

## COMMUNIQUE 12 – SEPTEMBER 2020

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### Message from the Chair

The challenges of coronavirus (COVID-19) will no doubt see 2020 recorded in history as one of the most difficult years of our time.

The virus has certainly refocused the way we do almost everything in our everyday lives and will, I suspect for some time. The way we work, shop, travel, communicate and interact in our communities has changed. While we all have been impacted, our thoughts, are with those that have lost loved ones to this terrible virus. We also offer support to our family, friends and colleagues in the hardest lockdown areas in and around Melbourne.



During this time, the wellbeing of our people is our number one priority. Our CMAs through their CEOs and staff have been working very hard to ensure we are still getting on with the job as best we can while being safe. It was very pleasing to hear from DELWP at our recent meeting that they are confident in how we have handled our response to COVID-19.

While COVID-19 has impacted our ability to engage face-to-face, within and outside of Vic Catchments, we have not stood still during this period. We continue to use the technology available to work with our partners on new ways to showcase integrated catchment management.

Challenges always bring opportunity and our CMAs have been working together with the Victorian Government to create programs that can deliver jobs as well as outcomes for the environment and their communities across Victoria.

Vic Catchments met on 28 August, our first meeting since February after we postponed our May meeting, as we felt it inappropriate to meet when everyone was so busy dealing with the most difficult of circumstances.

This edition includes some of the key outcomes of our meeting and other recent activities.

*Sharyon Peart*

## Vic Catchments meeting 28 August

We were hoping that COVID-19 restrictions may have allowed us to meet face-to-face but this was not the case. Despite the challenges of 28 people meeting online we achieved a lot and it was vital to reconnect.

We were lucky enough to have a presentation from Travis Bover, Assistant Secretary Drought Preparedness and Policy from the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Travis stepped us through the elements of the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund. He encouraged CMAs to engage in the process and it was pleasing to know that CMAs are acknowledged as a key delivery agency for significant parts of the program. You can keep up to date with all [the relevant programs here](#).

We also had presentations from Angela Avery and Mel Cann from Agriculture Victoria. Mel has been coordinating the agriculture component of the Victorian Government's Working for Victoria employment stimulus program (see photos below). Mel thanked the CMAs for their efforts in supporting the program. CMAs are on track to have at least 120 people employed through the agriculture program. Angela is the Research Director of Agriculture Victoria's Agriculture Research Sciences and she outlined some exciting initiatives as part of their Smart Farming program, which CMAs have been and will continue to be involved in.

We also discussed The Observership Program that some CMAs have participated in. The Observership Program facilitates the involvement of young, talented and energetic individuals in a structured experience on non-profit Boards. Each Observer is paired with an organisation for 12 months. Those that have participated have found the program to be a very positive experience and it was acknowledged that this could be a way to contribute to succession planning for CMA Boards. More information is available [here](#).

The presentations from the meeting are available, please contact [Tony Baker](#) if you would like to see them.

## Working for Victoria



CMA Working for Victoria crews are completing a range of important activities across the state.



## Governance update

We have been busy in the new year updating and improving our governance processes. At our last meeting we approved:

- a revised Charter and new operating protocols;
- a logo use policy – outlining the processes for the use of the Vic Catchment logo; and
- Chair's arrangements policy – outlines the sitting fees and allowances for the Vic Catchments Chair.

We are now embarking on a review of our Strategic Plan.

## Our people

Over the past months we have said goodbye to three amazing champions of natural resources management and Vic Catchments.

Chris Norman, former CEO of Goulburn Broken CMA, has left for a life in the north as CEO of NRM Regions Queensland, which is the Queensland equivalent of Vic Catchments.

Patricia Geraghty and Angus Hume have stood down as Executive Officer and Chair of the Victorian Catchment management Council (VCMC) to focus on other things.

We thank them all for their huge contributions.

With these departures we welcome:

- Chris Cummings to the role of CEO Goulburn Broken CMA.
- Alana Johnson as Acting Chair of the VCMC.
- Neil Myers as Acting Executive Officer of the VCMC.

We look forward to working with Chris, Alana and Neil.

## Contact us

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*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country we work on and pay our respects to them and their elders: past, present and future.*