

Victorian Catchment Management Council

Annual Report 2015



Victorian
Catchment
Management
Council

Victorian Catchment Management Council Annual Report 2014-2015

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Cover photographs courtesy of Tracey Koper and Neil Meyers.

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Chair's Foreword

This term of the Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council) will conclude on 25 September 2015 so this being our final Annual Report and in particular my last Chair's Foreword after three terms in the role, it is appropriate to reflect on that time as well as on some specifics of the past year.

Generally, the level of activity in integrated catchment management space has not been frenetic in the recent past, although the release of the Victorian Auditor-Generals' report on '*Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities*' in September 2014 has certainly ramped up that level. The report and subsequent actions are referred to in other sections of this Annual Report, so suffice to say, we are delighted that the recommendations, and actions in the Secretary of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's response align strongly with Council's recommendations in its past three Catchment Condition and Management Reports of 2002, 2007 and 2012. We look with confidence to very positive outcomes for integrated catchment management in Victoria from this process.

On a national level, I was honoured to be invited to the 13th Annual NRM National Chairs Forum in Brisbane in March 2015, where Chairs from Australia's 56 regions plus state and federal representatives swap ideas and report on natural resource management. Having participated in all 13 Forums, I was given the opportunity to reflect on those 13 years. I can confidently say three things: we work much more closely together, we have made significant progress (but with still much to do!) and the Victorian system still clearly leads the way.

Thank you to everyone I have had the privilege to work with, not just in this past year, but over my three terms as VCMC Chair: to Departmental Secretaries and staff, to Ministers and their staff and advisors, to my fellow Council members, and in particular to our staff, Patricia, Neil and Tracey, who have been wonderfully supportive and a constant for those nine years.

In accordance with the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the Victorian Catchment Management Council's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2015.



Mick Murphy OAM
Chair
14 August 2015

Introduction to the VCMC

Appointed under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act), the Victorian Catchment Management Council consists of up to 10 members appointed by Governor-in-Council on the basis of their skills, experience and knowledge of land protection, water resource management, primary industries, environment protection, conservation and local government.

Council Members (1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015)

Mr Michael Murphy OAM - Chairperson

- Chair, Sustainability Fund Advisory Panel
- Chair, Riparian Advisory Group
- Chair, Victorian Waterway Strategy Management Stakeholder Reference Group
- Former Chair, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
- Former Mayor and Councillor, Moyne Shire Council
- Former Board Member, South West Water Authority
- Civil Engineer and business development consultant

Mr Cullen Gunn

- Former Executive Officer, Victorian Catchment Management Council
- Partner in a small Victorian business engaged in farm forestry
- Director of Kilter Pty Ltd, managing VicSuper's Future Farming Landscapes investment

Mr Christopher Arnott

- Partner, Aither Pty Ltd
- Founder and Former Managing Director, Alluvium Consulting Pty Ltd
- Director, Engineers without Borders Australia
- Partner, Reputation Risk Map
- Fellow, Peter Cullen Trust Leadership Program
- Fellow, Williamson Community Leadership Program
- Extensive experience in waterway management and environmental flows

Mrs Merna Curnow

- Partner, mixed agriculture family farm business
- Former member of Grains Research and Development Corporations Southern Panel
- Former Grains Councillor and Vice President of VFF Grains Council
- Former member of North Central Catchment and Land Protection Board
- Inductee, Victorian Women's Honour Roll

Dr Peter Greig

- President, Upper Barwon Landcare Network
- Former Chair, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
- Vigneron and beef breeder in Murroon

Mr Craig Madden

- Member, Salinity Program Advisory Council
- Former member, Goulburn Broken Catchment and Land Protection Board
- Former member, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Member, Goulburn Broken Water Service Committee for Murray Goulburn Water

Ms Peta Maddy

- Advisor on integrated water management solutions
- Degrees in Chemical Engineering and Science
- Past President, Australian Water Association, Victorian Branch

Mr John Young

- Former Chief Executive Officer, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
- 35 years' experience in natural resource and catchment management, including agriculture, national parks, public and coastal land management

- Community member of the Moyne Shire Environment and Conservation Committee and the Moyne Shire Coastal Risk Management Steering Committee
- Former Member, Western Coastal Board

Council Staff

Patricia Geraghty
Executive Officer

Neil Meyers
Research and Policy Co-ordinator

Tracey Koper
Project and Administration Officer

VCMC staff members are employees of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) - see DELWP (formerly Department of Environment Primary Industries - DEPI) 2014-15 Annual Report for statement of workforce data for current and previous financial year.

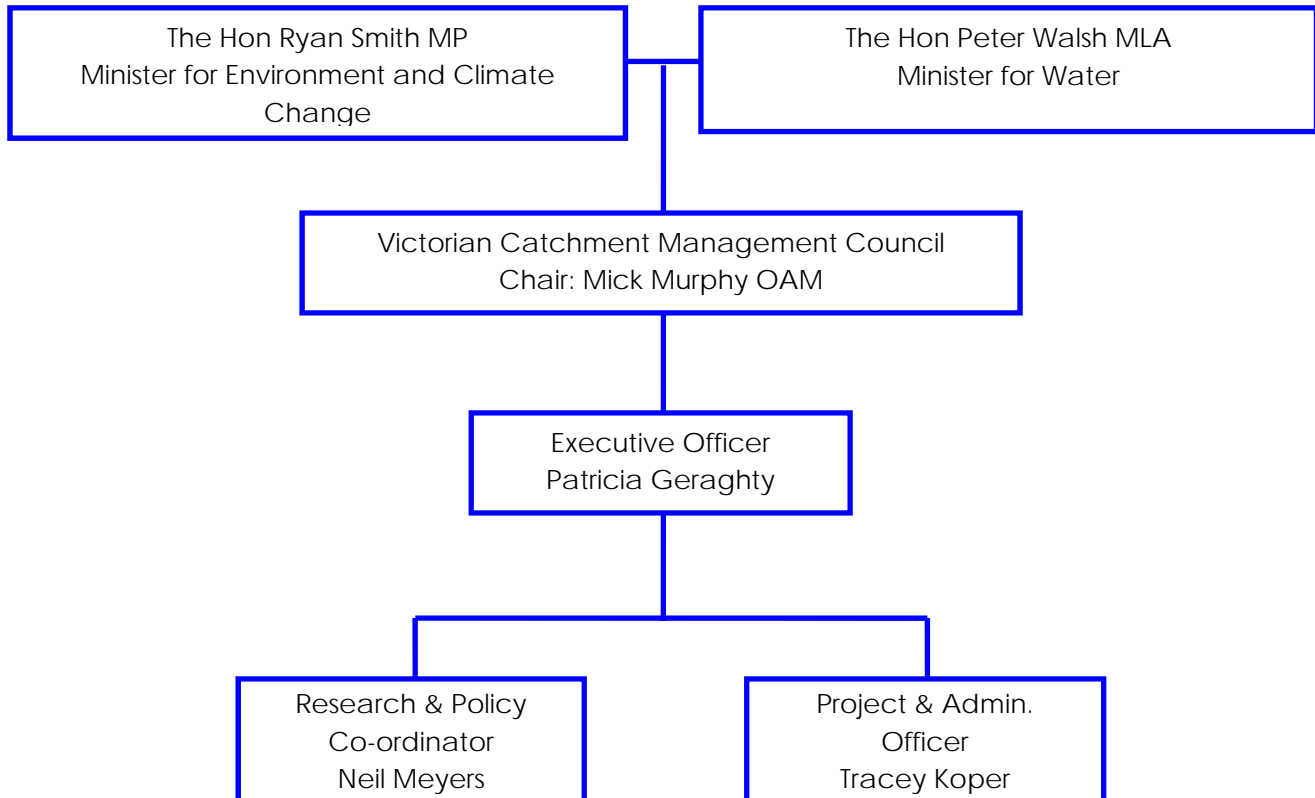
The VCMC secretariat employed three people (3 FTE) in 2014-15.

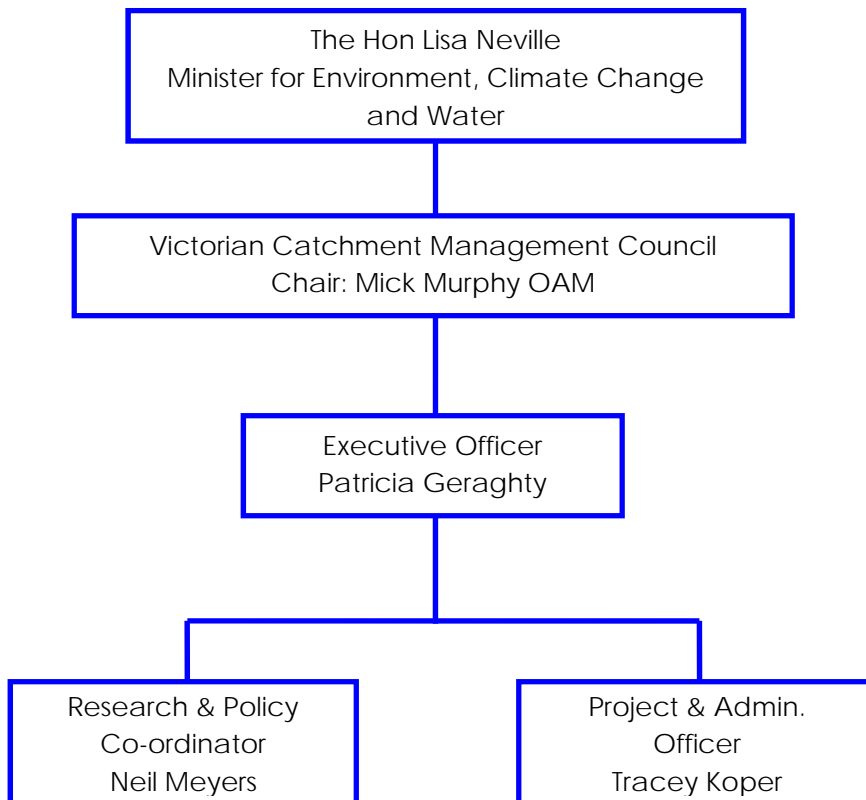
The breakdown of staff for the VCMC in 2014-15 is as follows:

	2013-2014	2014-2015
Executive Officers (salary greater than \$134,841)	0	0
Senior Management (salary less than \$134,841)	1	1
Administration Staff	2	2
Finance Staff	0	0
Male	1	1
Female	2	2
TOTAL	3	3

Organisational Structure

Before State Election on 29 November 2014





VCMC Role

Background

The Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council) is the state government's peak advisory body on catchment management, established under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) in 1997. The Hon. Ryan Smith MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change and the Hon. Peter Walsh MLA, Minister for Water, were the responsible Ministers from 1 July 2014 to 3 December 2014. The Hon. Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change and Water was the responsible Minister from 4 December 2014 to 30 June 2015. The Council is uniquely placed, independent of government agencies, Catchment Management Authorities and non-government organisations, to take a long term view and influence change in working towards its vision for catchment management:

Victoria will have healthy rivers flowing through ecologically sustainable and productive catchments.

Council takes a statewide view on land, water and biodiversity issues and priorities related to catchment management. It facilitates integrated and coordinated catchment management through Victoria's Catchment Management Framework. Council works particularly closely with DELWP (formerly DEPI) and CMAs. Also, Council encourages cooperation of other bodies such as non-government organisations involved in the management of land and water resources.

Council has continued the excellent and highly productive working relationship with its Ministers over this financial year, and has provided confidential advice on a number of matters.

Partnerships

Council works particularly closely with the CMAs and with DELWP (and its predecessor, the Department of Environment and Primary Industries). In addition, Council encourages cooperation between the major sectors of local government, community conservation and environment organisations, industry, state and federal agencies and Catchment Management Authorities by facilitating communication through various projects and forums.

Council has a unique relationship with CMAs. It is not responsible for the operation of CMAs, nor does it oversee their work. However, Council must be receptive to issues which emerge from the regions in developing a statewide position. It also provides the opportunity for CMAs to contribute to the policy and strategic picture at state level. Effective communication is critical to this process.

Statutory Roles

Under Part 2, Section 9 of the CaLP Act, the functions of the Council are:

- (a) to advise the Minister and, if requested by any other Minister, that other Minister—
 - (i) on matters relating to catchment management which apply throughout the State; and
 - (ii) on the condition of the land and water resources of the State; and
 - (iii) on priorities for catchment management throughout the State; and
 - (iv) on priorities to be given on the need for research and investigation on matters related to catchment management which apply throughout the State;
- (b) to encourage the co-operation of persons and bodies involved in the management of land and water resources in furthering the objectives of this Act;
- (c) to promote community awareness and understanding of issues relating to catchment management;
- (d) to advise the Minister and provide information to the Minister on any matter referred to it by the Minister.

The Council is also required to advise the Minister under Part 8, Division 1 Section 69 (2), (3) and (4) of the CaLP Act, on actions before recommendation for the declaration or revocation of a declaration of any pest plant or animal:

- (2) Before recommending the declaration, or the revocation of a declaration, of an animal as an established pest animal, the Minister must get advice on the proposal from the Council.
- (3) Before recommending the declaration, or the revocation of the declaration, of a plant as a noxious weed, the Minister must get advice on the proposal from the Council and the Authority of the region in which the declaration applies or will apply.
- (4) The advice of the Council or an Authority under sub-section (2) or (3) must include—
 - (a) an assessment of the extent and severity of impact of the animal or plant in Victoria; and
 - (b) suggested measures for the management of any infestation of the animal or plant; and
 - (c) an estimate of the cost of these measures and how it might be funded.

- (5) The Minister may, in a particular case or class of cases, exempt the Council or an Authority from complying with sub-section (4).

Furthermore, under Part 4, Section 19 Division 2 'Action Statements and Critical Habitats' of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (1988), the Council is to provide comment on list nominations and action statements:

19. Action statements

- (1) The Secretary must prepare an action statement for any listed taxon or community of flora or fauna or potentially threatening process as soon as possible after that taxon, community or process is listed.
- (2) The action statement must set out what has been done to conserve and manage that taxon or community or process and what is intended to be done and may include information on what needs to be done.
- (3) In preparing or amending an action statement the Secretary must consider –
 - (a) any management advice given by the Committee, the Conservation Advisory Committee and the Victorian Catchment Management Council; and
 - (b) any other relevant nature conservation, social and economic matters.

VCMC Committees

Under the *CaLP Act*, the Council may, from its members, appoint any committees that it considers necessary and may abolish any such committee; and determine the procedure of each committee. The nature and function of VCMC committees and working groups are described in the Operations of the VCMC later in this report.

Members of Council were also involved individually in a range of other external committees in 2014-15. A list of these committees is provided on page 19.

Executive Officer's Comment

Council consolidated its work based on the Strategic Plan during 2014-15, the final full year of its current term. The recommendations in the *Catchment Condition and Management Report* (CCMR) tabled in Parliament in December 2012 were the foundation for Council's Strategic Plan for its entire term, with additional key activities occurring as required. The work undertaken by Council as a whole and through its committees and working groups is described later in this Annual Report.

There are many opportunities for the Council and its staff to work collaboratively across the catchment management framework. These include the Chair, Mr Mick Murphy OAM and me participating in the Victorian Catchment Management Forum, and the Chair's and my membership in the CMA Chairs Forum and the CMA CEOs Group respectively. Such involvement has been positive for Council's relationships with the CMAs and with senior staff in the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP, formerly the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, DEPI). Council has also been represented on various external task forces, committees and working groups. These formal activities, along with field trips and the many informal conversations with our partners in the broad catchment management framework, provide us with the intelligence and experience to undertake our statutory tasks effectively.

A major activity for Council in this financial year has been its participation in the implementation of DELWP's (formerly DEPI's) Action Plan which responds to the Victorian Auditor-General's Report on the *Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities*, released in September 2014. This has been very welcome since many of the key recommendations in the report, and the Secretary's Action Plan in response to that report, are strongly aligned with Council's views and recommendations over many years.

I wish to thank my Chair, Mick Murphy OAM, the Council members and the Secretariat staff, Neil Meyers and Tracey Koper for their competence, courtesy and diligence in their respective roles. Particular mention needs to be made of the Chair, who has served three terms, from 2006 through to 2015. Mick has been an extraordinary figure in this role, with his integrity, his intelligence, his experience in so many areas, his enjoyment in engaging with anyone who has an opinion and a story to tell, and being such a fine person to deal with over the past nine years.



Patricia Geraghty
Executive Officer
14 August 2015

Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015

Our vision

'Victoria will have healthy rivers flowing through ecologically sustainable and productive catchments'

Who we are

- Role of the Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council) is to positively influence the condition and management of land and water resources across Victoria's catchments through the provision of advice to government and key stakeholders
- Council is a champion of integrated catchment management based on the first objective in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act):
" ...to establish a framework for the integrated and co-ordinated management of catchments which will maintain and enhance long-term land productivity while also conserving the environment; and aim to ensure that the quality of the State's land and water resources and their associated plant and animal life are maintained and enhanced."

What we must do

- Functions of Council are described in the CaLP Act, including providing advice to the Minister on:
 - matters relating to statewide catchment management and the condition of land and water resources
 - priorities for catchment management
 - priorities for research and investigation related to catchment management
- To encourage the cooperation of persons and bodies involved in the management of land and water resources and promote community awareness and understanding of catchment management issues
- Council must report on its activities annually, and every fifth annual report is to provide an assessment of the condition and management of land and water resources in the State, most recently in October 2012
- Additional functions relate to the declaration or revocation of declaration of pest plant and animal species under the CaLP Act, in addition to:
 - Specific functions under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*; and
 - Compliance with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and other related acts
- Council participates in and provides submissions on relevant reviews of legislation, strategies and plans

Drivers for 2012-2015

Catchment Condition and Management Report (CCMR) 2012 recommends:

1. That robust processes be established to determine the condition of the State's land and water resources and the effectiveness of land protection measures.
2. That this crucial function be assigned to an independent and appropriately resourced entity, with the task of reporting annually on progress towards the implementation of these processes, and every six years on overall condition.
3. That a State Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) plan be developed to define, explicitly, the quality of the land and water resources that will maintain and enhance long term land productivity, while also conserving the environment.

Strategic Goals

These two goals in the Strategic Plan are the key areas on which Council has focused its efforts over the 2012-2015 term to date, as a vehicle for change, for improving efficiency and effectiveness for the Catchment Management Framework and through using the knowledge and wisdom of our Council members and other experts.

These Goals have been reviewed annually.

1. Implementing CCMR 2012 recommendations; working towards CCMR 2017
2. Provide leadership to the Catchment Management Framework

Operations of the VCMC

Performance against objectives, functions, powers and duties

The functions of the Council are described in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) S.9, comprising providing advice to the Minister:

- (i) on matters relating to catchment management which apply throughout the State; and
- (ii) on the condition of the land and water resources of the State; and
- (iii) on priorities for catchment management throughout the State; and
- (iv) on priorities to be given on the need for research and investigation on matters related to catchment management which apply throughout the State.

Council must also encourage the co-operation of persons and bodies involved in the management of land and water resources in furthering the objectives of this Act; promote community awareness and understanding of issues relating to catchment management; and advise the Minister and provide information to the Minister on any matter referred to it by the Minister. Additional functions relate to the declaration or revocation of declaration of pest plant and animal species under the CaLP Act, specific functions under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*; and compliance with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and other related acts.

The activities of Council during 2014-15, undertaken by the whole Council and by its various committees were determined by the goals in the Strategic Plan, founded upon its functions under the CaLP Act.

Council is an advisory body. Council met its statutory obligations through the 2014-15 period through providing confidential advice on a range of topics to the Hon. Ryan Smith MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change and the Hon. Peter Walsh MLA, Minister for Water, who were the responsible Ministers from 1 July 2014 to 3 December 2014 and to the Hon. Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change and Water who was the responsible Minister from 4 December 2014 to 30 June 2015.

Timely advice was provided by Council as required under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* on nominations for final listings supported or rejected by the Scientific Advisory Committee and responses to Draft Action Statements, for which details are found later in this report. All other matters of compliance with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and other relevant acts were met.

Note that S.9J in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act* requires Council to report on the operation of this Act and the carrying out of its functions. In past annual reports, this requirement involved reporting on various programs and projects undertaken by the Catchment Management Authorities and by central agencies, within the integrated catchment management framework. These reports are available elsewhere, and can be found in the annual reports of these authorities and agencies, and thus are not duplicated here.

Performance against operational and budgetary objectives

The key ongoing objectives for the Council were its statutory obligations, comprising the provision of confidential advice to the relevant Ministers as described in the previous section. In most cases, this was in response to a verbal or written request from the Minister/s but in some cases, Council provided advice which it decided was of significance. All advice was provided in a timely manner.

The original budget was \$528,929 (refer to VCMC Finance Report). In relation to this figure, the overall expenditure for the 2014-15 period was \$515,275, resulting in a surplus of \$13,654 or +2.6%. This was within Council's budgetary objective of 5% or less variance.

In May 2015, Council was advised that the Water and Catchments Executive in DELWP (formerly DEPI) approved a one-off grant of \$200,000 to assist Council's participation in the implementation of the VAGO Action Plan over the period 2015-16. The grant enabled and will enable the Chair to participate actively in the Project Control Board and staff to deliver key input to project teams. Other actions include drafting a framework and approach for the Council's *Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017* and to work with the Department and CMAs in determining information needs for integrated catchment management monitoring and reporting for various end users, through until the end of December 2016.

Initiatives and key achievements

Council undertook various activities based around catchment condition reporting. This work directly related to the two goals in the Strategic Plan: implementing the *Catchment Condition and Management Report 2012* recommendations, and working towards the *Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017*; and providing leadership to the Catchment Management Framework.

The **Catchment Indicators Committee** of Council comprising Peta Maddy (convenor), Chris Arnott, and secretariat staff was established in July 2014. The purpose of this Committee was to undertake investigations around the work on catchment condition reporting completed through the Victorian Catchment Management Forum and presented to the Environment and Primary Industries Committee (EPIC) on 30 June 2014. The Committee surveyed the ten CMAs on the six EPIC-endorsed themes and indicators, and statewide providers of data were also engaged through August-September 2014. Advice from the Council to the Ministers was provided on 30 October 2014 following this work, along with delivering against the Ministers' 'Statement of Expectations' letter. Items included a preliminary framework and approach to catchment condition reporting, a summary of some key roles and responsibilities in this area and a snapshot of the status of the six themes and indicators.

Council was referred to in the implementation of DELWP's (formerly DEPI) Action Plan, which responded to the Victorian Auditor-General's 2014 Report on '*The Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities*'. Mick Murphy was invited to join the Project Control Board; Patricia Geraghty was a member of project team 1, responsible for development of an overarching strategy for integrated catchment management and increased accountability for Regional Catchment Strategy implementation; and Neil Meyers was a member of project team 4, responsible for developing a framework for catchment condition and management reporting. The Committee achieved its 2014-15 objectives in relation to catchment condition reporting work, which has continued and will continue through the VAGO Action Plan process.

The following field visits were undertaken. A joint visit to West Gippsland with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder Commissioners and staff took place in October 2014, including a field trip to the Morwell River, Lake Narracan and the Blue Rock reservoir; a field trip to Kilter sites in northern Victoria in February 2015, focussing on landscape scale change, with superannuation fund (VicSuper) investment; a trip on the Yarra River with Board and staff from Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water, highlighting the complexity of managing a busy urban waterway, port and riparian zone; a meeting with the Port Phillip and Westernport and Corangamite CMA Boards in April at the Mt Rothwell Conservation Centre; and a meeting and field trip with the Goulburn Broken CMA Board in May, looking at upland slopes and how the CMA works with partners on urban creek restoration, rural land development including floodplain management, roadside weed control, farm soil erosion and farm wetland restoration. Such visits foster good relationships among the various bodies involved in integrated catchment management.

Council members and staff also participated in conferences, workshops and many regional activities, through individual networks. These included the National Landcare Conference, meetings with the Victorian Coastal Council and the Victorian Landcare Council, participation in the Goulburn Broken CMA's research forum, presentation by the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists. Links with the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability were strengthened over the past year, with an agenda and agreement around collaboration, removing duplication and a shared reporting framework. Mick Murphy, as Chair of Council, was appointed to the Commissioner's Project Control Board, to guide the development of State of the Environment reporting.

Once the new Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, the Hon Lisa Neville, was appointed in December 2014, Council submitted a Handover Report to her. Since that time, there were several productive meetings with the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary and ministerial staff. At their initial meeting, the Chair presented the Minister with copies of CCMR 2012 and the 'Looking forwards' document articulating ongoing work and potential new activities through until the end of the current term of Council on 25 September 2015.

The Minister formally met with Council on 2 June 2015, delivering her key messages and engaging in a fruitful discussion, resulting in a new action plan being developed for the Council for actions over the period July to September 2015 when its term ends. The new Council (post 25 September 2015) will have the opportunity to establish its own Strategic Plan, underpinned by the functions described in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

VCMC Finance Report

The following table outlines operating revenue and expenditure for the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 financial years.

VCMC Financial Report 2010-2011 to 2014-2015.

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Operating Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
DELWP* Allocation	548,061	684,789	549,646	530,663	728,929
Trust Funds	19,851	0	0	0	0
Total Revenue	567,912	684,789	549,646	530,663	\$728,929⁴

Expenses	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
DELWP* Allocation	567,474	725,303	498,982	490,982	515,275
Trust Funds	19,851 ¹	0	0	0	0
Total Expenses	587,325	725,303	498,982²	490,026³	515,275

* Formerly DEPI

Notes:

1. The Council used the VCMC Trust Fund to sponsor a workshop on Indigenous Employment Opportunities in Natural Resource Management held on 29 June 2010.
2. There was an underspend in the 2012-2013 financial year due to the appointment of the Council members in September 2012, resulting in reduced expenditure for the period July to September 2012; and to savings on printing and editing in the production of the Catchment Condition and Management Report 2012.
3. There was approval from DELWP (formerly DEPI) in October 2013 for a carry-over of \$46,000 from the 2012-13 financial year, mainly to fund regional visits. This additional funding was loaded into the budget in February 2014. Two regional visits were then organised for March and May 2014, before the end of the financial year.
4. An additional \$200,000 was received from DELWP (formerly DEPI) in May 2015, in the form of a one-off grant to assist the Council's participation in the implementation of DELWP's (formerly DEPI) Action Plan which responds to the Victorian Auditor-General's Report on the Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities. This participation is for the period May 2015 through to December 2016.

VCMC, in conjunction with DELWP (formerly DEPI), has transitioned its accounting policies and financial reporting from current Australian Standards to Australian equivalents of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Significant Changes in Financial Position and Subsequent Events

There were no matters which changed the Council's performance or financial position during the 2014-15 reporting period. Further, there were no subsequent events which will have a material impact on the Council's future operations or financial position that occurred after this report was finalised.

Statutory Responsibilities

VCMC Meetings

	July 2014	August 2014	October 2014	December 2014	February 2015	May 2015	June 2015
Mick Murphy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chris Arnott	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Merna Curnow	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Peter Greig			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Craig Madden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peta Maddy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cullen Gunn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Young	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All absences were approved by the Chair prior to each meeting.

Freedom of Information

The VCMC is considered to be a "Government Agency" under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) and is required to comply with the procedures that have been prescribed under which members of the public may gain access to information held by agencies. A decision to release information is made by an Authorised Officer. The VCMC has determined that its Authorised Officer is the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Freedom of Information Manager, Ms Kim Reeves (03) 9637 9730.

During 2014-15, no requests were received for access to documents under the *FOI Act 1982*.

Documents which are maintained in the possession of Council include:

Internal working papers;

- Correspondence from Ministers and Members of Parliament, Government Departments and agencies, members of the public and the private sector;
- Reports prepared by consultants commissioned by Council;
- Accounts records; and
- Organisation and accommodation records.

You have a right to apply for access to documents held by VCMC and covered by the *FOI Act 1982*. This applies to both documents created by VCMC as well as those supplied to VCMC. You may apply for the original or for a copy.

FOI requests (\$27.20) must be made in writing to:

Ms Kim Reeves
 Freedom of Information Manager
 Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
 P.O. Box 500
 East Melbourne Vic 3002
 Tel: (03) 9637 9730
 Email: kim.reeves@delwp.vic.gov.au

Requests should be as specific as possible to enable the FOI Authorised Officer to identify relevant documents as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Once your letter requesting access has been received, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning must respond to you as soon as possible, but not later than 45 days, outlining its decision on your

request. If the Department refuses you access to the documents sought, you can appeal to the Principal Officer (Patricia Geraghty, Executive Officer) for an internal review, but you must do so within 28 days of the letter sent to you. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning must then reconsider your request and respond to you within 14 days.

If you wish to appeal further to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, you must do so within 60 days of the date you were notified of the internal review.

Consultancies

The VCMC commissioned no consultancies >\$10,000 in 2014-15.

The VCMC commissioned no consultancies <\$10,000 in 2014-15.

The definition of consultancy was updated effective from 1 July 2013. Consequently, disclosures on the 2014-2015 consultancy expenditure cannot be compared with previous year disclosures.

National Competition Policy

Competitive neutrality seeks to enable fair competition between government and private sector businesses. Any advantages or disadvantages that government businesses may experience, simply as a result of government ownership, should be neutralised. The VCMC continues to implement and apply this principle in its business undertakings.

Community Inclusiveness – Diversity Reporting Statement

The VCMC is committed to policies, programs and strategies aimed at delivering appropriate services to all Victorians regarding cultural diversity, women, young people and Indigenous affairs.

Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act

The *Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act 2003* requires public bodies to report on the implementation of the Act and applies when the Victorian Government's funding or provision of a grant exceeds \$3m in Metropolitan Melbourne and \$1m in Regional Victoria. The *Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act 2003* applies to all contracting arrangements for projects above this threshold including any sub-contracted elements which may be below this threshold.

The VCMC had no contracts that were commenced or completed in the 2014-15 period to which Victorian Industry Participation Policy applied.

Major Contracts

There were no major contracts valued at \$10 million or more entered into in 2014-15.

Protected Disclosure Act

The *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* (PD Act) enables people to make disclosures about improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act aims to ensure openness and accountability by encouraging people to make disclosures and protecting them when they do.

There were no disclosures made under the *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* during the 2014-15 reporting period.

What is a 'protected disclosure'?

A protected disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body.

The Victorian Catchment Management Council is a "public body" for the purposes of the Act.

What is 'improper or corrupt conduct'?

Improper or corrupt conduct involves substantial:

- mismanagement of public resources; or
- risk to public health or safety or the environment; or
- corruption.

The conduct must be criminal in nature or a matter for which an officer could be dismissed.

How do I make a 'Protected Disclosure'?

You can make a protected disclosure about the Victorian Catchment Management Council or its council members, officers or employees by contacting DELWP (formerly DEPI) or IBAC on the contact details provided below.

Please note that the Victorian Catchment Management Council is not able to receive protected disclosures.

How can I access the Victorian Catchment Management Council's procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action?

The Victorian Catchment Management Council uses established procedures from DELWP (formerly DEPI) for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a protected disclosure about the Victorian Catchment Management Council or its employees. You can access DELWP's (formerly DEPI) procedures on its website at: www.delwp.vic.gov.au.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
Jennifer Berenson, Senior Advisor, Privacy and Ombudsman
PO Box 500, East Melbourne Vic 3002.
Telephone: 03 9637 8697
Email: jennifer.berenson@delwp.vic.gov.au
Website: www.delwp.vic.gov.au

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria
Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street Melbourne 3000
Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234 Melbourne 3001
Website: www.ibac.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: see website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures

Employment and Conduct Principles

Victorian Public Service employment and conduct principles are applied in the appointment and management of staff. The VCMC follows the principles used by DELWP (formerly DEPI), in accordance with Government directives.

Public entities are required to have in place employment processes that will ensure that:

- 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; and
- public sector employees have a reasonable avenue of redress against unfair or unreasonable treatment.

Codes of conduct and standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) include:

- the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees
- the Conflict of Interest Policy Framework and the Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy Framework

For further information, please refer to the VPSC's website (www.vpsc.vic.gov.au).

Building Act

VCMC is located within DELWP (formerly DEPI) premises (8 Nicholson St East Melbourne) and uses Departmental facilities. It is understood that the owner of the building is compliant with building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

Environmental Reporting

Under FRD24C, CMAs are classified under the "other public sector entities", and are encouraged to adopt the requirements of this Financial Reporting Direction. The FRD24C requirements are not mandatory for public agencies; they apply only to Government Departments, the Environment Protection Agency and Sustainability Victoria.

The VCMC has been incorporated in DELWP's (formerly DEPI) Environmental Reporting under FRD24C.

Additional VCMC Information Available on Request

Information is available on request from:

The Project Officer

Victorian Catchment Management Council

Phone: (03) 9637 9892

Email: tracey.koper@delwp.vic.gov.au

Web: www.vcmc.vic.gov.au

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* See DELWP (formerly DEPI) Annual Report 2014-2015

External Committees and Working Groups that included a member or staff member of VCMC in 2014-2015

Group Name	VCMC Representative
CMA CEOs Forum	Patricia Geraghty
CMA Chairs Forum	Mick Murphy
CMA Communication Officers Forum	Tracey Koper
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability State of the Environment Reporting Reform Project Control Board	Mick Murphy
DELWP (formerly DEPI) MER Working Group	Neil Meyers
DELWP (formerly DEPI) Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine Editorial Committee	Tracey Koper
Riparian Forum (formerly the Riparian Advisory Group)	Mick Murphy
VAGO Implementation Action 1 Project Team	Patricia Geraghty
VAGO Implementation Action 4 Project Team	Neil Meyers
VAGO Implementation Project Control Board	Mick Murphy
Victorian Catchment Management Forum	Mick Murphy, Patricia Geraghty
Victorian Waterway Management Strategy Reference Group	Mick Murphy

VCMC Activities and responsibilities under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*

Nominations for final FFG listings supported by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and VCMC:

Taxa

Nealie (*Acacia loderi*)
Enfield Grevillea (*Grevillea bedgoodiana*)
Soft Sunray (*Leucochrysum molle*)
Viscid daisy-bush (*Olearia viscosa*)
McDowall's Galaxias (*Galaxias mcdowalli*)
Dargo Galaxias (*Galaxias mungadhan*)
Shaw Galaxias (*Galaxias gunaikurnai*)
Tapered Galaxias (*Galaxias lanceolatus*)
West Gippsland Galaxias (*Galaxias longifundus*)
East Gippsland Galaxias (*Galaxias aequipinnis*)
Roundsnout Galaxias (*Galaxias terenasus*)
Bacchus Marsh Varnish Wattle (*Acacia rostriformis*)
Rare Bitter-bush (*Adriana quadripartita*)
Western Water-starwort (*Callitriche cyclocarpa*)

Final Recommendation by the SAC to reject the listing of:

Fryerstown Grevillea (*Grevillea obtecta*)

Communities

There was one community identified and supported for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* by the SAC and VCMC

Strzeleckis Warm Temperate Rainforest Community

Potentially Threatening Processes

There were no potentially threatening processes identified and supported for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* by the SAC and VCMC

VCMC Responses to Draft Action Statements:

Under Section 19 (1) of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the Secretary must prepare an action statement for any listed taxon or community of flora or fauna or potentially threatening process as soon as possible after that taxon, community or process is listed. The VCMC provided advice to the Secretary on the following Draft Action Statements. Under Section 19 (3) of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the Secretary must consider any management advice given by the Victorian Catchment Management Council.

Leadbeater's Possum (*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*)
Barred Galaxias (*Galaxias fuscus*)
Dwarf Galaxias (*Galaxiella pusilla*)
Australian Grayling (*Prototroctes maraena*)
Yarra Pygmy Perch (*Edelia obscura*)
Hairy Anchor Plant (*Discaria pubescens*)
Dwarf Spider-orchid (*Caladenia pumila*)
Australian Whitebait (*Lovettia seali*)
White Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans* var. *tricolor*)
White Starbush (*Asterolasia asteriscophora* subsp. *albiflora*)

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