

Victorian Catchment Management Council

Annual Report 2016



Victorian
Catchment
Management
Council

Victorian Catchment Management Council Annual Report 2015-2016

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Chair's Foreword

This period from October 2015 has seen the appointment of new Council membership from across Victoria. These appointments to Council have brought a diverse set of skills and experience needed to extend the statutory obligations of Council. It is appropriate that I certainly acknowledge the work of our predecessors and staff.

The Council has a proud record in the provision of advice to government and the promotion and development of integrated catchment management in Victoria has been at the forefront in the organisations planning and indeed delivering across the natural resource management fields.

In strategic terms Council has instituted a Working Group to provide oversight in the development of the 2017 Catchment Condition and Management Report (CCMR). Further we have initiated a funded Project Manager position to coordinate and drive the CCMR processes. Council will continue to contribute to the further development of integrated catchment management, most particularly through continued involvement in the response to the Victorian Auditor General's report on the 'Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities,' where it has been my pleasure to have led the Project Control Board (PCB) of multi-agency people. This PCB at one level have successfully developed Victoria's initial integrated catchment management (ICM) strategy – 'Our Catchments, Our Communities,' launched by our Minister in April 2016. This provides a significant basis for longer term planning and delivery of ICM across Victoria. We have also provided support and advice to the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability in the progress of the State of the Bays report, which ultimately leads into the 2018 State of the Environment report. Our support is at a number of levels, principally through the Commissioner's Project Control Board, the Technical Advisory Group and at increasingly close interaction at staff levels. From the perspective of Council we recognise the need to work closely with the Commissioner and her staff in aligning CCMR and the development of the 2018 State of the Environment Report.

I thank the staff and my fellow members of VCMC for their enthusiasm and continued commitment to our statutory functions and indeed work beyond in bringing broad advice to Government. I must also note and acknowledge the ongoing support of the Department.

In accordance with the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Victorian Catchment Management Council for the year ending 30 June 2016.



Angus Hume
Chair
22 August 2016

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 (26 September 2012 – 25 September 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 Members (from 13 October 2015)

Mr Angus Hume – Chairperson

- Chair, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- Former dairy farmer from South Gippsland
- Qualifications in education and company directorship via AICD
- Strong background in natural resource management
- Co-chair, Gippsland Lakes Co-ordinating Committee
- Involved in Landcare since 1997, initially as President of the Stony Creek Landcare Group
- Former CEO of Greening Australia NSW
- Expedition leader, Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions

Ms Amity Dunstan

- Co-Founder and manager of business and projects at The Dunstan Plantation
- Founder and Principal of Farm Events
- Grain producer at Telangatuk East
- Former board member, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
- Delegate, Victorian Landcare Council
- Masters in Sustainable Agriculture; Bachelor of Applied Science in NRM
- International and local consulting experience in transition management
- Holds various local community committee roles

Ms Alana Johnson

- Director, Goulburn Murray Water
- President, Voices for Indi
- Former Director, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
- Founding Member, Australian Women in Agriculture
- Principal, Lurg Cattle Co.
- Landcare member since 1986
- Graduate, Australian Rural Leadership Program
- Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Social Scientist and PhD Candidate, Monash University

Mrs Joan Liley

- Member, Water Plan Reference Group
- Member, Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Reference Group
- Former Chair, South Gippsland Water
- Former Deputy Chair, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- South Gippsland beef producer
- Bachelor of Commerce, Graduate Diploma Education
- Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors

Mr Lance Lloyd

- Principal ecologist and Director of Lloyd Environmental Pty Ltd
- Honorary Research Fellow at Federation University Australia
- Chair, Translocation Evaluation Panel, Fisheries Victoria
- Chair, Great Australian Bight Resource Assessment Group, Australia Fisheries Management Authority
- Postgraduate degree in Science
- Past President of the River Basin Management Society
- Strong scientific background in catchment and water management
- Extensive consultation experience across the agricultural, community, environmental and business sectors

Ms Peta Maddy

- Director, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water
- Chair, Interdepartmental Reference Group for the Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy

- Associate at Aither
- Holds degrees in Chemical Engineering and Science (Toxicology and Pharmacology)
- Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Past President of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Water Association (2010 to 2013)

Mr Geoff Park

- Director, Natural Decisions Pty Ltd
- Trustee, Norman Wettenhall Foundation
- Honorary Research Fellow, Dept of Forest and Ecosystem Science, University of Melbourne
- Former knowledge broker, North Central Catchment Management Authority
- Former team member, Future Farm Industries CRC (NRM investment frameworks)
- Holds Bachelor of Science and Diploma of Education

Mr Mike Gooley – Secretary’s Nominee

- Former Director Catchments, DELWP
- Acting Executive Director Agriculture, DEDJTR
- Churchill Fellow
- Qualifications in Agricultural Science and Rural Development
- Significant experience in senior government roles

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 DELWP - see DELWP 2015-16 Annual Report for statement of workforce data for current and previous financial year.

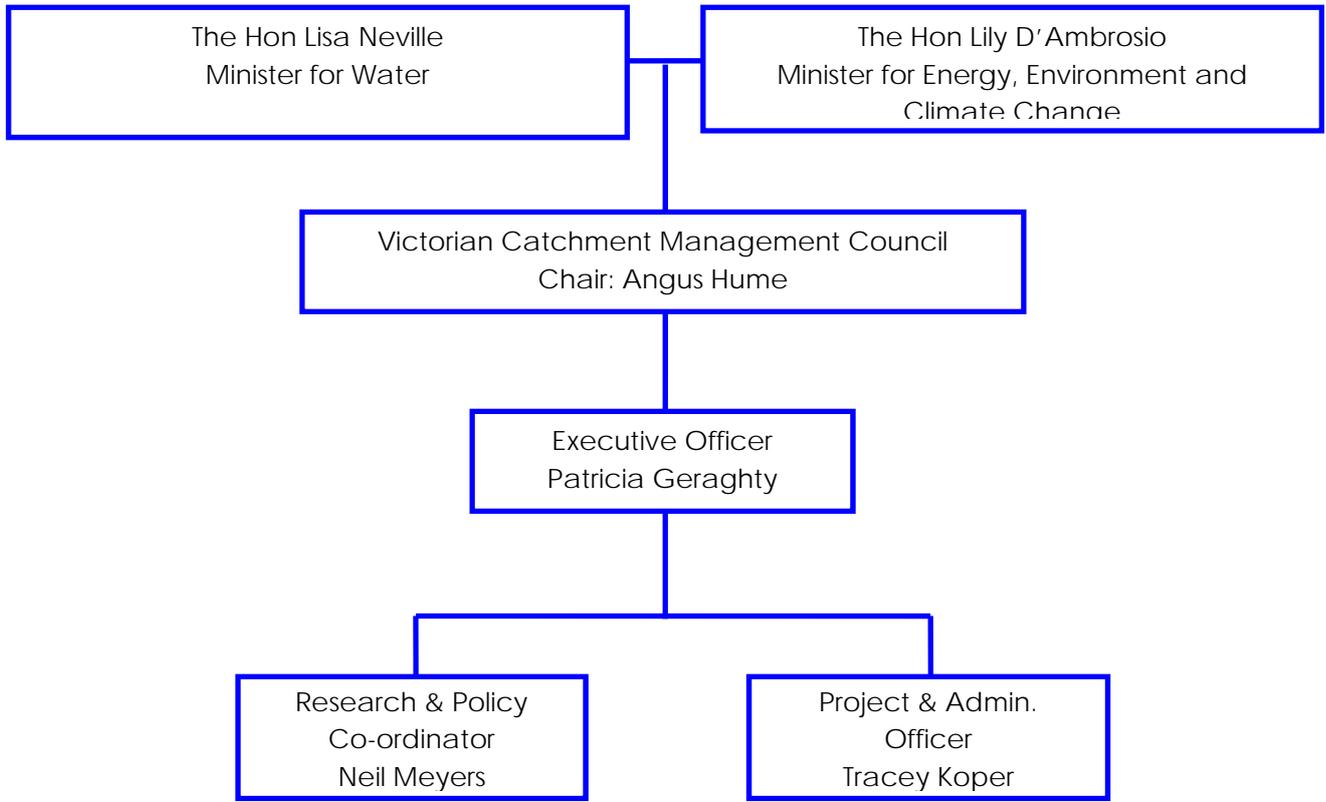
The VCMC secretariat employed three people (3 FTE) in 2015-16.

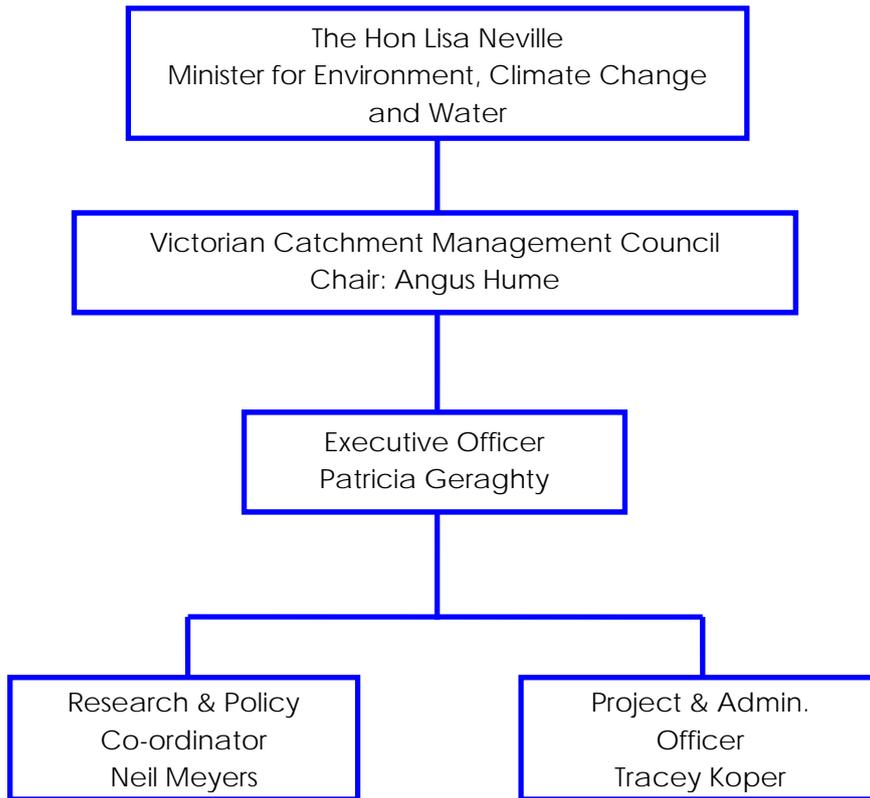
The breakdown of staff for the VCMC in 2015-16 is as follows:

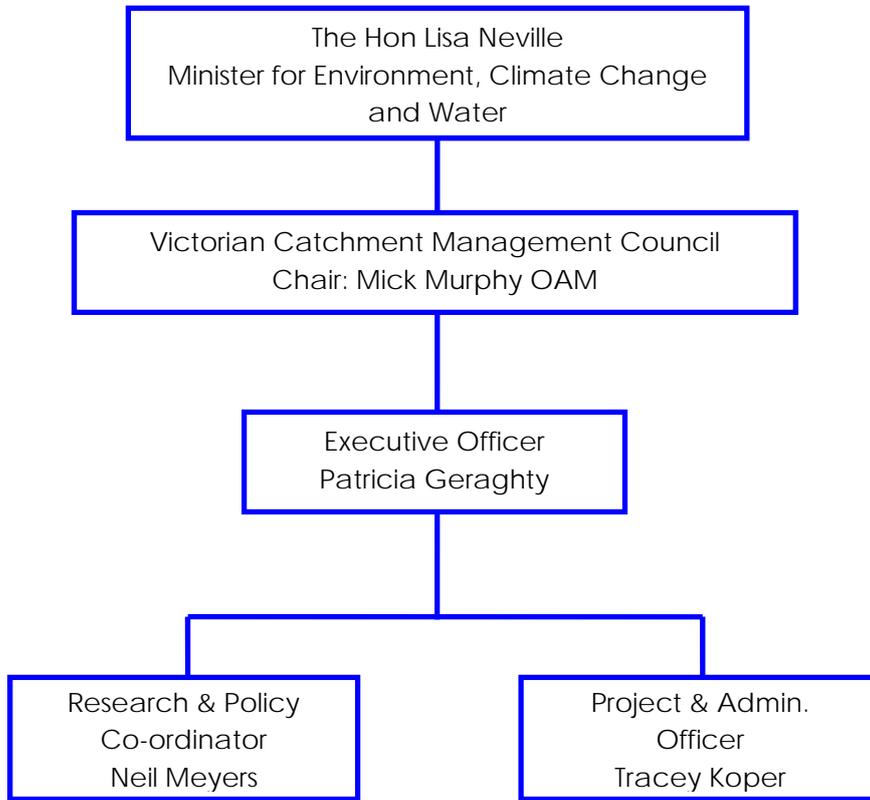
	2014-2015	2015-2016
Executive Officers (salary greater than \$134,841)	0	0
Senior Management (salary less than \$134,841)	1	1
Administration Staff	2	2
Finance Staff	0	0
Male	1	1
Female	2	2
TOTAL	3	3

Organisational Structure

23 May 2016 to 30 June 2016







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 responsible Ministers for the 2015-16 reporting period were:

- from 1 July 2015 to 22 May 2016, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water; and
- from 23 May 2016 to 30 June 2016, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water and the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

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 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 Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) and with DELWP. In addition, Council encourages cooperation between the major sectors of local government, CMAs, community conservation and environment organisations, industry, state and federal agencies and regional 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 2015-16. A list of these committees is provided in Appendix 2.

Executive Officer's Comment

It has been a year of change in the Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council). Mick Murphy OAM finished three terms as Chair in September 2015. There was a very well-attended farewell afternoon tea for Mick, with speeches from Adam Fennessy Secretary DELWP (and former VCMC member) and Sir Gus Nossal AC, and good wishes from past and present Council members and staff, departmental officers, CMA Chairs, CEOs and staff from CMAs, the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability and Mick's family. Mick has made a fine contribution to the reputation and achievements of the catchment management Framework in Victoria, and beyond.

A new Chair, Angus Hume was appointed on 13 October 2015, along with another six new members and one continuing member. Council staff developed an induction program for the Council, with introductory meetings and a targeted two-day session in January 2016. The program included the legacy of the Council, its legislative basis, business guidelines and preliminary development of the Strategic Plan for 2015-18.

The main statutory task for the Council in the coming year is the development of the Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017. The expertise of Council and staff has been complemented by support from our partners DELWP, the CMAs and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, all working together on this project.

The launch of 'Our Catchment, Our Communities' in April 2016 was a high point of the past year. An integrated catchment strategy for Victoria has long been recommended by successive Councils. This and other outcomes of the Action Plan addressing the Victorian Auditor-General's report on the *Effectiveness of the Catchment Management Authorities* are very welcome, achieved through the leadership of the Project Control Board, chaired by Angus Hume.

I thank my two Chairs, Mick Murphy and Angus Hume, and former and current Council members for their contributions over the past year. The three staff in the Secretariat, Neil Meyers, Tracey Koper and I have been together for the past ten years as Council members come and go. The transition in the past year has been smooth and we continue to enjoy our role in supporting the Council.



Patricia Geraghty
Executive Officer
22 August 2016

Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018

Preamble

The current Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council) was appointed in October 2015 with a three year term. There is a new Chair, one continuing member and six new members. The focus in Council's strategic thinking is on the requirements of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act), under which Council is established.

Vision

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

The role of the Council is to positively influence the condition and management of land and water resources across Victoria's catchments through the provision of advice to the Ministers and to key stakeholders.

Council is a champion of integrated catchment management based on the first objective in the 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."

Functions of Council are described in the CaLP Act, including:

- Providing advice to the Ministers 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
- Encouraging 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
- Reporting on its activities annually, and in every fifth annual report to provide an assessment of the condition and management of land and water resources in the State, most recently in October 2012

Additional functions

These 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*
- Compliance with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and other related acts

Council participates in relevant reviews of legislation, strategies and plans, including submissions where appropriate. These will include the Water Plan, Biodiversity Strategy, Climate Change Framework and others during 2016.

Drivers for 2015-2018 term

1. Planning, drafting and completing the Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017 (CCMR 2017) for tabling in Parliament by 31 October 2017
2. Establishing any Regional Catchment Strategy guidelines as required
3. Investigating priorities on the need for research and investigation on matters related to statewide catchment management
4. Reporting on the operations of the CaLP Act; e.g. advice on requirement that more than one half of the members of the board of each CMA (other than the PPW CMA) must be persons whose principal occupation is primary production.
5. Advice as requested by the Ministers, or on particular topics decided by Council e.g. delivery of the outcomes in the Water Plan; investment in healthy waterways and catchments; regional delivery

models; riparian action; environmental offsets; environmental levy; themes related to productivity such as sustainable agriculture

6. Aligning Victoria's environmental reporting efforts with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and with the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability

Strategic Goals

These two goals are the key areas on which Council will focus its efforts over the 2015-2018 term. Council's actions in these two areas are envisaged as a vehicle for change, for improving the operations of the Catchment Management Framework.

1. Timely completion of a high-quality CCMR 2017
2. Leadership within the Catchment Management Framework, building on successive Councils' past experience in catchment management

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/s and provide information to the Minister on any matter referred to it by the Minister. Additional functions relate to the declaration or the revocation of a 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.

This annual report covers the transition between the end of term of one Council and the appointment of a new Council. Hence, the activities of Council during 2015-16 were divided into two time periods, those undertaken by the previous Council during 1 July 2015 through to 25 September 2015 and those undertaken by the current Council from its appointment on 13 October 2015 through to 30 June 2016. The previous Council delivered a Handover Report to the Minister at the end of its term and the new Council undertook several induction meetings, and established its Strategic Plan, founded upon Council's functions under the CaLP Act.

Council is an advisory body. Statutory obligations through the 2015-16 period were met through providing confidential advice on a range of topics to the responsible Ministers for the 2015-16 reporting period. They were:

- from 1 July 2015 to 22 May 2016, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water; and
- from 23 May 2016 to 30 June 2016, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water and the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

The topics included 'Community engagement in the CMAs' prepared by a working group comprising Merna Curnow, Peter Greig, and Craig Madden, including consultation with DELWP and CMAs; 'Floodplain management' prepared by a working group comprising Cullen Gunn, Peta Maddy and John Young; and 'Ecomarkets' prepared by a working group comprising Cullen Gunn and Peta Maddy, including consultation with DELWP and Trust for Nature. During 2015 -16, Council submitted comments on the draft Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy, the draft 'Water for Victoria Discussion Paper' and on the draft 'Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036'. All submissions and advice involved active participation and support from the Council Secretariat staff.

Advice was provided by Council through 2015-16 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 CaLP 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, including initiatives and key achievements

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

The core budget was \$501,089.00 (refer to VCMC Finance Report). In relation to this figure, the overall expenditure for the 2015-16 period was \$490,089.00 resulting in a small surplus of \$11,000.00 or 2.2%. This was well within Council's budgetary objective of 5% or less variance.

In addition, Council was advised in May 2015 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 Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Action Plan over the period 2015-16. This grant enabled the Chair to participate actively in the VAGO Action Plan 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. The grant has also been used for supporting relevant work towards the development and delivery of the Council's Catchment Condition and Management Report, due in October 2017.

Council undertook various activities based around catchment condition reporting for the period 1 July 2015 until 25 September 2015. 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) and Chris Arnott was established in July 2014 and finished on 25 September 2015. The purpose of this Committee was to undertake investigations around the work on catchment condition reporting initiated through the Victorian Catchment Management Forum, including 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) VAGO Action Plan, which responded to the Victorian Auditor-General's 2014 Report on '*The Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities*'. The previous Chair, Mick Murphy was invited to join the Project Control Board; Patricia Geraghty was a member of the project team 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 the project team responsible for developing a framework for catchment condition and management reporting. Council's catchment condition and management reporting work continued alongside the VAGO Action Plan process during 2016 with the Council's Chair, Angus Hume chairing the Project Control Board.

The work towards the development and delivery of Council's Catchment Condition and Management Report, due in October 2017 continued with the appointment of the current Council. A Report Committee was established, comprising Peta Maddy (Chair), Alana Johnson, Lance Lloyd and Geoff Park. The Committee met five times since its first meeting on 25 February 2016. To date, the Committee is on schedule to deliver the report, has completed an inventory of available information on the condition and management of land and water resources in Victoria and has met with some of the key agencies and groups with whom it will collaborate during the development of the report. These included: staff from DELWP, the CMAs and from the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability.

Council endorsed a guide for the review of the current Regional Catchment Strategies in April 2016. The guide was developed by a working group set up by the CMA CEOs, comprising Rex Candy from East Gippsland CMA and Patricia Geraghty. The guide was discussed at the CMA Chairs' meeting in February, and DELWP Catchment Branch was kept informed about the process. The reviews are expected to be completed by December 2016.

Council members and staff also participated in conferences, workshops and many regional activities. These included the PPCMA Knowledge Banquet, National NRM Knowledge Conference, and the Farmtree and Landcare Association Forum and AGM. 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 and then Angus Hume, as Chair of Council, were appointed to the Commissioner's Project Control Board, to guide the development of State of the Environment reporting and Patricia Geraghty was appointed to the Technical Advisory Group. Furthermore, Joan Liley was appointed to the Commissioner's Stakeholder Reference Group.

The Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, the Hon Lisa Neville, formally met with Council in July 2015 and in April 2016, delivering her key messages and engaging in fruitful discussions.

VCMC Finance Report

The following table outlines operating revenue and expenditure for the 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-16 financial years.

VCMC Financial Report 2011-2012 to 2015-2016.

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-16
Operating Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
DELWP Allocation	684,789	549,646	530,663	728,929	701,089
Total Revenue	684,789	549,646	530,663	\$728,929³	\$701,089⁴

Expenses	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	725,303	498,982	490,982	515,275	490,089
Total Expenses	725,303	498,982¹	490,026²	515,275	490,089

Notes:

1. 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.
2. There was approval from DELWP 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.
3. An additional \$200,000 was received from DELWP in May 2015, in the form of a one-off grant to assist the Council's participation in the implementation of DELWP's Action Plan which responds to the Victorian Auditor-General's Report on the Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities.
4. This grant was carried over to 2015-16 to enable continuing participation in the Action Plan activities (refer Note 3) and to further the Council's relevant work on catchment condition and management reporting.

VCMC, in conjunction with DELWP, 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 Performance, and Subsequent Events

There were no matters which changed the Council's performance or financial position during the 2015-16 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

Council members to 25 September 2015

	June 2015	July 2015	August 2015	September 2015
Mick Murphy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cullen Gunn	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christ Arnott	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merna Curnow	✓	✓		✓
Peta Maddy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Craig Madden	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Young	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peter Greig	✓	✓		✓

Council members from 13 October 2015

	March 2016	April 2016	May 2016
Angus Hume	✓	✓	✓
Amity Dunstan	✓	✓	✓
Mike Gooley			
Alana Johnson	✓	✓	✓
Joan Liley	✓	✓	✓
Lance Lloyd	✓	✓	
Peta Maddy		✓	✓
Geoff Park	✓	✓	

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 2015-16, 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;
- Personnel and salary 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 (\$27.90) 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 of Environment and Primary Industries 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 2015-16.
The VCMC commissioned no consultancies <\$10,000 in 2015-16.

The definition of consultancy was updated effective from 1 July 2013. Consequently, disclosures on the 2015-16 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.

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 2015-16 period to which Victorian Industry Participation Policy applied.

Major Contracts

There were no major contracts valued at \$10 million or more entered into in 2015-16.

Protected Disclosures 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 Disclosures Act 2012* during the 2015-16 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 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 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 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, 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 does not own or control any government buildings and consequently is exempt from notifying its compliance with the 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 Environmental Reporting under FRD24C.

Additional VCMC Information Available on Request

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by the Victorian Catchment Management Council and are available (in full) on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*:

- (a) Details of publications produced by the Victorian Catchment Management Council about itself
- (b) A statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests by relevant officers

The 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

Additional information included in annual report

Details in respect of the following items have been included in the Victorian Catchment Management Council's annual report, on the pages indicated below:

- (a) a list of the Victorian Catchment Management Council's major committees; the purposes of each committee; and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved (*on page 14*).

Government Advertising Expenditure

VCMC's expenditure in the 2015-16 reporting period on government campaign expenditure did not exceed \$100,000.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expenditure

For the 2015-16 reporting period, VCMC had a total ICT expenditure of \$0.

"ICT Expenditure" refers to VCMC's costs in providing business enabling ICT services.

Compliance Disclosure Index

Legislation	Requirement	Page reference
Ministerial Directions		
Charter and purpose		
FRD 22G	Manner of establishment and the relevant Ministers	9
FRD 22G	Objectives, functions, powers and duties	9
FRD 22G	Nature and range of services provided	9
Management and structure		
FRD 22G	Organisational structure	6
Financial and other information		
FRD 10A	Disclosure index	22
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FRD 22G	Key initiatives and projects	14
FRD 22G	Public administration employment and conduct principles	20
FRD 22G	Occupational health and safety policy	*
FRD 22G	Summary of the financial results for the year	17
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FRD 22G	Statement on National Competition Policy	19
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FRD 22G	Details of consultancies over \$10,000	19
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FRD 29A	Workforce data disclosure	5
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<i>Protected Disclosure Act 2001</i>		20
<i>Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act 2003</i>		19
<i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>		2

* See DELWP Annual Report 2015-2016

Committees and Working Groups that included a member or staff member of VCMC in 2015-2016

Group Name	VCMC Representative
CMA CEOs Forum	Patricia Geraghty
CMA Chairs Forum	Mick Murphy / Angus Hume
CMA Communication Officers Forum	Tracey Koper
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's State of the Environment Reporting Reform Project Control Board	Mick Murphy / Angus Hume
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's State of the Environment Stakeholder Reference Group	Joan Liley
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's State of the Environment Technical Advisory Group	Patricia Geraghty
DELWP MER Working Group	Neil Meyers
DELWP Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine Editorial Committee	Tracey Koper
VAGO Implementation Action 1 Project Team	Patricia Geraghty
VAGO Implementation Action 4 Project Team	Neil Meyers
VAGO Implementation Project Control Board	Mick Murphy / Angus Hume
Victorian Catchment Management Forum	Mick Murphy / Angus Hume, Patricia Geraghty
Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy Interdepartmental Reference Group	Amity Dunstan

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

Shiny Daisy-bush (*Olearia passerinoides* subsp. *glutescens*)

Yarran (*Acacia melvillei*)

Umbrella Wattle (*Acacia oswaldii*)

Cut-leaf Burr-daisy (*Calotis anthemoides*)

Plains Billy-buttons (*Craspedia haplorrhiza*)

Spotted Emu-bush (*Eremophila maculate*)

Nominations not supported:

Hairpin Banksia (*Banksia spinulosa* var. *cunninghamii*)

Final Recommendation by the SAC to repeal the listing of:

Rare Bitter-bush (*Adriana quadripartita*)

Western Water-starwort (*Callitriche cyclocarpa*)

Communities

No communities were recommended by the SAC for listing or repealing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Potentially Threatening Processes

No potentially threatening processes were recommended by the SAC for listing or repealing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

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. 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. The VCMC provided advice to the Secretary on the following Draft Action Statements:

Soil erosion and vegetation damage and disturbance in the alpine regions of Victoria caused by cattle grazing

Dandenong Burrowing Crayfish (*Engaeus urostrictus*)

Martin's Toadlet (*Uperoleia martinii*)

Masters' Snake (*Drysdalia mastersii*)

Southern Shepherd's Purse (*Ballantinia antipoda*)

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