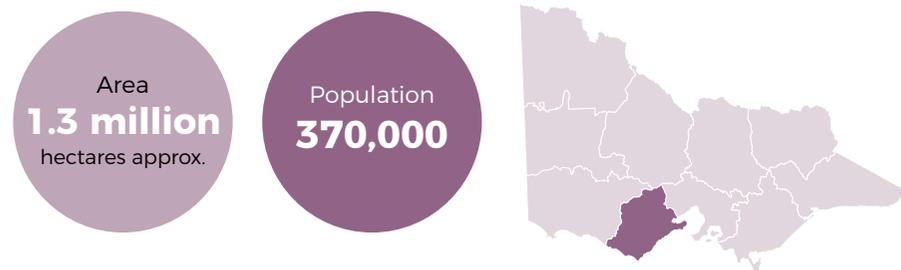


Corangamite

REGIONAL CONTEXT



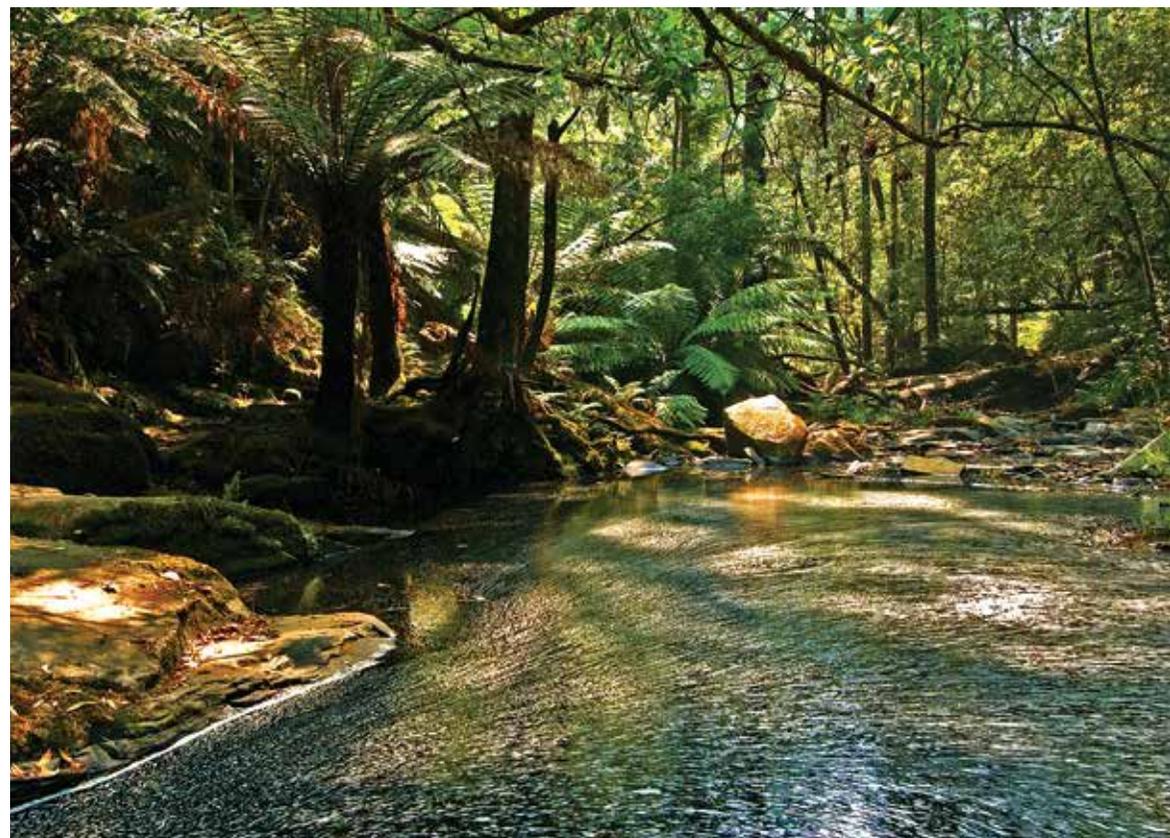
AGRICULTURE: Based on 2012 VLUIS data (Victorian Land Use Information Scheme), 68% of the region is under agriculture production (908,173ha); 98% of this agriculture is on private land, 2% on public land (forestry).

SIGNIFICANT NATURAL FEATURES: Great Otways National Park, Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion.

MAJOR WATERWAYS: Gellibrand, Moorabool, Barwon, Yarrowee and Leigh Rivers, large number of wetlands including Ramsar sites Port Phillip Bay – Western Shoreline and Bellarine Peninsula, and the Western District Lakes.

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE: Aboriginal Traditional Owners within the Corangamite CMA region include Wadawurrung (Wathuarong Aboriginal Corporation), Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Guli-Gad Aboriginal Corporation and Kuuyang Maar Aboriginal Corporation. There are also two Aboriginal Cooperatives - Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative and Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative.

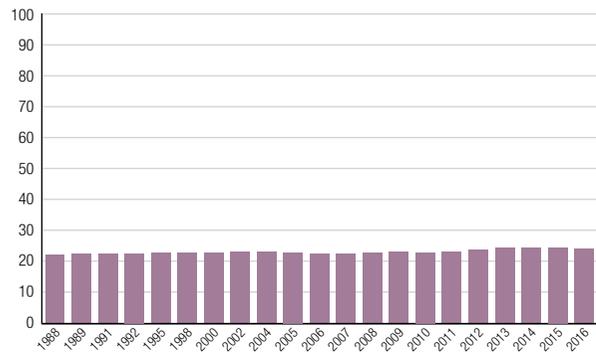
Source: CCMA, 2013a



Erskine River. Photo: Alison Pouliot

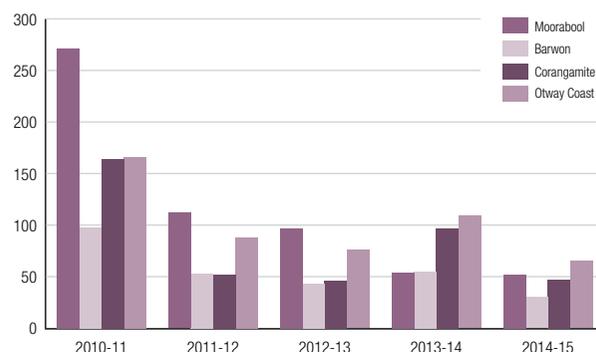
REPORT CARD

BIODIVERSITY Tree cover



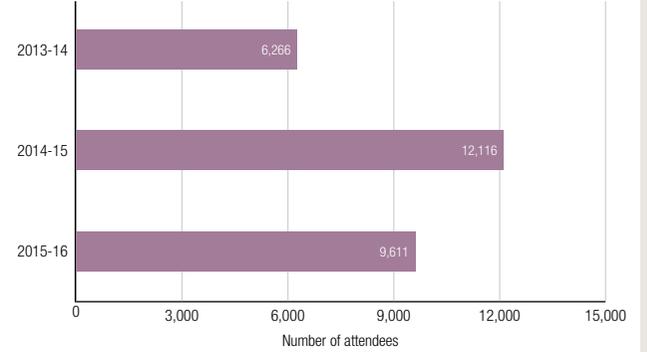
Average annual percentage (%) tree cover for the Corangamite region 1988-2016. Source: Van Dijk and Summers, 2016

WATER Streamflow



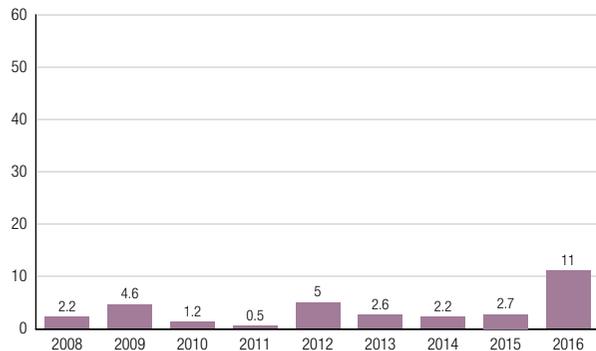
Basin streamflow (%) compared to long-term average. Source: Victorian Water Accounts

COMMUNITY Participation



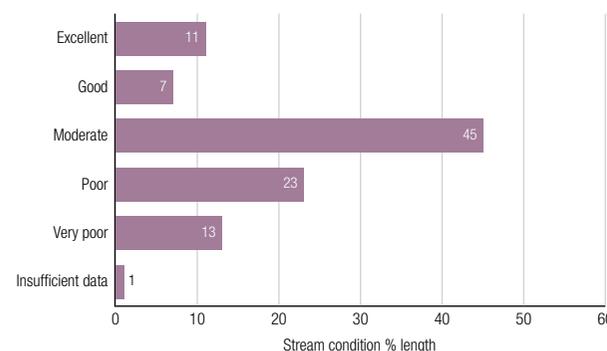
Community participation in CMA engagement events. Source: Victorian Catchment Management Authorities, 2014, 2015, 2017

LAND Exposed soil



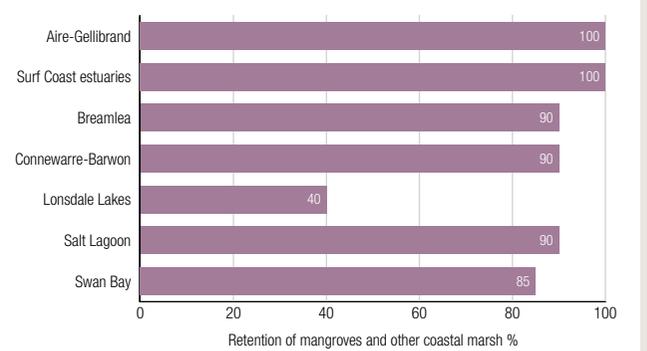
Percentage (%) Dryland area with 30-100% bare soils (higher risk of erosion) in March, 2008-16. Sources: DEDJTR, 2017a; EnSym; Guerschman et al., 2015

WATERWAYS Stream condition



Index of Stream Condition 2013 summary for the Corangamite region. Source: DEPI, 2013b, p. 112

COASTS Vegetation retention



Estimated total retention (%) of Mangroves and Other Coastal Marsh from pre-1750 to ~2008. Source: Sinclair and Boon, 2012

ASSESSMENT OF CATCHMENT CONDITION

LAND

- ▶ The Corangamite region has exhibited minimal risk of erosion from bare soils in dryland production areas over the last nine years. Land degradation results from erosion, acidification, loss of organic matter and decline in soil structure. The Corangamite CMA rates its land resources as being in moderate condition and stable (CCMA, 2016).

WATER

- ▶ According to the last index of stream condition benchmark conducted in 2010 (DEPI, 2013b), some 18% of stream reaches assessed are in excellent or good condition, mostly in Otway Coast Basin, while the remainder of the catchment is mostly in moderate or poor condition. Basin streamflow has declined from 2010-11 to 2014-15, with subsequent years remaining relatively dry.

BIODIVERSITY

- ▶ The Corangamite region has moderate levels of tree cover (approximately 25%) that has increased slightly over the last 20-30 years, and is primarily located in the Otway ranges. The region has large areas of grasslands on the Victorian Volcanic Plains, which naturally has low levels of tree cover. The Corangamite CMA assessed biodiversity as in 'moderate' condition, with a declining trend (CCMA, 2016). Heathlands, grassy ecosystems and woodlands are particularly threatened in the region.

COASTS

- ▶ There is high retention of mangroves and other coastal marsh across all sampled coasts, except for Lake Lonsdale, which has suffered extensive losses of a range of saltmarsh types. Losses are reported to result from changes to drainage, conversion of coastal land to pastures, and changes to hydrological regimes (Sinclair and Boon, 2012).
- ▶ The Corangamite CMA assessed the condition of its coasts as 'moderate' to 'good', but in decline, in its 2015-16 annual report (CCMA, 2016). Condition is highly variable across the region's coastline, as a large proportion is contained within conservation reserves. Protection and enhancement of saltmarsh vegetation communities is taking place across Glenelg Hopkins, Corangamite, Port Phillip and Western Port, and West Gippsland regions, using a tender process (CCMA, 2016).

COMMUNITY

- ▶ Community participation has been relatively stable over three years. A range of programs foster participation, including Landcare Programs, Indigenous Participation Programs, Waterwatch and EstuaryWatch (CCMA, 2016).
- ▶ The top three community concerns about environmental health relate to invasive weeds (79% of respondents), feral animals (63%), and declining native fauna (62%); all considered a problem by respondents (Schirmer et al., 2016). These findings are consistent with the Corangamite CMA's Rural Community and Land Use Profile project, which found that 43% of respondents were very concerned about pest plants and animals, 39% about degradation of rivers and streams, 33% about loss of native wildlife, and about one quarter of landholders are very concerned about soil degradation (CCMA, 2013b).

CASE STUDY

An innovative approach to catchment management through technology: NRM Planning Portal

“The portal allows Landcare groups and their partners to exchange and share insights and information about past and proposed catchment management activities online. This information was previously only available to a small number of people as maps, unpublished documents, or in people’s memories.”



Figure 48. Screenshot of the NRM Planning Portal. Source: CCMA

LOCATION: Corangamite

PARTICIPANTS: Corangamite CMA, Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (Federation University), Landcare, local governments, Trust for Nature, Parks Victoria, agricultural industry groups, water corporations, environment groups, Aboriginal groups, private landholders, government and non-government investors. The project has been principally funded through the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program and the Victorian Government’s integrated waterway and catchment programs.

OBJECTIVES: To identify joint local and regional integrated catchment management priorities in the region, including opportunities for co-investment. To enable community priorities to be considered alongside regional, state and national strategies, improving project delivery, partnerships and overall project outcomes.

The NRM Planning Portal <www.ccmaknowledgebase.vic.gov.au/nrmpp> provides an innovative approach to support integrated catchment management in the Corangamite region. The portal uses spatial technology and environmental datasets to help Landcare networks and their partners to understand the impact of their management activities (e.g. looking after native vegetation, cleaning up creeks and wetlands, and managing erosion and salinity).

The portal also helps groups to share information and knowledge about past works and projects and to come up with joint priorities for potential partnerships and investment. This is the first time

that management priorities, at different scales and underpinned by different motivations, can be viewed together over the entire region.

The web-based portal currently contains a range of local and regional Landcare management priorities for two Landscape Zones, with eight new Landscape Zones to follow by mid-2018. Priorities for key regional stakeholders such as Local Government Authorities, Parks Victoria, water corporations and Trust for Nature will also be incorporated into the portal during this time.

The portal allows Landcare groups and their partners to exchange and share insights and information about past and proposed catchment management activities online. This information was previously only available to a small number of people as maps, unpublished documents, or in people’s memories. This information allows CMAs and other groups to set strategic management priorities for land and water resources in the region.

The rapid and easy access to information on activities and priorities saves both time and money (for example, it helps avoid duplication in effort). It also helps Landcare partners to target funding bids, support the coordination of integrated on-ground activities, and provide for new opportunities for regional investment. The process of visualising management activities (Figure 48) has understandably generated pride in Landcare groups at seeing their on-ground achievements.