reconciliation of Level 3 fair value movements

	ROU motor vehicles	ROU building	Leasehold improvements	Plant and equipment	Motor vehicles
2023	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Opening balance	100,172	761,509	53,176	9,625	106,574
Purchases/(sales)	(21,047)	-	-	14,770	87,703
Remeasurement	-	13,634	-	-	-
Depreciation	(20,602)	(107,566)	(8,297)	(7,555)	(48,963)
Closing Balance	58,523	667,577	44,879	16,840	145,314
2022					
Opening balance	122,138	855,273	61,474	22,051	160,778
Purchases/(sales)	-	-	-	-	(10,155)
Remeasurement	-	12,766	-	-	-
Depreciation	(21,966)	(106,530)	(8,298)	(12,426)	(44,049)
Closing Balance	100,172	761,509	53,176	9,625	106,574

7.3.2 Fair value determination non-financial physical assets (cont'd)

Description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

	Valuation technique	Significant unobservable inputs
Leasehold improvements	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of leasehold equipment
Plant and equipment	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of plant and equipment
Motor vehicles	Current replacement cost/ Market rental value	Cost per unit Useful life of motor vehicles
ROU building	Current replacement cost/ Market rental value	Direct cost per square metre Useful life of buildings

Significant unobservable inputs have remained unchanged since June 2021.

8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

This section provides additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

Structure

- 8.1 Ex-gratia expenses
- 8.2 Reserves
- 8.3 Responsible persons
- 8.4 Remuneration of executive officers
- 8.5 Related parties
- 8.6 Remuneration of auditors
- 8.7 Subsequent events
- 8.8 Economic dependency
- 8.9 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective

8.1 Ex-gratia expenses

Ex-gratia expenses are the voluntary payments of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write-off) that is not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability of or claim against the entity.

The Authority had no ex-gratia expenses for the year ending 30 June 2023 (2022: \$0).

8.2 Reserves

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Committed funds reserve: (i)		
Balance at beginning of financial year	319,621	232,704
Net transfers from accumulated funds	108,545	86,917
Balance at end of financial year	<u><u>428,166</u></u>	<u><u>319,621</u></u>
Total Reserves	<u><u>428,166</u></u>	<u><u>319,621</u></u>

(i) The Committed funds reserve has been established to recognise that the Authority receives funding for programs in advance of the program works taking place. The Authority is committed to expending these funds in accordance with its Corporate Plan in succeeding years. At the end of the financial year any accumulated funds which represents unexpended program funding, has been transferred to the reserve.

8.3 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

The names of the persons who were responsible persons of the Authority at any time during the financial year were:

The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP	Minister for Environment and Climate Action	01 Jul 2022 to 04 Dec 2022
The Hon Harriet Shing MP	Minister for Water	01 Jul 2022 to 04 Dec 2022
The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP	Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources	05 Dec 2022 to 30 June 2023
The Hon Harriet Shing MP	Minister for Water	05 Dec 2022 to 30 June 2023
The Hon Ingrid Stitt MP	Minister for Environment	05 Dec 2022 to 30 June 2023
Peter Hilbig	(Chair)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
Emelia Sudholz	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
David Brennan	(CEO)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
David Drage	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
Michael Porter	(Board Member & Deputy Chair)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
Michelle Graymore	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
Lavergne Lehmann	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
Julie Slater	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023
Angela Enbom	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023

Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable from the Authority in connection with the management of the Authority during the reporting period was:

Income band	2023	2022
\$0-\$9,999	-	1
\$10,000-\$19,999	6	7
\$30,000 - \$39,999	1	1
\$230,000 - \$239,999	-	1
\$260,000 - \$269,999	1	-
Total number of responsible persons	8	10
Total remuneration \$	409,565	380,151

The compensation detailed above excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Ministers receive. The Ministers' remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

8.4 Remuneration of executive officers

The Wimmera CMA did not have any executive officers, other than the CEO, to whom the Victorian Government's Public Entity Executive Remuneration (PEER) Policy applies. The CEO is an accountable officer and therefore disclosed under note 8.3 and Note 8.5.

8.5 Related parties

The Authority is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria. Related parties of the Authority include:

- all key management personnel and their close family members;
- all Cabinet Ministers and their close family members; and
- all departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

Significant transactions with government-related entities

During the year, the Authority received funding from the following government-related entities:

	2023 \$	2022 \$	
Entity			Nature
Dept of Energy, Environment & Climate Action*	5,386,604	5,544,923	SLA Project Funding
North Central Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
North Central Catchment Management Authority	15,500	12,727	River Detectives
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	2,640	-	Landcare Facilitator Training
Mallee Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
Mallee Catchment Management Authority	2,640	-	Landcare Facilitator Training
Melbourne Water	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC,
Trust for Nature	9,672	9,672	Workstation Costs
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
North East Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
Victorian Environmental Water Holder	8,703	47,782	Water Delivery Plan
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	33,000	33,000	Vic Catch , OCOC
Horsham Rural City Council	1,000	-	Wimmera Biodiversity Sem.
Department of Treasury & Finance	15,331	14,017	Lease Motor Vehicle Residual

* Dept of Energy, Environment and Climate Action was changed from Dept. of Environment, Land Water and Planning on 1 January, 2023.

During the year, the Authority made payments to the following government-related entities:

	2023 \$	2022 \$	
Entity			Nature
Dept of Energy, Environment & Climate Action*	-	13,333	On Ground Works/Monitoring
Victorian Auditor-Generals Office	16,500	9,800	Audit Fee
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	3,900	3,833	Software Hosting/Application
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	132,362	192,589	IT Support/Finance system/EAP
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	10,582	17,636	WAN Costs
Parks Victoria	86,619	104,732	On Ground Works
Trust for Nature (Victoria)	104,067	6,637	On Ground Works
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	55,000	32,000	Vic Catchment Admin
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	7,807	7,807	Governance Vic Catch Chair
Vicfleet	39,199	41,040	MV Lease
Dept of Families, Fairness & Housing	-	54,494	Secondment
Corrangamite Cathment Management Authority	272	-	Vic Catchment Chair Fees

* Dept of Energy, Environment and Climate Action was changed from Dept. of Environment, Land Water and Planning on 1 January, 2023.

8.5 Related parties (cont'd)

Significant transactions with government-related entities (cont.)

At balance date the Authority had the following receivables outstanding from government-related entities:

	2023 \$	2022 \$	
Entity			Nature
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	2,904	-	Landcare Facilitator Training

Key management personnel of the Authority includes all responsible persons as listed in Note 8.4.

The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Ministers receive. The Ministers' remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

Compensation of KMPs	2023 \$	2022 \$
Short-term employee benefits	369,172	339,001
Post-employment benefits	36,305	34,523
Other long-term benefits	4,088	6,627
Total	409,565	380,151

There were no related party transactions or balances that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interest.

Remuneration is disclosed in the financial statements based on the nature of the payment in accordance with AASB 124, The disclosure categories include:

- * short-term employee benefits: wages, salaries, paid annual and sick leave, profit sharing and bonuses (if payable within 12 months of the end of the period).
- * post-employment benefits: pensions, post-employment life insurance or health care, superannuation entitlements and other retired benefits.
- * other-long term employee benefits: long service leave, sabbatical leave, jubilee or other long service benefits, long-term disability benefits, deferred compensation and profit sharing and bonuses (not payable wholly within 12 months).

8.6 Remuneration of auditors

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Victorian Auditor-General's Office for audit of financial statements	16,500	16,000
Total remuneration of auditors	16,500	16,000

8.7 Subsequent events

The Authority has on 1 July, 2023 entered into a new lease arrangement for the Depot. This lease arrangement is not a new lease, it replaces the existing lease. The changed lease arrangement is for 5 years with a further option of 5. The right of use asset and the associated lease liability has not been adjusted to reflect this change at 30 June 2023.

No other matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the reporting period which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operation of the authority, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the authority in future financial years.

8.8 Economic dependency

The Authority is dependent on the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action for the majority of its revenue used to operate the entity. At the date of this report, the Board of Directors has no reason to believe the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action will not continue to support the Authority.

8.9 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective

Certain new and revised accounting standards have been issued but not effective for the 30 June 2023 reporting period. The Authority is reviewing its existing policies and assessing the potential implications of these accounting standards which includes:

AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities.

AASB-2-22-10 amends AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement by adding authoritative implementation guidance and illustrative examples for fair value measurements of non-financial assets of not-for-profit sector entities not held primarily for their ability to generate net cash inflows.

Among other things, the Standard:

- specifies that an entity needs to consider whether an asset's highest and best use differs from its current use only when it is held for sale or held for distributions to owners under AASB 5 Non-current Assets for Sale and Discontinued Operations or if it is highly probable that it will be used for an alternative purpose;
- clarifies that an asset's use is 'financially feasible' if market participants would be willing to invest in the asset's service capacity, considering both the capacity to provide needed goods or services and the resulting costs of those goods and services;
- specifies that if both market selling price and some market participant data required to fair value the asset are not observable, an entity needs to start with its own assumptions and adjust them to the extent that reasonably available information indicates that other market participants would use different data; and
- provides guidance on the application of the cost approach to fair value, including the nature of costs to be included in a reference asset and identification of economic obsolescence.

The Standard applies prospectively to annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024, with earlier application

Other Amending Standards

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to future reporting periods, but are considered to have limited impact on the Authority's reporting.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority

Opinion	<p>I have audited the financial report of the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (the authority) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balance sheet as at 30 June 2023 • comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • cash flow statement for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies • declaration in the financial statements. <p>In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the authority as at 30 June 2023 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.</p>
Basis for Opinion	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the authority in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
Board's responsibilities for the financial report	<p>The Board of the authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the authority's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



Paul Martin

as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

MELBOURNE
28 September 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 – disclosure index

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority's Annual Report 2022-23 is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation and pronouncements. This index has been prepared to help identify compliance with each of the statutory disclosure

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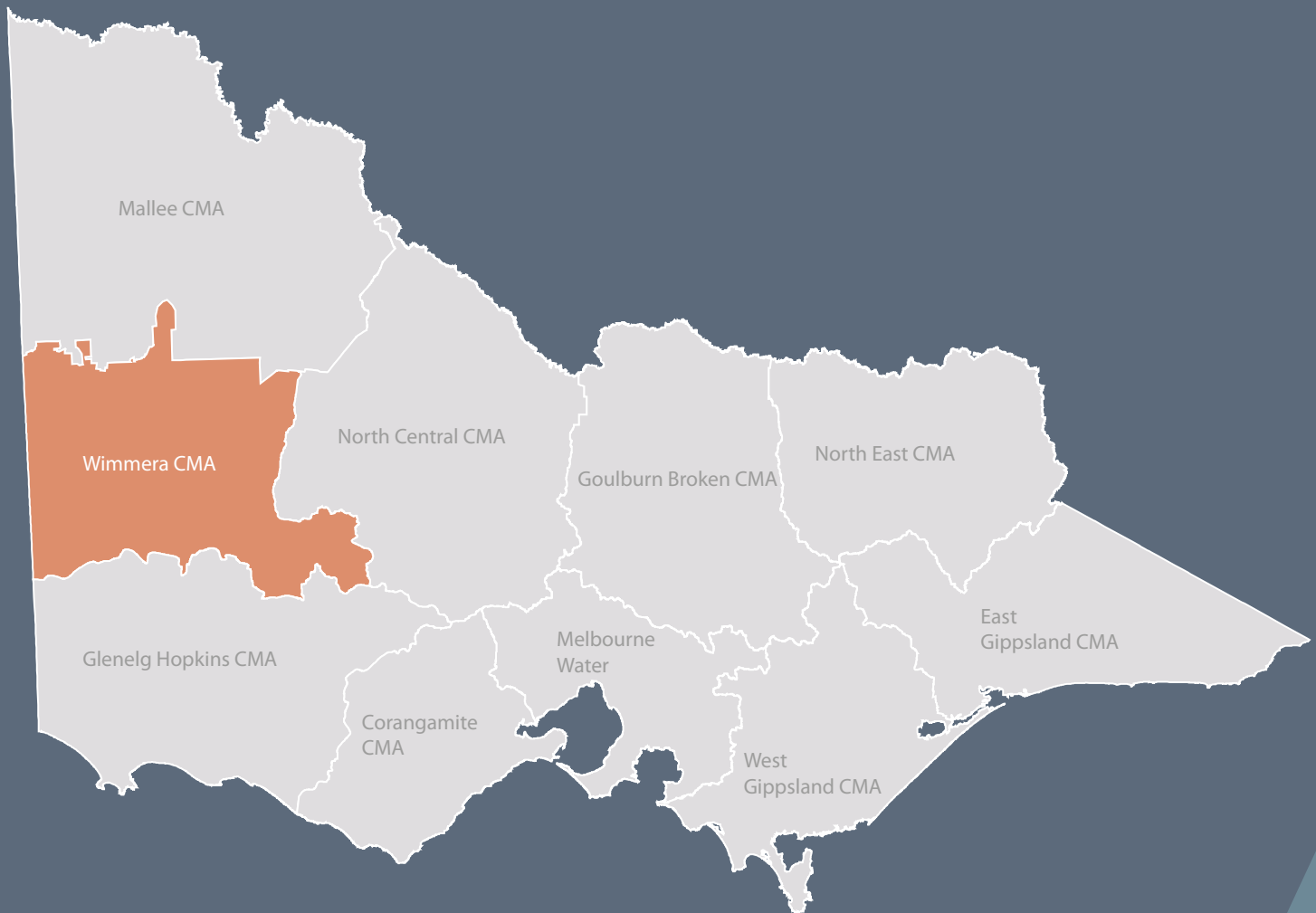
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Wimmera CMA is one of 9 CMAs and Melbourne Water working in Victoria under an integrated catchment management approach to achieve sustainability across the state.

Each CMA supports the role that communities and government play in protecting and enhancing local natural environments.



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