ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

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 were the Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Water for the period from 1 July 2025 to 14 April 2026 and the Hon. Harriet Shing Minister MLC for Water from 15 April 2026 to 30 June 2026, and The Minister for Environment from 1 July 2025 to 14 April 2026, the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP and the Hon. Enver Erdogan, MP Minister for Environment from 15 April 2026 to 30 June 2026

The 2025-26 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) 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: Taylors Lake

Abbreviations

BGLC	Barengi Gadjin Land Council
CaLP Act	*Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EMAC	Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation
EWR	Environmental Water Reserves
FOI	Freedom of Information
FRD	Financial reporting direction
FTE	Full–time equivalent
GHCMA	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
NRM	Natural resource management
PDSP	Protective Data Security Plan
PID Act	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012
RCS	Regional Catchment Strategy
The Act	Freedom of Information Act 1982

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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 2026.

Peter Hilbig
Chair - Wimmera CMA Board
31 August 2026

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present our annual report. We met all expectations as described by the Minister for Water's Letter of Expectations and successfully delivered $7.9 million of natural resource management projects and outcomes for the community.

Financially, the organisation is in a strong position, with internal and external audit results confirming sound processes and our balance sheet in an excellent position going into 2026-27. We were successful in receiving our recertification for ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems.

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

This year we welcomed 3 new board members: David Jochinke, Robyn Tucker and Danae McDonald. All 3 bring extensive experience in governance, agriculture, planning, health and culture. It is particularly encouraging to note that Danae has transitioned from a Board Associate role which was established as a development and succession initiative.

After 12 years and 8 years respectively, we farewelled David Drage and LaVergne Lehmann as directors. We thank them for their extensive and insightful counsel which they so generously shared. Their experience and commitment have been greatly appreciated. We also farewelled our Youth Associate Georgia Bennett.



Georgia made a significant contribution to the board bringing a perspective of youth and a passion about achieving community and environmental outcomes.

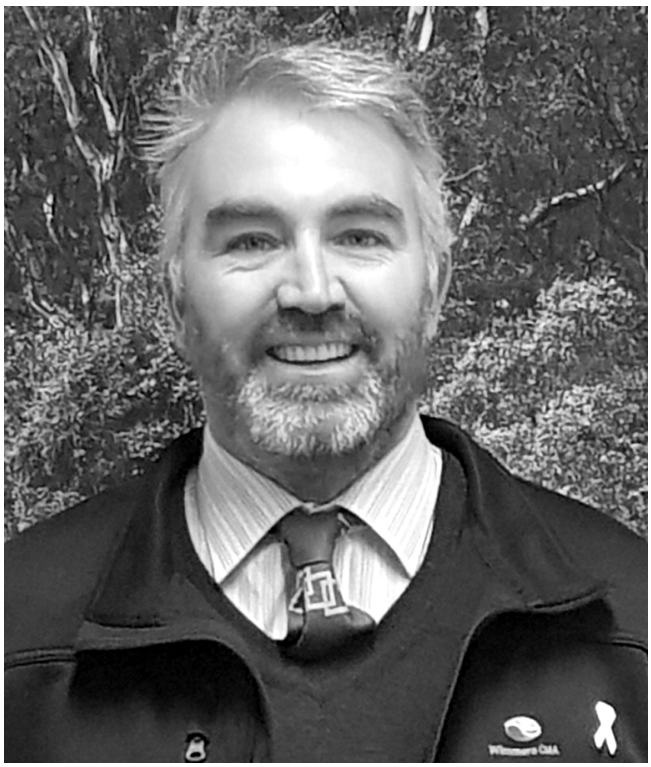
We congratulate our CEO David Brennan on being invited to undertake a secondment to help develop a new Victorian government entity. The board recognised this as an opportunity for professional and organisational development, and to share capacity and expertise. We also congratulate and thank Luke Austin for ably acting as CEO while David was otherwise engaged, and to other staff who stepped up to ensure quality and continuity of projects and services.

Significant time has been allocated to understand the impacts and opportunities from mineral sand developments, renewable energy projects and transmission line infrastructure in the region. These large projects represent significant land use change, along with risks, opportunities and transformation of our region.

As a Board we engage with and listen to our communities about natural resource management and sustainable rural enterprises; this underpins our decision making and strategic planning.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of fellow board members, staff and volunteers in contributing to a successful year for the Wimmera CMA.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer



Below average rainfall during 2025 impacted our catchment and community with dry conditions and reduced run-off affecting our water storages and limiting the availability of environmental water and the recreational values of many of our waterways. To mitigate these short-term effects, we continued to deliver drought refuge projects on sections of the Lower Wimmera River, Burnt Creek and Mount Cole Creek. Fortunately, the start of 2026 has delivered several months of above average rainfall.

For the third year in a row, our catchment experienced the impact of fire with the Grass Flat fire burning over 8,500 hectares. The fast-moving grass fire affected the communities of Natimuk, Quantong and Vectis with 17 homes lost and multiple sheds and outbuildings. The fire had repercussions for key environmental assets including the Wimmera River, Natimuk Creek and Lake, wetlands and stands of native and endangered vegetation. Recovery efforts continue to be a priority.

We continued to work closely with First Nations Peoples to support meaningful cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes. A highlight of our partnership was the release of Barengi Gadjin Land Council's updated 'Growing what is Good' Country Plan.

On behalf of Victorian CMAs, we partnered with CSIRO to lead the Victorian component of the National Soil Monitoring Program. In conjunction with Melbourne Water, Agriculture Victoria and all CMAs, the project will see 406 sites across Victoria sampled to help understand soil condition and trend and support stakeholders to make evidence-based decisions to improve soil health.

We were also successful in obtaining funding to significantly expand our soil moisture probe network assisting farmers to make informed farming decisions.

The Our Catchments, Our Communities Program continued to deliver highly valued community projects, our most high-profile project being the construction of 2 new pedestrian bridges in Horsham improving access to Apex Adventure Island. This project was delivered in partnership with Horsham Apex Club 15 and Horsham Rural City Council. We are members of the newly formed Mineral Sands Agricultural Land Restoration Working Group independent advisory body. It will provide Resources Victoria with practical, evidence-based advice on restoring agricultural land after mineral sands mining in northwest Victoria. The focus is on returning land to its pre-mining productivity.

As Chair of the Wimmera Integrated Water Management (IWM) forum, I led the refreshment of the Strategic Direction Statement which articulates key priority projects and community aspirations.

We continue to support government to ensure that the most up to date flood information is converted to planning schemes as quickly as possible and continue to work with the Regional Municipal Emergency Planning committee to better prepare the region for biosecurity threats such as avian influenza.

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 delivering more community and environmental outcomes across our catchment.



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 were the Hon Gayle Tierney, MP Minister for Water for the period from 1 July 2025 to 14 April 2026 and the Hon. Harriet Shing, MLC Minister for Water from 15 April 2026 to 30 June 2026, and The Minister for Environment from 1 July 2025 to 14 April 2026, the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos, MP and the Hon. Enver Erdogan, MP Minister for Environment from 15 April 2026 to 30 June 2026

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, economically and culturally 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 8 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 makes sure 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 an outcome, the organisation is respected through the demonstration of these values.

Wimmera CMA staff value:

Commitment to the organisation, demonstrated by

- Taking responsibility for our actions and following through on our commitments
- Representing the organisation in a professional, fair and positive manner
- Adapting to organisational needs

Integrity, by

- Behaving impartially, treating all parties fairly and equally
- Conducting ourselves in a transparent and open manner, free from pretence or deceit

Respect, by

- Treating people with consideration and understanding, having regard for their rights, feelings and perspectives
- Communicating respectfully and listening to different perspectives

Support, by

- Striving to bring the best out of others by working in a collaborative and positive manner
- Supporting staff through sharing knowledge and providing assistance
- Helping each other to achieve a common understanding, outcome or goal Our region

Our region

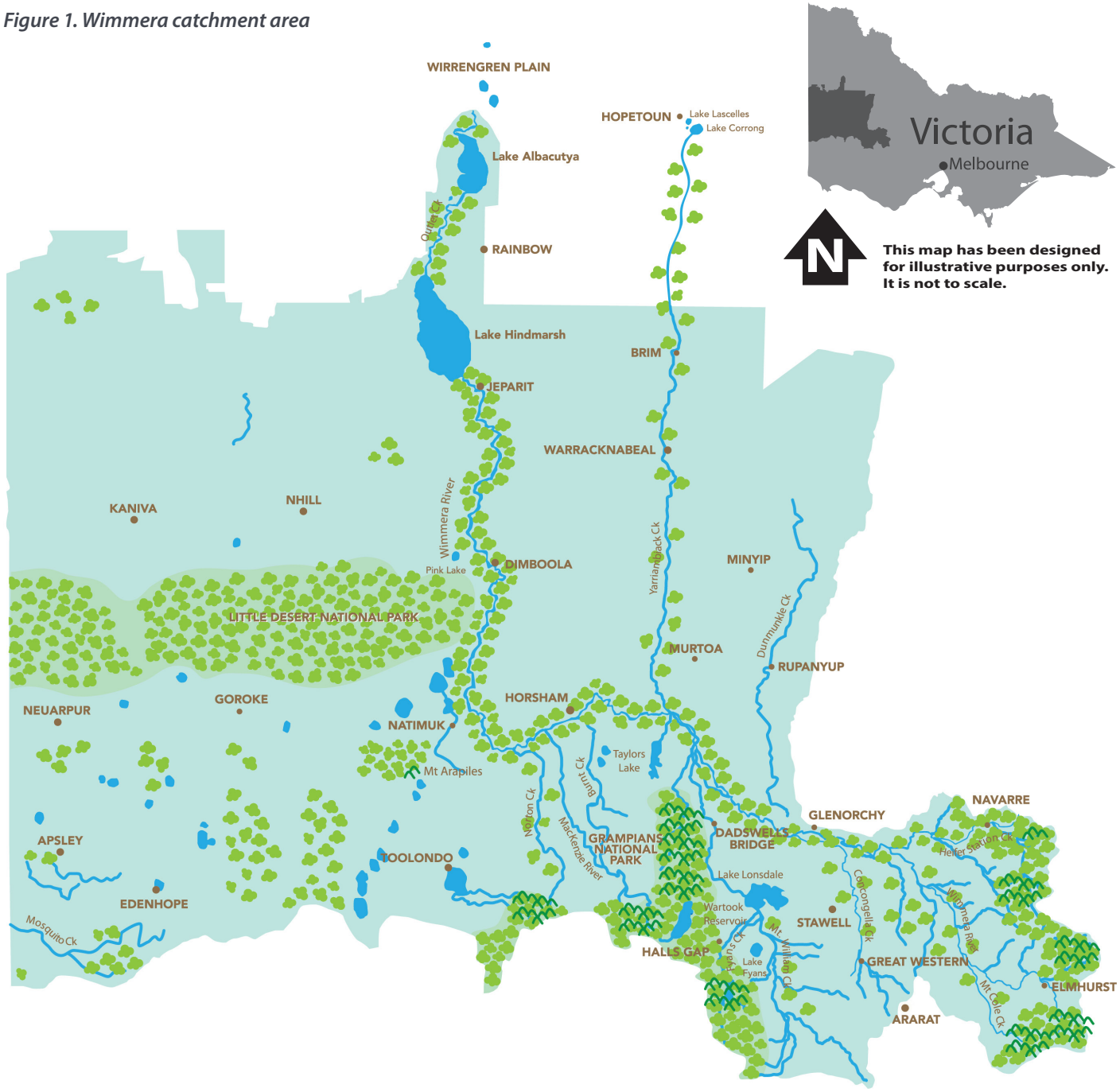
The Wimmera is in western Victoria and extends from the Pyrenees ranges to the east to Ngalpakatia/Ngelpagutya (Lake Albacutya) and the Big Desert National Park to the north and the South Australian border to the west (Figure 1). The region has a population of approximately 50,000 and around one-quarter 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 3,400, or 25% of Victoria's depressional wetlands (wetlands not linked to rivers or streams) (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, 2025), the 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 residents, landholders, land managers, First Nations 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	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, Department of Transport and Planning, Trust for Nature. 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.	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, local 'Landcare' groups, '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, Dimboola Boat and Water Ski Club.	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, National Malleefowl Recovery Group, One Basin 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
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, Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network.	Education partner, capacity building
Consultants and contractors	Used when internal expertise gaps exist.	Service providers

Operational performance

Performance targets and measures

Wimmera CMA's performance indicators and targets in Table 2 are based on our commitment to deliver on legislative compliance requirements. These include the CaLP Act Statement of Obligations, and the Water Act Statement of Obligations, as well as our business objectives identified in the Corporate Plan and Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS).

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
Improved performance and demonstrating outcomes	• "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."	✓	• Complied fully with standing directions of the Minister for Finance – the Financial Management Act 1994. • Clean internal and external audit results. • Reduction in carbon emissions throughout the year. • Attained 3-year certification for ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certification. • No lost days due to staff injuries.
Climate change Provide services that mitigate and adapt to climate change and climate variability.	• "Wimmera CMA becomes carbon neutral. • Explore opportunities to strengthen adaptation and mitigation strategies with regional partners. • CMA recognised as a leader in pragmatic climate change solutions and outcomes."	✓	• "Wimmera CMA in partnership with Wimmera Southern Mallee Development continues to support the Wimmera Southern Mallee Climate Action group which aims to deliver local climate change action. • Continued to implement actions through a sustainability committee towards carbon neutrality. • Continue to contribute to the Vic Catchments Climate Change coordinator role and associated projects."
Waterway and catchment health Provide leadership in delivery of programs to improve the health of priority waterways and catchments.	• 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.	✓	• "Wimmera Strategic Water Management Working Group met regularly to provide effective governance and advice regarding waterway health, integrated water management and floodplain management. • Continued to provide flood advice, approvals and referral responses. • Continue to assess and condition applications for works on waterways permits. • Supported landholders and community groups to protect and enhance the regions waterways. • Assisted local government to undertake new flood studies and implement new planning schemes. • Implemented Integrated Water Management Strategic Directions Statement."

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.	• Agricultural sector is adapting to climate change. • Landholders building capacity to implement actions to maintain or enhance soil resilience.	✓	• Implemented Future Drought Fund project activities. • Continued to develop partnerships to support water for agriculture including Smart Water project with 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. • Leading the Victorian delivery of the national soils monitoring program under the National Soils Strategy.
Community engagement and partnerships All aspects of service delivery will be customer and community centred.	• Strengthen community engagement in regional planning and implementation.	✓	• "Delivered the latest iteration of Australia's longest running natural resource management (NRM) and landholders longitudinal survey. • Supported community engagement in regional planning and implementation of changes to Landcare facilitator hosting arrangements and the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. • Supported local NRM practitioners to undertake professional development, including cross-regional training for Landcare professionals with GHCMA 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..	• 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).	✓	• "Supported partnership efforts to advance the recovery and long-term stewardship of the fire-impacted Ranch Billabong. • Collaborated on funding proposals to support BGLC-led initiatives to recognise and strengthen cultural values and economic inclusion in the water sector. • Continued partnership-based activities to rehabilitate, protect and improve access to Country in line with Barengi Gadjin Land Council's (BGLC) Country Plan. • Strengthened engagement with BGLC's nursery enterprise to support BGLC-led native plant production, revegetation and cultural land management outcomes. • Supported BGLC and DEECA to continue to engage on delivery of a Landcare for Country pilot in the region. • Continued to support BGLC and Landcare groups to explore, test and build partnerships focused on cultural burning activities."
Recognise recreational values Support the wellbeing of communities by considering recreational values of waterways.	• 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).	✓	• "Constructed visitor facilities including pedestrian bridges, walking and cycling trails and boat launching facilities to enhance the visitor experience around our waterways. • Continued to partner with local councils, public land managers and community groups to identify and plan projects to improve access and visitor experiences around our waterways. work with HRCC to link over 20 kilometres of walking/cycling tracks along the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River)."

Strategic domain	Outcome (1-5 year ambitions)	Result	Comments
Resilient and liveable cities and towns Contribute to healthy communities and support resilient, liveable environments.	• "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)."	✓	• "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."
Leadership, diversity and culture Reflect the diverse needs of the community.	• "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. • Maintain a diverse leadership team."	✓	• "Maintained a minimum of 50% females in our workplace. • Provided opportunity to act in leadership roles as and when opportunities arose. • Implemented 'Leading the Way' and used disability service providers when applicable."

Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy

Wimmera CMA worked with regional stakeholders, First Nations groups 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 (https://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 5 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.

Wimmera CMA completed a mid-life review of the Regional Catchment Strategy in 2025-26. The findings of the review will inform ongoing implementation of the strategy and the development of the strategy's next iteration.

Initiatives and key achievements

Carbon Farming Outreach Program

On behalf of Victorian CMAs and Melbourne Water in partnership with Agricultural Victoria and Landcare Victoria we managed the delivery of the Carbon Farming Outreach Program.

Funded by the Australian Government the program delivered 143 events across the state exploring biodiversity and carbon markets with farmers, service providers and decision makers. Events were co-designed with local communities and trusted experts.

The program had over 8,400 participants with an average satisfaction rate of 87% with over half of participants on average reporting plans to take action to lower on-farm emissions and improve their local environments for a range of benefits.

National Soil Monitoring Program

On behalf of Victorian CMAs, Melbourne Water and Agriculture Victoria we continued to lead the delivery of the Victorian component of the National Soil Monitoring Program. Samples from 207 of the 406 Victorian sites have been collected and sent for analysis.

The initial results have been shared with land managers and will support them to make evidence-based decisions to improve soil health whilst assisting them to prioritise their soil health and strengthen their soil knowledge and capability to restore, improve and maintain soil health.

Cyber security

An internal audit was conducted during the year to affirm the attainment of level 1 of the Essential 8 across our systems. With the exception of some minor features identified and since implemented; we can confirm that we are at level 1. We continue to work with our ITC contractors OttoIt to monitor and improve our systems with a focus on cybersecurity enhancement. This initiative aligns with the Minister's letter of expectations, and the Australian Cyber Security Centre's (ACSC) guidelines to strengthen our organisation against cyber threats.

We have commenced work with consultants, Secure Arc to document and maintain this information in a live system. The final steps in this project will involve utilising the system to identify new opportunities and next targets to ensure that we are well positioned to continue to enhance and prepare for future advancements in cyber security.

SharePoint migration

This year has seen the finalisation of our migration from SharePoint on Prem to SharePoint Online. This project has involved the redesign of the structure of the filing system to reflect the changing needs of the business; and rolling out training to all staff. We continue to refine and improve the system through continued use and identification of opportunities. The final reconciliation of files has the redundant server ready for shutdown in early July.

Bird flu preparedness

Wimmera CMA, in collaboration with DEECA and Local Government, has driven the establishment of a Wimmera Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) sub-committee to prepare for a potential arrival of H5N1 avian influenza. The sub-committee will correspond with municipal councils, GWMWater and emergency services to gather data about potential places where 'hot spot' outbreaks of the disease might occur in the Wimmera - and how the region might respond under Victorian guidelines. The aim is to inform a DEECA led action and response plan.

Social drivers survey

The latest iteration of Australia's longest running longitudinal rural landholder survey was delivered in partnership with Murdoch University, with surveys distributed to 2,500 Wimmera landholders with properties over 10 hectares. For the sixth time since 2004, farmers and rural landholders across the Wimmera region of Victoria were invited to share their views on local land and farm management practices to help guide investment. No other Australian farming region has such detailed information about trends and priorities shaping landholder decision-making over the past 3 decades.

Landcare facilitator positions

Significant time and energy were directed towards managing substantial changes to Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program hosting arrangements while maintaining continuity of support for Landcare groups, networks and communities across the Wimmera. Decisions by Horsham Rural City Council and West Wimmera Shire Council to cease hosting Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program-funded positions created uncertainty for facilitators, local Landcare organisations and community stakeholders. Considerable effort was required to manage the change process, explore alternative delivery arrangements, and help maintain local relationships, knowledge and delivery momentum.

Floodplain reforms

Wimmera CMA has been working in collaboration with North Central CMA, Northern Grampians Shire Council and DEECA to prepare the Stawell flood-related planning scheme amendment for approval by the Minister for Planning to commence community consultation. Subject to Ministerial approval, anticipated within the next 6 weeks, community consultation is scheduled to commence in September 2026. This amendment process represents a significant milestone as the first CMA-led Ministerial amendment for flood-related planning controls. Reaching this stage reflects the strong collaboration, commitment and effort of all project partners and stakeholders involved in the project to date

Social media engagement

Wimmera CMA online communications continue to reach our audience, with our engagement numbers continuing to build again. Our biggest audience reach is still through our website (Figure 2) with our main pages of attraction being the home page and the Wimmera Region, followed by the River Flows Map, Publications, People and Careers, Flood Advice and our Catchment Management Map (POZI). Our most popular stories were the Wimmera Regional Waterway Strategy and Soil Moisture Probe Portal.

Facebook still holds our biggest social media audience and continues to grow. We continue to use our online presence to share and educate the public about our region; our local and threatened plants and animals; projects we are involved in and to promote events of ours and our partners.

Wimmera CMA's strategy this past year has been focussed on promoting work we have been involved in or are doing and sharing this through short videos and less sharing of others posts. This has helped social media post interactions and effectiveness increase, leading to more followers.

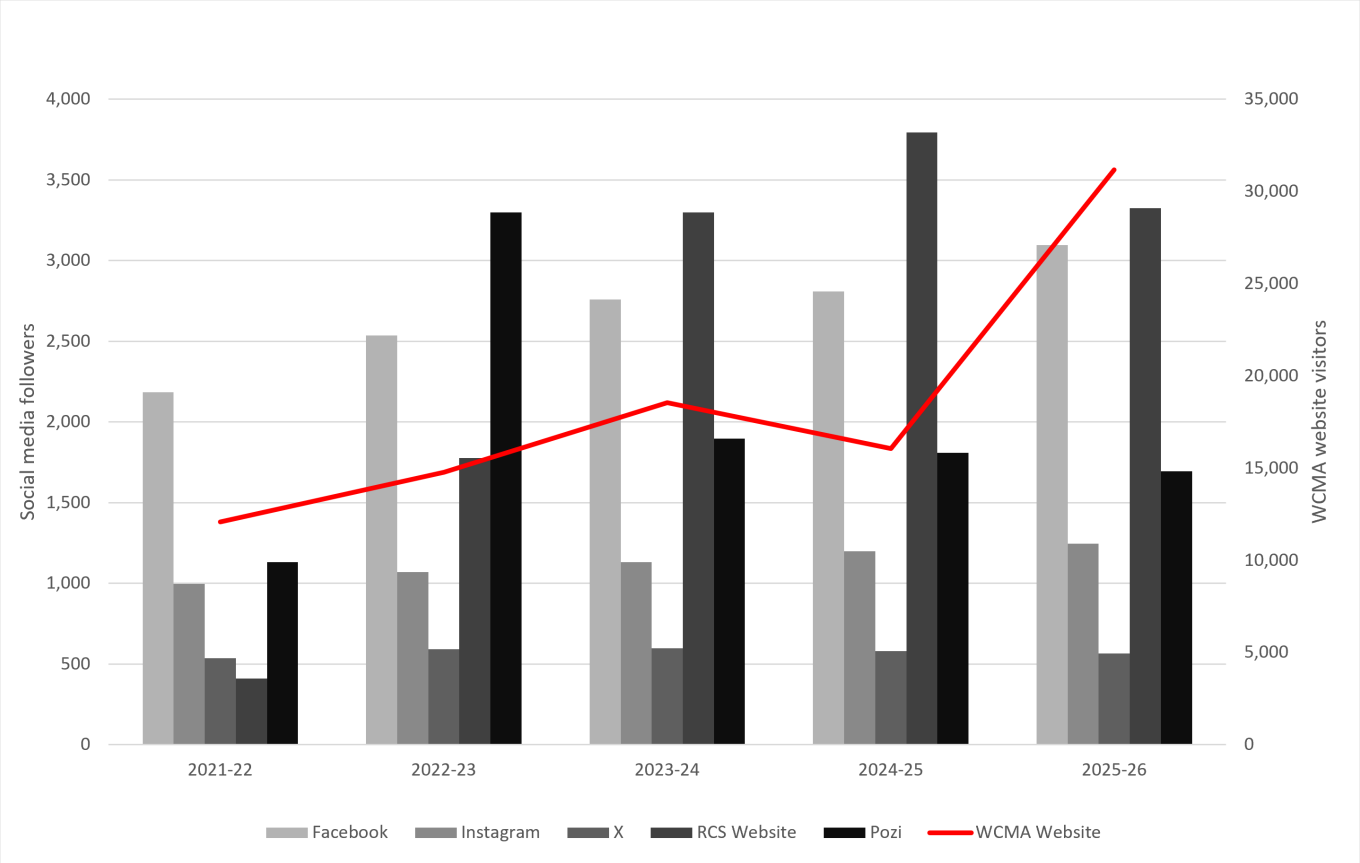


Figure 2. Number of participants accessing Wimmera CMA's website and social media pages annually.

Catchment condition & management report

This section of the annual report provides an assessment of the condition and management of the region's environment and a reflection on the likely impact of annual scale actions, events, and observed change within the 2025-26 financial year. A key purpose of monitoring changes in the operating context is to help identify opportunities for adapting and improving the way the environment is managed.

The report is structured in line with a state-wide outcome framework that links regional outcomes sought by catchment communities to the policy outcomes of the Victorian and Australian Governments. These are outlined in the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy (https://wimmera.rcs.vic.gov.au/).

Reporting in 2025-26 focuses on assessing Wimmera CMA's contribution to the management of land and water resources. Reporting on condition indicators will be undertaken as part of the final review of the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy.

Introduction

Wimmera CMA monitors catchment condition and management to help identify opportunities for improving the way the region's water, land and biodiversity are managed and regional communities and stakeholder organisations are supported and engaged.

This *Catchment Condition and Management Report* includes 5 themes:

1. Water
2. Land
3. Biodiversity
4. Community
5. Integrated Catchment Management.

Each theme section provides:

- A brief description of the theme in the Wimmera.
- An assessment of the condition and management of the theme during 2025-26.
- Evidence of changes to catchment condition brought about by actions and events during 2025-26.
- A summary of catchment and natural resource management actions achieved by Wimmera CMA, partner organisations and groups during 2025-26.

How to interpret this report

The assessment is based on a set of state-wide indicators outlined in the *Regional Catchment Strategy outcomes framework*, augmented with regionally specific indicators that have been selected based on the availability and quality of data, and linkages back to regional and policy outcomes.

Three types of indicators contribute to catchment condition and management reporting:

1. **Contextual indicators** help to identify how external environmental factors such as rainfall, river flows and soil moisture may have influenced program delivery
2. **Condition indicators.** Where appropriate, this report provides a condition rating (see Table 3) based on the state of the catchment theme during 2025-26. Assessments are based on available science and expert advice, as well as evidence gained during the year. The 2025-26 annual report includes a summary rating for catchment condition building on previous years' assessments.
3. **Management indicators** assess the delivery of Wimmera CMA's programs and activities. Where appropriate, this report provides a rating (see Table 6) based on delivery of planned activities and targets relevant to the catchment theme.

Reporting on management and contextual indicators is undertaken annually. Reporting on condition indicators is undertaken less frequently, reflecting the timeframes to observe changes in the natural environment and the availability of supporting data.

The 2025-26 annual report includes the 2022-23 condition ratings and an update on factors that may have influenced catchment condition over the preceding year.

As much as possible the reporting format attempts to provide a transparent path between the evidence and the assessment. It is not a definitive assessment but an evaluation at a point in time, based on the best available evidence.

Condition ratings

An overall condition rating for each theme is provided based on the 2022-23 Catchment Condition Report. Overall condition ratings were assigned in 2022-23 based on a set of condition indicators for each theme and consideration of other influencing factors. The assessment incorporated available science, expert advice and other evidence.

This annual update aims to provide an overview of the factors that may have influenced catchment condition during 2025-26 or any new information relating to catchment condition that will inform future assessments.

Table 3. Condition indicator ratings.

Condition rating	Description
Good	The condition is classified as good.
Moderate	The condition is classified as moderate.
Poor	The condition is classified as poor.
Not applicable	A condition rating is not applicable for this indicator.

The condition trend reflects change in the condition of catchment themes over the short to medium term. The condition trend rating in Table 4 describes the observed change in the environmental asset during 2025-26. 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.

Table 4. Condition trend rating.

6-year condition trend	Description
Positive	The condition is moving in a positive direction over the short to medium term pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.
Neutral	The condition is in a neutral state over the short to medium term and is considered stable pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.
Concerned	The condition is cause for concern over the short to medium term and will continue to decline pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.

Wimmera catchment condition summary 2025-26

Table 5 provides a summary of catchment condition during 2025-26, trend in condition over the past 5 years and a management rating for 2025-26.

Table 5. Summary catchment condition assessment for 2025-26.

Theme	Condition		Management	Summary comment for 2025-26
	Condition rating for 2025-26	6-year trend in condition	Management rating for 2025-26	
Water	Poor	Concerned	Above expectations	**Waterway condition across the Wimmera catchment was poor in 2025-26**, with conditions deteriorating due to ongoing low rainfall and runoff. Limited natural flows and allocations of water for the environment constrained management options, requiring a strategic focus on maintaining base flows and delivering targeted freshes to support water quality and sustain aquatic habitats including drought refuges. The impacts of dry conditions were widespread. Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) dried completely, and the drying of many shallow wetlands also increased their vulnerability to cropping and other land-use pressures.
Land	Moderate	Neutral	Satisfactory	**Land condition across the Wimmera catchment was generally good in 2025-26.** High levels of ground cover during autumn helped protect soils from wind and water erosion, while soil health indicators remained stable, with average soil organic carbon (1.3%) and soil pH (6.3) similar to 2024-25. Although soil organic carbon remained below optimal levels for productivity and soil health, above average rainfall in the final quarter of the year substantially improved soil moisture, resulting in near-full soil moisture profiles across much of the catchment, supporting favourable conditions heading into the 2026-27 season.
Biodiversity	Moderate	Neutral	Above expectations	**Biodiversity condition across the Wimmera catchment was stable overall in 2025-26, but ongoing pressures warrant close monitoring.** Positive signs included strong native fish populations in priority waterways, new platypus detections in the MacKenzie River and increased detections of critically endangered south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo. Malleefowl showed positive signs of presence and breeding in the region, despite their habitat being heavily impacted by bushfire in early 2025. However, biodiversity values continued to be threatened by invasive species, habitat loss, bushfire impacts and fluctuating seasonal conditions. Unseasonal rainfall supported post-fire vegetation recovery but also increased pest risks and favoured rabbit population growth.

Theme	Condition		Management	Summary comment for 2025-26
	Condition rating for 2025-26	6-year trend in condition	Management rating for 2025-26	
Community	Good	Neutral	Satisfactory	**Wimmera CMA recorded strong community engagement in 2025-26,** with more than 4,100 people participating in around 223 events. Highlights included the Black Snake Productions Wildlife Show at the Horsham Fishing Competition, Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar, Perennial Pasture Systems annual conference, Landcare native vegetation planting events and nature-learning activities with local schools. Participation varied across the catchment due to seasonal conditions, volunteer capacity, and broader regional pressures. Despite these challenges, engagement outcomes were positive. Landcare activity levels remained mixed, while Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council continued their strong partnership to deliver shared regional outcomes.
Integrated Catchment Management	Good	Neutral	Satisfactory	**Integrated catchment management outcomes remained strong in 2025-26,** supported by Wimmera CMA's established partnerships with community groups, industry, Traditional Owners and government agencies. Through collaborative forums, targeted engagement and formal agreements, partners worked together to deliver shared regional outcomes and address complex catchment challenges. A key focus was the development of the new *Wimmera Regional Waterway Strategy* and its *Implementation Plan*, with stakeholders and community groups and members contributing valuable local knowledge and expertise. These partnerships continued to strengthen coordinated planning and integrated catchment management across the region.

Wimmera catchment management summary 2025-26

Management ratings

Management indicators assess the delivery of Wimmera CMA's programs and activities. Each theme contains several management indicators representing activities implemented for each theme. These indicators are described in each theme section in this report.

This report assigns a management rating for each indicator based on a comparison of activities achieved during 2025-26 against those funded and planned for delivery. The ratings are described in Table 6.

Table 6. Management indicator ratings.

Management rating	Description
Above expectations	The delivery of activities and programs associated with the indicator was above expectations during 2025-26. This applies where most planned activities were delivered, or targets were met or exceeded.
Satisfactory	The delivery of activities and programs associated with the indicator met expectations during 2025-26. This applies where most targets were met or almost achieved.
Below expectations	The delivery of activities and programs associated with the indicator was below expectations during 2025-26. This applies where some critical activities or targets were not delivered, or most activities or targets were not delivered.
Not applicable	A management rating is not applicable for the indicator.
Unknown	The rating for the indicator is not known or not assessable.

An overall management rating for 2025-26 has been assigned to each theme based on the individual indicator ratings and other factors that may have influenced delivery outcomes. An accompanying management summary explains the basis for each rating and identifies key influences on program delivery such as climate conditions, natural events, organisational capacity and socio-economic factors.

Table 7 provides the overall management rating for each theme for 2025-26. Table 7 summarises the number of indicators rated as *above expectations, met expectations, below expectations, not applicable* or *unknown* and includes the total number of indicators assessed for each theme.

A summary description of management for each theme is provided below.

Table 7. Summary catchment management assessment for 2025-26.

Theme	Management rating 2025-26 (Number of indicators assessed as meeting each category)					Overall management rating
	Not applicable / Unknown	Below expectations	Met expectations	Above expectations	Total number of indicators assessed	
Water	1	0	2	4	**6**	Above expectations
Land	1	0	2	0	**2**	Met expectations
Biodiversity	-	0	0	3	**3**	Above expectations
Community	-	0	4	0	**4**	Met expectations
Integrated catchment management	-	0	1	0	**1**	Met expectations

Management summary for each theme

Water

Wimmera CMA worked with partner organisations and private landholders to protect and enhance the region's waterways and riparian landscapes. Nearly 4,785 hectares of riparian land were protected or improved, exceeding expectations, while weed control was undertaken across more than 3,130 hectares. Eighteen riparian management agreements covering 476 hectares were established, and 21 kilometres of fencing were installed to manage stock access. Environmental watering targets were achieved, with 9,536 megalitres delivered to rivers and streams and 42.5 megalitres delivered to wetlands in accordance with the Seasonal Watering Plan.

Land

Wimmera CMA supported improved land management practices across more than 477 hectares of private farmland, helping landholders protect waterways and biodiversity through fencing, weed and pest animal control, and revegetation activities. Monitoring and assessment programs continued to inform sustainable land management, including six land use and management surveys across the region, soil moisture monitoring at 80 sites, and soil sampling at 30 sites to assess key indicators such as soil organic carbon.

Biodiversity

Wimmera CMA and partner organisations achieved strong biodiversity management activity across the region. More than 403 hectares were revegetated with native species, exceeding expectations and enhancing habitat. Extensive pest animal control was undertaken across more than 180,800 hectares, benefiting riparian and terrestrial habitats and priority species such as Malleefowl and the south-eastern red-tailed black-cockatoo. Wimmera CMA also partnered with Trust for Nature to secure the permanent protection of 53 hectares of high-quality wetlands through conservation covenants, contributing to the long-term conservation of important native habitats and ecosystems.

Community

Wimmera CMA continued to strengthen partnerships, community engagement and participation in natural resource management. Collaboration with Barengi Gadjin Land Council supported cultural outcomes, including improvements to the Dalki Garringa Nursery and development of the draft Wimmera Regional Waterway Strategy. More than 4,100 people participated in 223 events, an increase of almost 2,000 participants from 2024-25. Community involvement remained strong, with more than 1,200 volunteers contributing an estimated 13,800 hours to Landcare projects, while all available Victorian Landcare Grant funding was allocated to support local environmental initiatives.

Integrated catchment management

Wimmera CMA maintained strong partnerships with a diverse range of organisations, supporting the effective delivery of natural resource management programs across the region. These partnerships included local governments, government agencies, First Nations organisations, Landcare networks, farmer-led agricultural groups, biodiversity organisations and nature-based recreation

groups. Ongoing collaboration enabled the sharing of knowledge, resources and expertise, helping to achieve environmental, cultural and community outcomes while strengthening regional capacity to manage and protect natural assets.

Contextual information

Contextual indicators are tools used to measure and assess progress or performance in a particular area. In this report they identify how environmental factors such as rainfall, river flows, soil moisture, exposed soil and natural extreme events may have influenced catchment condition and management program delivery.

Annual rainfall

This indicator looks at the Wimmera's annual rainfall. The amount and timing of rainfall strongly influence the condition of the catchment's land, water and biodiversity. For example, it impacts on agricultural production, water flows and quality, environmental flows, habitat availability, and plant and animal breeding and growth.

Figure 3 shows that annual rainfall in the Wimmera from January to December 2025 was generally below the annual average since the year 2000 (Australian National University, 2026). Conditions were relatively dry during the second half of 2025. Rainfall increased from February 2026, resulting in above average rainfall across most of the region for the 2025-26 financial year overall (July 2025 to June 2026).

A small area immediately east of Horsham recorded very much above average rainfall for the financial year, while parts of the upper catchment recorded average rainfall. Figure 4 presents rainfall conditions for the 2025-26 financial year (Bureau of Meteorology, 2026).

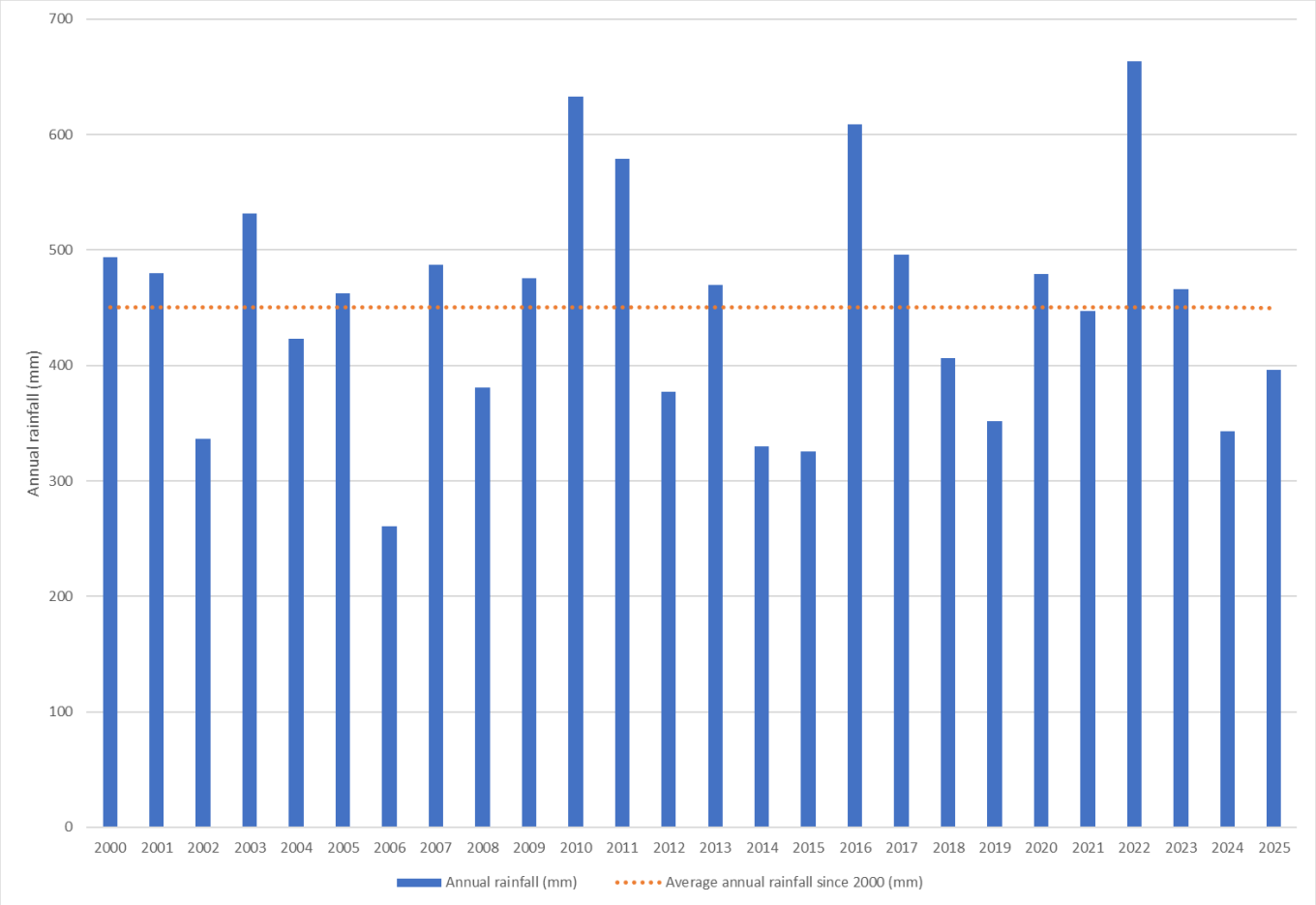


Figure 3. Total annual Wimmera rainfall compared against the average by calendar year (Australian National University, 2026).

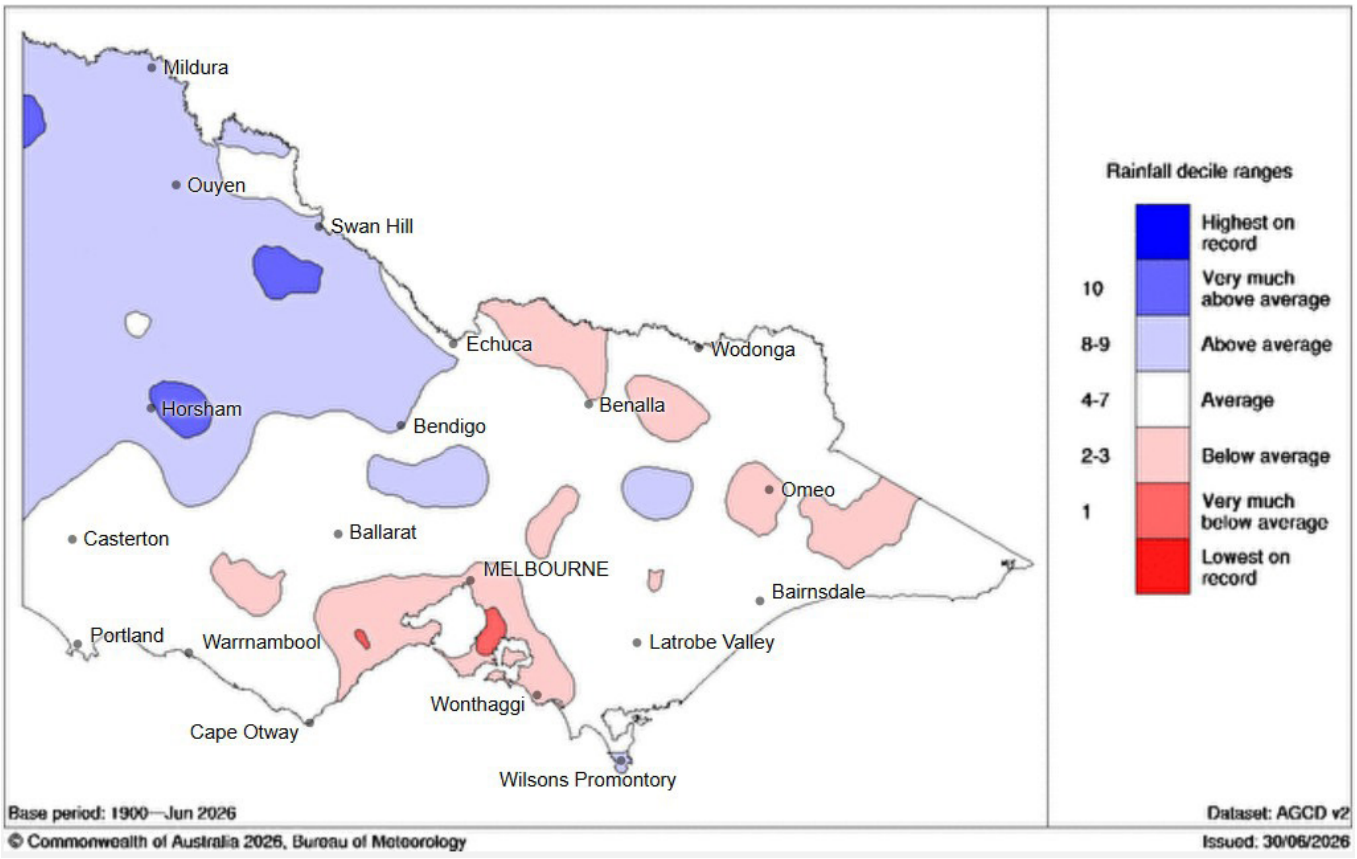


Figure 4. Victorian rainfall deciles from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 (Bureau of Meteorology, 2026).

River and wetland inflows

This indicator provides estimates of annual inflows to the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) during the 2025 calendar year.

Figure 5 shows that annual inflows to the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) were extremely low during the 2025 calendar year, ranking as the fourth lowest since 2000 and third lowest in the past decade.

Runoff into wetlands, rivers, streams and water storages remained limited due to the prolonged dry conditions that persisted until February 2026. However, rainfall was very much above average across the region between February and June 2026, improving catchment conditions and supporting inflows to waterways and water storages (Bureau of Meteorology, 2026).

Figure 6 shows that annual inflows into GWMWater-managed Grampians headworks storages were slightly below the post-1997 average. Inflows were more than double those recorded in each of the previous 2 years.

By June 2026, total storage levels were similar to those recorded a year earlier, increasing by approximately 1% compared to June 2025. Major storages, including Lake Bellfield and Lake Wartook, recorded stronger recoveries, with water levels 5 to 20% higher than at the same time in the previous year (GWMWater, 2026).

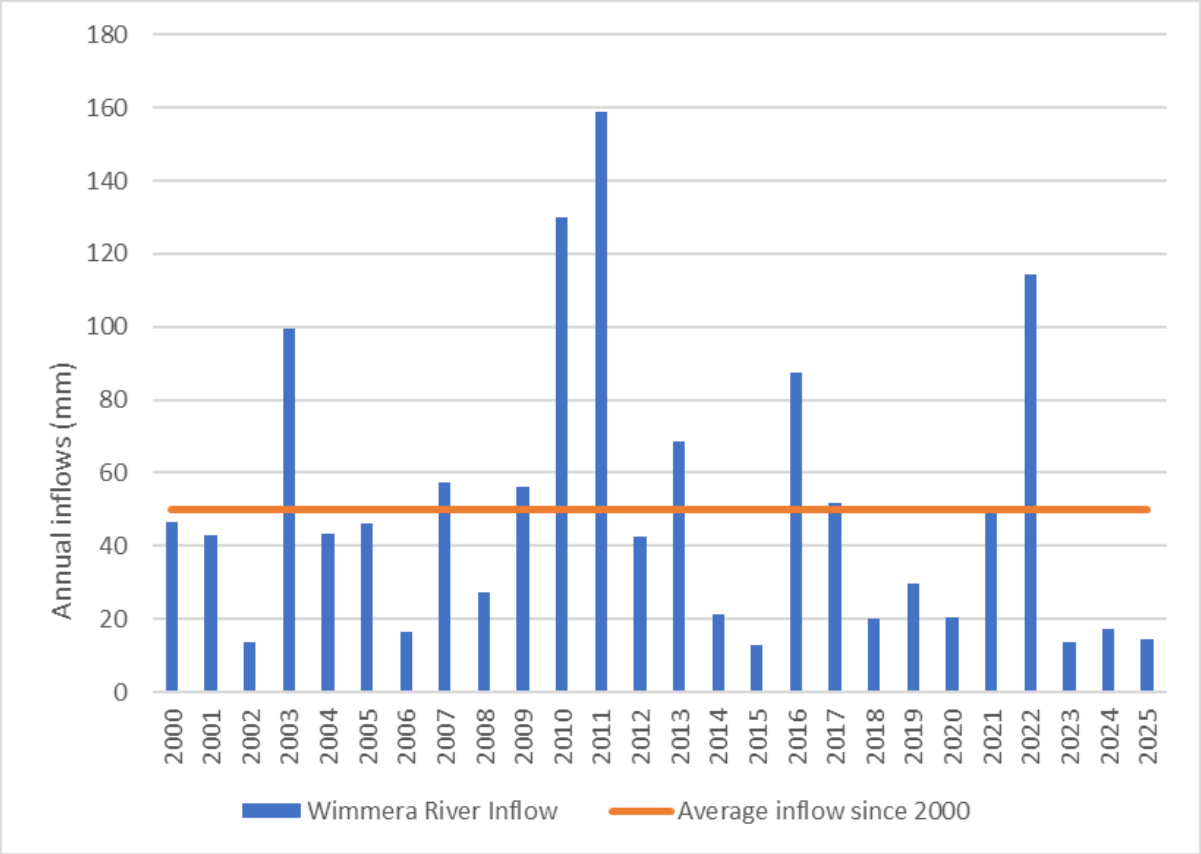


Figure 5. Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) inflow. Total annual surface and subsurface runoff into the river, estimated by the OzWALD model-data fusion system (Australian National University, 2026).

Figure 6 shows that annual inflows into GWMWater-managed Grampians headworks storages were slightly below the post-1997 average. Inflows were more than double those recorded in each of the previous 2 years.

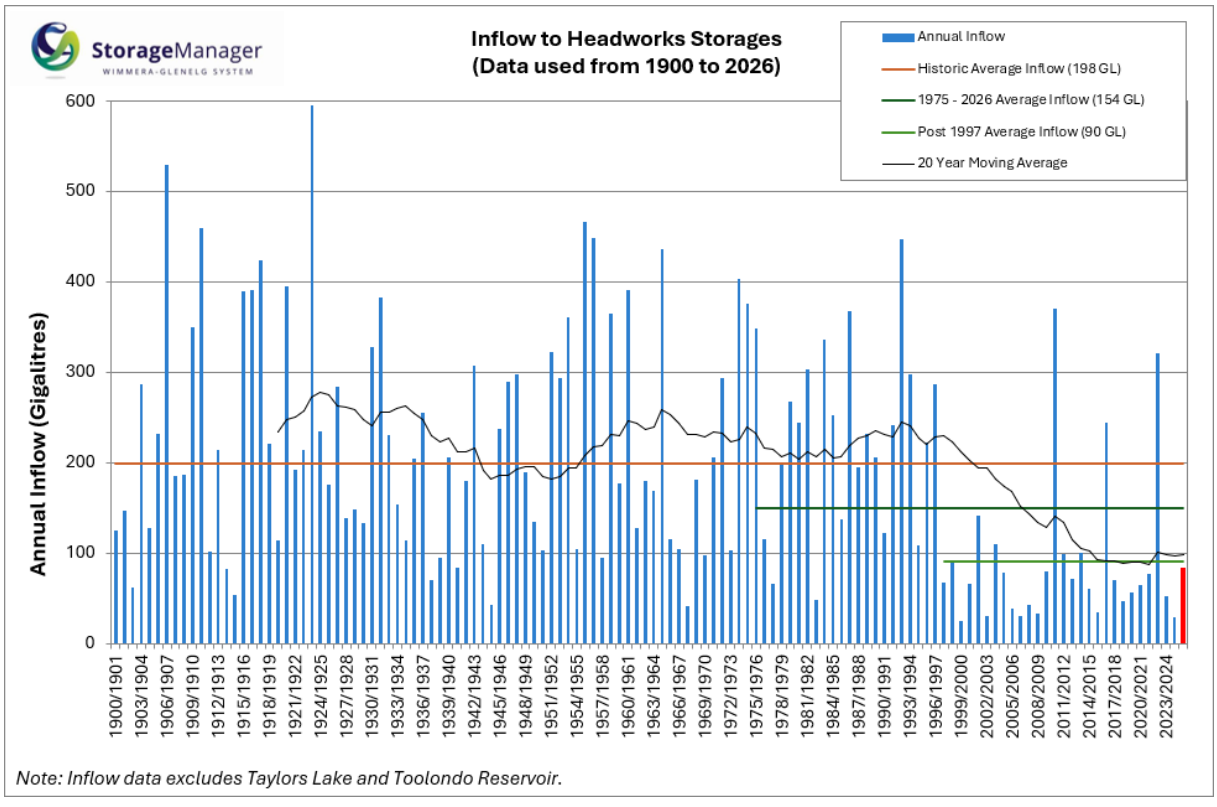


Figure 6. Annual inflows to Grampians headworks storages. The red line shows the 2025-26 financial year (GWMWater, 2026).

Soil moisture

This indicator provides an estimate of soil moisture, representing the amount of water stored in Wimmera soils. Soil moisture plays an important role in agricultural productivity, runoff to waterways and the health and function of ecosystems.

Figure 7 shows that the average amount of water stored in the soil profile during the 2025 calendar year (January to December) was the lowest recorded since 2000.

Data from Wimmera CMA's network of soil moisture probes and weather stations indicated that the region experienced average to above average rainfall in July 2025, followed by average to below average rainfall during August and September. Soil moisture reserves remained close to capacity in the upper 50 to 60 centimetres of the soil profile, while deeper soil moisture levels were generally low across the catchment. As crops matured, soil moisture reserves were progressively depleted.

Average to above average rainfall in November 2025 benefited late-season crops. However, for many producers, this rainfall arrived too late to significantly improve winter crop yields and contributed to harvest delays (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

Average to above average rainfall in February and March 2026 provided an opportunity for soil moisture reserves to recharge, with moisture infiltrating to depths of up to 100 centimetres in some locations. At the time, forecasts of El Niño conditions contributing to predictions of a drier spring and ongoing conflict in the Middle East affecting fuel and fertiliser supply and prices, leading to uncertainty across the agricultural sector. The average to above average rainfall received during the final quarter of the financial year was therefore particularly welcomed by agricultural producers. By June 2026, much of the catchment had close to full soil moisture profiles, especially within the upper 60 centimetres of the soil profile (Wimmera CMA, 2026)

Improved soil moisture conditions also supported the growth and regeneration of native vegetation, including in areas recovering from the 2024-25 bushfires in Gariwerd (Grampians National Park) and the Little Desert National Park, as well as the Natimuk-Grass Flat bushfire of January 2026. However, these favourable conditions also supported increased pest plant and animal populations, with Wimmera CMA and stakeholder organisation staff reporting observations of increased weed growth and rabbit numbers in some locations.

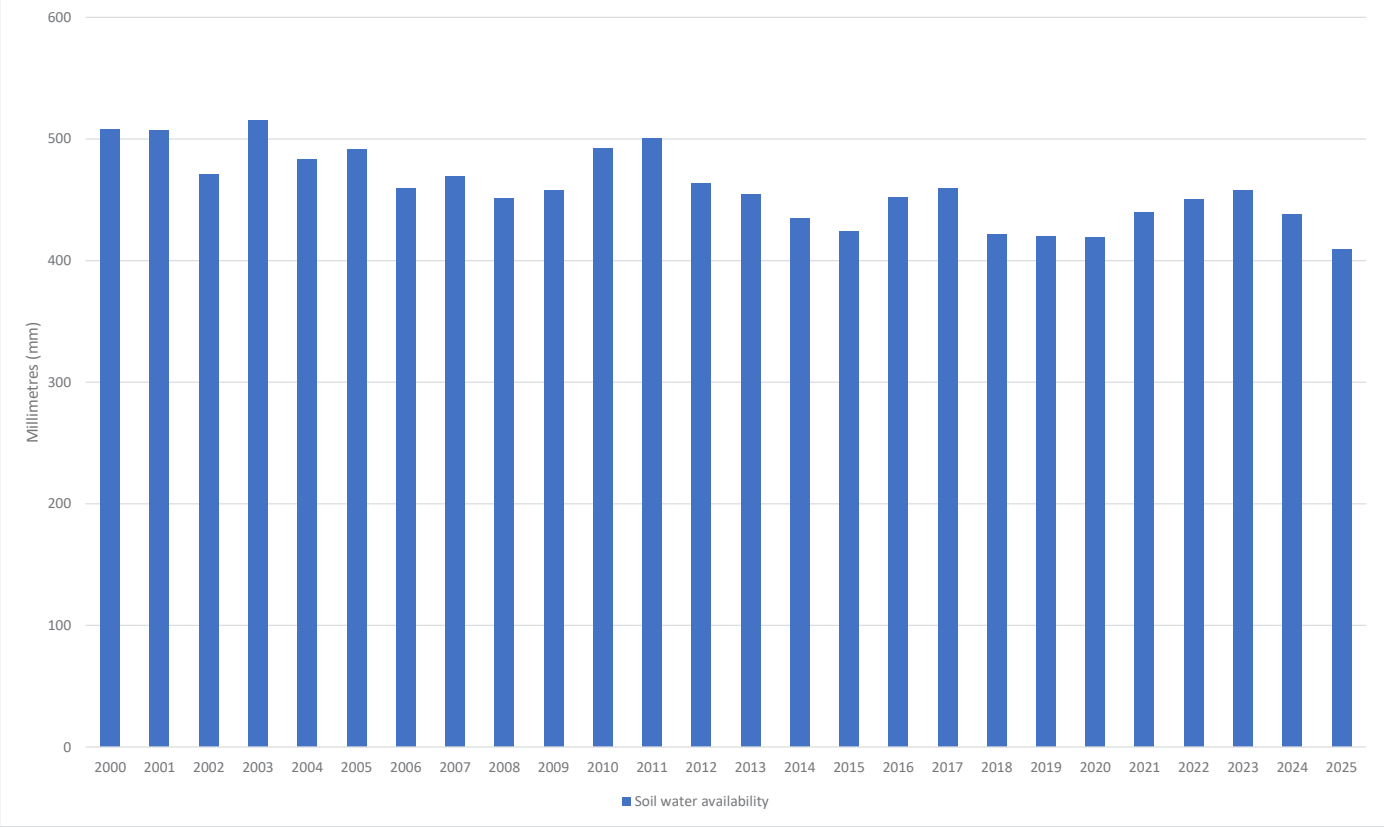


Figure 7. Wimmera soil water availability. Average amount of water stored in the soil profile during the year, estimated by the OzWALD model-data fusion system (Australian National University, 2026).

Exposed soil

This indicator measures the proportion of soil that is not protected by vegetation or organic matter on the ground. Ground cover helps protect soil from wind and water and is an important indicator of land condition. It also contributes to carbon sequestration, water infiltration, agricultural production, and the health of native vegetation.

National ground cover thresholds for agricultural land agricultural land recommend a minimum of 50% cover to reduce the risk of soil loss by wind erosion and at least 70% cover to minimise water erosion (Leys, et al., 2020).

Figure 8 shows that, on average, around 19% of soil in the Wimmera was unprotected by vegetation or litter during the 2025 calendar year. This means approximately 81% of soil remained protected, exceeding the minimum cover thresholds recommended to reduce the risk of erosion on agricultural land.

Rangeland and pasture productivity mapping undertaken in April 2026 found that 96% of the Wimmera catchment had more than 50% ground cover, providing protection from wind erosion. In addition, 75% of the catchment had ground cover exceeding 70%, indicating a lower risk of both wind and water erosion (GeoGlam RaPP, 2026).

The annual *Wimmera Cropland Management Transect Report*, completed by Wimmera CMA staff in April 2026, also indicated generally good levels of soil protection across the region.

Ground cover within the northern Wimmera, upper catchment and southern Wimmera transect surveys were predominately classified as adequate, with more than 50% ground cover observed in most paddocks. However, 15% of paddocks assessed within the southern transect had low ground cover below 50%, or no ground cover. This was largely attributed to the Natimuk-Grass Flat bushfire, which affected extensive areas of farmland in January 2026.

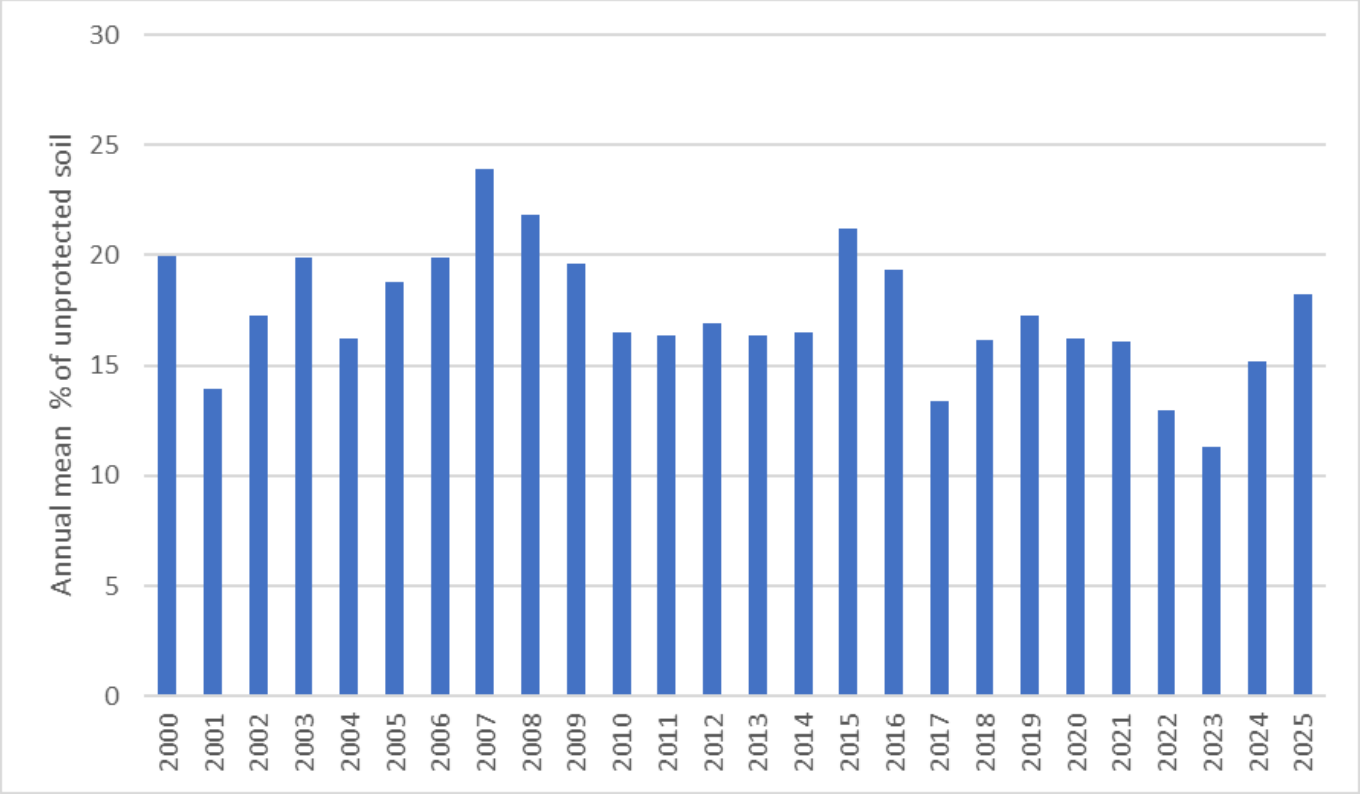


Figure 8. Annual mean percentage of soil unprotected by living vegetation or litter, derived from MODIS imagery and CSIRO mapping by the OzWALD model-data fusion system (Australian National University, 2026).

Natural extreme events

This section reports on significant natural and extreme events that occurred in the region during 2025-26.

A major grassfire occurred at Natimuk-Grass Flat on 9 January 2026, burning approximately 8,500 hectares. Driven by strong winds and hot, dry conditions, the fire spread rapidly, travelling around 10 kilometres in less than an hour. While most of the affected area was agricultural land, the fire also had a substantial impact on native vegetation along Natimuk Creek, Natimuk Lake and sections of the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) (ABC News, 2026).

Following the fire, Wimmera CMA undertook visual assessments of affected sections of the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) and monitored water quality at Quantong. No significant impacts on water quality were detected, largely because limited rainfall and runoff occurred following the fire, reducing the risk of sediment and ash runoff into the river.

Wimmera CMA also supported landholders to rebuild fencing along fire-affected waterways to restrict stock access and promote the recovery of riparian vegetation. This work will continue during 2026-27.

There were no riverine flood events in the Wimmera catchment during 2025-26.

Water

Wimmera rivers, streams and wetlands provide important environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits. They support recreation and tourism, supply water to towns and agricultural enterprises, hold significant cultural values, and provide habitat for a diverse range of native plants and wildlife.

The environmental condition of these waterways is influenced by a range of interconnected factors, including flow regimes, water quality, pest plants and animals, habitat connectivity, land management practices, recreational activities, urban and rural development, and natural events such as droughts, floods and bushfires.

Climate change is a significant long-term risk to the health of the region's waterways. Projected declines in rainfall and streamflow are expected to reduce water availability, while more intense rainfall events may increase the frequency and severity of flooding. Land management practices can also affect waterway condition by influencing local runoff patterns, erosion rates and the movement of nutrients and sediment into rivers, streams and wetlands.

Waterway condition assessment

Condition rating for 2025-26	6-year trend in condition	Summary comment for 2025-26
Poor	↓ **Concerned**	Waterway condition across the Wimmera catchment was poor in 2025-26, with conditions deteriorating due to ongoing low rainfall and runoff. Limited natural flows and allocations of water for the environment constrained management options, requiring a strategic focus on maintaining base flows and delivering targeted freshes to support water quality and sustain aquatic habitats. The impacts of dry conditions were widespread. Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) dried completely, and the drying of many shallow wetlands also increased their vulnerability to cropping and other land-use pressures.

River flows and wetland filling

The first part of the year was characterised by dry conditions, with below-average rainfall until February 2026. Weak and short-lived climate drivers contributed to warmer and drier weather, resulting in reduced natural river flows.

Flow data indicates that flows during 2025-26 were generally below long-term averages across the catchment, reflecting the prolonged dry conditions experienced throughout much of the year. While rainfall and runoff increased in autumn and early winter 2026, these improvements were insufficient to restore annual flow volumes to average levels.

Very limited water reached Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) for most of the year, except for small volumes that leaked through the Jeparit Weir. From May 2026, natural flows combined with deliveries of water for the environment subsequently flowed into Gurru. No flows entered Dock Lake during 2025-26 and the lake dried out.

Most wetlands in the south and southwest of the region remained largely dry due to lack of sufficient rainfall and runoff.

Annual Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) flows at Glynwylln in the upper catchment, Mount William Creek at Mokepilly and MacKenzie River at Wartook are shown in Figure 9.

Water for the environment

Dry climatic conditions limited inflows to the Grampians headworks storages, resulting in volumes that were marginally below the long-term average since 1997. However, inflow levels represented a significant improvement on those observed over the previous 2 years.

Storage reserves remained relatively stable throughout the year, with total system storage in June 2026 sitting approximately 1% above June 2025 levels. The most notable gains were seen in Lake Bellfield and Lake Wartook, where storage levels were 5% to 20% higher than a year earlier (GWMWater, 2026).

The Victorian Environmental Water Holder's allocation of water for the environment reached 40% (16,224 megalitres) during 2025-26, while allocations for the Commonwealth Environmental Holder and piped wetlands remained at 0%.

Allocations carried-over from previous years were available, including 12,542 megalitres for the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) system and 64 megalitres for wetlands. These allocations supported water for the environment activities designed to achieve priority ecological objectives for the year.

Opportunities to deliver water for the environment were constrained at times by poor water quality in key storages, including elevated salinity and blue-green algal outbreaks in Lake Lonsdale, and maintenance works at the Taylors Lake outlet.

During 2025-26, 9,536 megalitres of water for the environment was delivered across 8 river reaches, with a focus on protecting drought refuges and maintaining water quality. Monitoring identified positive ecological responses, including healthy aquatic vegetation, positive responses from waterbirds, frogs and turtles, stable fish populations and 13 platypus detections, including a newly tagged female.

The wetland program delivered 43 megalitres of water to 11 pipelinesupplied wetlands, helping to maintain important habitat across a dry and largely agricultural landscape. Many wetlands responded strongly to watering, with surveys recording abundant aquatic vegetation, diverse waterbird observations, frogs and turtles and threatened plant species such as ridged watermilfoil and spiny lignum. Monitoring also confirmed high plant diversity and positive ecological outcomes at key sites including Carapugna and Crow Swamp.

Beyond environmental benefits, water deliveries also supported community values by improving water quality for landholders, enabling recreational activities, and contributing to the wellbeing of First Nations Peoples through the support of healthy Country.

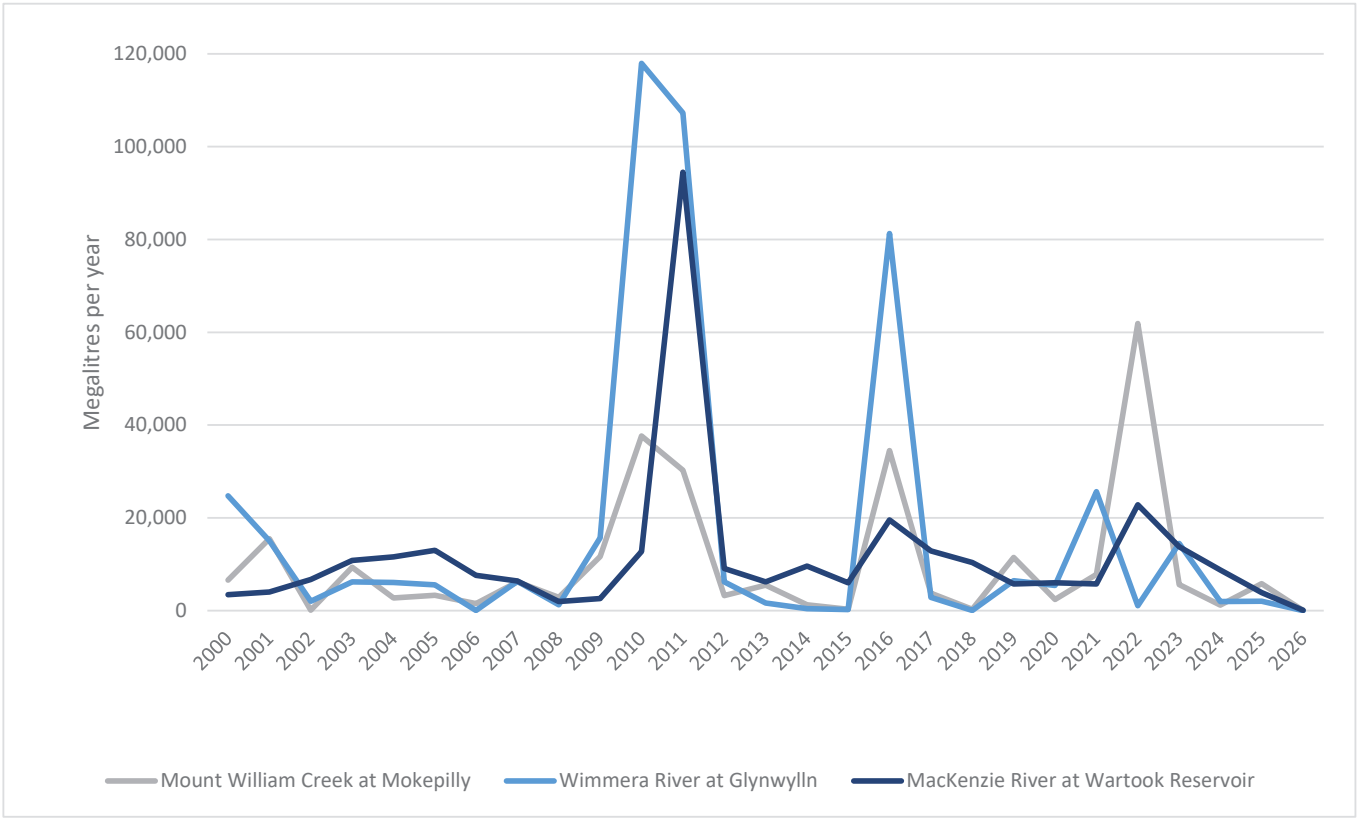


Figure 9. Annual river flow in megalitres per year at 3 river and stream locations (Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, 2026).

Water quality

Wimmera CMA staff undertook bi-monthly water quality monitoring at 23 sites across the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) and its tributaries. Results indicated that salinity objectives were achieved only about one-third of the time, reflecting consistently elevated salinity levels across multiple monitoring sites and mirroring the results recorded in 2024-25. Dissolved oxygen levels showed a further decline, meeting compliance objectives just 9% of the time, compared with 27% in the previous year.

Water quality objectives are defined in Victoria's Environment Reference Standard for Water. Wimmera CMA attributes the low compliance for salinity and dissolved oxygen to the dry conditions, with below-average rainfall and limited runoff continuing from 2024-25.

Compliance for pH was moderate at 55%, while all monitoring sites met objectives for total nitrogen and total phosphorus. Turbidity compliance improved substantially to 45%, up from 18% in 2024-25. This improvement was likely associated with reduced rainfall and lower flow conditions, which limited sediment mobilisation within waterways (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

Blue-green algal blooms were detected in several recreational lakes and water storages, including Green Lake, Lake Lonsdale and Lake Charlegrark. In response, recreational access was restricted at affected sites to protect public health. These outbreaks also influenced water management operations, with releases of water for the environment from Lake Lonsdale temporarily deferred while water quality risks were assessed. This affected the timing of deliveries of water for the environment and associated ecological outcomes in downstream waterways.

Wetland vegetation

The Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research's Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program surveyed Crow Swamp and Carapugna wetland in October 2025 following deliveries of water for the environment and seasonal rainfall. Monitoring identified strong ecological responses at both wetlands, with surveys recording a high diversity and abundance of wetland vegetation species.

At Carapugna wetland, surveys confirmed the presence of the threatened ridged watermilfoil, while vulnerable chariot wheels were recorded at both sites and appeared to have responded positively to recent watering. Crow Swamp also supported populations of the critically endangered spiny lignum, highlighting the conservation significance of these wetlands and the benefits of providing water for the environment.

Groundwater

Groundwater levels reflect the balance between water entering and leaving an aquifer. They are influenced by groundwater extraction for consumptive uses, such as irrigation, stock and domestic supply, and by recharge from rainfall.

GWMWater's groundwater monitoring indicates that groundwater levels remained stable in 4 out of the 5 zones within the West Wimmera Groundwater Management Area during 2025-26. The exception was the Neuarpur Zone, where groundwater levels declined.

Groundwater levels also remained stable across other management areas, including the East Grampians, West Grampians, Upper Wimmera and Wimmera Mallee Sedimentary Plains (GWMWater, 2026).

Management of Wimmera waterways

Management rating for Wimmera waterways

The overall management rating for water is above expectations as most planned activities were achieved, or targets were met or exceeded.

Waterway indicators used in the assessment

The indicators in Table 8 reflect Wimmera CMA's efforts to protect and improve the condition of riparian lands by undertaking activities such as fencing, weed control, revegetation and pest herbivore control including rabbits.

Table 8. Catchment management indicators for waterways.

Indicator	Management rating	Comment
Extent of protected or improved riparian land (hectares)	**Above expectations**	Wimmera CMA, partner organisations and private landholders worked together to protect or improve almost 4,785 hectares of riparian land.
Fence (kilometres)	**Met expectations**	Wimmera CMA supported private landholders to construct 21.7 kilometres of fence to manage stock access to waterways and riparian areas.
Vegetation (hectares)	**Above expectations**	There were no targets for revegetation. However, 2 hectares were revegetated to enhance riparian vegetation.
Weed control (hectares)	**Above expectations**	Wimmera CMA, in partnership with Parks Victoria, Project Platypus and private landholders, controlled weeds across more than 3,130 hectares.
Number of management agreements (perpetual or non-perpetual)	**Above expectations**	Wimmera CMA established 18 riparian management agreements with private landholders covering an area of 476 hectares.
Environmental flow compliance	**Met expectations**	Wimmera CMA delivered 9,536 megalitres of water for the environment to 8 river and stream reaches and 42.5 megalitres of water to 11 wetlands in line with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder's Seasonal Watering Plan.

Table 9 provides a summary of the main waterway project activities carried out by Wimmera CMA during 2025-26.

Table 9. Management activities for rivers, streams and wetlands during 2025-26.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
Wimmera CMA continued to manage water for the environment in the region. Key actions during 2025-26 included: • Delivered water for the environment to river and stream reaches and wetlands in the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline's footprint. • Surveyed waterways for native fish, platypuses, waterbirds and vegetation to assess responses to management and inform future actions. • Developed and submitted seasonal watering proposals for the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) system and Wimmera Mallee Pipeline wetlands to the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. • Provided seasonal reviews for the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) system and wetlands to the Victorian Environmental Water Holder and Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. • Updated the community about activities via an annual forum, quarterly newspaper updates and social media updates. • Prepared for a socio-economic assessment of water for the environment in the Wimmera and Southern Mallee, to be completed in 2026-27. • Maintained partnerships with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, GWMWater, DEECA and Parks Victoria.	• Delivered 9,536 megalitres of water to 8 reaches. • Delivered 42.5 megalitres of water to 11 wetlands. • Completed 1 survey for platypus, 4 for native fish and 2 for native vegetation. • Completed monthly bird surveys at 8 wetlands. • Completed 2 seasonal watering proposals. • Completed 2 seasonal reviews. • Shared 4 media items and hosted an annual forum attended by 10 people. • Completed planning for 1 socio-economic assessment. • Maintained 5 partnerships.	Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.
Wimmera CMA delivered 3 projects seeking to ensure Wimmera rivers, streams and wetlands continue 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: • Established management agreements with private landholders. • Revegetated areas with native species. • Controlled weeds, rabbits and foxes. • Installed fences to control stock access. • Installed rock chutes to mitigate erosion. • Assessed sites to prioritise future erosion control works.	• Established 18 riparian management agreements with private landholders covering 476 hectares. • Controlled weeds over 1,130 hectares. • Protected 423 hectares of riparian land from grazing access. • Established 2 conservation covenants over 53 hectares. • Controlled pest herbivores over 702 hectares. • Installed almost 16 kilometres of fencing. • Completed 2 hectares of revegetation. • Installed 5 erosion control structures across 4 sites and maintained 1 structure at an additional site. • Completed 1 publication. • Completed 31 property assessments.	Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
Wimmera CMA, Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Parks Victoria partnered to maintain and improve the ecological character of Ngalpakatia/Ngelpagutya (Lake Albacutya), an internationally significant Ramsar wetland. Actions included: • Controlled weeds and rabbits to maintain and improve regeneration and recruitment opportunities for eucalypt woodlands. • Developed the 2025-26 *Lake Albacutya Ramsar Site Management Plan.*	• Controlled weeds over 1,000 hectares. • Maintained 2 partnerships. • Controlled pest herbivores over 1,900 hectares. • Completed 1 management plan.	Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.
Wimmera CMA's Delivering Our Catchments, Our Communities Project supported public and private land managers and community groups to deliver a range of integrated projects to maintain and improve the water, biodiversity, land health and productivity values of the Wimmera whilst improving the liveability and resilience of the region. During 2025-26, the project delivered engagement activities and on ground works with stakeholders, community groups and private landholders including riparian fencing and grazing management, rubbish removal, visitor recreational facility improvements and river access improvements with 2 bridges constructed and a new walking track established. These works were complimented by traditional threat abatement works including pest plant and animal control.	• Maintained 8 partnerships. • Assessed 431 hectares for weed control works. • Established 0.55 hectares of grazing access management. • Improved 3 visitor recreational facilities. • Completed 120 hectares of rubbish removal. • Completed 0.36 kilometres of a road trail.	Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.
Wimmera CMA delivered its statutory and regulatory obligations under Victorian Government legislation. Key actions during 2025-26 included: • Provided floodplain advice and responded to floodplain and wetland related planning scheme referrals. • Assessed and issued works on waterways permits. • Undertook water quality assessments. • Engaged with the Wimmera community, including via Black Snake Production's wildlife show at Horsham's annual fishing competition. • Maintained partnerships with DEECA and Victorian CMAs to deliver government policy including the development of the draft *Victorian Waterway Management Strategy.* • Contributed advice to regional developments such as the West Wind Energy Project, Iluka Wimmera mineral sands proposal, Campbells Bridge Windfarm proposal, the Horsham Solar Farm, DMS Mineral Sand development, Burnt Creek Industrial Estate and Horsham Rural City Council's South Precinct Plan. • Contributed to the Wimmera Southern Mallee Climate Adaptation Community Resilience Group, Wimmera Southern Mallee Drought Resilience meeting and led the Wimmera's Integrated Water Management Forum. • Consulted with stakeholders and drafted the next iteration of the *Wimmera Waterway Strategy* and its *Implementation plan* and *Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Plan.* • Progressed implementation of the *Wimmera Native Fish Management Plan*, including research into river blackfish breeding.	• Responded to 133 requests for floodplain advice and 91 floodplain referrals, completing over 99% of responses on time. • Processed 46 works on waterways permits, completing 97% of responses on time. • Processed 33 enquiries, with no permit requirements. • Monitored water quality at 23 locations bi-monthly. • Engaged over 500 participants in CMA events. • Maintained 11 partnerships. • Completed 1 draft strategy. • Completed 1 draft implementation plan.	Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.
The Grampians Yarram Gap Road Bushfire Recovery project supported the restoration of waterways and catchments impacted by the Grampians Yarram Gap Road Bushfire.	• Completed 3.8 kilometres of fencing. • Completed 2 hectares of weed control. • Completed 2 assessments.	Victorian Government.
Wimmera CMA coordinated the implementation of the *Wimmera Regional Floodplain Management Strategy* by partner organisations, and relevant actions set out in the *Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy.* Actions included: • Facilitated the Wimmera Strategic Water Management Working Group partnership. • Coordinated implementation of the *Wimmera Floodplain Management Strategy's* workplan.	• Maintained 1 partnership group. • Held 2 partnership meetings. • Progressed workplan implementation. • Provided input for the Wimmera emergency management group, attending 4 meetings.	Victorian Government's Floodplain Management Program -Implementing Victoria's Floodplain Management Strategies.
Wimmera CMA collaborated with DEECA and West Wimmera and Northern Grampians shire councils to support development of flood studies for Apsley and Edenhope townships in West Wimmera Shire and Great Western in Northern Grampians Shire. The studies sought to understand the impact of flooding in the townships and guide flood mitigation and response actions.	• Consolidated 3 partnerships for flood studies. • Completed 4 reports for the Edenhope and Apsley flood studies. • Completed 1 report for the Great Western flood study.	Victorian Government's Flood Reclamation Roadmap. Fast tracking flood studies in regional Victoria.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
Wimmera CMA collaborated with Yarriambiack and Hindmarsh shire councils on business cases for flood-mitigating infrastructure-development projects at Whitton Swamp near Warracknabeal and Jeparit Weir respectively.	• Consolidated 2 partnerships. • Completed 2 projects.	Victorian Government's Fast-tracking council flood planning – scoping future flood-mitigation infrastructure plans program.
Wimmera CMA collaborated with DEECA, the Department of Transport and Planning and Hindmarsh Shire Council to commence development of a flood study for the Lower Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) in Hindmarsh Shire. The study seeks to understand the impact of flooding in the lower reaches of the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) and guide flood mitigation and response actions.	• Consolidated 1 partnership for flood study. • Signed 1 contract with Hindmarsh Shire Council.	Victorian Government's Flood Reclamation Roadmap. Fast tracking flood studies in regional Victoria.
The Wimmera CMA's River Detectives program delivered hands-on, cross-curricular activities to inspire teachers, students and community members to understand, appreciate and protect their local rivers and streams. The program combined environmental education with practical citizen science, allowing participants to collect and analyse water quality data while learning about the interconnectedness of water, land, plants, animals and human communities.	• Engaged 6 schools. • Delivered 6 events. • Engaged 110 student participants. • Engaged 11 teacher participants.	Wimmera CMA.
Wimmera CMA investigated the feasibility and options for connecting high-value ecological drought refuge sites on the MacKenzie River and Burnt Creek system to the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.	• Drafted 1 feasibility study.	Victorian Government's Water Cycle Adaption Action Program Funding.
Wimmera CMA designed a monitoring plan to support the monitoring requirements of the drought refuge sites located in the Lower Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) and Mount Cole Creek.	• Completed 1 plan.	Victorian Government's Waterways Investment Framework.
Wimmera CMA in partnership with GWMWater progressed the construction of pipelines to connect 4 drought refuge pools in the Lower Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) to the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline. The planning, design, approvals and procurement were completed during 2025-26 with construction to be undertaken in 2026-27.	• Finalised planning, design, approvals and procurement to connect 4 drought refuge pools to water supply pipelines.	Victorian Government Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

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

Condition Rating for 2025-26	6-year Trend in condition	Summary Comment for 2025-26
Moderate	**Neutral**	**Land condition across the Wimmera catchment was generally good in 2025-26.** High levels of ground cover during autumn helped protect soils from wind and water erosion, while soil health indicators remained stable, with average soil organic carbon (1.3%) and soil pH (6.3) similar to 2024-25. Although soil organic carbon remained below optimal levels for productivity and soil health, above average rainfall in the final quarter of the year substantially improved soil moisture, resulting in near-full soil moisture profiles across much of the catchment, supporting favourable conditions heading into the 2026-27 season.

The growing season

Despite a difficult start to the 2025 growing season due to low rainfall and limited soil moisture, conditions improved as the season progressed. Mild growing conditions and late spring rainfall supported crop development, resulting in average to slightly above-average yields across the region. However, the late rainfall also had some negative impacts, particularly on hay production, with hay quality affected in parts of the Wimmera.

The 2026 growing season began more favourably, with significant and widespread rainfall across the Wimmera in late February. Soil moisture probes indicated that most areas had largely full soil moisture profiles, providing an excellent foundation for crop establishment. The early rainfall, however, also stimulated weed growth and the emergence of volunteer crops, plants not deliberately sown, that drew down on soil moisture reserves, requiring herbicide applications.

The unseasonal February rain also produced some noteworthy observations during the annual *Wimmera Cropland Management Study*. Along the study route, a small number of paddocks appeared to have been deliberately left unsprayed or untreated, allowing self-regenerating crops to establish and, in some cases, begin flowering. This was most commonly observed in paddocks that had grown legumes or barley during the 2025 season. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, given the high costs of sowing and spraying, some growers strategically retained these volunteer crops to provide livestock feed, improve soil nitrogen levels, or produce green manure for future cropping.

Land use and soil health

As part of the *Wimmera Cropland Management Study*, annual transect surveys monitor land use change and ground cover across more than 1,200 paddocks throughout the Wimmera. Surveys are conducted each autumn and spring. Monitoring commenced on the northern transect in 1996 and the southern transect in 2015. In autumn 2021, a mid-transect route was added to improve representation of land within the Horsham Rural City Council area.

The northern transect bisects the Yarriambiack, Buloke and Hindmarsh municipalities and the northern half of West Wimmera Shire. The southern transect covers the Upper Catchment region and the southern portion of West Wimmera Shire. The mid transect is primarily located within the Horsham municipality.

Key findings from the autumn 2026 survey include:

- **Cropping expansion continued in the south.** The southern transect recorded an 11% increase in the number of paddocks converted from grazing (pasture) to cropping, reaching 25,195 hectares of the survey area. In contrast, land use remained relatively stable in the northern (51,140 hectares) and mid (10,080 hectares) transects.
- **Ground cover remained high across most of the region.** More than 96% of the surveyed area maintained adequate ground cover, defined as greater than 50% vegetation cover, to protect soil from wind erosion. However, the southern transect recorded an almost 6% increase in observations of bare ground compared to autumn 2025, with 15% of paddocks having no ground cover (see Figure 10). This was likely influenced by the Natimuk/Grass Flat fire in January 2026, after which strategic cultivation was undertaken in burnt paddocks to reduce the impact of wind erosion. Ground cover increased across both the mid (see Figure 11) and northern transects (see Figure 12).

- **Stubble retention remained the dominant land management practice.** Stubble retention was observed across 75% of the survey area. Stubble burning declined compared with recent years, with no observations recorded in the northern transect and only 3% of paddocks affected in the southern transect. The widespread rainfall in February 2026 likely created challenging conditions for managing weeds and volunteer crops. As stubble burning can leave soils vulnerable to erosion, it is generally considered a last-resort management practice, often used to control herbicide-resistant weeds or manage snail and slug populations.
- **Livestock presence remained largely unchanged from previous years.** Sheep continued to be the dominant livestock type. Consistent with 2024-25 results, 92.5% of surveyed paddocks contained no livestock at the time of observation (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

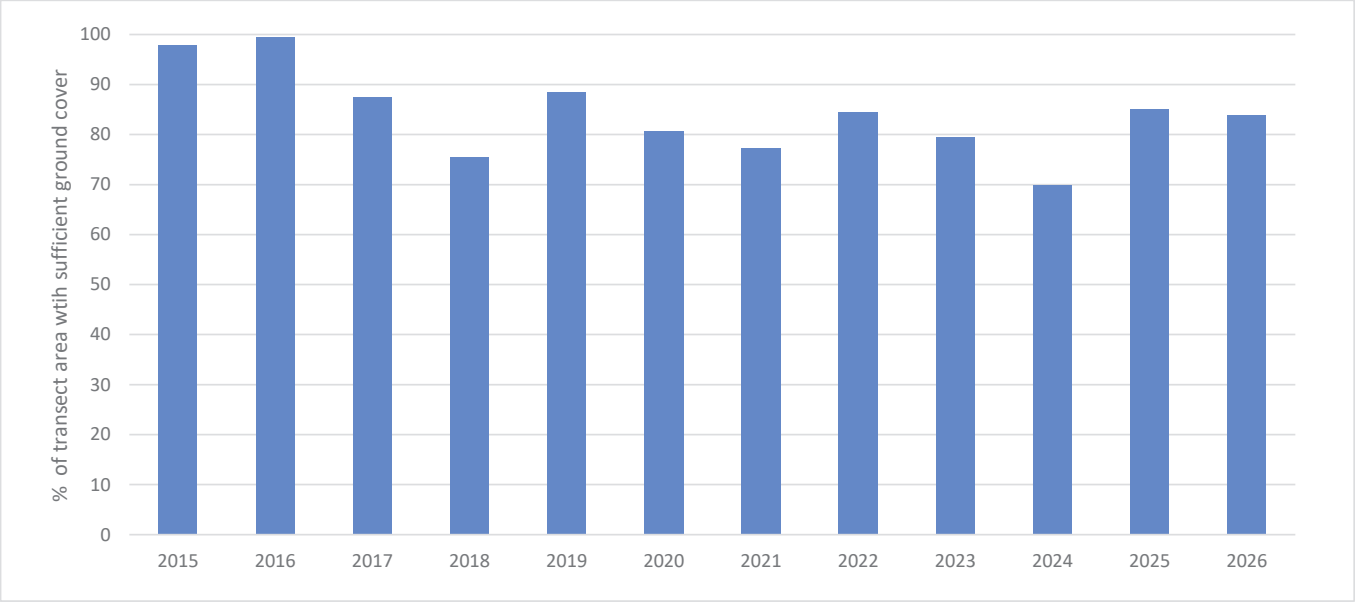


Figure 10. Percent of southern transect with sufficient ground cover to protect soil from erosion (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

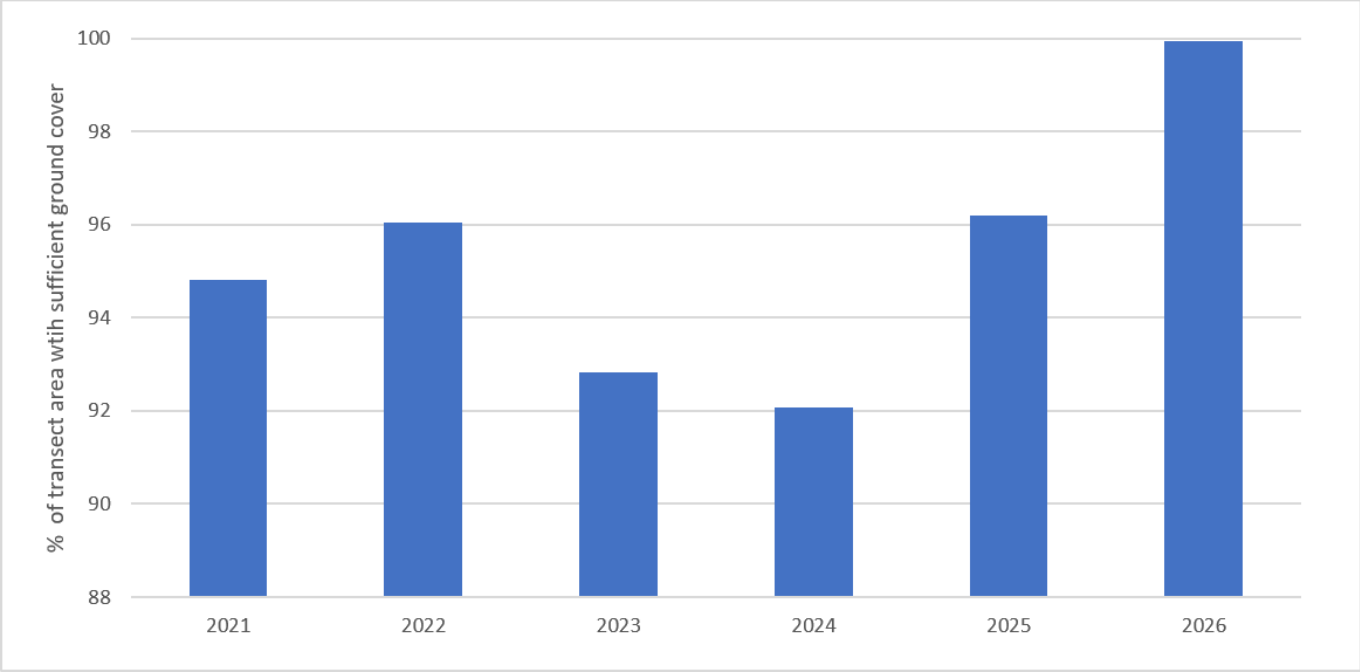


Figure 11. Percent of mid region transect with sufficient ground cover to protect soil from erosion (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

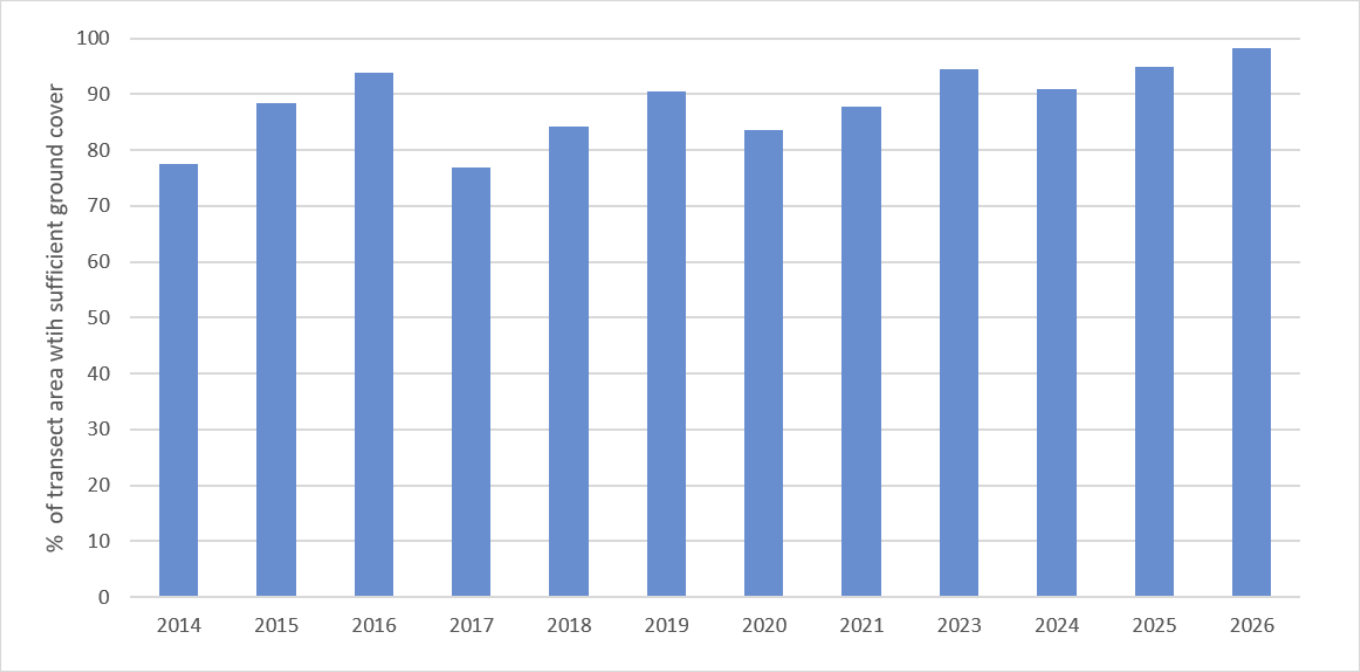


Figure 12. Percent of northern transect with sufficient ground cover to protect soil from erosion (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

Soil organic carbon

Soil organic carbon measures the carbon stored in soil organic matter derived from living organisms. It includes undecomposed plant material, soil organisms and humus. Soil organic carbon plays an important role in maintaining soil health by storing nutrients, stabilising soil structure and supporting soil microbial activity.

Increasing soil organic carbon through practices such as retaining crop residues can improve the water-holding capacity of soils, enabling crops to access this stored moisture during dry periods. This helps to maintain productivity under variable seasonal conditions.

Under Australian rainfed farming systems, total soil organic carbon levels typically range from 0.7 to 4% (Hoyle, et al., 2011). Soil organic carbon levels below 1% may limit soil health and reduce yield potential, particularly in lower rainfall environments (Sumner, 1999).

Soil testing undertaken by Wimmera CMA across 30 paddocks found that soil organic carbon levels in the top 10 centimetres ranged between 0.4% and 2.8%, with an average of 1.3%. These results were consistent with previous years of monitoring and were generally at the lower end of the range compared to Australian soils under rainfed farming systems. At depths of 10 to 100 centimetres, soil organic carbon levels ranged from 0.18% to 0.7%, averaging 0.5%. Lower carbon levels at depth are expected, as organic carbon is typically concentrated near the soil surface where crop and pasture residues accumulate and root activity is greatest (Anderson, et al., 2022).

Management of Wimmera land

During 2025-26, government agencies and conservation, industry and community groups worked together to protect the region's land and soils while supporting a sustainable and profitable community. Industry and farmer-led groups continued to build knowledge and support farmers to build capacity and implement practices that improve resilience in agricultural land.

Management activities led by Wimmera CMA during 2025-26 to benefit Wimmera agricultural land and soils and support farmers are summarised under the Community Theme of this report. This includes activities to support Landcare groups and networks.

Management rating for Wimmera land

The overall management rating for land is **met expectations** as all targets were achieved.

Wimmera CMA continued to promote awareness of the region's soil moisture probe network and monitor land use and management practices via annual transect surveys.

Land indicators used in the assessment

The indicators in Table 10 reflect Wimmera CMA's efforts to protect and improve the condition of land by undertaking activities such as fencing to control stock access, weed control, revegetation and pest herbivore control including rabbits.

Table 10. Catchment management indicators for land.

Indicator	Management rating	Comment
Area of improved agricultural practices (hectares)	**Met expectations**	Management of biodiversity and waterways was improved on 477 hectares of private farmland, with Wimmera CMA supporting private landholders to carry out fencing to manage stock access, weed and pest animal control works and revegetation.
Number of agricultural assessments	**Met expectations**	6 surveys of land use and management were completed along northern, middle and southern Wimmera transects in spring and autumn respectively. Soil moisture probe monitoring was carried out at 80 sites and soil sampling at 30 sites, including soil organic carbon.

Table 11. Management activities for land carried out in the Wimmera during 2025-26.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
Wimmera CMA's Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator aimed to: • Connect farmers, landholders, community groups and agricultural industries to relevant information and programs on climate-smart, sustainable agricultural practices. • Facilitate partnerships and connections. • Support the delivery of sustainable agriculture projects in the Wimmera region.	• Employed 1 facilitator. • Facilitated partnerships with key stakeholders. • Supported stakeholders with the development of projects and grant submissions.	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
Wimmera CMA delivered the Carbon Farming Outreach Program in partnership with Agriculture Victoria and Landcare Victoria. The program supported Australian farmers and land managers to reduce emissions and store carbon. Workshops explored agricultural emission sources, supply chain reporting requirements, as well as current and emerging options for reducing emissions while maintaining productivity. Based on participant feedback, an additional extension was provided exploring the co-benefits of emissions reduction using strategic shelterbelt plantings, technology assisted livestock management, addressing soil constraints and calculating on-farm emissions.	• Delivered 8 events with a total of 98 participants.	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
The On Farm Natural Capital and Climate-Smart Communities of Practice project aims to broaden the natural capital knowledge base and promote pathways for improved management of soil and vegetation and negative edge effects in the highly fragmented and patchy Wimmera agricultural landscape.	• Established 16 on farm demonstration sites. • Developed 17 communication materials. • Completed 16 bird surveys and 16 habitat condition surveys. • Established 2 baseline datasets.	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
Wimmera CMA on behalf of Victorian CMA's, Melbourne Water and Agriculture Victoria are leading the delivery of the Victorian component of the National Soil Monitoring Program. The national program, led by CSIRO, aims to take soil samples at approximately 3,000 sites to monitor agreed national soil health indicators, with the data used to help understand soil condition and trend. The data will support stakeholders to make evidence-based decisions to improve soil health whilst empowering land managers to prioritise their soil health and strengthen their soil knowledge and capability to restore, improve and maintain soil health.	• Coordinated the Statewide delivery of the project • Sampled 72 sites across the Wimmera and North Central region.	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Table 12. Management activities led by partner organisations and groups during 2025-26 to benefit Wimmera agricultural land and soils and support farmers.

Management activities led by partner organisations	Achievements
Perennial Pasture Systems continued to conduct perennial pasture research and provide practical information on productive pasture and livestock management to farmers across the Upper Wimmera catchment and central and western Victoria. Activities included managing on-farm demonstration sites and sharing information through workshops, paddock walks, annual conference, webinars, case studies, reports, email updates and social media.	• Delivered a webinar on red-legged earth mite identification and management as part of the Meat & Livestock Australia-funded "Less Mites, More Feed" Producer Demonstration Site project. • Continued the "Less Mites, More Feed" Producer Demonstration Site project, sharing practical information on monitoring and red-legged earth mite management. • Delivered community information and extension events attended by more than 200 people, including the 2025 Annual Conference, Season Update, Financial Skills Workshop and Spring Paddock Walk. • Completed the Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site project, "Productive Grazing with Feed Quality Management." • Commenced planning and producer engagement for a new Producer Demonstration Site investigating arrowleaf clover for finishing lambs. • Provided regular member communications through email updates, website articles and social media.
Agriculture Victoria continued to deliver targeted support to the agricultural communities across the Wimmera through extension, research and capacity-building activities that enhanced farm resilience, productivity and sustainable land management.	• Delivered a wind erosion extension program, including a webinar with Dr John Leys attended by 174 participants and published 6 new wind erosion control webpages to support landholders to manage soil loss and protect ground cover during challenging seasonal conditions. • Delivered a Farm Business Resilience course and follow-up activities at Wonwondah, supporting farmers to strengthen business planning, risk management and long-term resilience. • Delivered soil moisture probe workshops at Natimuk and Wonwondah, attended by 59 participants, building farmer knowledge and confidence in using technology to inform seasonal management decisions. • Delivered the Wimmera Pulse Field Day, attended by approximately 90 participants. • Continued community liaison and agricultural recovery support in the Natimuk district following the Grass Flat fires. • Delivered drought support initiatives across the region. • Delivered succession planning workshops in Dimboola attended by 62 participants.
Additional activities such as Landcare support are included under the Community Theme.	

Biodiversity

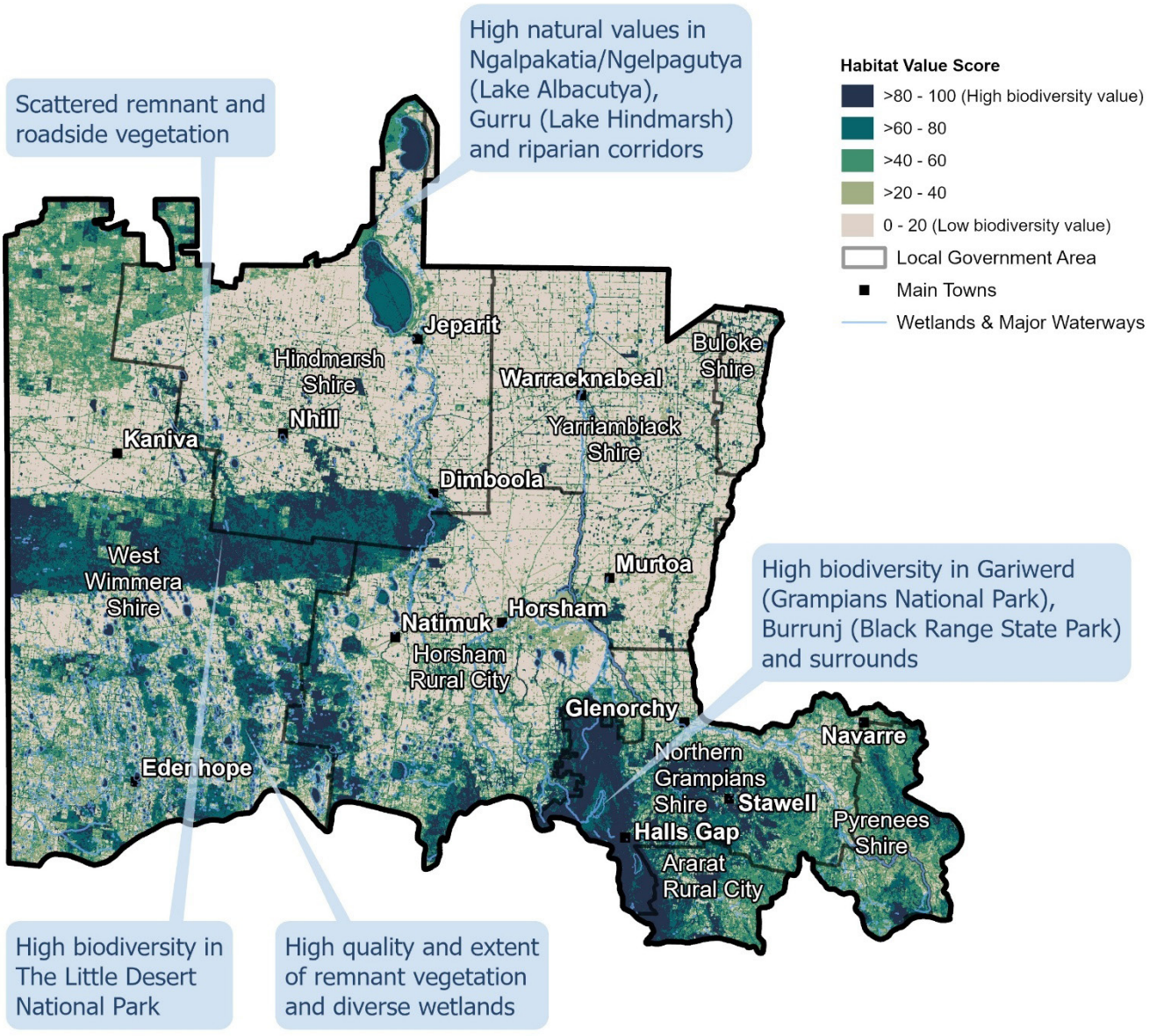
The Wimmera supports large areas of high biodiversity value, especially the northern Gariwerd (Grampians National Park) and Burrunj (Black Range State Park), Little Desert National Park, upper Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) catchment area, Gurru (Lake Hindmarsh) and scattered woodland and wetland reserves.

The Wimmera is home to Ngalpakatia/Ngelpagutya (Lake Albacutya), recognised as an internationally important wetland under the Ramsar Convention. Riparian corridors along waterways including the Barringgi 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 13).

Threatened species include the Malleefowl, south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo, growling Grass frog and the Wimmera's remnant platypus population.

Figure 13 is a habitat value map developed by DEECA. It combines information on thousands of species habitats to show the relative biodiversity value of landscapes in Victoria. Habitat Value ranks the value of biodiversity by considering the number of species for which a location provides habitat and their rarity in a statewide context to enable a comparison of all locations across Victoria (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, 2024). Figure 13 shows the Wimmera portion of this map.

Figure 13. Habitat Value - the relative biodiversity value of landscapes in the Wimmera (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, 2024).



Biodiversity condition assessment

The biodiversity condition assessment reports on the health of native species and native vegetation, for the areas where biodiversity 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.

Table 13. Biodiversity condition assessment for 2025-26.

Condition Rating for 2025-26	6-year Trend in condition	Summary Comment for 2025-26
Moderate	**Neutral**	**Biodiversity condition across the Wimmera catchment was stable overall in 2025-26, but ongoing pressures warrant close monitoring.** Positive signs included strong native fish populations in priority waterways, new platypus detections in the MacKenzie River and increased detections of the critically endangered south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo. Malleefowl showed positive signs of presence and breeding in the region, despite their habitat being heavily impacted by bushfire in early 2025. However, biodiversity values continued to be threatened by invasive species, habitat loss, bushfire impacts and fluctuating seasonal conditions. Unseasonal rainfall supported post-fire vegetation recovery but also increased pest risks and favoured rabbit population growth.

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

Biodiversity indicators

South-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo

The 2026 annual south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo count recorded 1,443 birds across the species' range in Victoria and South Australia, with 218 volunteers participating in the survey. This was an increase of 558 birds compared to the 885 recorded in 2025. While the higher count is encouraging, it is likely to reflect increased survey effort and improved detection rates rather than a substantial increase in the population.

Despite the 2025-26 year's higher count, long-term monitoring continues to indicate concerns for the species' recovery, with fewer females and juveniles in flocks (Birdlife Australia, 2026). This suggests ongoing challenges for breeding success and population growth. These findings reinforce the importance of continued conservation and habitat management efforts to support the long-term recovery of this threatened species.

Platypus

Before the Millenium Drought, platypus were widely distributed throughout waterways in the Wimmera. The MacKenzie River supports the catchment's last known platypus population. Wimmera CMA has monitored the population since 2001, and recently in partnership with Barengi Gadjin Land Council.

Platypus monitoring in October 2025 identified a new juvenile female platypus, which was captured, microchipped and tagged. Monitoring activities also recorded 13 microchip detections from previously tagged individuals, along with 4 instances where platypus avoided capture traps. A second platypus was captured in the Mount Zero channel, downstream of Dad and Dave Weir.

Native fish

Native fish monitoring during 2025-26 indicated that fish communities remain in generally good condition, particularly for small-bodied native species. Surveys of the MacKenzie River, Burnt Creek and Mount William Creek consistently recorded strong populations of southern pygmy perch, including high abundances at multiple sites, highlighting the ongoing persistence of this threatened species.

The Dimboola Weir Pool was assessed as healthy, with abundant aquatic vegetation supporting strong populations of native fish, including golden perch and freshwater catfish. High numbers of exotic species, particularly massing small redfin, were also observed (Lieschke & Hogan, 2025).

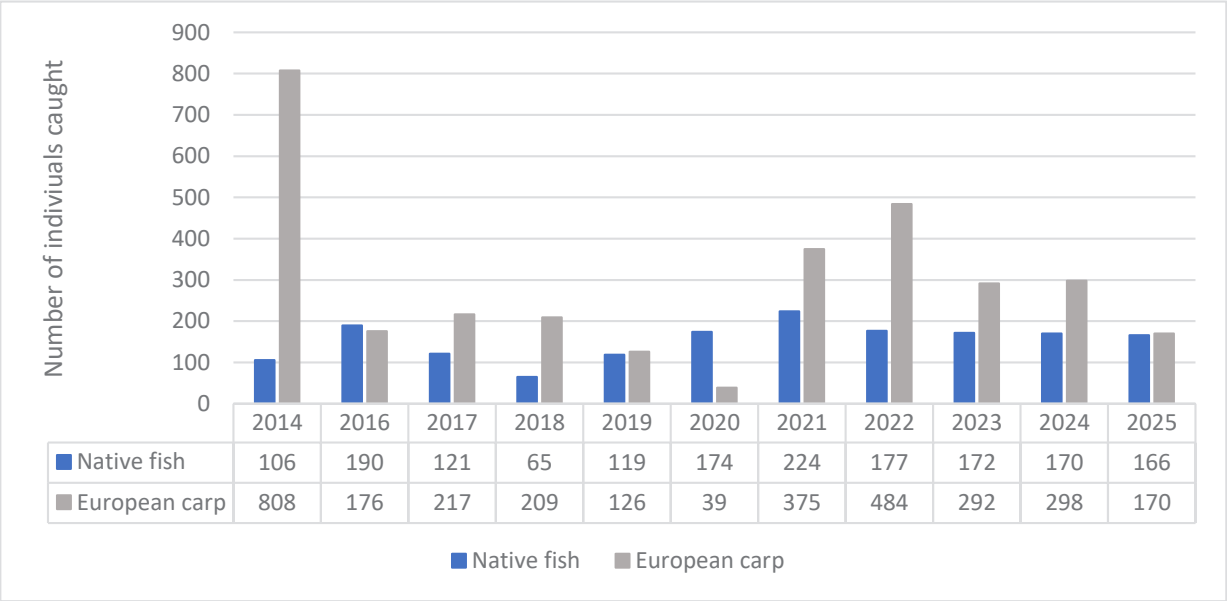
A diverse range of native species was also recorded across the region, demonstrating the continued importance of Wimmera waterways as habitat for native fish.

Results from blackfish monitoring and translocation surveys were encouraging, with river blackfish detected at translocation sites within the MacKenzie River and Burnt Creek system. Native fish communities at these sites were dominated by small-bodied species, including southern pygmy perch and obscure galaxias, suggesting suitable habitat conditions and continued recovery potential (Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, 2025).

However, some indicators suggest ongoing challenges. The 2026 ***Wimmera Native Fish Report Card*** surveys recorded fewer golden perch compared to the previous year and no freshwater catfish. Other species observed included Australian smelt, flat-headed gudgeon, redfin, silver perch, common galaxias, and Murray cod. European carp remain as a significant pressure, with numbers increasing since the 2025 survey despite a smaller survey effort (Austral Research and Consulting, 2026).

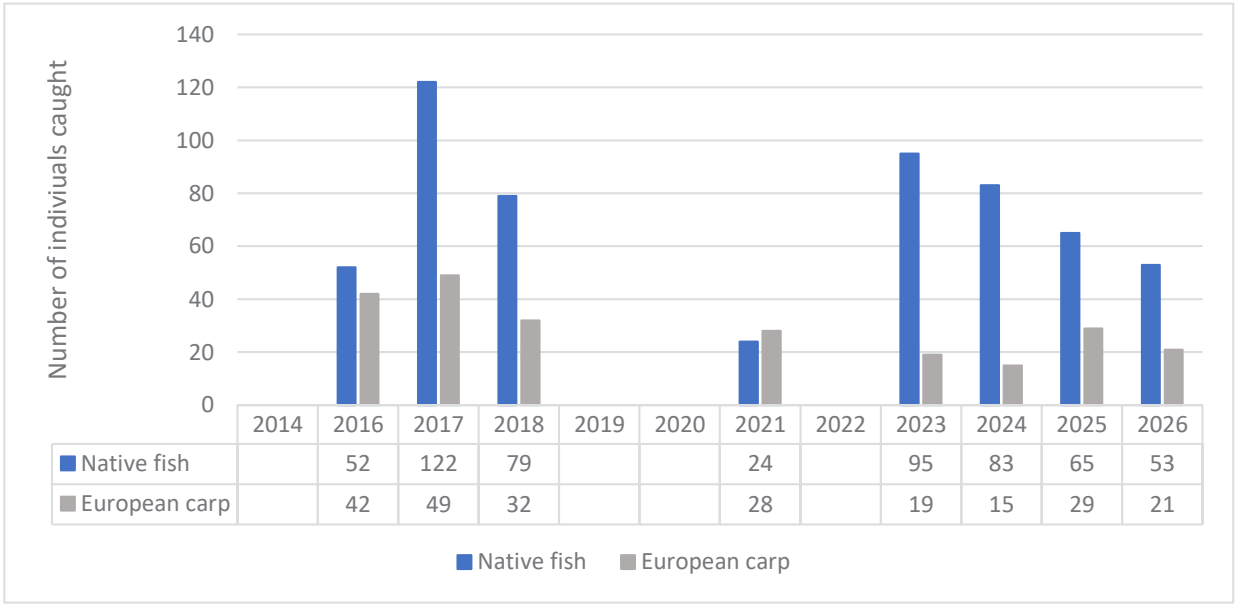
Recreational fishing competition results reflected the broader monitoring findings, with native fish caught in healthy numbers at both Horsham and Jeparit. The Horsham Fishing Competition recorded a substantial increase in golden perch catches compared to 2025 (see Figure 14), while the Jeparit Easter Competition also reported native fish as the dominant catch (see Figure 15).

Overall, native fish populations across the Wimmera appear stable, with strong numbers of small-bodied native species and evidence of success from recovery and translocation programs. However, ongoing management will be required to address the impacts of invasive species and support the recovery of larger native fish such as freshwater catfish and golden perch.



	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Native fish	106	190	121	65	119	174	224	177	172	170	166
European carp	808	176	217	209	126	39	375	484	292	298	170

Figure 14. Horsham Anglers Club fishing competition results (Horsham Fishing Competition Committee, 2026).



	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Native fish		52	122	79			24		95	83	65	53
European carp		42	49	32			28		19	15	29	21

Figure 15. Jeparit Anglers Club Easter fishing competition results (Jeparit Anglers Club, 2026).

Waterbirds and frogs

During 2025-26, monthly waterbird monitoring was undertaken at 3 sites along the lower Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River), where water for the environment was delivered to maintain water levels and improve water quality. Fewer bird species were recorded compared to previous years (Starks, 2026). While species richness was lower, this does not necessarily indicate a decline in ecosystem condition, as waterbird abundance and diversity can vary considerably between years in response to rainfall patterns, water availability and breeding movements across the broader landscape.

The 8 wetlands in the north-eastern Wimmera that receive water for the environment were also monitored during spring 2025. Commonly recorded waterbird species included grey teal, Australian wood duck, Pacific black duck and Australasian grebe. Eastern long-necked turtles and frogs were observed at several sites, demonstrating that these wetlands continue to provide important aquatic habitat for a range of water-dependent species in an otherwise dry, highly modified agricultural landscape (Starks, 2025).

Malleefowl

During the 2025-26 breeding season, 344 Malleefowl mounds were monitored, representing approximately 85% of all known mounds in the Wimmera. Of these, 59 mounds were identified as being actively used for nesting. Breeding activity remained close to the long-term average recorded at monitored sites.

Long-term monitoring indicates that Malleefowl breeding activity in the Wimmera has generally increased since surveys began in the early 2000s. State-wide trends in Victoria have been more variable but overall suggest stable to increasing levels of breeding activity over the same period.

Bushfires in 2024-25 fires burnt approximately 95,000 hectares of the Little Desert National Park, affecting several known Malleefowl nesting and habitat areas. However, breeding surveys conducted in October 2025, around ten months after the fire event, confirmed that Malleefowl continue to persist in the region (National Malleefowl Recovery Group, 2026). The presence of active nesting mounds following the fires demonstrates the species' resilience and highlights the ongoing importance of monitoring and habitat management to support population recovery.

Threat indicators

Invasive weeds

Landcare groups, Parks Victoria, DEECA, Greening Australia, Trust for Nature and local councils continued to undertake weed management across the Wimmera during 2025-26.

Following widespread rainfall during late 2025 and early 2026, Parks Victoria reported an increase in agricultural weed growth in bushfire-affected areas, particularly along the boundaries of the Little Desert National Park and nearby waterways. These post-fire environments can be highly vulnerable to weed invasion, as reduced vegetation cover and soil disturbance create favourable conditions for weed establishment.

Parks Victoria also identified the South African weed orchid (***Disa bracteata***) as an emerging concern. This invasive species is becoming increasingly widespread across the Wimmera and has been observed in a range of habitats, including roadside reserves, where it has the potential to impact native vegetation communities.

Foxes and feral cats

Parks Victoria continued fox and feral cat control programs across priority conservation areas, including Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park and the Little Desert National Park. Control activities in the Little Desert National Park were undertaken in partnership with Wimmera CMA and aim to reduce predation pressure on native wildlife and support the recovery of threatened species and ecosystems.

Rabbits

Rabbit populations remained a significant concern across the catchment. Parks Victoria and Wimmera CMA staff reported that rabbits appeared to be abundant and, in many areas, were increasing. In response, Parks Victoria, community groups, Landcare networks and other stakeholders continued rabbit control programs in priority areas across public and private land to reduce impacts on agricultural productivity, native vegetation and ecosystem health.

Deer and goats

Parks Victoria continued deer control programs across Wimmera parks and reserves. Parks Victoria reported deer populations within the park's estate remained stable during 2025-26.

Goat control programs undertaken in recent years also appear to have been effective. Parks Victoria reported that no goats have been observed in areas of Gariwerd (Grampians National Park) where aerial shooting was conducted in 2023, indicating that goat numbers remain low in these locations.

Over-abundant native herbivores
Observations from Wimmera CMA staff suggest that kangaroo and wallaby populations remained relatively stable across the catchment during 2025-26, although numbers were still considered high in many areas.

Following the 2024-25 fires in Gariwerd (Grampians National Park) and the Little Desert National Park, favourable rainfall supported vegetation regeneration. The availability of fresh plant growth appeared to provide sufficient food resources for kangaroo and wallaby populations, with no significant browsing impacts on vegetation recovery observed by Wimmera CMA staff.

Paddock trees
The loss of paddock trees continues to be a concern across the Wimmera, particularly where trees are damaged or destroyed during stubble-burning operations. Of particular concern are Buloke woodlands, which are listed as critically endangered.

In some cropping systems, paddock trees can be viewed as a management challenge because they may interfere with large agricultural machinery and restrict the efficient use of GPS-guided farming technologies. However, paddock trees provide important ecological benefits, including habitat, refuge and nesting sites for a wide range of native birds, mammals and reptiles. Retaining these trees is important for maintaining biodiversity within the region's agricultural landscapes (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

Fire
One significant bushfire occurred in the Wimmera during 2025-26. The Natimuk-Grass Flat fire in January 2026 burnt approximately 8,500 hectares (VicEmergency, 2026). While the majority of the affected area was agricultural land, the fire also caused substantial damage to native vegetation along Natimuk Creek, Natimuk Lake and sections of Barringgi Gadyin (the Wimmera River).

The fire impacted remnant Buloke and eucalypt woodland communities, including areas of high environmental value. Strong winds associated with the fire event also damaged surviving trees, with some being uprooted or structurally weakened (Stock & Land, 2026).

Following the fire, exposed and burnt ground was vulnerable to wind erosion. Reports indicated that strong winds contributed to the loss and movement of topsoil in some recently burnt areas, highlighting the importance of ground cover and post-fire land management in reducing erosion risks. In response,strategic cultivation was used in burnt paddocks to reduce the impact of wind erosion (Wimmera CMA, 2026).

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.

Management rating for Wimmera biodiversity
The overall management rating for biodiversity is **above expectations**. Most planned activities were achieved, or targets were met or exceeded.

Biodiversity indicators used in the assessment
The indicators in Table 14 reflect Wimmera CMA's efforts in collaboration with partner organisations to protect and improve the condition of biodiversity by undertaking activities such as weed control, pest animal control and targeted threatened species actions.

Table 14. Biodiversity indicators to assess catchment condition.

Indicator	Management rating	Comment
Vegetation (hectares)	**Above expectations**	Wimmera CMA supported Landcare groups and partners agencies to revegetate 403 hectares with native vegetation.
Pest herbivore and predator control (hectares)	**Above expectations**	Wimmera CMA supported partner organisations to control herbivore pest species across more than 180,800 hectares. Areas treated include the Little Desert National Park to benefit Malleefowl and other species, south-eastern red-tailed black-cockatoo habitat in the southwest Wimmera and beside waterways.
Additional area of permanent protection through CMA programs (hectares)	**Above expectations**	Wimmera CMA partnered with Trust for Nature to permanently protect 53 hectares of high-quality wetlands through conservation covenants.

Table 15. Management activities for biodiversity carried out by Wimmera CMA in 2025-26.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achieved	Funder
The Securing Girran Habitat Now and for the Future Project delivered in partnership with Birdlife Australia, DEECA, Parks Victoria, Greening Australia, Trust for Nature and private landholders aims to improve the south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo's 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.	• Maintained 25 nest boxes. • Undertook acoustic monitoring at 15 sites. • Treated 28,339 hectares for pest herbivores. • Controlled weeds over 17,413 hectares. • Engaged 479 people in events. • Managed grazing over 52 hectares. • Improved 336 hectares of vegetation. • Completed 3 flora and 4 fauna assessments.	Australian Government's National Heritage Trust.
The Building Resilient Wimmera Mallee Malleefowl Communities 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 in the Wimmera and improve the trajectory of this iconic species by protecting and improving habitat and reducing the impact of predators.	• Controlled weeds over 5,072 hectares. • Controlled pest herbivores over 149,626 hectares. • Completed 1 flora assessment and 2 fauna assessments. • Completed 1 captive breeding and translocation trial.	Australian Government's National Heritage Trust.
The aim of our Icon Species - Platypus project was to undertake research to further understand why natural dispersal hasn't occurred in the Wimmera and develop the Wimmera Platypus Management Plan which sets out a strategic to secure the species' long-term future in the catchment.	• Completed 1 plan.	Victorian Government's 2023-2025 Icon Species Program.
The Wimmera Platy Patch project aims to support the local Platypus population by improving riparian areas, stream banks, water quality and aquatic habitat of the Wimmera River, MacKenzie River and Burnt Creek. Targeting the peri-urban waterways around the Horsham township, the project also aims to improve the amenity of these green spaces for the local community and contribute to protecting the abundant Traditional Owner Cultural values within the project area.	• Completed 1 plan. • Completed 27 hectares of weed control.	Australian Government Urban Rivers and Catchment Program.

Table 16. Management activities led by partner organisations for biodiversity during 2025-26.

Management activities led by partner organisations	Achievements
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 preventing pests and disease from entering, establishing and spreading within the Wimmera catchment. This included: • Inspecting and treating Regionally Prohibited Weeds, including serrated tussock at Armstrong, Barkly, Deep Lead, Landsborough, Moyston and Stawell; English broom at Glenlogie, Moyston and Stawell; spiny emex at Apsley and Arapilies, serrated tussock and spiny emex at Dimboola, and buffalo burr at Longerenong. • Monitoring and treating areas for state prohibited weeds across the Wimmera, including mesquite at 6 localised locations around Murtoa. • Conducting twice yearly surveillance for tramp ants, including red imported fire ants, at Serviceton, Lawloit, Nhill, Lochiel, Dooen, Hopetoun (2 sites), Horsham (2 sites), Burnt Creek, Great Western and Halls Gap. • Conducting fortnightly surveillance during summer for exotic fruit fly in Horsham at 15 high risk sites. • Collected 10,553 fox scalps that were submitted at the Horsham fox bounty collection centre. • Identified and scoped significant infestation of the Regionally Controlled Weed, wheel cactus, along the Yarriambiack Creek at Lah and subsequently identified a new Victorian record for brown-spined prickly pear (*Opuntia phaeacantha*) infestation throughout the Yarriambiack Creek catchment.	• Inspected and treated 6 sites to eradicate state prohibited weed Mesquite. • Inspected 4 locations for regionally prohibited weeds spiny emex, serrated tussock and buffalo burr. • Completed 8 English broom inspections at 3 locations. • Identified infestation of regionally controlled weed wheel cactus. • Identified a new Victorian record for brown-spined prickly pear. • Completed 44 serrated Tussock inspections including 27 private properties, 8 roadsides, 4 railway properties and 5 public land reserves. • Collected 10,553 fox scalps from 122 participants. • Undertook twice yearly surveillance at 12 sites for tramp ants. • Undertook fortnightly surveillance on 15 sites for exotic fruit fly in Horsham.
Greening Australia continued to restore Wimmera landscapes and to provide strong environmental benefits for future generations through a range of projects. These included: • Management and permanent protection of the Nurcoung Biodiverse Carbon Demonstration Property, a demonstration site for a biodiverse carbon project whilst also improving habitat connectivity for endangered malleefowl. • As an industry partner, mentored 2 honours students at Federation University to continue investigations into the benefits of stratification of *Callitris gracilis* seed and the germination responses of *Einadia nutans, Olearia pimeliodes, Pittosporum angustifolium, Myoporum platycarpum* and *Atriplex lindleyi sub sp. Inflata* to a variety of treatments. • Hosted a student engagement activity as part of Latrobe Universities annual botany field trip. • Restored hydrology to 2 wetlands in the West Wimmera to support endangered brolga populations.	• Completed 200 hectares of weed and rabbit control. • Established 187 hectares of permanently protected land under a Trust for Nature conservation covenant. • Engaged 55 students. • Restored 10 hectares of wetland. • Maintained at least 5 partnerships.
Parks Victoria aimed to manage threats to native species in the Wimmera by controlling invasive weeds and animals.	• Completed 9.7 hectares of weed control. • Completed 4,587 hectares of rabbit fumigation. • Completed 100 hours of fox control. • Established 418 fox bait stations. • Undertook 6 nights of deer control.
Buloke Shire Council aimed to: • Continue construction of the Wycheproof Wetlands Precinct with water supply and circulation infrastructure being installed ready for commissioning in 2025-26. • Establish vegetation surrounding wetlands and landscaping improvements in other areas including tree planting in public parks. • Continued the pigeon removal program. • Achieve an overall reduction in the quantity and type of roadside weeds and rabbits across the municipal area.	• Wycheproof wetland water delivery infrastructure commissioned and first stage of filling. • Vegetation continued to be established around wetlands and public areas, including tree planting in public parks. • Implemented pest control measures including pigeon and rabbit removal.

Management activities led by partner organisations	Achievements
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: • Taking the total land area protected with a Trust for Nature conservation covenant to 19,042 hectares in the Wimmera region. • Working with multiple organisations to coordinate the 28th Annual Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar, "Creatures of the Night." • Working with the Snape Reserve Committee of Management, hosting a field trip to the reserve. • Collaborating with Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Dalki Garringa Native Nursery, Project Platypus, local Landcare networks and the Urimbirra Cooperative, to deliver 5 events. • Hosting an environmental education stall with the Urimbirra Cooperative at the Kaniva Show. • Continuing to provide support to the landholders impacted by the 2024-25 bushfires in Gariwerd and Little Desert. • Strengthening Trust for Nature's partnership with Bank Australia by taking up the opportunity to manage the Bank Australia Conservation Reserve.	• Permanently protected 512 hectares of habitat on 9 properties with a conservation covenant throughout the Wimmera. • Strengthened 1 partnership, which included multiple educational programs. • Completed 3,090 hectares of weed control, fencing, strategic revegetation and other restoration activities for 9 landholders with covenants affected by the 2024-25 Little Desert National Park fires. • Delivered 1 educational event and supported 1 further event, which included a field trip. • Ran 5 collaborative events, engaging over 270 people.
Hindmarsh Shire Council aimed to: • Achieve an overall reduction in the quantity and type of roadside weeds and rabbits across the municipal area. • Support rural landholders to plant native species to improve habitat for native wildlife and birds through an annual rural revegetation program. • Revegetate parts of the municipality with native trees planted by parks and gardens staff.	• Controlled 126 kilometres of roads for weeds. • Rabbit warren ripping occurred along council-managed roads; 7.8 kilometres by council; 60 kilometres by Yanac Broughton VFF Landcare Group. • HSC further undertook 5.5 hectares of rabbit warren ripping at the Rainbow transfer station, with more done by the Rainbow District Landcare Group. • Planted 2,600 plants over 2.4 hectares by Rainbow District Landcare Group. • Planted 4,000 plants over 7.6 hectares by Horsham District Landcare Network. • Produced 1 outdoor vegetation guide. • Completed bird monitoring at 3 properties.
Horsham Rural City Council aimed to: • Achieve an overall reduction in the quantity and type of roadside weeds and rabbits across the municipal area. • Support rural landholders to plant native species to improve habitat for native wildlife and birds through council's annual rural revegetation program. • Revegetate parts of the municipality with native trees planted by parks and gardens staff.	• Achieved an overall reduction in the quantity and type of roadside weeds and rabbits across the municipal area. • Revegetated parts of the municipality with native trees planted by parks and gardens staff. • Eradicated 330 rabbit warrens. • Treated 50 kilometres of roadside for priority weed species. • Planted 1,500 native trees in the municipal area.
The Pyrenees Shire Council aimed to: • Manage weed on road reserves. • Implement control measures for isolated populations of serrated tussock in the Landsborough and Barkly areas with the assistance of Agriculture Victoria. • Conduct a detailed field survey of bushfire-affected roadsides across sections of the Wimmera and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Areas. • The survey recorded 454 vascular plant taxa and 57 fauna species, including 50 species that have been recorded locally five times or less in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas, and approximately 20 species not previously recorded in the Pyrenees LGA. The findings are detailed in the Raglan-Mount Cole Bushfire Rehabilitation Plan. • Progress community engagement and implementation of new flood overlays covering sections of the Wimmera catchment, based in part on recommendations from the Upper Wimmera Flood Investigation.	• Managed weeds over 20 kilometres of linear road reserves. • Completed 1 survey of bushfire effected roadsides. • Completed community engagement for 1 flood overlay.

Management activities led by partner organisations	Achievements
The Northern Grampians Shire Council aimed to: • Improve weed control via the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program 2025-2026. The main focus was to retreat outbreaks from last year of African boxthorn, bridal creeper, Paterson's curse, sweet briar and the brooms with broader controls of St John's wort and horehound. Several opportunistic treatments for restricted weeds were also targeted. • Target European rabbits with fumigation and ripping of warrens around Lake Lonsdale, Black Range and Stawell.	• Surveyed 601.5 kilometres for pest weeds. • 9.24 kilometres of roadsides sprayed. which covered a total of 4.44 hectares of declared weed treatments. • Completed fumigation and ripping of 20 rabbit warrens.
The Horsham District Landcare Network aimed to: • Provide opportunities for students, community members and Landcare groups to participate in environmental restoration, education and protection. • Provide habitat for the endangered golden-rayed blue butterfly at Grass Flat via revegetation of creeping boobialla.	• Planted 500 creeping boobialla. • Planted 120 Grey box and Swamp paperbark. • Offered 30 ticket subsidies to the Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar 2025. • Hosted 8 students and 2 staff members for 22 days of environmental restoration work. • Improved infrastructure at The Patch Community Garden. • Donated over 12 nestboxes to the Little Desert National Park fire recovery and Natimuk community. • Ran 2 school holiday excursions.
Ararat Rural City Council aimed to: • Develop a community resource centre on their website which includes education material on local flora and fauna. • Complete a municipality wide biodiversity asset register and floristic vegetation mapping, in partnership with Biodiversity Services and SciLink. • Manage weeds in partnership with Project Platypus, targeting: blackberry, St. John's wort, sweet briar, flax-leaved broom, Cape broom, horehound, bridle creeper, African boxthorn, gorse/furze, Paterson's curse, hawthorn, spiny rush, Cape tulip (two leaf), boneseed, Chilean needle grass, Bathurst burr, spiny broom, Spanish heath, pampas grass and periwinkle.	• Developed 1 education resource. • Developed 1 biodiversity asset register. • Managed over 34 hectares for weeds.
The Yarrilinks Landcare Facilitator aimed to: • Support Landcare groups, landholders and the wider community to participate in natural resource management activities. • Support the Yarrilinks Committee and 4 Landcare groups in Minyip, Lah, Rupanyup and the Wallup Ag Group. • Promote Yarrilinks Landcare through community engagement events, meetings, digital promotion through social media, newsletter, blog and website, school engagement, and social presence at the Victorian Landcare Awards, Warracknabeal Show, and Speed Field Days. • Maintain Landcare projects by groups and in partnership with NRM bodies, including the Wimmera rice-flower project with DEECA. • Partner with regional Landcare networks to deliver Agriculture Victoria's Partnership Against Pests funding application of workshops for weed management across the region. • Assisted in delivering Landcare group projects funded by the Victorian Landcare Program including revegetation across private land in Minyip, Rupanyup, and Lah, weed management in Minyip and Rupanyup.	• Planted 4,700 stems over 22 hectares. • Attended 6 General Meetings and 2 AGMs. • Ran 9 events which engaged 200 participants. • Shared 4 newsletters, 15 blogs, and 38 social media posts. • Completed 26 hectares of weed control.

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 such as Landcare are active catchment stewards and participant 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 condition assessment

Condition Rating for 2025-26	6-year Trend in condition	Summary Comment for 2025-26
Good	**Neutral**	Wimmera CMA recorded strong community engagement in 2025-26, with more than 4,100 people participating in around 223 events. Highlights included the Black Snake Productions Wildlife Show at the Horsham Fishing Competition, Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar, Perennial Pasture Systems annual conference, Landcare native vegetation planting events and nature-learning activities with local schools. Participation varied across the catchment due to seasonal conditions, volunteer capacity, and broader regional pressures. Despite these challenges, engagement outcomes were positive. Landcare activity levels remained mixed, while Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council continued their strong partnership to deliver shared regional outcomes.

Community participation in events

Wimmera CMA observed strong participation in key events during 2025-26, with more than 4,100 people participating in around 223 events. Participation increased significantly from 2024-25, with almost 2,000 more people involved.

Wimmera CMA and partner organisations continued to support and engage the community with annual events. This included Black Snake Productions Wildlife Show at the Horsham Fishing Competition, Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar, Perennial Pasture Systems annual conference, Landcare native vegetation planting events and nature-learning activities with local schools.

Landcare, community groups and community volunteering

Wimmera CMA staff and local Landcare facilitators observed that participation in Landcare groups and environmental volunteering continued to vary across the catchment, reflecting a challenging operating environment influenced by seasonal conditions, competing demands on a relatively limited pool of volunteers, and growing pressures affecting regional communities.

Ongoing recovery efforts and the cumulative impact of recent large-scale bushfires and major renewable energy, mineral sands mining and transmission infrastructure proposals were among the intersecting pressures influencing volunteer capacity, community priorities and engagement patterns in different ways depending on local circumstances, values and economic considerations.

While overall participation outcomes were encouraging given current circumstances, Landcare group activity levels continued to vary across the region. Volunteer fatigue was evident within some groups, while others experienced renewed momentum through the involvement of new members, emerging leaders and fresh project ideas. Some groups and networks also continued exploring new directions, including biodiversity monitoring, environmental data collection and the use of emerging technologies to support conservation outcomes.

Throughout the year, substantial effort was directed towards supporting Victorian Landcare Facilitators, host organisations and community groups as they navigated both this evolving operating environment and significant changes to facilitator hosting arrangements across parts of the Wimmera. The strong teamwork ethic among the Wimmera Landcare team, together with a flexible and adaptive approach to supporting communities, was a notable achievement and helped maintain continuity of support for local Landcare groups and networks.

Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council continued their strong and well-established partnership, working collaboratively to support Landcare delivery, Traditional Owner self-determination and shared environmental outcomes across the region.

The average Landcare Group Health Score for groups in the Wimmera was 3. Groups in this category generally feel they are making progress and actively seek assistance from support staff, although many continue to rely on a small number of committed volunteers to sustain activities and governance functions.

Positive Landcare outcomes during 2025-26 included:

- Ongoing support for program design and continuous improvement of the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program.
- Successful management of significant change processes for Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program hosting arrangements, ensuring continuity of support for Landcare communities across the Wimmera.
- Continued delivery of the Best of the West facilitator professional development event in partnership with Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Mallee CMA, strengthening collaboration, knowledge sharing and peer support among facilitators across western Victoria.
- Coordination of the Community-led Recovery from Western Victoria Bushfires project, establishing 9 demonstration sites and supporting biodiversity recovery, community resilience and knowledge sharing across fire-affected landscapes.
- Continued delivery of the Partnerships Against Pests project led by Project Platypus, supporting community-led pest plant and animal management through planning, training and cross-network collaboration.
- Strong outcomes through the Victorian Landcare Grants program in the Wimmera, including 65 hectares of revegetation, 23,590 tubestock planted, 1,028 hectares of weed control, 151 hectares of rabbit control, 39 community engagement events, 837 participants, 1,224 volunteers and 13,812 volunteer hours.

All Victorian Landcare groups continued responding to changes to Australian Taxation Office reporting requirements. As in previous years, these changes placed a significant administrative burden on volunteer committees and highlighted the ongoing governance responsibilities carried by community volunteers.

Despite ongoing challenges, Landcare groups, volunteers and partner organisations continued to make a significant contribution to environmental stewardship, community resilience and landscape-scale conservation outcomes across the Wimmera.

First Nations Peoples

Wimmera CMA and Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) continued their strong and well-established partnership during 2025-26, built on many years of working together to achieve shared environmental, cultural and community outcomes. Regular communication and collaboration supported joint planning, project delivery and strategic discussions, with a focus on creating meaningful outcomes that align with Traditional Owner aspirations and priorities.

Partnership activities continued across a range of areas, including waterway and wetland management, cultural heritage protection, environmental stewardship, community engagement and capacity building. Wimmera CMA remained committed to supporting Traditional Owner leadership and self-determination through collaborative planning, flexible project delivery approaches and long-term relationship building.

The longstanding partnership between Wimmera CMA and BGLC continued to support management of Ranch Billabong near Dimboola, an important cultural and environmental asset connected to the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River). Previous investments in infrastructure, monitoring and management have strengthened BGLC's capacity to care for the area in accordance with cultural and environmental objectives. Following the significant impacts of the Little Desert fires, Wimmera CMA and BGLC worked together to plan actions to address high-risk fire-damaged trees, improve safety and accessibility, and support ongoing rehabilitation.

Wimmera CMA and BGLC also continued to collaborate on native fish recovery initiatives, including efforts to support threatened river blackfish and southern pygmy perch populations within the Wimmera catchment.

Support was also provided to BGLC through ongoing engagement with DEECA's Landcare for Country initiative, helping strengthen connections between Traditional Owner priorities, Landcare networks and broader community-based environmental action.

Wimmera CMA also supported strategic upgrades to fencing and other infrastructure at the Dalki Garringa Nursery and was pleased to support preparations for the launch of BGLC's updated Country Plan, which will provide an important foundation for future partnership activities, helping guide joint investment and delivery aligned with Traditional Owner aspirations and priorities.

Wimmera CMA maintained its longstanding relationship with Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative and continued to support community engagement activities where opportunities aligned.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC), the Registered Aboriginal Party for the south-eastern portion of the Wimmera catchment, remained an important partner and significant time and energy continued to be invested in engagement with EMAC to support regional planning activities, waterway management discussions and participation in projects and initiatives relevant to Country within the upper catchment.

Documentation supporting Wimmera CMA's partnerships with Traditional Owner organisations included Country Plans, project plans, partnership agreements, meeting records, regional strategies and project-specific collaboration arrangements.

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.

Management rating for Wimmera community engagement and participation

The overall management rating is **met expectations** as all targets were achieved.

Community indicators used in the assessment

Table 17. Community indicators for catchment condition.

Indicator	Management rating	Comment
Number of formal partnership agreements with Traditional Owners/ First Nations Peoples	**Met expectations**	Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) and Wimmera CMA continued to partner to support cultural outcomes. A highlight of 2025-26 was collaborating to support strategic upgrades to fencing and other infrastructure at the Dalki Garringa Nursery enabling BGLC to more effectively engage with regional revegetation efforts and enterprise development. Discussions with Barengi Gadjin Land Council progressed collaborative development of a draft ***Wimmera Regional Waterway Strategy***, planned to be finalised in 2026-27.
Number of participants in engagement events	**Met expectations**	More than 4,100 people participated in 223 Wimmera CMA events. Participation increased significantly from 2024-25, with almost 500 more people involved (Wimmera CMA, 2026).
Number of volunteers in Wimmera CMA's programs	**Met expectations**	Landcare and other community groups reported 1,224 volunteers and 13,812 volunteer hours working on Victorian Landcare Grant projects. Private landholders engaged in Wimmera CMA programs, with 13 undertaking waterway improvement works on their properties under management agreements with Wimmera CMA.
Total quantum of grants awarded ($)	**Met expectations**	Wimmera CMA allocated all available grant funding for the 2025-26 Victorian Landcare Grants program. This included $303,525 in program funding allocated across 30 group grants supporting Landcare groups and networks to undertake work in their local area.

Table 18 describes community actions and achievements for 2025-26.

Table 18. Management activities carried out to support the Wimmera community during 2025-26.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
The Wimmera Regional Landcare Coordination 2025-26 project aimed to provide regional level support for Wimmera-based Landcare facilitators employed under the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. It also included: • Supporting strategic actions of the Victorian Landcare Team. • Supporting Landcare and community group leadership and governance activities. • Educating school children and youths, providing opportunities to connect to nature. • Contributing to the annual Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar's organising committee, educating the community about the Wimmera's Biodiversity. • Supporting implementation of annual land use and land management transect surveys. • Hosting the 'Best of the West' cross-regional Landcare facilitator professional development event in Port Fairy, attended by 24 participants.	• Engaged 176 participants. • Completed 2 surveys. • Supported 3 events.	Victorian Government's Landcare Program.
Wimmera CMA delivered the Victorian Landcare Grants Program in the Wimmera region. This devolved grant program aimed to provide opportunities for Landcare and environmental volunteering groups to address local priorities through on-ground works, education and community capacity building.	• Completed 2 kilometres of fencing. • Fenced 3 hectares of native vegetation. • Revegetated 65 hectares. • Planted 23,590 tube stock. • Controlled 1,028 hectares of weeds. • Managed rabbits over 151 hectares control. • Engaged 837 volunteers across 39 events. • Completed 9 assessments.	Victorian Government's Landcare Program.
The Yarriambiack Landcare Facilitator supported Landcare groups, landholders, and the wider community to participate in natural resource management activities in the Yarriambiack Shire area. The facilitator is hosted by Wimmera CMA.	• Employed one Landcare facilitator.	Victorian Government's Landcare Program.
The Horsham Area Landcare Facilitator supported Landcare groups, landholders, and the wider community to participate in natural resource management activities in the Horsham Rural City Council Area. The facilitator is hosted by Wimmera CMA.	• Employed one part-time Landcare facilitator.	Victorian Government's Landcare Program.
The West Wimmera Landcare Facilitator supported Landcare groups, landholders, and the wider community to participate in natural resource management activities in the West Wimmera Shire Area. The facilitator is hosted by Wimmera CMA.	• Employed one part-time Landcare facilitator.	Victorian Government's Landcare Program.

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 condition assessment

Condition Rating for 2025-26	6-year Trend in condition	Summary Comment for 2025-26
Good	**Neutral**	**Integrated catchment management outcomes remained strong in 2025-26**, supported by Wimmera CMA's established partnerships with community groups, industry, Traditional Owners, and government agencies. Through collaborative forums, targeted engagement and formal agreements, partners worked together to deliver shared regional outcomes and address complex catchment challenges. A key focus was the development of the new ***Wimmera Regional Waterway Strategy*** and its ***Implementation Plan***, with stakeholders and community groups and members contributing valuable local knowledge and expertise. These partnerships continued to strengthen coordinated planning and integrated catchment management across the region.

Partnerships for integrated catchment management

Wimmera CMA's partnerships provide 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 organisations, Landcare networks and groups, farmer-led agricultural bodies, 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 Southern Mallee Regional Partnerships Forum involving Landcare facilitators, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, government agriculture agencies and farmer-led groups.
- Collaboration meetings with Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.
- Wimmera Strategic Water Management Working Group involving Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Victoria State Emergency Service, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, and Wimmera municipal councils. This group has responsibilities as a Wimmera Floodplain Management workplan implementation committee. It also operates as a practitioner group for Integrated Water Management and other water-related programs in the Wimmera.
- Individual meetings with delivery partners and stakeholders to discuss project proposals.
- Wimmera Southern Mallee Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Group meetings. Wimmera Southern Mallee Development facilitates this group after Wimmera CMA helped initiate its formation in 2022.

Wimmera CMA staff also contributed to stakeholder-led forums related to environmental water management, regional development and major infrastructure projects like mining, water pipelines and wind farms.

Wimmera CMA partnered with stakeholders to facilitate contributions of local knowledge and expertise into the development of the draft *Wimmera Regional Waterway Strategy,* planned to be finalised in 2026-27.

Wimmera CMA's strong partnerships helped open significant investment opportunities. For example, Wimmera CMA helped local government partners develop applications for 5 Integrated Water Management projects. Partners identified these projects through the Wimmera Strategic Water Management Working Group and many one-on-one meetings. A 2026 Wimmera Strategic Directions Statement refresh also confirmed these projects as regional priorities.

Management rating for integrated catchment management in the Wimmera

The overall management rating for Integrated Catchment Management is **met expectations** as the targets for most activities were achieved.

Table 19. Integrated catchment management indicators for catchment condition.

Indicator	Management rating	Comment
Number of partnerships	**Met expectations**	Wimmera CMA has well-established partnerships with a broad range of organisations. These include local government, government agencies and First Nations, Landcare network, farmer-led agricultural, biodiversity-focused, and nature-based recreation groups.

Table 20. Management activities for integrated catchment management carried out in the Wimmera during 2025-26.

Wimmera CMA Project	Achievements	Funder
Wimmera CMA completed a mid-term review of the ***Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-27***.	• Reviewed one strategy.	Victorian Government's Catchment Stewardship Program - Our Catchments, Our Communities.
Wimmera CMA progressed its commitment to promote, support and help develop Integrated Water Management projects by collaborating with: • Wimmera Integrated Water Management forum. • Victoria Catchment Management Authority Integrated Water Management network. • Wimmera municipal councils. • Wimmera Strategic Water Management Working Group representatives. • DEECA IWM representatives.	• Drafted one Strategic Directions Statement. • Formed one statewide network. • Submitted 5 project proposals seeking funding. • Maintained 14 partnerships.	Victorian Government's Integrated Water Management (IWM) Program's Catchment Management Authority IWM Resourcing Initiative.

Summary of the financial results for 2025-26

Five-year financial summary ('000)

	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Government Contributions	9,371	7,283	6,977	6,934	7,172
Other Revenue	563	670	540	361	99
Total Revenue	**9,934**	**7,953**	**7,517**	**7,295**	**7,271**
Expenses	8,959	6,809	6,906	6,842	5,294
Net Operating Result	**975**	**1,144**	**611**	**453**	**1,977**
Net Gain/(loss) on Non-financial Assets	(6)	(6)	(1)	0	17
Comprehensive Result	**969**	**1,138**	**610**	**453**	**1,994**
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash and Deposits Held	438	674	805	617	2,174
Total Assets	15,067	13,977	12,307	11,656	11,191
Total Liabilities	2,309	2,188	1,656	1,614	1,602
Total Equity	**12,758**	**11,789**	**10,651**	**10,042**	**9,589**

Overview

Significant changes in financial position during the year

The Authority was able to secure $672,000 of funding in advance which will be carried over to the 2026-27 financial year. This has increased assets and the net operating result for this period. We have additional carry forward funds due to delays in the delivery of on-ground works and soils projects.

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.

Capital projects

Wimmera CMA does not manage any capital projects.

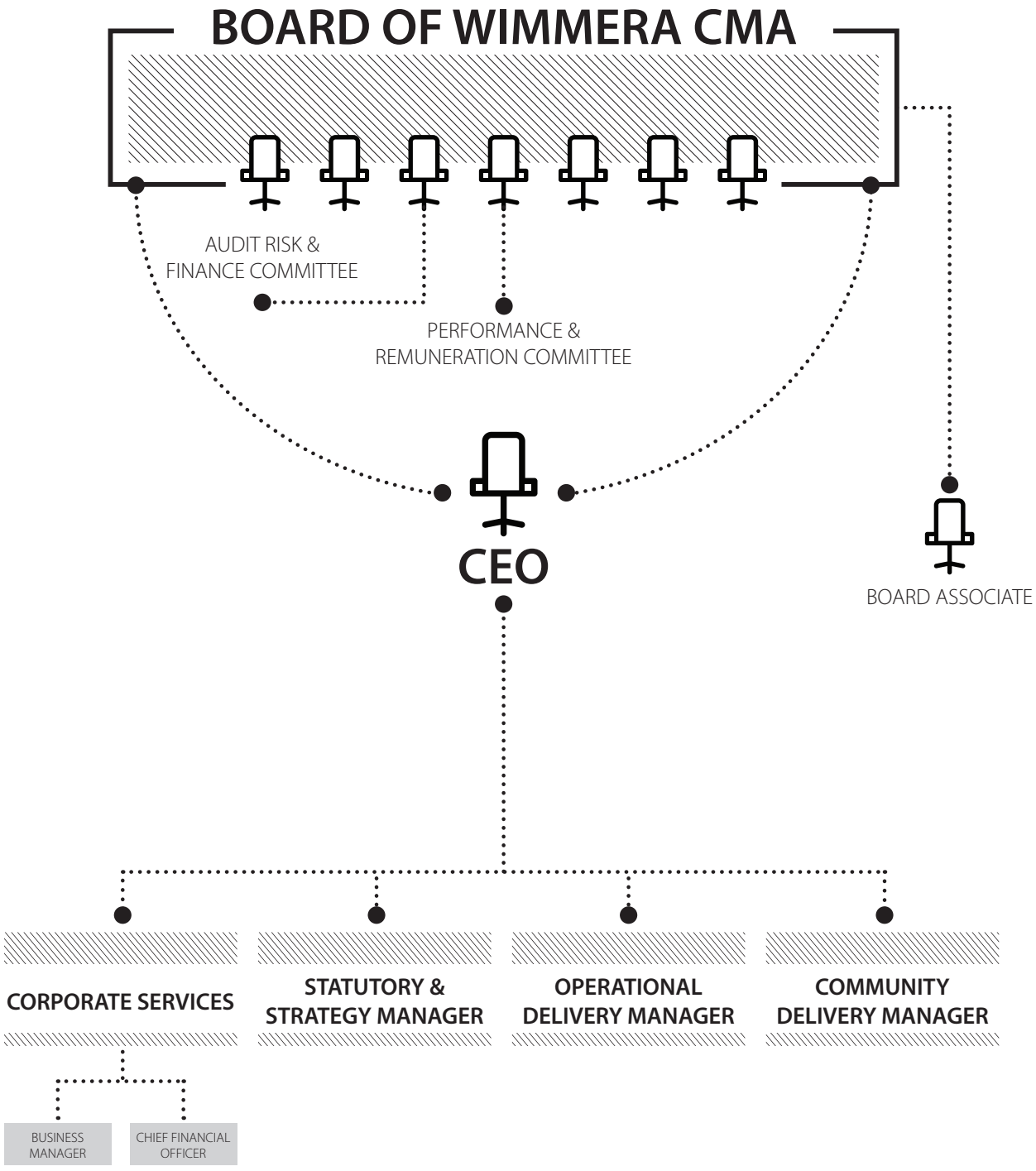
Victorian Landcare Grants 2025-26 successful recipients

Recipient	Project title	Grant amount $
Yarrilinks	Identifying and protecting high value natural assets while engaging the community in Landcare	$9,700
Rupanyup VFF Landcare Group	Revegetation, bird monitoring, and nest boxes for Rupanyup and beyond	$14,100
Minyip Landcare Group	Roadside revegetation, bird monitoring, priority weeds and seed collection capacity building for Minyip	$7,800
Lah Landcare Group	Invasive cactus control on private land and bird monitoring to identify high value sites	$2,950
Eastern Hindmarsh Landcare Group	Landcare Fleabane Community Field Day	$4,690
Laharum Landcare Group	Supporting Northwest Gariwerd/Grampians Biodiversity	$15,600
Jallukar Landcare Group	Monitoring Biodiversity in Jallukar Landcare Region as a Foundation for Grampians to Pyrenees Biolinks	$13,400

Recipient	Project title	Grant amount $
Black Range Land Management Group	Caring for country through long-term biodiversity protection and resilience of the Black Range	$10,900
Horsham District Landcare Network	Little Desert Biolinks for threatened species	$16,720
Crowlands Warrak Landcare Group	Weedbusting for our Waterways	$12,500
Kaniva District Landcare	Revegetation at Telopea	$14,550
Stawell Urban Landcare	Weed, education and environmental stewardship	$16,460
Landsborough Landcare Group	Landsborough noxious weed control 2025-2026	$8,565
Moyston Landcare Group	Smarter Surveying	$8,950
Murrandarra Landcare Group	Tree Guardians for the South Eastern Red Tailed Black Cockatoo.	$15,440
Concongella Landcare Group	Enhancing the biodiversity of the Concongella region through revegetation.	$15,400
Horsham District Landcare Network	Grasslands close to extinction: engaging Landcare communities to save the Wimmera's rarest ecosystem	$9,570
Elmhurst Landcare Group	Monitoring Biodiversity in Elmhurst Landcare Region as a Foundation for Grampians to Pyrenees Biolinks	$6,600
Black Range Land Management Group	Walpa, Caring, Together: deepening private landholder partnership with Traditional Owners through cool Cultural Burning	$14,900
Horsham Urban Landcare Group	Growing Sustainability and Community in Horsham	$4,690
Community Association of Halls Gap - Halls Gap Landcare Group	Halls Gap Native Habitat Protection and Community Engagement	$15,440
Yanac Broughton VFF Landcare Group	Management of Pest Animals	$7,000
Northern Grampians Landcare Group	Monitoring Biodiversity in Northern Grampians Landcare Region as a Foundation for Grampians to Pyrenees Biolinks	$6,300
Project Platypus	A future for Landcare Round 2: Collaboration, community and evaluating impacts	$15,600
Perennial Pasture Systems	Chicory – summer feed option & fire protection	$13,900
Project Platypus	Project Platypus invasive species support - community groups and fire response	$13,300
Horsham East Landcare and Agriculture Group	Connecting Farmers through Coordinated Pest Management and Soil Health Education	$7,500
Wallup Ag Group	Support grant awarded	$500
Telopea Downs Agricultural and Landcare Group	Support grant awarded	$500
	TOTAL AMOUNT	$303,525

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 2026.

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 Reappointed 1 October 2025 – 30 September 2027
David Drage	14 October 2013 – 30 September 2017 Reappointed 1 October 2017 – 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 Reappointed 1 October 2025 – 30 September 2027
La Vergne Lehmann	1 October 2017 – 30 September 2021 Reappointed 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2025
Angela Enbom	1 October 2019 – 30 September 2023 Reappointed 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2027
Duncan Ashby	1 October 2023 – 30 September 2027
Andrew Barton	1 October 2023 – 30 September 2027
David Johincke	1 October 2025 – 30 September 2029
Danae McDonald	1 October 2025 – 30 September 2029
Robyn Tucker	1 October 2025 – 30 September 2029

Associates

Danae McDonald continued in the role of Board Associate until 30 September 2025 when she was successful in being appointed to the Wimmera CMA Board.

Georgia Bennett held the role of Board Associate from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

These appointments were funded by DEECA with the support of Wimmera CMA with the aim to develop future board members through improving their understanding of the water sector, good governance practices and the opportunity to learn on the job with board members through the attendance at board meetings.

Board Associate	Term of appointment
Danae McDonald	1 July 2024 to 30 September 2025
Georgia Bennett	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Board attendance

Board Member	Meetings Attended
1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	
Peter Hilbig	7
Andrew Barton	7
Angela Enbom	6
Duncan Ashby	6
Michelle Graymore	6
Danae McDonald *Appointment commenced Oct 2025*	5
Robyn Tucker *Appointment commenced Oct 2025*	5
David Jochinke *Appointment commenced Oct 2025*	3
David Drage *Appointment ceased Sept 2025*	2
La Vergne Lehmann *Appointment ceased Sept 2025*	2
Total Meetings	**7**

Board Associate	Meetings Attended 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026
Georgia Bennett *Appointment ceased June 2026*	5
Danae McDonald *Appointment ceased Sept 2025*	2
Total Meetings	**7**

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



Peter Hilbig - Chair

Term of appointment
October 2017 – September 2027

Peter Hilbig was initially appointed Chair in October 2017 and reappointed 2021 and 2025. He lived in the Wimmera for almost 40 years and now resides in central Victoria. He has worked locally and in Malaysia and Northern Territory as a teacher and school leader, leadership coach and school reviewer. Peter's interest in the Wimmera and passion for sustainable catchment management developed through 6 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 Chair of Vic Catchments, the peak body for Catchment Management Authorities in Victoria. He is a volunteer firefighter and a Justice of the Peace.



Andrew Barton

Term of appointment
October 2023 – September 2027

Andrew Barton was appointed to the Wimmera CMA Board in October 2023. As a Professor of Water Resource Engineering at Federation University Australia, Andrew brings considerable national and international experience and knowledge across strategic water resource planning, impacts of climate change to water supply, streamflow and water quality monitoring, entitlement and allocation frameworks, and direct operational experience of managing water resources through the extremes of droughts and floods.
Andrew also has extensive executive leadership, strategy and organisational management experience having worked and consulted across a spectrum of industry and university roles. Andrew is currently employed as the Deputy Dean of the Graduate Research School where he strives to develop research strengths and enhance the provision of research training for the University's research students.
Andrew is a Chartered Professional Engineer, an Executive Engineer, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia, and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Robyn Tucker

Term of appointment
October 2025 – September 2029

Robyn Tucker was appointed to the Board in October 2025. Robyn is an intensive livestock environmental and planning consultant based in Horsham. Her work includes farmer consulting, policy work for government agencies and industry research. Robyn is a certified professional soil scientist and environmental auditor. She also owns a beef and cropping farm in south-east Queensland.

Robyn has a strong interest in sustainable land use practices that support profitable businesses while also protecting the natural environment. She is committed to using her knowledge and experience to help foster a healthy Wimmera catchment that supports the needs of the local community.



Duncan Ashby

Term of appointment
October 2023 – September 2027

Duncan Ashby was appointed to the Board in September 2023. He is currently a lecturer at Marcus Oldham College and has also had extensive experience in the agricultural sector as a farm business adviser and CPA. As a consultant he specialised in family farm businesses where he engaged with financial management, structuring, and succession planning.

This work involved a particular focus on land leasing, share-farming and contract farming and he undertook a Churchill Fellowship in 2014 to study these issues in the USA, UK and Canada.

Duncan has also undertaken corporate governance work with selected companies and has co-authored an AgriFutures Australia (RIRDC) publication on land leasing (Successful Land Leasing in Australia).

Other previous experience includes working for the Department of Defence where he held several roles, including working on Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).

He holds a Bachelor of Commerce from The University of Melbourne with majors in economics, management, and business law; a Graduate Diploma of Arts (Political Science) – also from The University of Melbourne; post graduate qualifications in accounting (CPA) and certification from the Judge Business School at Cambridge University in 'Circular Economy and Sustainability Business Strategies' (2023).

Duncan has a long association with the Wimmera ranging from farm business consulting throughout the region, regular visits to the northern Grampians and Mount Arapiles and outings on the Barringgi Gadyin (Wimmera River) for the Dimboola regatta.



Michelle Graymore

Term of appointment

October 2023 – September 2027

Michelle Graymore was appointed to the Board in October 2017. Michelle is a researcher of European heritage focused on the social dimensions of water system transformation, particularly in rural and regional areas. She has expertise in understanding the relationship rural and regional communities have with water, particularly how they are connected to, and manage, water from households and farms to businesses and resource managers. Michelle is also interested in the ways the water sector can work with Indigenous people to ensure our watery places thrive and continue to nourish us and future generations.

Michelle is passionate about the Wimmera and is committed to ensuring the region's wellbeing. She led the Wimmera Research Group at Federation University in Horsham between 2010 and 2014. She continues to contribute to the region's wellbeing through her expertise in sustainability, social change processes, integrated water management, water governance and community engagement.



David Jochinke

Term of appointment

October 2025 – September 2029

Son of the Wimmera, David "DJ" Jochinke is a thirdgeneration dryland mixed farmer from Murra Warra. A respected national agricultural leader, DJ brings deep practical experience, strategic insight, and a long record of service to farmer advocacy and rural development. DJ has represented Australian agriculture at the highest levels of government, industry, and public policy and he also continues to contribute to numerous local organisations, reflecting his commitment to practical leadership and regional resilience. Grounded, collaborative, and futurefocused, DJ is widely regarded as a trusted voice for Australian farmers and rural communities.



Angela Enbom

Term of appointment

October 2019 – September 2027

Angela Enbom was appointed to the Wimmera CMA Board in October 2019. A commercial beekeeper, she operates her own business while managing a sustainable small-scale food production farm. As a migratory apiarist, Angela has worked across diverse landscapes and ecosystems, giving her a strong understanding of natural resource management. She is Chair of the State Apiculture Industry Advisory Committee and President of the Central Victorian Apiarists' Association.

Angela is passionate about building resilient rural communities and supporting their long-term viability. She is committed to helping regional communities adapt to changing environmental and economic conditions through informed, inclusive planning. Drawing on her experience in teaching, primary production, small business and the apiculture industry, Angela brings a strategic, big-picture perspective to the Board.



Danae McDonald

Term of appointment

July 2024 – September 2025 – (Board Associate)

October 2025 - September 2029

Danae is a proud Wotjobaluk Woman who has lived in the Horsham area her whole life. She currently works as a First Nations Hospital Liaison Officer at Grampians Health and is a member of the Barengi Gadjin Land Council. Danae very passionate about how we care for the land and waterways on which we operate, and how we keep the land healthy and continue to improve its ability to thrive.

Danae brings knowledge passed down from the elders and community members about the historical ways in which Aboriginal ancestors cared for the land and waterways.



David Drage – Deputy Chair

Term of appointment

October 2013 – September 2025

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

Term of appointment

October 2017 – September 2025

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, 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.

Board Associate



Georgia Bennett

Term of appointment

July 2025 – June 2026

Georgia Bennett moved to the Wimmera in 2022 after completing a Bachelor of Business at Monash University. Since then, she has worked across tourism and regional development, with destination marketing remaining at the centre of her work. As Marketing Manager at Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism, Georgia helps share the stories and places that make the region special, promoting connection to its towns, landscapes, and character.
Her role spans creative strategy, community collaboration, and showcasing the natural beauty of the area to visitors and locals alike.
Appointed as the Youth Board Delegate in 2025, Georgia brings a tourism and youth perspective to discussions about the region's environment, recreation, and future.
Having learned the region through the lens of tourism, she continues to explore it with curiosity and appreciation, enjoying hikes in the Grampians, camping by the lakes, and the rhythm of everyday life in the Wimmera.

Board governance committees

The Board commenced the year with 3 governance committees; Audit, Risk and Finance; Business and Planning and Performance and Remuneration. At the Strategic Planning day, it was decided that only the Audit, Risk and Finance and the Performance and Remuneration Committees would continue from 1 October.

Audit, Risk and Finance Committee

This committee's terms of reference require that they meet at least 4 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.
- The currency of policies that fall within the purpose of the Committee.
- Oversight of financial reporting, compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and maintenance of an efficient and effective audit function.
- This committee met 4 times this reporting year.

Audit Risk & Finance Committee 1 July 2025- 30 September 2025
Duncan Ashby (Committee Chair)
La Vergne Lehmann
Angela Enbom
David Drage
Peter Hilbig (Ex Officio)
*Tim Hewitt (Independent Member)

Audit Risk & Finance Committee 1 October 2025 - 30 June 2026
Duncan Ashby (Committee Chair)
Michelle Graymore
Robyn Tucker
Peter Hilbig (Ex Officio)
*Tim Hewitt (Independent Member)

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.
- The committee met twice this reporting year

Performance & Remuneration Committee 1 July 2025- 30 September 2025
Peter Hilbig (Committee Chair)
Andrew Barton
Michelle Graymore
La Vergne Lehmann
Danae McDonald

Performance & Remuneration Committee 1 October 2025 - 30 June 2026
Peter Hilbig (Committee Chair)
Andrew Barton
Angela Enbom
Danae McDonald

Business and Planning Committee

This committee meets as required to satisfy statutory reporting requirements.

The committee's role is to monitor, review and recommend to the Board:

- A review of the committee structure was conducted at the Board Strategic day in October, and the decision was made to reduce the board governance committees back to the two, with the Business & Planning Committee being put into recess.
- The committee did not meet this reporting year.

Business & Planning Committee 1 July 2025- 30 September 2025
Michelle Graymore (Committee Chair)
Duncan Ashby
Angela Enbom
Andrew Barton
Danae McDonald
Peter Hilbig (Ex Officio

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 safety, public sector Code of Conduct; organisational values and behaviours; organisational policies mandatory training and professional 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, cyber security, Privacy in the Victorian Public Sector and human rights charter.

We also run training on cyber security with regular sessions that were recorded so staff unable to attend could catch up. An annual cyber security information session has also been included for the Board each year.

Employment support program (EAP)
We have renewed our shared contract with 3 other CMAs with Tellus Health One. 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.

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 completed a statewide project with the other CMA's engaging a consultant to undertake a review of our policies and procedures to ensure compliance against our obligations and ensure legislative compliance. An internal review of the relevant documents has been conducted with the next steps to incorporate them into our OH&S processes and communicate them to staff.

We continue to look to identify opportunities for collaboration and consistency across the organisations to collectively improve the efficiency of our systems.

Staff have been supported with regards to their health and wellbeing, with annual flu vaccinations offered to all staff.

We have 15 staff accredited in level 2 first aid. Fire extinguisher training was offered to all staff.

Incident management

We had 4 incidents reported in 2025-26, including 3 related to motor vehicles; with 2 involving hitting a kangaroo and one field-based incident. There were no injuries reported or lost time incurred. This was compared with the previous year when there were 3 hazards and five incidents reported.

Table 21. Incident report summary.

Measure	Key Performance Indicators	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24
Full-time equivalent		19.62	19.63	17.89
Hazards	Hazards identified	0	3	5
	Rate per 100 FTE	0	15.29	27.95
Incidents	Total no. of incidents - staff	4	5	2
	No. of reportable incidents requiring medical treatment - staff	0	0	0
	Incident rate per 100 FTE Staff	19.62	25.48	11.18
	No. incidents – Employment Programs	0	0	0
	No. of reportable incidents requiring medical treatment – Employment Programs	0	0	0
	Incident rate per 100 FTE - Employment Programs	0	0	0
Claims	No. of standard claims	0	0	0
	Rate per 100 FTE	0	0	0
	No. of lost time claims	0	0	0
	Rate per 100 FTE	0	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 ($)	0	0	0
Return to work	Percentage of claims with RTW plan <30 days (%)	0	0	0
OH&S Meetings	Meetings held	12	11	10

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 2025.

All employees, with the exception of the CEO, are covered by the Wimmera CMA Enterprise Agreement 2024-28 which was approved by the Fair Work Commission 20th March 2025.

We have had an insignificant change to our staffing numbers during the 2025-26 year of .01FTE.

Table 22. Details of employment levels in 2025 and 2026.

	2025-26		2024-25		2023-24	
Classification	**Number (head count)**	**FTE**	**Number (headcount)**	**FTE**	**Number (headcount)**	**FTE**
Executives	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior managers	5	4.8	5	4.8	5	4.8
Administration staff	2	1.4	2	1.4	2	1.2
Field staff	16	12.42	16	12.63	13	10.89
Total	**24**	**19.62**	**24**	**19.63**	**21**	**17.89**

Workforce inclusion policy

Wimmera CMA is committed to growing a diverse and inclusive workplace culture, which is reflective of the communities in which we work and live. Wimmera CMA recognise it is through the achievement of an inclusive workplace culture that we will provide a safe and inclusive environment for all.

Over the last two years we have provided opportunities for 3 members of our youth community to develop their skills as a board member through our Board Associate program. In the second year of the program, Danae McDonald was successful in being appointed to the Wimmera CMA board.

We continue to offer graduate positions to develop the future of the organisation, with two graduates currently working in the organisation. This program continues to provide a career pathway for staff and opportunities within the organisation.

The organisational structure provides for gender equity and flexible working and is reflected within our staffing split.

Table 23. Details of employment levels in 2025 and 2026.

Gender	**25-26**	
Classification	**Number (headcount)**	**FTE**
Male	11	10.50
Female	13	9.12

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 2025-26 reporting period, Wimmera CMA had no tenders of this size.

Social procurement framework

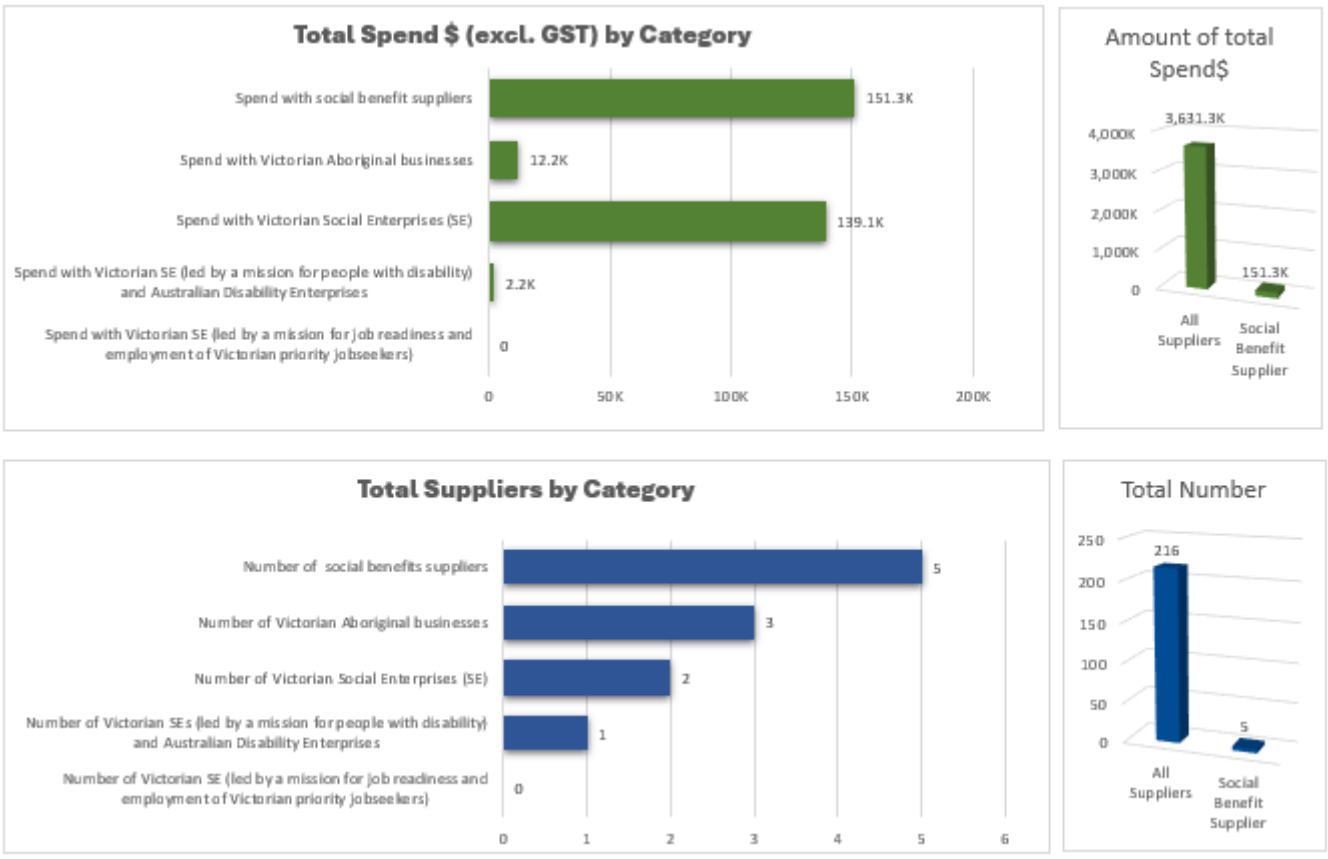
Wimmera CMA continued its commitment to social procurement in 2025-26. Social procurement practices and planning were undertaken to support a range of local organisations and generate social value consistent with Victoria's Social Procurement Framework.

Wimmera CMA supports local businesses and will give preference to local suppliers where they offer competitive value, quality and capability, while meeting the organisation's operational needs and objectives.

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:

- Continuation of a multi-year 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 projects delivery including the supply of monitoring stakes and E-waste services. AXIS Worx is a social enterprise providing supported employment for people with disabilities who are unable to work in the open employment sector.
- Employing causal staff through Skillinvest to undertake threat abatement works. Skillinvest is a social enterprise and not-for-profit organisation that delivers employment, education and training services.
- Supporting catering services from Horsham Central – a transition to work program designed to support people with disabilities.

Figure 16. ABN wash results 2025-2026.



Government advertising expenditure

Wimmera CMA's expenditure in the 2025-26 reporting period on government campaign expenditure did not exceed $100,000.

Consultancies

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

In 2025-26 there were 10 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were $10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred in 2025-26 in relation to these consultancies was $280,772 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 2025-26 there were 9 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than $10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2025-26 in relation to these consultancies was $36,200 excl. GST.

Reviews and studies expenditure

In 2025–26, there were five reviews and studies undertaken which were not commercially sensitive. with the total cost this year of $186,250. Details of individual reviews and studies are outlined in Table 24.

Table 24 Reviews and Studies Expenditure

Name of the review	Reasons for review/study	Terms of reference/scope	Anticipated outcomes	($000) LTD cost (excl.GST)	($000) Final cost if completed (excl. GST)	($000) Publicly available (Y/N) and URL
Wimmera connections: MacKenzie River and Burnt Creek drought refuges feasibility study	The project will explore modifying current pipelines that source supply from Wartook and Moora Moora storages to artificially water high-value ecological sites in the MacKenzie River and Burnt Creek system using existing environmental allocations.	The aim of this project was to undertake a feasibility assessment of connecting sites to the pipeline, as well as the infrastructure design, management and monitoring requirements for up to 4 sites, should the concept be feasible and further approvals granted.	Feasibility and prioritisation study of sites for pipeline connections and scoping of 'pilot' water circulation project.	49,475	76,475	N
Development of a monitoring program to assess current water quality, fish and macroinvertebrates in drought refuge sites in the Lower Wimmera River and Mt Cole Creek	To develop ongoing monitoring process for drought refuge sites that are either currently supplied with water for environment entitlements or will be supplied by the new East Grampians Pipeline	To develop a monitoring program to assess parameters to demonstrate if environment objectives are being met and assess the overall success. The seven site-specific plans considers the relative importance of needs, and possible scalability of monitoring (in timing, frequency, spatial and taxonomic coverage). It needed to be scalable due to ongoing monitoring costs and future funding limitation. The program should be made adaptable under different climatic conditions and be repeatable.	A monitoring program and site-specific plans to detect change over time, assess progress towards environmental objectives, and support adaptive management through defined decision triggers. Estimate implementation costs and ensure the program is robust, repeatable, scalable, and adaptable to varying climatic conditions.	17,186	20,986	N
Assessment of Environmental Watering opportunities for the proposed Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Pipeline	Potential pipeline development may provide opportunities for environmental watering in the Upper Wimmera River Catchment.	This project aim was to identify and prioritise high-value ecological refuge sites in the upper Wimmera catchment and assess the feasibility of supplying priority sites with environmental water via the proposed Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Pipeline.	Identify potential refuge locations within the vicinity of the proposed SWNPP. Review the current knowledge of each location including ecological conditions, opportunities and constraints and select six potential refuge sites for ground truthing. Ground truth and assess the feasibility of the identified six sites as refuges if supplied with water from the SWNPP. Prioritise the potential refuge sites for connection to the SWNPP.	54,830	54,830	N
Apsley Flood Study – West Wimmera Shire Council	To assess flood risks to the West Wimmera Shire town of Apsley	To document flood risks, and potential flood-mitigation and flood responses actions for the town of Apsley.	A document for use in flood planning, flood preparation and response for the town of Apsley.	19,711	132,000	Y
Edenhope Flood Study – West Wimmera Shire Council	To assess and document flood risks to the West Wimmera Shire town of Edenhope	To document flood risks, and potential flood-mitigation and flood responses for the West Wimmera Wimmera town of Edenhope.	A document for use in flood planning, preparation, action and response for the town of Edenhope.	45,048	165,000	Y
			TOTALS	186,250	449,291	

Information and communication technology expenditure

Table 25. Wimmera CMA ICT expenditure during 2025-26, totalling $299,000

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expenditure			
All Operational ICT Expenditure	ICT expenditure relating to project to create ICT capabilities		
All ICT operational Expenditure ($000)	Non-BAU ICT Expenditure ($000)	Operational Expenditure ($000) (OPEX)	Capital Expenditure ($000) (CAPEX)
Total	Total A+B	A	B
284	41	26	15

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 – broken down to Operational expenditure (OPEX) and Capital Expenditure (CAPEX)

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 2025-26.

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

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 https://ovic.vic.gov.au. An application fee of $34.50 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

Freedom of Information (FOI) statistics and timeliness
During 2025-26 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.

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: Wimmera CMA Protected Disclosure Policy (IBAC)

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: A secure email disclosure process is available on IBAC's website.

Disclosure of emergency procurement

Wimmera CMA did not activate emergency procurement in the 2025-26 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. Refer to occupational health and safety in this report.
- A statement on industrial relations within the Wimmera CMA, and details of time lost through industrial accidents and disputes. Refer to employment and conduct principles in this report.
- A list of Wimmera CMA major committees, the purposes of each committee and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved. Refer to Board governance committees in this report.

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).

Procurement complaints

Under the Governance Policy of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VPBP) Wimmera CMA must disclose any formal complaints relating to the procurement of goods and services received through its procurement complaints management system.

Wimmera CMA did not receive any formal complaints through its procurement complaints management system in 2025-26.

Environmental reporting

Reporting of environmental data by government entities

Wimmera CMA is committed to reducing its environmental footprint and improving the sustainability of its operations. During 2025-26, Wimmera CMA continued to promote resource efficiency across its operations and investigate opportunities to further reduce emissions and energy consumption. This included exploring options for incorporating an appropriate electric vehicle and associated charging infrastructure as part of the organisation's fleet management planning.

Table 26. Demonstrates results of the annual waste audit conducted at Wimmera CMA. Full-time equivalent (FTE) based indicators are adopted for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24
Full-time equivalent	19.62	19.63	17.89
Electricity consumption (kWh) *	1553.33 (5591.99 MJ)	1662.75 (5985.9 MJ)	1803.43 (6492.35 MJ)
Estimated greenhouse emissions associated with electricity consumption (tonnes)	0.40	0.46	0.49
Water consumption (kL)	8.31	13.39	20.07
Total waste production (kg)	33.15	39.46	34.13
General waste production (kg)	12.18	10.72	7.22
Recycling rate (%)	63.3	72.8	78.8
Estimated greenhouse emissions associated with waste to landfill (tonnes)	0.37	0.28	0.19

Wimmera CMA continued 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

Chair Wimmera CMA Board

Financial statements

How this report is structured

The Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (the Authority) has presented its audited general purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2026 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 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 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, carry forward project funding 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 Changes in accounting policy
8.3 Responsible persons
8.4 Remuneration of executive officers
8.5 Related parties
8.6 Remuneration of auditors
8.7 Subsequent events

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 Minister for Finance 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 2026 and financial position of the Authority at 30 June 2026.

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 17th September 2026.



Chairperson
Peter Hilbig



David Brennan
CEO and Accountable Officer



Camille Pope
Chief Finance Officer

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT (a)

for the financial year ended 30 June 2026

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
Continuing operations			
Revenue and Income from transactions			
Government/partnership contributions	2.1.1	9,371,173	7,282,728
Interest income	2.1.2	516,065	479,929
Other income	2.1.3	47,066	190,033
Total revenue and income from transactions		**9,934,304**	**7,952,690**
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses	3.1.1	2,732,190	2,567,378
Depreciation	4.1.1	168,789	186,555
Interest expense	6.3.5	60,142	57,484
Program delivery expenses	3.2	1,222,453	790,934
Contractors	3.2	3,682,430	2,370,962
Other operating expenses	3.3	1,092,794	835,250
Total expenses from transactions		**8,958,798**	**6,808,563**
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		**975,506**	**1,144,127**
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net loss on non-financial assets (b)	4.1.2	(6,604)	(6,177)
Net result		**968,902**	**1,137,950**
Comprehensive result		**968,902**	**1,137,950**

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 2026

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.1	11,928,402	11,490,728
Receivables	5.1	1,585,234	805,023
Total financial assets		**13,513,636**	**12,295,751**
Non-financial assets			
Property, plant and equipment	4.1.1	262,313	347,800
Right-of-use property, plant and equipment	4.1.1	1,258,775	1,284,687
Other non-financial assets	5.3	31,977	48,424
Total non-financial assets		**1,553,065**	**1,680,911**
Total assets		**15,066,701**	**13,976,662**
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	254,658	186,943
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	742,035	666,480
Leases	6.3	1,312,133	1,334,266
Total liabilities		**2,308,826**	**2,187,689**
Net assets		**12,757,875**	**11,788,973**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		10,755,633	9,883,719
		278,543	181,555
Contributed capital		1,723,699	1,723,699
Net worth		**12,757,875**	**11,788,973**

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 2026

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		8,590,964	7,024,775
Interest received		516,065	479,929
Goods and services net amount from the ATO (b)		245,024	220,309
Other receipts		47,066	190,033
Total receipts		**9,399,119**	**7,915,046**
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(8,778,420)	(6,952,149)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(96,897)	(57,484)
Total payments		**(8,875,317)**	**(7,009,633)**
Net cash flows provided by operating activities		**523,802**	**905,413**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchases of non-financial assets		(16,612)	(231,896)
Proceeds from the sale of non-financial assets		-	68,943
Net cash flows (used in) investing activities		**(16,612)**	**(162,953)**
Cashflows from financing activities			
Repayment of borrowings and principal portion of lease liabilities (c)		(69,516)	(68,043)
Net cash flows (used in) financing activities		**(69,516)**	**(68,043)**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		**437,674**	**674,417**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		11,490,728	10,816,313
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	**6.1**	**11,928,402**	**11,490,728**

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.
(c) The Authority has recognised cash payments for the principal portion of lease payments as financing activities; cash payments for interest portion as operating activities consistent with the presentation of interest payments and short-term lease payments to leases and low-value assets as operating activities.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY (a)

for the financial year ended 30 June 2026

	Accumulated surplus	Committed funds reserve	Contributed capital	Total
	$	$	$	$
Balance at 1 July 2024	8,612,452	314,872	1,723,699	10,651,023
Net result for the year	1,137,950	-	-	1,137,950
Transfers (from)/to reserves (b)	133,317	(133,317)	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2025	**9,883,719**	**181,555**	**1,723,699**	**11,788,973**
Net result for the year	968,902	-	-	968,902
Transfers to/(from) reserves (b)	(96,988)	96,988	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2026	**10,755,633**	**278,543**	**1,723,699**	**12,757,875**

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 2026

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 Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements - Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for Profit Tier 2 Entities* (AASB 1060) and Financial Reporting Direction 101 *Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* (FRD 101).

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

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.

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
•employee benefit provisions;	3.1.2
•useful lives of assets;	4.1
•estimating discount rate when no implicit rate is in the lease;	6.3
•fair value measurements of assets and liabilities;	7.3

Rounding

Unless otherwise stated, amounts 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.

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 (grants) predominantly through State and Commonwealth Government contributions.

2.1 Income from transactions

Significant judgement: Grants Contributions

The Authority has determined that all grant income is recognised as income of not-for profit entities in accordance with AASB 1058.

The Authority has determined that no grants were enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance olbigations and accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers in accorance with AASB 15.

2.1.1 Government/Partnership contributions

Grants recognised under AASB 1058

	2026 $	2025 $
State Government/Partnerships	7,312,329	5,887,295
Commonwealth Government/Partnerships	2,058,844	1,395,433
Total Government/Partnership contributions	9,371,173	7,282,728

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 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* ;
* a lease liability in accordance with AASB 16 *Leases* ;
* a financial instrument, in accordance with AASB 9 *Financial Instruments* ; or
* a provision, in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets.*

2.1.2 Interest

	2026 $	2025 $
Interest on bank deposits	516,065	479,929

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.

2.1.3 Other income

	2026 $	2025 $
Other Income	47,066	190,033

Other income received during 25/26 for projects funded from other sources.
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.

3.1 Employee expenses

3.1.1 Employee benefit expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

	2026 $	2025 $
Salaries & wages	1,926,194	1,798,183
Leave & public holidays	440,882	426,434
Superannuation	277,419	255,046
Other employee expenses	87,695	87,715
Total employee benefit expenses	**2,732,190**	**2,567,378**

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

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.

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.

Current provisions	2026 $	2025 $
Annual Leave	225,971	188,710
Long Service Leave	406,240	377,344
Provision for On-costs	59,474	46,477
Total current provisions for employee benefits and on-costs	**691,685**	**612,531**
Non-current provisions		
Long Service Leave	43,920	48,033
On-costs	6,430	5,916
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	**50,350**	**53,949**
Total provisions for employee benefits and on-costs	**742,035**	**666,480**

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 Comprehensive Operating Statement as it is taken.

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

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax and workers compensation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately, along with superannuation 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.

3.2 Program delivery expenses

	2026 $	2025 $
Materials	283,000	88,953
Repairs and maintenance	28,993	30,060
Grants paid	593,488	534,560
Contractors	3,682,430	2,370,962
Consultants	316,972	137,361
Total program delivery expenses	**4,904,883**	**3,161,896**

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

3.3 Other operating expenses

	2026 $	2025 $
Promotions and marketing	263,903	172,502
Business and project administration	730,576	568,422
Travel and vehicle expenses	61,560	53,556
Audit, finance and bank expenses	36,755	40,770
Total other operating expenses	**1,092,794**	**835,250**

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:
•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.

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.

4.1 Total Property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2026 $	2025 $	2026 $	2025 $	2026 $	2025 $
Leasehold improvements at fair value	805,725	805,725	(785,740)	(777,442)	19,985	28,283
ROU building at cost FY26 at fair value FY25 *(a)*	1,414,531	1,392,261	(155,755)	(107,573)	1,258,775	1,284,688
Plant and equipment at fair value	306,376	289,764	(268,015)	(258,240)	38,361	31,524
Motor vehicles at fair value	411,408	457,265	(207,441)	(169,272)	203,967	287,993
Net carrying amount	**2,938,040**	**2,945,015**	**(1,416,951)**	**(1,312,527)**	**1,521,088**	**1,632,488**

(a) As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2025, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value. For further information, refer to Note 8.2.

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.

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.

Subsequent measurement:

Leasehold improvemeents, plant and equipment and motor vehicles are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. The right-of-use assets are measured at cost under the revised policy. 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

Right-of-use assets are subsequently measured at cost less accumulated depreciation, impairment and adjustments for remeasurement of the lease liability. 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. Impairment of right-of-use assets is determined and accounted for in accordance with AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets.*

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

Depreciation and amortisation

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	1 to 5

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.

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

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.

Impairment of right-of-use assets

The Authority has assessed all right-of-use assets for impairment, and no indicators of impairment are identified as at 30 June 2026.

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

	Leasehold improvements at fair value $	Buildings (ROU) assets *(b)* $	Plant and equipment at fair value $	Motor vehicles at fair value $	Total $
Opening balance - 1 July 2025 *(a)*	**28,283**	**1,284,688**	**31,524**	**287,992**	**1,632,487**
Additions			16,612		**16,612**
Remeasurement		47,382			**47,382**
Disposals				(6,604)	**(6,604)**
Depreciation	(8,298)	(73,295)	(9,775)	(77,421)	**(168,789)**
Closing balance - 30 June 2026	**19,985**	**1,258,775**	**38,361**	**203,967**	**1,521,088**

Notes:

(a) Fair value assessments have been performed for all classes of assets in this purpose group and the decision was made that movements were not material (less than or equal to 10 per cent) for a full revaluation of FRD 103. The next scheduled full revaluation for this purpose group will be conducted in 2027. Refer to note 7.3 for more information.

(b) As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2025, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value.

4.1.2 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.

	2026 $	2025 $
Net gain on disposal of non-financial assets		
Proceeds from sale of non-financial assets	-	68,943
Less written down value	(6,604)	(75,119)
Total net loss on disposal of non-financial assets	**(6,604)**	**(6,176)**

5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Introduction

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

5.1 Receivables

Current receivables	2026	2025
Contractual	$	$
Trade receivables	1,555,316	804,226
	1,555,316	804,226
Statutory		
GST input tax credits recoverable	29,918	797
Total current receivables	**1,585,234**	**805,023**

Receivables consist of:

• 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, which 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 and the calculation of the loss allowance are set out in Note 7.1.

5.2 Payables

Payables	2026	2025
Contractual	$	$
Trade payables	111,191	106,983
Accrued expenses	130,457	67,504
	241,648	174,487
Statutory		
FBT payable	10,610	10,122
Group tax	2,400	2,334
	13,010	12,456
Total current payables	**254,658**	**186,943**

Payables consist of:

• 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.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days.

5.3 Other non-financial assets

	2026	2025
Prepayments	31,977	48,424
Total current other non-financial assets	**31,977**	**48,424**

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.

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.

The Authority's bank accounts are held in the Central Banking system (CBS) under the *Standing Directions 2018*

	2026	2025
Cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet:	**$**	**$**
Cash on hand	500	500
Cash at bank	11,927,902	11,490,228
Balance as per cash flow statement	**11,928,402**	**11,490,728**

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 Authority's leasing activities

Low value lease

The Authority leases Photocopiers which are of low-value items. The Authority has elected to account for these low value leases 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 included in "other operating expenses" (See note 3.3) on a straight line basis over the lease period.

At 30 June 2026, the Authority was committed to low value leases and the total commitment at that date was $7,725.See note 6.4.

6.3.1 Right-of-use assets

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

6.3.2 Expense recognised for low value leases

The following amounts are recognised as expense relating to low value leases.

	2026 $	2025 $
Expenses relating to low value leases	4,079	10,815
Total amount recognised as an expense	**4,079**	**10,815**

6.3.3 Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

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 contact, 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;

• 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.

6.3 Leases (cont'd)

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:

- 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.

Low-value leases

The Authority has elected to account for low-value leases 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.

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.

Future lease payments	Minimum future lease payments (a)	
	2026	2025
	$	$
Not longer than 1 year	130,545	133,010
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	522,180	508,070
Longer than 5 years	1,302,806	1,393,289
Minimum future lease payments	**1,955,531**	**2,034,369**
Less future finance charges	(643,398)	(700,103)
Present value of minimum lease payments	**1,312,133**	**1,334,266**

Note:

(a) Minimum future lease payments include the aggregate of all base payments and any guaranteed residual.

6.3 Leases (cont'd)

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.

6.3.4 Maturity Analysis of borrowings

	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Carrying amount	Nominal amount	Less than 1 month	1-3 months	3 months - 1 year	1-5 years	5+years
2026								
Lease liabilities	4.82	1,312,133	1,955,531		32,636	97,909	522,180	1,302,806
Total		**1,312,133**	**1,955,531**	**-**	**32,636**	**97,909**	**522,180**	**1,302,806**
2025								
Lease liabilities	4.82	1,334,266	2,034,369	-	35,052	97,958	508,070	1,393,289
Total		**1,334,266**	**2,034,369**	**-**	**35,052**	**97,958**	**508,070**	**1,393,289**

6.3.5 Interest Expense

	2026 $	2025 $
Interest on lease liabilities	60,142	57,484
Total Interest Expense	**60,142**	**57,484**

Interest expense is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments

As at 30 June 2026, the Authority has low value commitments totaling $7,725 (2025:$10,815).

7. RISKS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

Introduction

It is often necessary for the Authority to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, 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.

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

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 instruments

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).

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they originated. They are initially measured at fair value less 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 recognises the following liabilities in this category:
*payables (excluding statutory payables); and
*lease liabilities

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 2026 has been calculated at 0%, and as such no loss allowance has been recognised.

7.1.1 Financial instruments - Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category

	Carrying Amount	Net gain/loss	Total interest income/ (expense)	Fee income/ (expense)	Impairment loss
	$	$	$	$	$
2026					
Financial assets at amortised cost					
Cash and Deposits	11,928,402	-	516,065	-	-
Trade receivables (a)	1,555,315	-	-	-	-
Write-Offs	-	-	-	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	**13,483,717**	-	**516,065**	-	-
Trade Payables (a)	111,191	-		-	-
Lease Liabilities	1,312,133	-	60,142	-	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	**1,423,324**	-	**60,142**	-	-

Note:

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

	Carrying Amount	Net gain/loss	Total interest income/ (expense)	Fee income/ (expense)	Impairment loss
	$	$	$	$	$
2025					
Financial assets at amortised cost					
Cash and Deposits	11,490,728	-	479,929	-	-
Trade receivables (a)	804,226	-	-	-	-
Write-Offs	-	-	-	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	**12,294,954**	-	**479,929**	-	-
Trade Payables (a)	106,983	-	-	-	-
Lease liabilities	1,334,266	-	57,484	-	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	**1,441,249**	-	**57,484**	-	-

Note:

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets
As at 30 June 2026, the Authority has no known contingent assets. (2025: nil)

Contingent liabilities
As at 30 June 2026, the Authority has no known contingent liabilities. (2025: 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.

7.3.1 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.

7.3.2 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

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.

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. The Authority acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. 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.

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

Description of significant assumptions applied to fair value measurement

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	Useful life of motor vehicle

8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

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

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 2026 (2025: $0).

8.2 Changes in accounting policy

8.2.1 Right-of-use assets

The Authority has made a change in accounting policy to change the measurement basis from the revaluation model to the cost model for the subsequent measurement of right-of-use assets arising from market leases, in accordance with the updated requirements under FRD 104.

Previously, the Authority had measured all right-of-use assets arising from market leases using the revaluation model under AASB 13. Following the change in accounting policy, the Authority will measure all right-of-use assets using the cost model. Right-of-use assets measuring using the cost model are held at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment and any adjustments for remeasurement of lease liability. Periodic revaluations are not required; however, the cost model requires annual impairment assessments with AASB 136.

Upon adoption of the cost model, the Authority has applied a modified retrospective approach. The approach takes the right-of-use asset's carrying amounts recorded under the revaluation model as at 30 June 2025 as the right-of-use asset's opening balances on application of the cost model.

Accordingly, the comparative information presented is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value.

Right-of-use assets arising from significantly below-market leases

The Authority is not required to make any adjustments to right-of use assets arising rom significantly below-market leases, as the Authority already measures these right-of-use assets using the cost model in accordance with AASB 16 and FRD 104, and are thus not impacted as a result of this accounting policy change.

Impacts on financial statements

On transition to the cost model, there was no impact on the Authority's financial statements. No impairment was identified by the Authority for the right-of-use assets held at 30 June 2026.

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. Gayle Tierney MLC	Minister for Water	01 Jul 2025 to 14 April 2026
The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MF	Minister for Environment	01 Jul 2025 to 14 April 2026
The Hon. Harriet Shing MLC	Minister for Water	15 Apr 2026 to 30 June 2026
The Hon. Enver Erdogan MLC		15 Apr 2026 to 30 June 2026
Peter Hilbig	(Chair)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 June 2026
David Brennan	(CEO)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 June 2026
David Drage	(Board Member & Deputy Chair)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 September 2025
Michelle Graymore	(Board Member & Deputy Chair from 01 Oct 2025)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 June 2026
Lavergne Lehmann	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 September 2025
Angela Enbom	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 June 2026
Andrew Barton	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 June 2026
Duncan Ashby	(Board Member)	01 Jul 2025 to 30 June 2026
Robyn Tucker	(Board Member)	01 Oct 2025 to 30 June 2026
David Jochinke	(Board Member)	01 Oct 2025 to 30 June 2026
Denae McDonald	(Board Member)	01 Oct 2025 to 30 June 2026

8.3 Responsible persons (cont'd)

Remuneration

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

Income band	2026	2025
$0–$9,999	2	-
$10,000–$19,999	7	6
$30,000 - $39,999	1	1
$290,000 - $299,999	1	1
Total number of responsible persons	**11**	**8**
Total remuneration $	**447,130**	**435,611**

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.

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 entitles 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:

Entity	2026 $	2025 $	Nature
Dept of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	6,712,179	5,270,716	Service Level Agreement Project Funding
Dept of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	-	11,155	Biodiversity Seminar
North Central Catchment Management Authority	62,524	34,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC, National Soils Return
North Central Catchment Management Authority	-	15,500	River Detectives
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	33,000	34,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	138,000	34,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC, H5N1 Preparedness
Mallee Catchment Management Authority	33,000	34,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC
Melbourne Water	33,000	33,000	Vic Catchments , OCOC
Trust for Nature	18,300	17,908	Workstation Costs
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority	33,000	34,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	33,745	234,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC/Reimbursement
North East Catchment Management Authority	33,000	34,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	33,000	34,329	Vic Catchments , OCOC
Department of Treasury & Finance	-	40,466	Lease Motor Vehicle Residual
Vic Water	-	636	Training Reimursement
Parks Victoria	-	91,039	Secondment
Victorian Fisheries Authority	149,581	-	Secondment

8.5 Related parties (cont'd)

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

Entity	2026 $	2025 $	Nature
Victoria Auditor-General's Office	18,500	17,600	Audit Fee
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	24,883	51,058	IT Support/Finance system/EAP
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	4,137	8,707	WAN Costs
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	90,000	90,000	Climate Change Co-ordinator
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	76,391	76,686	Carbon Farming Project
Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority	44,800	29,867	National Soil Moitoring Project
Trust for Nature (Victoria)	72,000	75,951	On Ground Works
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	55,000	55,000	Vic Catchment Admin
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	76,391	76,686	Carbon Farming Project
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	7,800	-	Vic Catchment Chair Sitting Fees
Mallee Catchment Management Authority	76,391	76,686	Carbon Farming Project
Mallee Catchment Management Authority	-	57,680	National Soil Monitoring Project
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	76,391	76,686	Carbon Farming Project
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	104,802	-	National Soil Monitoring Project
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	76,391	76,686	Carbon Farming Project
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	9,347	4,998	Best of the West event
Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	179,014	-	National Soil Monitoring Project
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority	123,700	54,376	Carbon Farming Project
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority	48,925	-	National Soil Monitoring Project
North Central Catchment Management Authority	45,320	-	National Soil Monitoring Project
North Central Catchment Management Authority	76,391	-	Carbon Farming Project
North East Catchment Management Authority	1,823	-	Forum Catering Reimbursement
North East Catchment Management Authority	76,391	-	Carbon Farming Project
North East Catchment Management Authority	21,630	-	National Soil Monitoring Project
Melbourne Water	76,391	76,686	Carbon Farming Project
Melbourne Water	12,360	-	National Soil Monitoring Project
Victorian Managed Insurance Authority	48,540	-	Insurance
Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water	138,546	-	Lower Wimmera Drought Refuge

Significant transactions with government-related entities (cont.)

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

Entity	2026 $	2025 $	Nature
Parks Victoria	-	100,143	Secondment
Trust for Nature	20,130	-	Workstation Costs
Victorian Fisheries Authority	149,581	-	Secondment

Key management personnel of the Authority includes all responsible persons as listed in Note 8.3.

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

Compensation of Key Management Personnel	2026 $	2025 $
Total compensation of Key Management Personnel	**447,130**	**435,611**

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

8.6 Remuneration of auditors

	2026 $	2025 $
Victorian Auditor-General's Office for audit of financial statements	18,500	17,600
Total remuneration of auditors	**18,500**	**17,600**

8.7 Subsequent events

No 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.

Independent Auditor's Report

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

To the Board of Wimmera Catchment Management Authority

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (the Authority) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2026 • 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 material accounting policy information • declaration in the financial statement. In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at 30 June 2026 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the Financial Management Act 1994 and Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures.
Basis for Opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975.* 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 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (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. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
Board's responsibilities for the financial report	The Board of the Authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the Financial Management Act 1994, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. 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.

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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.



MELBOURNE
18 September 2026

Cassandra Gravenall
As delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Appendices

Appendix 1 – disclosure index

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority's Annual Report 2025-26 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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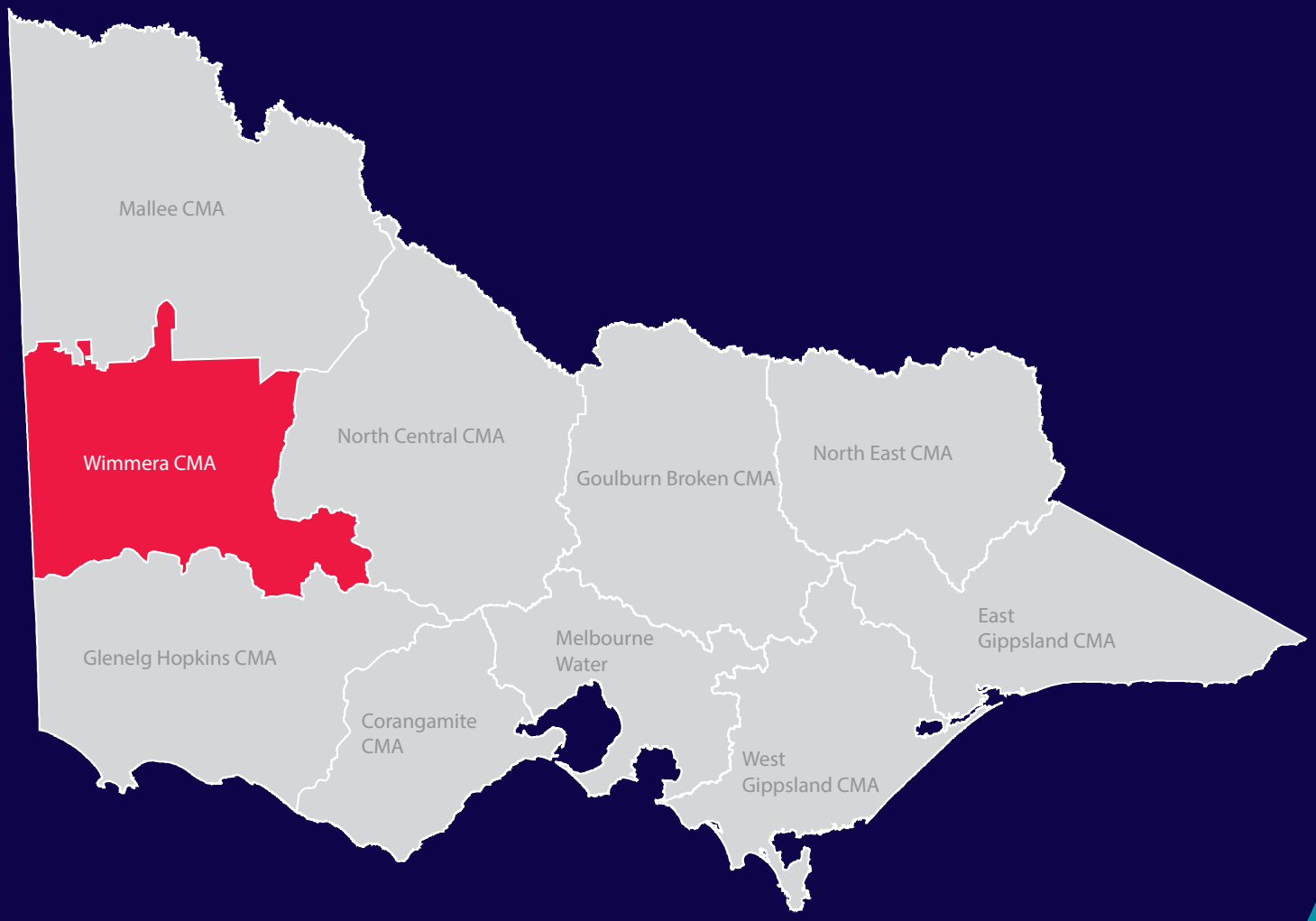
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Wimmera CMA is one of 9 CMAs and Melbourne Water working in Victoria under an integrated catchment management approach to achieve sustainability across the state. Each CMA supports the role that communities and government play in protecting and enhancing local natural environments.



Wimmera Catchment Management Authority

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