

Having trouble viewing this email? [View Online](#)

## Vic Catchments Forum Newsletter | Issue 18 | March 2022



[HOME](#) | [ABOUT](#) | [CONTACT](#)

# COMMUNIQUÉ

## Message from the Chair

Our thoughts are with our NRM colleagues in northern NSW and Queensland as they deal with the impacts of what is, in some cases, record floods. We are reminded about the impact of climate change and our need to continually improve our flood management. No doubt, our NRM friends will play a significant role in recovery efforts, as we do when the need arises.

Once again, we held our Vic Catchments meeting online as the uncertainty of Covid created risks we were not willing to take. We will continue to look for opportunities to gather in the future. We did however hold our annual partnership meeting where we were able to share information and ideas with several partner organisations. More details are included later in the Communiqué.

From 1 January 2022 Port Phillip and Westernport CMA's role was fully incorporated into Melbourne Water. As a result, we have welcomed Melbourne Water into Vic Catchments. We look forward to their contribution.

The first tranche of three Regional Catchments Strategies have been approved with seven near complete. The new strategies, accompanied with our RCS outcomes framework, will further enhance our ability to demonstrate the outcomes we achieve.



We are forever mindful of the need to continually communicate the value of CMAs and Victoria's Integrated Catchments Management approach. Our 2020-21 Actions and Achievement report is imminent and outlines all the good work and outcomes achieved through the period. It will be available on the Vic Catchments website soon. Stay tuned.

Peter Hilbig



# Vic Catchments Meeting 20

24-25 February 2022

**The first day of our two-day Vic Catchments meeting in February was focused on hearing from our partners and sharing information:**

## DELWP Update

Helen Vaughan, Deputy Secretary Water and Catchments, congratulated CMAs on the completion of their Regional Catchment Strategies and said cooperation with regional partners, communities and connection with Traditional Owners was very evident in the work.

She acknowledged the excellent work CMAs have done during the pandemic of looking after staff, keeping programs operating and keeping in touch with communities.

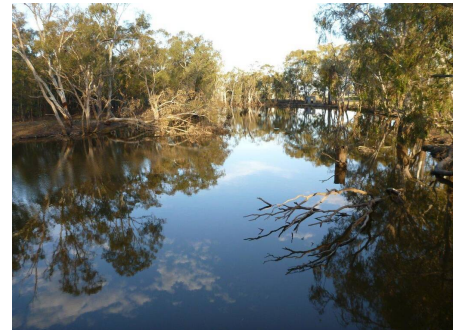
Lastly, she briefly outlined the status of the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission and the Director Development Program scheduled for 29-30 March.



## VEWH

Chris Chesterfield, Chair of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) announced the reconfirmation of the partnership between VEWB and Vic Catchments through the signing of a revised MOU. The MOU, amongst other things, seeks opportunities to embed Integrated Catchment Management into environmental water management.

It was pleasing to hear from Chris and Executive Officer, Beth Ashworth, that CMA Regional Waterway Strategies are a strong focus for the VEWB in the development of a landscape approach to managing water for the environment. Vic Catchments is supporting this process.



## Landcare

The Chair of Landcare Victoria Inc (LVI), Jane Carney, said the MOU between Vic Catchments and LVI demonstrated the value Landcare placed on its relationship with CMAs. She saw many opportunities for CMAs and Landcare Networks to add value to collective goals.

Chief Executive, Andrew Maclean, outlined some of LVI's current initiatives including development of the Vic Landcare Plan.



He said he looked for support from CMAs in:

- inviting LVI to participate in structured engagement with the Landcare community to avoid duplicating processes.

- engaging more effectively with DELWP about funding programs
- assisting Landcare to promote Landcare success stories
- providing professional development opportunities for its people
- collaborating on policy advocacy, and
- engaging with Landcare early in projects.

## VicWater

Jo Plummer, Chair (pictured) and Peter Morison, CEO of VicWater, joined the meeting to discuss the recently signed MOU between the two organisations. The relationship between VicWater and Vic Catchments has grown over the last two years and seen us progress several initiatives together. (More information is included in "Partnerships and Collaborations" below.)



## Agriculture Victoria

Megan Higson and Jennifer Duke joined the meeting to outline the work they are doing on the Victorian Agriculture Sector Climate Change Pledge and the formation of the Climate Change Statement. Ag Vic are keen to engage with CMAs on the development of the statement. Vic Catchments has agreed to assist in coordinating input.



## Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability (CES)

Gillian Sparkes (Commissioner) and Scott Rawlings (Director) provided an update on the State of the Environment Reporting. Both the State of the Marine and Coastal Environment 2021 Report and State of the Environment Biodiversity Update 2021 Report are available on the CES website and we urge anyone interested in accessing research data on the state of the environment to visit: <https://www.ces.vic.gov.au/>

Gillian explained that all of the data is indicating that biodiversity decline is a big issue, which will require strong leadership and all of our efforts to address.



[Learn more ...](#)

## NRM Regions Australia Update

NRM Regions Australia are the peak body representing NRM organisations including CMAs at a national level. Vic Catchments and NRM RA work collaboratively to complement our efforts.



Chair, Emma Jackson explained that the organisation continues to become more professional since moving from a working group to a formal board of directors with appropriate layers of governance and supporting policies.

With Kate Andrews now as full-time CEO, communication with Ministers Ley and Littleproud and their offices has ramped-up considerably.

As the Vic Catchments representative on NRM RA, Helen Reynolds said she was very impressed with where NRM is now as an organisation, and excited about opportunities ahead in 2022.

## Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Steve Costello from the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, provided an update on the review of the National Landcare Partnership (NLP). The review found a high level of satisfaction with NLP and its sub-components and the way it was being managed. He reported that overall, the findings call for refinement rather than any revolutionary changes.

Steve also briefed Vic Catchments on the draft Biodiversity Stewardship legislation. Many big businesses want to be nature-neutral by purchasing offsetting credits and there is a desire for this to happen in a rigorous way, with disciplined measurement and reporting. That is the purpose of the Biodiversity Stewardship legislation and there is confidence that it will be passed in March. Minister Littleproud sees a role for NRM bodies to provide extension and facilitator-type support to get individual landholders involved. The other opportunity for NRMs is in providing monitoring services.



**The second day of our two-day Vic Catchments meeting was focused on discussing our current priorities and reviewing our action plan in the context of the strategic plan. In addition, a new member was added to Vic Catchments:**

### Melbourne Water

With the integration of PPWCMA into Melbourne Water on 1 January 2022 and with Melbourne Water taking on the roles and responsibilities previously undertaken by PPWCMA, it was decided Melbourne Water should be invited to join Vic Catchments. Melbourne Water accepted this invitation and the meeting officially endorsed it as a member of Vic Catchments. The Vic Catchments Charter was modified to reflect this.



Melbourne Water will be represented by Kirsten Shelly and a member of the Board of Melbourne Water, to be confirmed. Details of how the relationship works will be fine-tuned over the next 6-12 months.

### VCMC

The recent disbanding of VCMC also necessitated amendment to the Vic Catchments Charter. The amendments were approved at the meeting.

# Partnerships and collaboration



We have renewed our MOU with the VEWH and have participated in their annual strategic workshop to explore potential linkages between CMA led waterway strategies and a landscape approach to managing water for the environment.



A successful first meeting was held with Victorian Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio. We took the opportunity to explain our experience and capability in biodiversity management. A fruitful discussion about how CMAs might assist the delivery and reporting of Biodiversity 2037 followed and we will work with DELWP to explore this further. We have also suggested a follow up meeting to the Minister to detail CMAs climate change projects and capability. Monthly meetings with Emily Garnett, Senior Advisor to the Minister, are continuing.



We are working with Landcare Victoria Inc on a joint action plan that will sit under our MOU and provide us with actions we can work on together. This includes advocating for the continuation of the Regional Land Partnership program.



Vic Catchments and VicWater recently signed an MOU. In doing so, we acknowledge that by working together the industry is in a better position to tackle climate change, population growth and meet the expectations of government and the community.

There are several areas where this cooperation has seen positive change already, including:

- The establishment of the industry exchange program with a portal on the VicWater website being used very successfully to help people move across the whole sector.
- Development of the Director networks and programs.
- Driving diversity and inclusion across the broader sector.

We are committed to exploring further opportunities for collaboration including the engagement of intelligent water networks, innovations in the circular economy, sector resilience and the management of resources that drive success across the environmental, social and governance spectrum.

## A Stronger Industry

### Director Development

CMA representatives are helping plan content for the Director Development program to be held on 29-30 March at the Melbourne Convention Centre. Feedback from previous programs will be incorporated as will a desire for relevant case studies.

Complementing this, VicWater have engaged consultants to develop an additional Director development program. VicWater is keen to engage CMA directors in the program so our Chair, Peter Hilbig, has been liaising with the consultants.

## Triennial Review of Vic Catchments

The triennial review of Vic Catchments has commenced. A survey of outgoing Chairs seeking feedback on strengths and weaknesses along with exit interviews and a survey of new Chairs in March, will form the bulk of the report.

## Submissions

Over the past three months, Vic Catchments has made submissions on the following initiatives:

- Australian Government's proposed National Soils Action Plan - aimed at implementing the National Soils Strategy released last year.
- DELWP's proposed BushBank program.

## Our People



### Helen Reynolds, NRM RA Director

Helen Reynolds, Chair of Goulburn Broken CMA has been appointed Victoria's Director on the Board of NRM Regions Australia. Helen will attend NRM RA Board meetings along with other State and Territory representatives. We look forward to hearing the progress that is being made for our industry at a national level.



### 2022 Australia Day Awards

Several of our industry champions were recognised for their contributions to natural resource management in the recent Australia Day Awards. We congratulate the following on their well-deserved recognition:

- Victoria Marles
- Eve Kantor
- Mark Wootton
- Jim Gough
- Rosie Nature
- Mark Allan.



Following the integration of PPWCMA into Melbourne Water, the majority of PPWCMA staff chose to take up offers to work with Melbourne Water and have successfully integrated into their new roles.

## CONTACT US

*Tony Baker*  
*Acting Executive Officer, Vic Catchments*  
e: [executiveofficer@viccatchments.com.au](mailto:executiveofficer@viccatchments.com.au)  
m: 0407 840 514

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