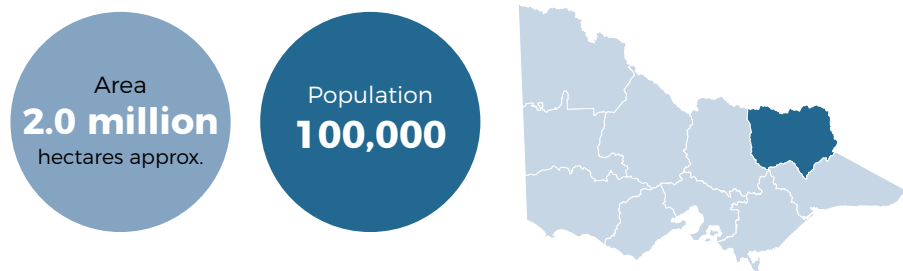


North East

REGIONAL CONTEXT



AGRICULTURE: 45% of catchment area is private land, mostly used for agriculture.

SIGNIFICANT NATURAL FEATURES: Alpine National Park, Mount Buffalo National Park, Chiltern- Mt Pilot National Park, Warby-Ovens National Park.

MAJOR WATERWAYS: Ovens, King, Kiewa, Mitta Mitta and Upper Murray River basins, Lake Dartmouth, Lake Hume, Ryans Lagoon, Black Swamp.

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE: Traditional Owner groups include the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.

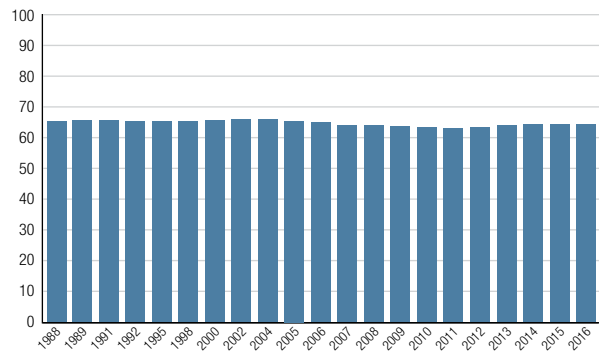
Source: NECMA, 2013



Mornings at Mt Buffalo. Photo: NECMA

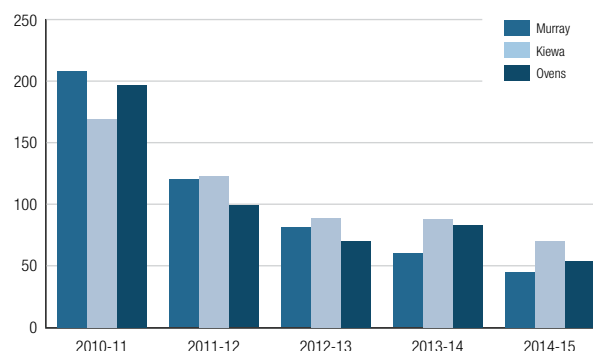
REPORT CARD

BIODIVERSITY Tree cover



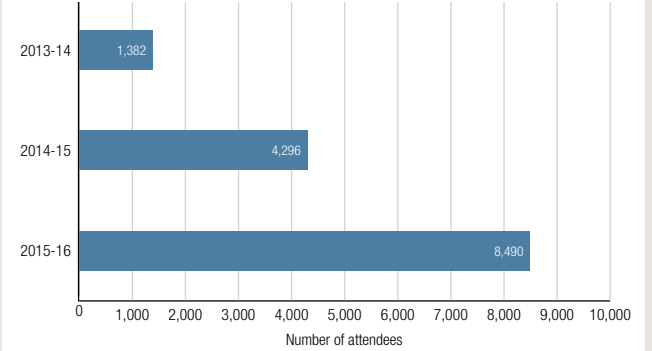
Average annual percentage (%) tree cover for the North East region 1988-2016. Source: Van Dijk and Summers, 2016

WATER Streamflow



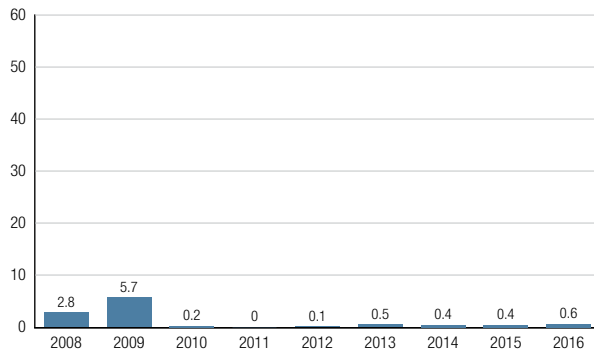
Basin streamflow (%) compared to long-term average. Source: Victorian Water Accounts

COMMUNITY Participation



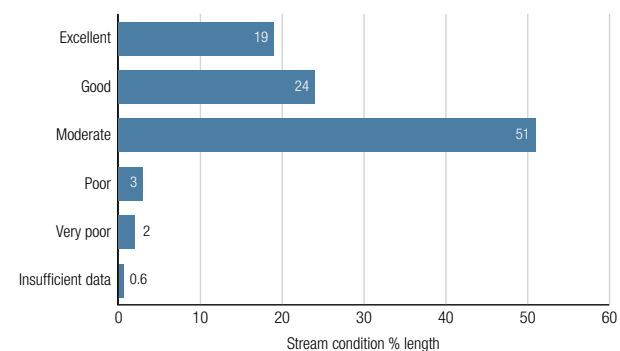
Community participation in CMA engagement events. Source: Victorian Catchment Management Authorities, 2014, 2015, 2017

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 North East region. Source: DEPI, 2013b, p. 18

ASSESSMENT OF CATCHMENT CONDITION

LAND

- ▶ The North East region has had almost negligible risk of erosion from bare soils in dryland production areas over the last nine years. The North East CMA reports that low bare soils is a result of climatic conditions, rather than changes in land management practices or tenure (NECMA, 2016). Soil health issues include erosion, decline in soil structure, loss of organic matter, and the presence of acidic soils.

WATER

- ▶ According to the last Index of Stream Condition benchmark conducted in 2010 (DEPI, 2013b), nearly half of the region's stream reaches assessed are in 'excellent' or 'good' condition, particularly in the Upper Murray Basin. Most remaining reaches in 'moderate' condition, primarily in Kiewa and Ovens River Basins. Very few reaches were assessed as being in 'poor' condition. Basin streamflow has been slightly below the long-term average from 2012-13 to 2014-15 in the Murray, Kiewa and Ovens systems.

BIODIVERSITY

- ▶ The North East region has widespread tree cover (approximately 65% on average), with nearly 55% of the region protected in state forests and national parks. The North East CMA reported areas of continued ecosystem decline due to the long-term impacts of land clearing, inappropriate land use and livestock grazing, and invasive pest species (NECMA, 2016). Deer are a species of particular concern to the community.

COMMUNITY

- ▶ Community participation has increased over three years. Local government and the North East CMA provide opportunities for community engagement and strategic partnerships in the integrated management of catchments (NECMA, 2016).
- ▶ The top three community concerns about environmental health relate to invasive weeds (86% of respondents), pest fish species (75%), and feral animals (74%); all considered a problem by respondents (Schirmer et al., 2016).

CASE STUDY

Protecting catchment health through strategic planning



Photo: Lance Williams

“While Native Vegetation Precinct Plans for new developments have been around for a while in Melbourne’s urban growth areas, this story presents an example of strategic planning to protect natural assets in a regional urban area.”

LOCATION: North East

PARTICIPANTS: North East CMA (NECMA), City of Wodonga, Metropolitan Planning Authority, North East Water, DELWP, Goulburn Murray Water.

OBJECTIVES: To develop a strategic planning approach to growth in the Wodonga area that protects land and water resources.

The City of Wodonga is one of the fastest growing regional centres in Victoria. A proposed development corridor, the Leneva-Baranduda precinct, is projected to double the area of Wodonga over the next 40 years. The current land use is predominantly agricultural, but also contains areas of native vegetation including some areas of the threatened Box-Gum Grassy Woodland ecological community. The protection of native vegetation and waterways in this area is considered a priority.

While Native Vegetation Precinct Plans for new developments have been around for a while in Melbourne’s urban growth areas, this story presents an example of strategic planning to protect natural assets in a regional urban area.

The Leneva-Baranduda growth corridor provides NECMA and other state and local government agencies with a unique opportunity to plan an integrated, sustainable and water-smart development, whilst meeting the needs of a growing population. This is the first time that this type of approach to growth area planning has been used outside of metropolitan Melbourne.

To date, government agencies have developed the draft Leneva-Baranduda Growth Area Framework Plan, Leneva Valley and Baranduda Native Vegetation Precinct Plan and Leneva-Baranduda Integrated Water Management Plan. The Native Vegetation Precinct Plan provides guidelines to protect, manage and enhance native vegetation health and habitat value in the growth area. The Water Management Plan sets out objectives for waterway management in the growth area. The Plan ensures that waterways are incorporated into new urban development in a way that protects and enhances water quality, biodiversity, and recreational opportunities.

This strategic approach to protecting land and water resources is an innovative example of planning for growth in a regional centre.