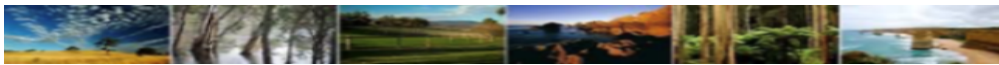


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Vic Catchments Forum Newsletter | Issue 22 | March 2023



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COMMUNIQUÉ

Message from the Chair

Since October many of our regions have been heavily focussed on flood recovery. There has been widespread impact to people, properties, businesses, and the environment both directly and indirectly. CMA regions that have been impacted by floods, have been funded by the Victorian Government to deliver recovery efforts for this financial year and we await announcements about future recovery funding. It will be an ongoing effort and we will also need to carefully monitor our waterways for any lingering issues such as water quality and carp proliferation. We will also be feeding into the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry to assist with continual improvement efforts.

Since we last met we have had new Ministers sworn in and DELWP is no more and DEECA has been established. With the inclusion of agriculture there is another opportunity for us to think about how integrated catchment management can be supported by the machinery of government. All CMAs have

CMAs and Melbourne Water (MW) have also been busy submitting their applications to the new round of National Heritage Trust (NHT) funding made available by the Australian Government. This is an important piece of work that compliments the investment provided by the Victorian Government. The CMAs have a strong track record of delivery and governance and have put forward a strong case for why it is important to deliver this program through the regional NRM model and why Victoria should receive its fair share of funding.



Our February meeting was online, and we are in the process of establishing a process to identify big strategic issues that we will tackle collectively. More detail about our meeting is included in the report below.

received their Letters of Expectations from the Minister for Water, Harriet Shing. We look forward to working with the new Ministerial team and will be reaching out throughout the year.

Peter Hilbig



Vic Catchments Meeting

Our February meeting was held online on 24th February. The next meeting is scheduled to be face-to-face on Thursday 18th of May 2023. Our 2023 meeting schedule is included later in Communiqué.

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (CES)



Dr Gillian Sparkes, Commissioner (left) and Dr Scott Rawlings presented on the status of the State of the Environment report for 2023. This is part of ongoing communication between Vic Catchments and CES in recognition of CMAs and MW as partners in the reporting process.

Gillian told the meeting delivery of the State of the Environment (SoE) report is on track. Of note to CMAs is that while the SoE 2018 reported against 170 indicators, and they will provide the baseline on condition and trend, the 2023 themes have been altered due to the establishment of standalone reports such as the Marine and Coastal Environment Report. Environmental water includes a draft framework

for future reporting in response to action 3.6 of the Water Plan.

This is the first report since the VCMC and the Catchment Condition Management Report were repealed from the CaLP Act. A catchment report within the SoE report will remove duplication and CMAs have developed material to inform this component of the report.

[Learn more...](#)

NRM RA Update – CEO, Kate Andrews

Kate provided an update on her work on influencing government and the private sector and the work NRM RA have been doing to inform members.

Influencing government and the private sector:

- the new Government came in with an agenda they want to address quickly – foremost being the Nature Repair Bill. Minister Plibersek is keen to get the private sector to put more money into these activities. Kate has run a couple of sessions for NRMers about the draft bill and NRM RA have contracted additional legal expertise so they can be properly informed in their submission.



- Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act Reform (National Environmental Standards) – Kate has been asked to provide advice on the Regional Planning portion of this part of the reform agenda and will keep us informed as it progresses.

Information to members:

- Following the NRM RA Knowledge Conference there is real momentum in the Natural Capital Accounting space. NRM RA have released some work from experts in this space and are working with others to develop some overview papers and online workshops. You can find this information on the Natural Capital Knowledge Hub on the NRM RA website.

[Learn more...](#)

DEECA Update

As always, we were grateful to receive our quarterly update from DEECA.

Machinery of government changes have taken place within the department, now titled Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). Minister Stitt (pictured right) as Minister for the Environment is being fully briefed on her new portfolio. Minister Shing continues as Minister for Water and Minister D'Ambrosio is Minister for Climate Action, and Minister for Energy and Resources.



Many CMAs have received funding for flood recovery activity around waterways for this financial year and a business case is being prepared for future years.

Following on from the *My Victorian Waterway* survey, DEECA is developing a discussion starter, which they will test with CEOs and Waterway Managers forums, to assist in the development of the Victorian Waterway Management Strategy.

We were also provided an update on Water is Life (WIL). CMAs are encouraged to read the document and inform themselves of who has been assigned as the accountable executive or senior officer for actions in WIL.

[Learn more about Water is Life...](#)



Partnerships and collaboration

Australian Government (AG)

Vic Catchments met with new representatives from the Australian Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), who will be the Victorian contacts for the next round of National Heritage Trust funding. We took the opportunity to explain how we operate in Victoria and the value we add to the AG program.

Landcare Victoria (LVI)

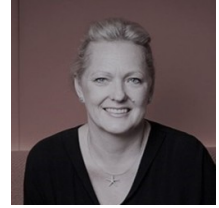
We also attended a series of Landcare Victoria Workshops which aimed to inform the development of the LVI Landcare plan. The plan is about sustaining the Landcare movement in Victoria.



[Learn more...](#)

Trust For Nature

We met with new CEO of Trust for Nature (TFN), Corinne Proske. Corinne is from the corporate sector and will have a focus on the financial sustainability of TFN. We also had follow-up meetings regarding the Australian Government's NHT funding proposals and how the TFN can support these proposals.



[Learn more about TFN...](#)

VicWater



Our Executive Officer continues to meet monthly with Jo Lim, CEO, VicWater. Discussions have focussed on:

- Water Corporation and carbon offsets which our Climate Change Coordinator, Jason Mullins, has been involved in.
- Director Development programs and inductions for new Board members.

[Learn more...](#)

A Stronger Industry

State of the Environment Report feedback

We have provided feedback to the Commissioner of Environmental Sustainability on some draft chapters of the State of the Environment Report (SoE). This feedback has been well received and we have provided additional information that can support a catchment condition report for the SoE report.

Contributing to Biosecurity Strategy



DEECA has held a series of workshops around Victoria as part of the development of the Biosecurity Strategy. Vic Catchments has been keenly involved in this and have helped shaped the strategy, ensuring that our role and our regional strategies are recognised.

National CEOs Forum

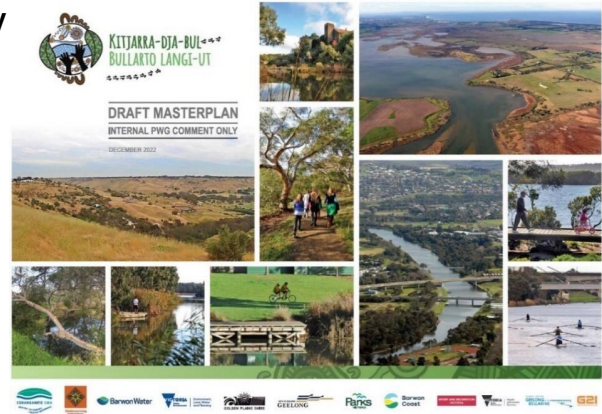
The dates for the National CEOs forum are likely to be 30th and 31st of August. The venue is yet to be confirmed. The Executive Officer will be supporting NRM RA in the development of the agenda.



Corangamite CMA Visit

Chair, Peter Hilbig, and Executive Officer, Tony Baker, were recently invited to attend the Corangamite CMA Board meeting. They presented to the CCMA Board on the role of Vic Catchments and the current and future activities of the collective.

Peter and Tony discussed the important role all Board members play in advocating for our industry with government and community champions.



Peter and Tony also attended a site visit on the Barwon River where CCMA is leading the activation of new parts of the river by improving sustainable access under the Kitjarra-dja-bul Bullarto langi-ut Masterplan. This is an exciting project and a great example of how CMAs deliver shared benefits for the community.

[Learn more about the project here....](#)

Our People

Australia Day Honours

We acknowledge our former Board members that were recognised with Australia Day awards, including:

- Leanne Miller, current GBCMA Board Director.
- Christine Brooke, former NCCMA Board Director.
- Julie De Hennin, former NECMA Board Director.



We are proud to see the hard work and commitment of members of our industry rewarded in this way.

Vic Catchments Future Meeting Schedule

Thursday, 18 May 2023 – Melbourne

Friday, 25 August 2023 – Online

Thursday, 16 November 2023 - Melbourne

CONTACT US

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Vic Catchments

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