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Vic Catchments Forum Newsletter | Issue 20 | August 2022



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COMMUNIQUÉ

Message from the Chair

Since our last communique we have observed some significant changes at both a national and state level. At a national level we have new Ministers for Environment and Water, Climate Change, and Agriculture. There has also been a demerger of the previous Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment to form the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Our partners at NRM Regions Australia have been working with the new departmental and ministerial staff so there is an understanding of the role CMAs play and the benefits we provide for the government.

In Victoria we have a new Water Minister in Harriet Shing, following the resignation of the previous Minister, Lisa Neville. Minister Shing has been to several of our Vic Catchments meetings in the past and we look forward to building on our relationship.

As we come to the end of winter, we are mindful of the weather forecasts and looking to the skies and rivers. As always, our CMAs are prepared for potential floods particularly in the east of Victoria. We wish everyone well in these communities, many of which are still recovering from the impact of bushfires.



On 1 July 2022 we recognised 25 years of Catchment Management Authorities. This is a significant milestone given the change that has gone on around us. We continue to deliver outcomes for our catchments with our communities every day and Vic Catchments along with our CMAs will be showcasing the benefits and achievements of CMAs work throughout 2022-23.

Peter Hilbig



Vic Catchments Meeting

We have recently decided to split our meetings up to two online meetings and two face-to-face meetings per year. This meeting was online. Our meeting schedule is included below.

NRM Regions Australia



NRM Regions Australia are a national body representing NRM groups across Australia.

Chief Executive, Kate Andrews (left) joined our meeting and explained changes happening at the federal level, including the previous Department of Agriculture Water and Environment (DAWE) being split into two departments – Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (DCCEEW).

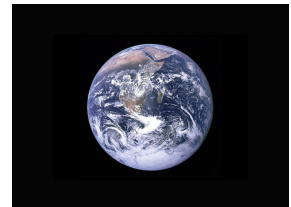
Kate said the recent release of the State of the Environment report meant greater recognition of the urgent need to protect the environment and to do so more quickly. Kate is working with the departments and ministerial staff to explain how CMAs can manage the risks that come with declining environmental values.

NRM RA is launching a members' hub on 25th August. This is a collaborative platform to help support the work of the regions across the country. It will make information more widely and more readily available through the establishment of communities of practice and knowledge hubs with search engines.

Preparations for the NRM Knowledge Conference and National Chairs Forum in Margaret River in November are progressing well. Register here [Home - 8th National NRM Knowledge Conference \(cvent.com\)](https://www.cvent.com/events/home-8th-national-nrm-knowledge-conference)

Climate Change Coordinator

The CMAs and Melbourne Water have collectively invested in a part-time state-wide Climate Change position for several years. The role was established to have a single point of focus state-wide that would avoid duplication of effort across CMAs in the broad and dynamic climate change space.



The Coordinator works with the CMA Climate Change Forum to ensure awareness of state and national activity, support research into Climate Change initiatives like Blue/Teal carbon and carbon farming, advocate for the implementation of climate change initiatives and develop knowledge.

With additional funding from DELWP and Goulburn Broken CMA, the new Coordinator is Jason Mullins. Jason joined our meeting and presented on his role and some of the activities he has been involved in.

Jason can be contacted at jason.mullins@gbcma.vic.gov.au

Foot and Mouth Disease

Dr Paul Beltz, Senior Veterinary Officer, Ag Vic (South West) provided Vic Catchments with a very comprehensive brief on Agriculture Victoria preparedness for biosecurity risk, including Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).



Paul explained that Victoria is well placed because of our electronic tagging system to track any outbreak quickly. However, there is recognition that an FMD outbreak would cause significant social and health issues for people in the agriculture sector beyond the direct, devastating impact on livestock.

Paul said in the event of an outbreak of FMD, Ag Vic may call on CMAs to support the response effort particularly in the areas of mapping, IT, spatial analysis and community engagement.

Paul urged CMAs to:

- engage with regional emergency management teams to understand the risk.
- maintain good records of vehicle and people movement on farming property.
- follow basic biosecurity practices:
 - clean boots and work wear – use detergent.
 - follow biosecurity provisions
 - clean in, clean out.

For further information, please see the following websites:

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity>

<https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au>

Celebrating 25 Years of CMAs

This year CMAs are celebrating 25 years of ensuring the protection and sustainable management of land, biodiversity and water resources within the Victorian Catchment Management regions. Working with communities to protect and enhance our rivers and landscapes while supporting productivity from our natural resources, CMAs have worked hard to deliver innovative and thoughtful solutions to the challenges facing natural resource management in Victoria. Community-based Boards and dedicated local staff, many of whom have worked in CMAs for many years, have built relationships and trust leading to outcomes that have widely benefited the community and the environment. Look out for local events to mark the occasion in your local CMAs.



Partnerships and collaboration



NRM RA and National Landcare Network

Vic Catchments has been supporting NRM Regions Australia in their work with the National Landcare Network (NLN) to develop a collaborative principles-based guiding framework. The aim of this framework is to model principles of engagement which underpin the collaborative relationship between NRM RA and NLN so that it can, in turn, guide the partnerships of NRM and Landcare groups. Landcare Victoria is also represented on the working group, and we have used our MOU as an example of good practice.

[Learn more...](#)

NRM Regions Australia

Our Executive Officer continues to meet fortnightly with the CEO of NRM RA and the Executive Officers from each State and Territory on a fortnightly basis. This provides an opportunity to understand developments at a national level and to seek support from NRM RA where necessary. This group played a large role in developing the agenda for the CEOs national conference and will contribute to the agenda for the NRM Knowledge Conference in November. We also had a meeting with the Australian Government DAFF to discuss the feedback that has been received by NRM groups on some of the DAFF programs.



[Learn more...](#)

Memorandums of Understanding

Vic Catchments continues to engage with Landcare Victoria, VicWater and the VEWH as part of our MOUs. Our MOU with the VEWH has been reviewed and renewed and we have developed key messages with LVI and VicWater about the respective parts of our industry and our partnerships.



WaterAble

We are liaising with WaterAble through their engagement activities and Jo Lim at Vic Water. They are running a workshop on the 9th of September and CMAs are invited to participate. It will provide examples of success stories of employment of people with disabilities in the water sector. It is an opportunity for CMAs to learn from other organisations that have been proactive in employing people with a disability, and from people with disabilities that have been employed in the sector. It will also allow for CMAs to share their experiences. This could support CMAs' diversity and inclusion initiatives.



[Learn more...](#)

A Stronger Industry

National NRM CEOs Conference



On the 19th and 20th of July our Executive Officer and several of the CMA CEOs attended the National NRM CEOs conference in Canberra. The meeting was positive and optimistic, however, the Australian Government staff were clear that the new government was still shaping their portfolios. This coincided with Minister Plibersek's announcement and release regarding the State of the Environment report. We look forward to hearing more about how the government intends to deal with the report findings.

(Pictured l to r): Bec Hemming, Tony Baker, Kirsten Shelly, Chris Cumming, Brad Drust, Katie Warner, Sarah Holland-Clift

DELWP Biodiversity



Vic Catchments has attended several meetings with DELWP Biodiversity to discuss DELWP funding for the climate change position and the design of their funding programs.

Agriculture Victoria

We have been liaising with Agriculture Victoria on the development of the Victorian Climate Change and Agriculture Statement. We took the statement to our Executive in July, where it was endorsed.

Our Executive Officer has been liaising with Agriculture Victoria Vic on the Victorian [Biosecurity Statement](#). The statement is currently being submitted for approval. Approval prior to September will mean the Biosecurity Statement will be launched at the Victorian Biosecurity Roundtable on September 12-13, which Vic Catchments has been invited to attend. This will then kick off a conversation to develop the Biosecurity Strategy. A consultative co-design process will follow. We have asked Agriculture Victoria if they could present to us in November.



[Learn more....](#)

Our People



Queen's Birthday Honours

In June 2022, the latest Queen's Birthday Honours were announced. It was pleasing to see the recognition of people from our industry including:

- Dr Margaret Rowe
- Gary Howard
- Terri Allen



Cath Jenkins

Each year the Weekly Times newspaper conducts the Shine Awards, which celebrates women in rural Australia. The 17th August edition showcased the achievements of our very own Cath Jenkins, Corangamite CMA Chair and Vic Catchments member. Cath even made the front page, along with her handsome free-range chooks. Winners will be announced on 23 November 2022.

Upcoming Events

WaterAble Industry Workshop
Friday 9 September 2022
Time: 9am – 12pm
Location: Zoom

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/waterable-industry-workshop-tickets-389071652787>

NRM Knowledge Conference
31 October to 2 November 2022
Margaret River HEART (WA)

[Home - 8th National NRM Knowledge Conference \(event.com\)](#)

Vic Catchments Future Meeting Schedule

Thursday 17 November 2022 – Melbourne

Friday 24 February 2023 – Online

Thursday 18 May 2023 – Melbourne

Friday 25 August 2023 – Online.

CONTACT US

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