



VICTORIAN
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Victorian Catchment Management Council

Annual Report 2017



Victorian Catchment Management Council Annual Report 2016-2017

ISSN 1444-7126 (Print)

ISSN 2207-144X (pdf)

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Cover photographs courtesy of Tracey Koper and Neil Meyers.

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Chair's Foreword

This Annual Report covers a year of considerable activity, most notably on two particular fronts, in addition to extending our normal program. Firstly, Council and our staff continued to focus on the development of the Catchment Condition and Management Report (CCMR) 2017. Throughout this work I must acknowledge the support of key partners DELWP, the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability and the Environmental Reporting Project Control Board members, and the Catchment Management Authorities. Each has provided significant insights to various components of the Report and added a diverse set of skills and experience needed to extend the statutory obligations of Council. The CCMR sees an innovative approach with the inclusion of a regional snapshots chapter.

Secondly, we have celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the formation of Victoria's integrated catchment management framework, VCMC and CMAs. Council was proud to host an evening event in Queen's Hall, Parliament House and see the presentation of recognition awards to individuals from each of the 10 CMA regions and from the statewide perspective. Importantly the framework has a clear focus on both cooperative relationships and coordination between individuals and organisations, to devolve decision making on local issues to the residents and communities living in the catchment.

Council has continued the provision of advice to government, and the promotion and development of integrated catchment management. The Chair has undertaken the role of leadership for the Strategic Reference Group, which provides oversight to the delivery of the Our Catchments Our Communities policy framework.

Council acknowledges the need to continue to work with many partners across the state in a cooperative way to bring about the management outcomes we need to better manage our land and water resources. Again, I thank Council staff for their enthusiasm and continued commitment to delivering the CCMR and all our ongoing statutory functions. My fellow members of Council, each bringing various skills and knowledge to our deliberations on statewide issues in integrated catchment management, must all be thanked in developing 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 2017.



Angus Hume
Chair
22 August 2017

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

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

- Grain grower in southern Wimmera
- PhD candidate in Social Science
- Member of Federation University's Rural Incubator for Social and Economic Research
- Tutor at Federation University's Horsham and Ararat campuses
- Secretary of Telangatuk East Hall Committee
- VCMC delegate on the Interdepartmental Reference Group for the Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy 2016 – 2017

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, Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Reference Group
- Committee member, Fish Creek Landcare
- 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

- Chair, Victorian Catchment Management Report committee (2016)
- Director, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water
- Founding Chair, Water Resources Committee, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water
- Chair, Interdepartmental Reference Group for the Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy
- Associate, Aither
- Holds Bachelor of Chemical Engineering (Hon) and Science (Toxicology and Pharmacology)
- Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Past President, 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 (to 4 October 2016)

- Former Director Catchments, DELWP
- 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

Philip Wallis (from 1 August 2016)
Senior Project Manager

VCMC staff members are employees of DELWP - see DELWP 2016-17 Annual Report for statement of workforce data for current and previous financial year.

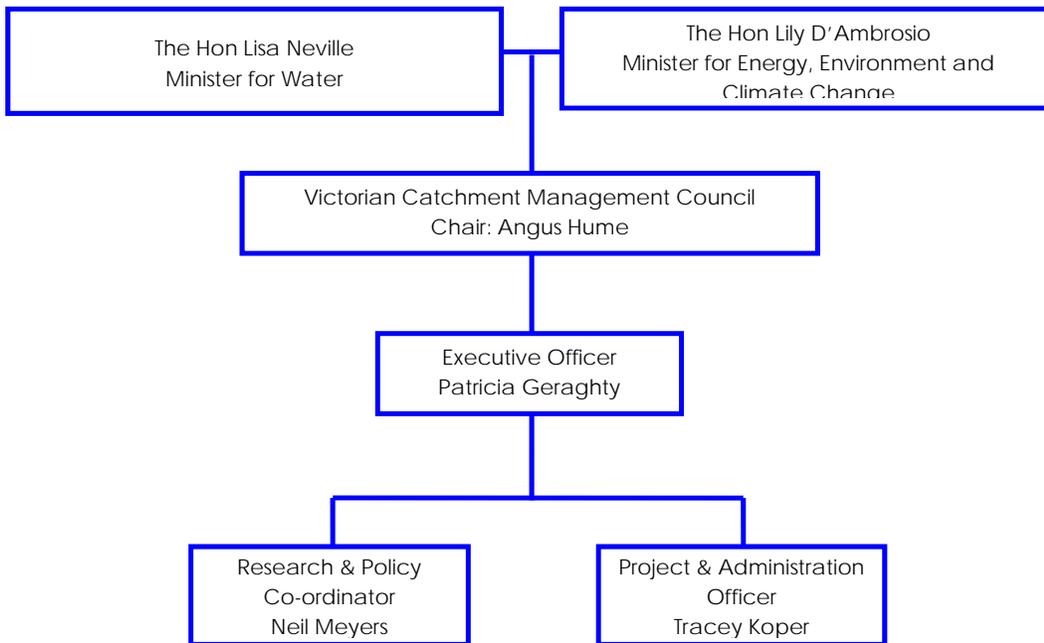
The VCMC secretariat employed four people (4 FTE) in 2016-17.

The breakdown of staff for the VCMC in 2016-17 is as follows:

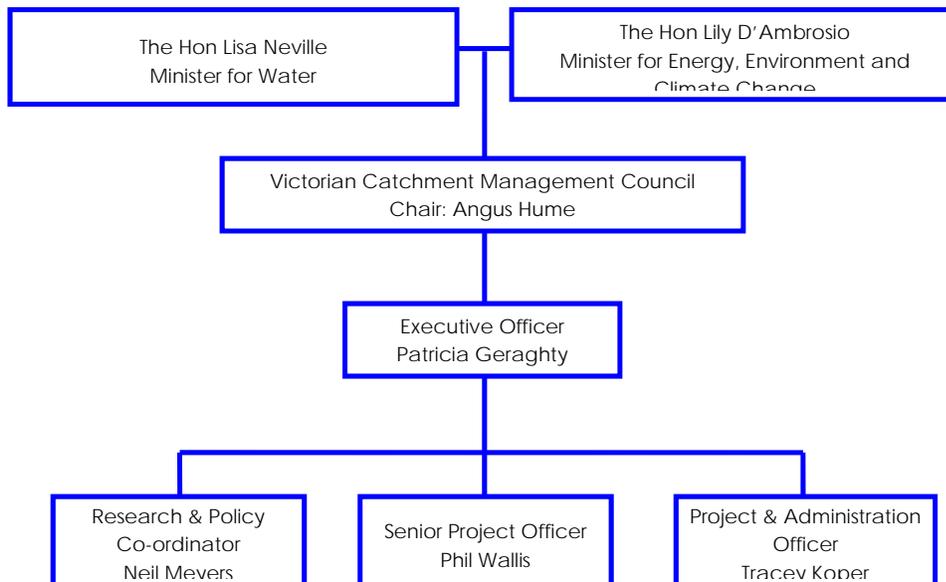
	2015-2016	2016-2017
Executive Officers (salary greater than \$134,841)	0	0
Senior Management (salary less than \$134,841)	1	1
Administration Staff	2	3
Finance Staff	0	0
Male	1	2
Female	2	2
TOTAL	3	4

Organisational Structure

1 July 2016 – 31 July 2016



1 August 2016 – 30 June 2017



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 2016-17 reporting period were 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 several 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.

This year, all VCMC members have sat on the interview panels for CMA Chair and Board positions, as part of the ongoing partnership with DELWP and the CMAs.

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 2016-17. A list of these committees is provided in Appendix 2.

Executive Officer's Comment

The main statutory task for the Council during the past year was the shaping and development of the *Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017 (CCMR)*. This task comes along every five years and requires a significant and concerted effort by the Chair, members and staff. Their expertise and commitment have been complemented by support from our major partners DELWP, the CMAs and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability.

The Water Plan *Water for Victoria* and the Biodiversity Plan *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037* were launched during the past year and are significant achievements in statewide policy related to catchment management. Along with *Our Catchment Our Communities*, there is now a solid foundation for integrated catchment management in Victoria as has long been recommended by successive Councils. The Our Catchment Our Communities Strategic Reference Group is chaired by Angus Hume and provides strong leadership in overseeing the implementation of integrated strategy. It was fitting that there were events in 2017 to celebrate both the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Council and the CMAs, and the first year of the implementation of *Our Catchments Our Communities*.

I thank my Chair, Angus Hume, the Council members and the staff for their dedication and their enthusiasm over the past year, culminating in the near-final version of the CCMR. I thank Neil Meyers and Tracey Koper for their many and varied roles in supporting Council and me. And I wish to recognise the outstanding role that Dr Philip Wallis has played as the Senior Project Manager for the CCMR project.



Patricia Geraghty
Executive Officer
22 August 2017

Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018

Preamble

The current Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council) was appointed in October 2015 for a three-year term. 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 submission to the Minister 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' experience in catchment management

Operations of the VCMC

Performance against objectives, functions, powers and duties

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

- (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/s on any matter referred to it by the Minister/s. 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. The current Council was appointed on 13 October 2015 and operated throughout the reporting year 2016-17.

Council is an advisory body. Statutory obligations were met through the provision of confidential advice on a range of topics to the responsible Ministers for the 2016-17 reporting period. They were: The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water and The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

During 2016 -17, Council submitted comments on the *Marine and Coastal Act Consultation Paper*, the *Climate Change Adaptation Plan*, 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 2016-17 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 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 but in some cases, Council provided advice which it decided was of significance. All advice was provided in a timely manner.

The budget was \$689,940.00 (refer to VCMC Finance Report). The overall expenditure for the 2016-17 period was \$645,601.88 resulting in a surplus of \$44,338.12 or 6.43%. This was within Council's budgetary objective of 10% or less variance.

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 audit *Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities*. Accordingly, Council was advised in May 2015 that the Water and Catchments Executive in DELWP approved a one-off grant of \$200,000 to assist Council's participation in the implementation of the Action Plan over the period 2015-17.

This grant enabled our Chair to lead the VAGO Action Plan Project Control Board and staff to deliver key input to project teams. Other actions included drafting a framework and approach for 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 during 2016-17 for supporting staff undertaking relevant work towards the development and delivery of the *Catchment Condition and Management Report*, due in October 2017. Council's catchment condition and management reporting work continued alongside the VAGO Action Plan process during 2016-17 with Angus Hume chairing the Our Catchments Our Communities Strategic Reference Group and the Executive Officer Patricia Geraghty a member of the Our Catchment Our Communities Implementation Committee.

Council's work based around catchment condition and management reporting over the past year 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 work directly aligned with Action 5.1 in *Our Catchment Our Communities*, which is 'Improve state and regional catchment reporting'. The development and delivery of Council's *Catchment Condition and Management Report* was initially undertaken by a Report Committee, comprising Peta Maddy (Chair), Alana Johnson, Lance Lloyd and Geoff Park. In December 2016, the Report Committee was replaced by the whole of Council as the direct Project Control Board for the project. The project was led by Project Manager Dr Philip Wallis and was on schedule as at 30 June 2017.

During 2016-17, the Project Manager or VCMC staff, plus a Council member met with each of the CMAs. These round-table discussions came as result of a change in the scope of the Council's report to include a section on catchment condition and management in each of the CMA regions. In some cases, other key agencies and groups with whom the CMAs collaborate participated in the roundtable discussions and in the ensuing development of the report.

Consultation involved several processes. A 'Shaping the CCMR' workshop was held in October 2016, which provided VCMC members and staff the opportunity to set the scene for the *Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017* project, and involve targeted partners to contribute to its framing and development. A Technical Advisory Group comprising staff from VCMC, DELWP and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability was established. Four eminent reviewers provided comments on each of the three versions of the report and there was targeted consultation, focused on the members of the already existing Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's Environmental Reporting Project Control Board. There were also several opportunities for the CMAs to provide feedback on the regional sections in the report.

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 from Council. The mid-term reviews were approved by each CMA Board and sent to Council and to DELWP. The reviews were assessed as more than satisfying the directions in the guide, and their recommendations will be helpful when Council sets up a collaborative process to develop the guidelines of the next suite of Regional Catchment Strategies, starting in early 2018.

Council members and staff also participated in conferences, workshops and many regional activities. These included the National Landcare Conference, Port Phillip and Westernport CMA's Knowledge Banquet, Biodiversity across the Borders Conference, the Farmtree and Landcare Association Forum and AGM, the Centre for Aquatic Pollution Identification and Management Research Summit, Victorian Rabbit Action Network workshop, and Systemic Inquiry workshops.

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. Angus Hume was appointed to the Commissioner's Environmental Reporting Project Control Board to guide the development of State of the Environment reporting and Philip Wallis was appointed to the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Group. Furthermore, Council member Joan Liley was appointed to the Commissioner's Stakeholder Reference Group.

Council staff Patricia Geraghty (Convenor) and Tracey Koper initiated a Working Group to plan and organise a celebration to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Victorian Catchment Management Framework. The other representatives were Joanne Green and Elodie Chene from the Catchments Branch in DELWP and Paula Camenzuli from the West Gippsland CMA. Organising the event at

Queen's Hall included proposing the program, setting up a 'Recognition' process for 10 regional and one statewide nominees who have made significant contributions to integrated catchment management in Victoria, and preparing a booklet on some highlights in catchment management. The high tea event on 28 June was attended by some 120 people, hosted by Angus Hume, Chair of Council and Christine Wyatt, Acting Secretary DELWP and with a keynote address by Cheryl Batagol, Chairman of the EPA and a former Council member. The Parliamentary Secretary for Water and for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Anthony Carbines represented the Government at the event and gave a short address congratulating the catchment management sector on its achievements over 20 years.

Angus Hume hosted the 'Our Catchments Our Communities Summit' the following day at the Melbourne Cricket Ground with the opening address by The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water, several keynote addresses from eminent persons and panel sessions combining into what was very successful day. VCMC member Geoff Park was a panellist and Patricia Geraghty was a panel convenor at the Summit.

Vic Catchments has been established as an industry-wide grouping of CMA Chairs supported by an Executive Officer and as a vehicle for building partnerships and exchanging information. Council's Chair and Executive Officer have ex officio membership, along with the CMAs CEOs, in the group, ensuring the continuing close relationship of Council with the CMAs. Patricia Geraghty is in the CMA CEOs' Group and was nominated as a member of its Strategy and Planning Portfolio. She was also involved in the CEOs' work on strategic priorities for Vic Catchments, based on significant landscapes.

VCMC Finance Report

The following table outlines operating revenue and expenditure for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years.

VCMC Financial Report 2012-13 to 2016-17.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-16	2016-17
Operating Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
DELWP Allocation	549,646	530,663	728,929	701,089	689,940
Total Revenue	549,646	530,663	728,929³	701,089⁴	689,940

Expenses	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	498,982	490,982	515,275	490,089	645,602
Total Expenses	498,982¹	490,026²	515,275	490,089	645,602

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 enabled continuing participation in the Action Plan activities (refer Note 3) and to further the Council's relevant work on catchment condition and management reporting over the period 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, in alignment with the goals in *Our Catchments Our Communities*.

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 2016-17 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 2016	August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016	February 2017	March 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017
Angus Hume	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Amity Dunstan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mike Gooley *											
Alana Johnson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Joan Liley	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lance Lloyd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peta Maddy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Geoff Park		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Mike Gooley's resignation was accepted by the Governor-in-Council on 4 October 2016.

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 2016-17, 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 (\$28.40) 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 2016-17.

The VCMC commissioned no consultancies <\$10,000 in 2016-17.

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 a public body to apply Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy in all procurement and project activities valued at:

- \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne and for statewide projects; and
- \$1 million or more in regional Victoria.

The VCMC had no contracts that were commenced or completed in the 2016-17 period to which Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy applied.

Major Contracts

There were no major contracts valued at \$10 million or more entered into in 2016-17.

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 2016-17 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 20*).

Government Advertising Expenditure

VCMC's expenditure in the 2016-17 reporting period on government campaign expenditure did not exceed \$100,000.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expenditure

For the 2016-17 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

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FRD 22H	Manner of establishment and the relevant Ministers	6
FRD 22H	Objectives, functions, powers and duties	6
FRD 22H	Nature and range of services provided	6
Management and structure		
FRD 22H	Organisational structure	5
Financial and other information		
FRD 10A	Disclosure index	19
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FRD 22H	Key initiatives and projects	11
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FRD 22H	Occupational health and safety policy	*
FRD 22H	Summary of the financial results for the year	14
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FRD 22H	Application and operation of <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	15
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* See DELWP Annual Report 2016-17

Committees and Working Groups that included a member or staff member of VCMC in 2016-2017

Group Name	VCMC Representative
CMA CEOs Forum	Patricia Geraghty
CMA CEOs' Strategy and Planning Portfolio Group	Patricia Geraghty
CMA Chairs Forum	Angus Hume
CMA Communication Officers Forum	Tracey Koper
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's State of the Environment Reporting Reform Project Control Board	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/Philip Wallis
DELWP MER Working Group	Neil Meyers
DELWP Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine Editorial Committee	Tracey Koper
Environmental-Economic Accounting Implementation Working Group	Philip Wallis
Our Catchments Our Communities Goal 5: Improved monitoring, evaluation and reporting Working Group	Philip Wallis
Our Catchments Our Communities Implementation Committee	Patricia Geraghty
Our Catchments Our Communities Strategic Reference Group	Angus Hume
VAGO Implementation Action 1 Project Team	Patricia Geraghty
VAGO Implementation Action 4 Project Team	Neil Meyers
VAGO Implementation Project Control Board	Angus Hume
Victorian Catchment Management Forum	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

Mount Martha Bundy (*Eucalyptus carolaniae*)
Yarriambiack Mallee-box (*Eucalyptus yarriambiack*)
Avenue Cassinia (*Cassinia tegulata*)
Brumby Mallee-gum (*Eucalyptus phoenix*)
Brumby Sallee (*Eucalyptus forresterae*)
Avon Peppermint (*Eucalyptus ornans*)
Thin-leaf Daisy-bush (*Olearia curticoma*)
Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)
Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)
White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
Podolepis species (*Podolepis laevigata*)
Wombat Bossiaea (*Bossiaea vombata*)
Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans* subsp. *volans*)

Communities

North Western Goldfields Intermittent Community

Potentially Threatening Processes

The loss of biodiversity as a result of the spread of Coast Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* subsp. *sophorae*) and Sallow Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* subsp. *longifolia*).

Final Recommendation by the SAC to reject the listing of *Habitat clearance, toxic waste impacts and change to hydrology/chemistry as a result of iron ore mining processes* as a Potentially Threatening Process.

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:

Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*)
Slender Myoporum (*Myoporum floribundum*).
Yellow Elderberry (*Sambucus australasica*)
Limestone Grassy Woodland Community

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