

Recognising recreational values

Highlights report
2020–2024



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Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action



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Acknowledgement

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) proudly acknowledges Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

For tens of thousands of years, First Nations and Traditional Owners in Victoria have practised their law and lore, customs and languages, and nurtured Country through their spiritual, cultural, material and economic connections to land, water and resources.

DEECA acknowledges all First Nations and Traditional Owners and pays respect to their Elders past and present. First Nations and Traditional Owners hold the knowledge, stories, custodial obligations and cultural expertise that have always ensured the health of waterways and Country. Each Nation and Traditional Owner group holds the cultural authority to speak for waterways and water landscapes on their Country.

-  COVER LEFT: COURTESY VICTORIAN FISHERIES AUTHORITY
-  COVER MIDDLE: DEECA WATER AND CATCHMENTS GROUP
-  COVER RIGHT: COURTESY MELBOURNE WATER

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However, since colonisation, Australia's First Nations people have been treated as bystanders in the management of water landscapes. Their water landscape values and uses have not always been protected and Victoria's waterway management and planning have not always benefited from their traditional ecological knowledge.

DEECA will recognise this in the new Victorian Waterway Management Strategy and seeks to enable a shift in the way we manage waterways. This includes increasing Traditional Owner self-determination and decision-making in waterway management, and therefore delivering real benefits for Traditional Owners and the wider Victorian community. To enable this, DEECA is committed to working in close partnership with Traditional Owners for the development of the new Strategy.

Ministerial Foreword

In 2016, the Victorian Government released *Water for Victoria*, our strategic plan for managing water to support a healthy environment, prosperous economy and thriving communities. A commitment was also made to enhance the recreational value of water. Eight years on, this commitment remains strong, and clear benefits to communities across Victoria are evident.

Healthy waterways and catchments support the wellbeing of Victorians who enjoy the recreational benefits our rivers and streams provide.

The Victorian Government is supporting the water sector to continue to strengthen opportunities for recreational activities on and around our waterways and water storages.

This report showcases a selection of projects completed within the last four years, and highlights the achievements of partnerships between the Victorian Government, the water sector, community groups and Traditional Owner organisations.

These projects have led to improved access to recreational opportunities on and around water-based natural spaces and water storages, as well as a better understanding by Victorian communities on how to achieve their recreational objectives. It has also built increased capability of water corporations and catchment management authorities to consider recreational values in their operations, resulting in improved recreational outcomes for Victorian communities.

In addition to the Recreational Values Program, the Victorian Government has committed \$12.4 million to open Tarago Reservoir to on-water recreation, which will allow the community and recreational anglers to enjoy recreational fishing on the reservoir. This work is being delivered in partnership with Better Boating

Victoria, Melbourne Water and Gippsland Water, and is a prime example of collaboration across organisations to achieve recreational outcomes for the community.

It is fantastic to see the improvements to Victoria's diverse water assets over the last eight years, which have directly benefited the health and quality of life of Victorians. Inclusion of social and recreational values of water in waterway planning is now a business-as-usual practice across the water sector.

We will continue to work with the water sector to understand and incorporate recreational values in how we manage Victoria's water resources into the future, creating positive, long-lasting impacts for all Victorians.



The Hon. Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Water



CAMPASPE RIVER
PHOTO COURTESY VICTORIAN
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WIMMERA RIVER, PHOTO
COURTESY WIMMERA CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



YARRA RIVER,
PHOTO COURTESY VICTORIA WALKS

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SERVICES/ACCESSIBILITY-AUDITS-OF-
RECREATIONAL-PATHS](http://WWW.VICTORIAWALKS.ORG.AU/SERVICES/ACCESSIBILITY-AUDITS-OF-RECREATIONAL-PATHS)

Introduction

The Recreational Values Program is supporting a more capable water sector to provide services that support recreational outcomes and improve access for the community to better enjoy waterways.

The program was created following the 2016 release of *Water for Victoria*; a strategic, long-term plan for managing water to support a healthy environment, prosperous economy and thriving communities. A commitment to enhancing the recreational values of water is articulated in Chapter 7 of *Water for Victoria*.

The Recreational Values program has built on the foundational work delivered during its initial four years and continues to build capacity of delivery agencies to invest in and deliver recreational opportunities around waterways.

This snapshot highlights the achievements over the last four years, of a \$5.854 million investment to enhance recreational opportunities at Victoria's water storages, lakes, rivers and streams. The program has delivered a diverse range of projects to improve recreational access to waterways across rural and regional Victoria as well as at popular sites in Melbourne. Funding has directly contributed to new infrastructure projects that support access at waterways across Victoria, including Merri River in Warrnambool, Trawool Reservoir, Waranga Basin, Bullarto Reservoir and Jamieson River.

The Recreational Values Program through 2020–2024 has also focused on:

- Clarifying expectations of the water sector in relation to providing recreational and social benefits through updated governance arrangements, including planning, community engagement, collaboration and information provision requirements.
- Improving water sector agency capacity to meet these expectations through targeted initiatives to address identified capability needs. This includes developing policy for considering recreation at drinking water storages, developing new *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023* to support water entities to manage recreation, and funding support for specific and innovative sector partner projects that demonstrate the benefits of considering recreation.
- Creating better linkages between DEECA, the water sector, Traditional Owners and related government portfolios to achieve greater collaboration, inform decision-making and leverage investment to achieve shared objectives.

- Working in partnership to respond effectively and recover from emergency situations, including implementation of appropriate COVID-19 restrictions at recreational areas.
- Working towards delivering the 2022 Election Commitment to open Tarago Reservoir to on-water recreation.

The program developed new *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023* to ensure that water entities can continue to manage activities in recreational areas so that communities can enjoy these sites safely. The new regulations apply to approximately 40 water storages across Victoria which have been determined as recreational areas under section 122ZA of the *Water Act 1989*. The regulations allow water entities to manage activities in recreational areas, allowing for safe and enjoyable recreation. It also provides for the preservation of water quality, Aboriginal cultural heritage, wildlife and vegetation and management of facilities.

If you would like further information about how you can input into planning for water-based recreation in your area please contact your local water corporation or catchment management authority, details on which can be found at water.vic.gov.au

Valuing recreation at waterways around Victoria



List of projects and locations

- 1 Trawool Reservoir walking track and fishing platform
- 2 Creating connection through interpretive signage on Wadawurrung Country (Lal Lal Reservoir, Bostock Reservoir in Ballan, Bolwarrah Weir in Bunding, Upper Stony Creek Reservoir in Durdidwarrah and Wurdee Boluc Reservoir [Wurdiboluc])
- 3 Visitor access and experience in the Lower Thomson and Latrobe Wetlands
- 4 Daylesford reservoirs recreational amenities
- 5 Master planning water recreational opportunities in the Great South Coast
- 6 Merri River connections
- 7 Waranga Basin Embankment recreation area project
- 8 Improving wastewater management at Lake Eppalock
- 9 Understanding visitor patterns at Goulburn-Murray Water's reservoirs
- 10 Recreational facility upgrades in the Grampians Wimmera Mallee area
- 11 Jamieson River recreation improvements





01 Trawool Reservoir Walking Track and Fishing Platform

PHOTOS COURTESY
GOULBURN VALLEY WATER

Goulburn Valley Water, in partnership with Taungurung Land and Waters Council, has built a new walking track linking the Great Victorian Rail Trail at Trawool to the Trawool Reservoir, winding through sections of Falls Creek.

The Victorian Government provided \$250,000 towards the project, enhancing both the recreational opportunities at the reservoir, as well as improving cultural heritage and preserving environmental values.

The walking track, constructed by Biik Environmental and running approximately 5km in length, is sign-posted and features directional signage to help improve access and walkability of the track, which is steep and narrow in parts.

Two new fishing platforms at Trawool Reservoir enable easier launching of kayaks, as well as all abilities fishing access above the water edge. The platforms were built using converted barges previously part of a lagoon rehabilitation project at the Shepparton Wastewater Management Facility. Victorian Fisheries Authority annually stocks the reservoir with native fish to the area, ensuring that recreational anglers can take advantage of the improved access. The reservoir and fishing platform is accessible by road, or via the walking track.

The newly installed signs are fitted with QR codes enabling visitors to learn more about local and reservoir history, as well as track details (distance, options, grade of difficulty and directions). Taungurung Land and Waters Council has been engaged for ongoing management of the reservoir, fishing platforms, creek vegetation and walking tracks. Continued promotion of the track and improved access to reservoir facilities and campgrounds will be made through Goulburn Valley Water and Parks Victoria.

The project is an excellent example of water corporations, such as Goulburn Valley Water, working in partnership with Traditional Owners to achieve both recreational and cultural benefits by improving access and broadening cultural knowledge and awareness of the area.





02 Creating connection through interpretive signage on Wadawurrung Country

PHOTOS COURTESY
BARWON WATER

In 2022, interpretative signage at five publicly accessible Barwon Water and Central Highlands Water reservoirs on Wadawurrung Country was installed, to celebrate Wadawurrung history and culture, educate the community about native flora and fauna and promote safe recreational use of these areas. Twelve signs have been installed at

Lal Lal Reservoir, Bolwarra Weir, Bostock Reservoir, Upper Stony Creek Reservoir and Wurdee Boluc Reservoir. The signs provide opportunities for greater sharing of culture, history and knowledge at these sites to increase community involvement and as well as achieving shared benefits for Traditional Owners and recreational users.

The signage content was developed in partnership with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, and the signs were designed through the engagement of Wadawurrung artist Billy-Jay (BJ) O'Toole.

Located on Wadawurrung Country, the reservoir sites are important water sources for greater Geelong and Ballarat, as well as the environment and their surrounding areas. These sites are very popular for recreational activities, including mountain biking, bushwalking, bird watching, picnics and fishing. The reservoirs are home to an abundance of native flora and fauna, including the elusive platypus. Bird watchers can keep a look out for the wedge tailed eagle, yellow tail black cockatoo, white cockatoo, galah, magpie, crow, raven, blue wren and pelican.

This project was delivered by Barwon Water in partnership with Central Highlands Water and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

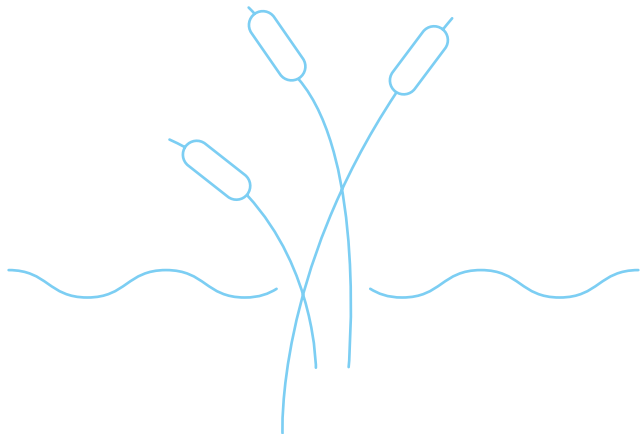




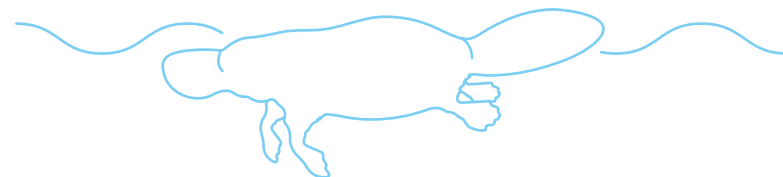
PHOTO COURTESY WEST
GIPPSLAND CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

03 Visitor access and experience in the Lower Thomson and Latrobe Wetlands

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, in partnership with Wellington Shire Council, Gippsland Ports, Field and Game Australia, Parks Victoria and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), has carried out works to improve visitor access and experience in the Lower Thomson and Lower Latrobe Wetlands. The works included weed and vegetation control to improve boating, fishing and rowing access, installation of bollards and rocks for further improved access, walking track improvements and interpretive signage.

The project focused on the lower Thomson and Lower Latrobe Wetland areas including Lower Thomson River, Heart Morass, Sale Common and Dowds Morass. The Lower Latrobe Wetlands and Lower Thomson River area is important ecologically, culturally and socially, and has a high biodiversity value. The area has been identified as an important cultural site to the Gunaikurnai people and the project has enabled better protection of important sites through improved visitor access, and has provided educational opportunities of the importance of the wetlands and the role environmental water plays in maintaining the ecological values.

Improved visitor access benefits local Sale community members as well as regional visitors to participate in the many recreational activities these waterways provide, including angling, boating, birdwatching, fishing, rowing, hunting and bushwalking.





04 Daylesford reservoirs recreational amenities

PHOTO COURTESY
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WATER

Visitors now have access to new public toilet facilities with improved onsite wastewater systems at Bullarto Reservoir, east of Daylesford. The Recreational Values program provided \$132,000 to Central Highlands Water towards the project, which will cater for increased public visitation and diversity of users from across the local community.

The installation of public toilets and wastewater systems ensures enhanced amenities are available for the community to use at the reservoir, which is well-stocked with fish and enjoyed by a range of visitors for bushwalking, orienteering and fishing. The new facilities boost the recreational experience for visitors, while also managing the quality of Daylesford's water supply.

The Bullarto Reservoir is situated in one of the most popular tourism regions in Victoria, and with the support of the Victorian Government, is now more accessible for the local community and visitors to the region to enjoy.



05 Master planning water recreational opportunities in the Great South Coast

 PHOTOS COURTESY
WANNON WATER

Wannon Water has developed a Recreation Opportunities Strategy to inform how existing water assets and infrastructure can be used or accessed by the community to support positive health and wellbeing (physical, social, cultural) outcomes.

An initial site selection process of opportunities for recreational access to Wannon Water assets was completed, followed by community engagement. The sites were categorised into five key themes:

- nature-based recreation
- day tripping
- other sports and recreation
- public art sites
- special event tours

Community feedback was positive, and showed strong support for extra opportunities for recreation within the region, increasing public access to assets, and for nature-based activities and day trips.

Some opportunities for increased recreation include providing access to land surrounding existing urban water assets into community gardens or the potential for public art to be installed on infrastructure like pump stations, treatment plants and water storage facilities, and tours and special events to unique locations such as pristine water catchments. To showcase potential opportunities, a community water tower open day was held in Warrnambool in March 2022 with over 200 members of the community attending.

The Recreation Opportunities Strategy is an exciting step towards increasing recreational opportunities within the region and will be used to guide Wannon Water's actions in partnership with government and communities to enhance social connection and physical and mental health.

The Recreation Opportunities Strategy is also one of the first strategies of its type, and is a prime example of how water corporations can be guided by the needs of their community to achieve improved recreational outcomes in their region.





06 Merri River Connections

PHOTOS COURTESY GLENELG
HOPKINS CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The Recreational Values Program provided \$400,000 towards the Merri Connections Project, a collaborative effort between the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and the Warrnambool City Council. The project enhances community access to the Merri River and surrounding areas through the construction of a new all-abilities kayak pontoon and adjoining footpaths at Platypus Park in West Warrnambool.

The all-abilities kayak launch provides a safe and accessible entry point to the Merri River, encouraging water-based recreational activities, such as kayaking and canoeing, for both seasoned paddlers and beginners to explore the waterway. Increased access facilitates greater water-based sports and activities, fostering a more active and engaging outdoor lifestyle for residents and visitors.

The adjoining footpaths, designed to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, now offer a scenic and convenient route through the Woodend Road precinct, boosting connectivity within the community.

The accessibility of the kayak launch and footpaths allows individuals of all physical capabilities to enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by the Merri River. Families, groups, and individuals with mobility challenges can now more easily participate in river-based experiences, creating a more inclusive and diverse recreational environment.

New all-weather walking tracks, seating on top of the floating pontoon, picnic tables, and signage provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation in and around the Merri River.

A focus on the Merri River's ecological improvement has resulted in targeted environmental upgrades, such as habitat restoration, vegetation management, and erosion control measures, contributing to the preservation and enhancement of the river's natural habitat.

The project fulfills one of the key desires of the community to improve pedestrian access to the Merri River, and is a significant step in continuing to connect the West Warrnambool community.





07 Waranga Basin Embankment Recreation Area project

PHOTO COURTESY
GOULBURN-MURRAY WATER

Waranga Basin, just east of Rushworth, is the fourth largest inland waterway in Victoria. With \$68,500 from the Victorian Government, Goulburn-Murray Water has replaced ageing barbecues and picnic facilities at the Embankment recreation area. The new facilities include an all-abilities double electric barbecue, a purpose-built shelter and accessible picnic table and chairs. Signage with recreation information and the history of Waranga Basin has also been installed.

The embankment recreation area is one of Waranga Basin's most accessible recreational areas, located directly adjacent to Tatura-Rushworth Road, with easy access from the carpark. Works have been completed to improve and create more space in the carpark, including two new disabled parking spaces at the entrance to the pathway leading to the shelter area.

The new facilities overlook the waterway, which makes the site a perfect spot to enjoy sightseeing, fishing, walking and open green space, as well learning more about the history of Waranga Basin.



08 Improving wastewater management at Lake Eppalock

PHOTO COURTESY
GOULBURN-MURRAY WATER

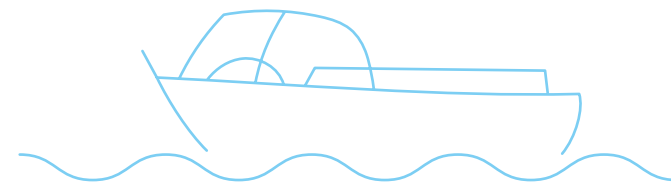
Lake Eppalock is one of Goulburn-Murray Water's busiest recreational waterways. To support recreation and community, Goulburn-Murray Water operates 11 wastewater effluent systems, which includes nine pump stations, pump mains pipework and 31 effluent evaporation lagoons.

Funding of \$200,000 provided by the Recreational Values program has improved the management of wastewater at Lake Eppalock through installation of new flow meters and gauge boards, soil permeability tests, and the development of a design action plan to minimise risk of wastewater entering Lake Eppalock.

Eight new flow meters create greater understanding of effluent flows, as well as 31 new gauge boards across all the effluent systems on the lake's lagoons to monitor wastewater levels. The completed design action plan outlines the way forward in achieving best practice management of the Eppalock wastewater effluent systems, and provides Goulburn-Murray Water with high priority actions and next steps. The plan also provides reassurance that recreational assets (such as toilet

blocks and club leases) enjoyed by visitors and the broader community continue to provide the service required.

These improvements and future planning are essential to maintain Lake Eppalock's water and environmental quality, and to support the continued recreational use of the area for boating, fishing and camping for the local community and visitors to the region.





09 Understanding visitor patterns at Goulburn-Murray Water's reservoirs

PHOTO COURTESY GOULBURN-MURRAY WATER

Funding of \$96,600 from the Recreational Values program has enabled Goulburn-Murray Water to purchase 46 car counters and three pedestrian counters to accurately monitor the number of visitors to key recreational sites across 17 water storages. This follows a trial of using car counters over the past several years to determine attendance at Lake Eildon, Lake Eppalock and Cairn Curran Reservoirs.

The car counters provide data for Goulburn-Murray Water to gain a deeper understanding of the numbers and timing of visitation at these key sites, where to focus works and prioritisation of future investment and capital improvements.

Aligning immediate works and future planning with visitation trends enables appropriate timing of service and works with minimal disruption at peak times, and ensure those visiting Goulburn-Murray Water's many recreation sites can continue enjoy the facilities for boating, camping and fishing for years to come.



10 Recreational facility upgrades in the Grampians Wimmera Mallee area

PHOTO COURTESY GRAMPPIANS
WIMMERA MALLEE WATER

Recreational and amenity upgrades across several Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWMWater)-managed reservoir foreshore areas within the Wimmera and Glenelg Catchments has enhanced the recreational experience of visitors near the towns of Horsham, Stawell and Balmoral. The Recreational Values Program contributed \$400,000 to this project, which included works to protect important environmental and cultural heritage values, ensuring that social, cultural and environmental values were balanced.

New, fit-for-purpose toilets have been installed at Flat Rock Campground at Lake Lonsdale, including two all-abilities units. Given the sensitive environment adjacent to Lake Lonsdale, the toilets use a vault system where waste is pumped out and disposed of off-site.

Funding supported development of a precinct plan for the Taylors Lake camping area. New bollards were installed to help to protect the reservoir foreshore, as well as 30 fire pits to reduce fire risk and protect cultural heritage. Visitors can enjoy an additional six picnic tables, and roads have been upgraded to improve access.

A precinct plan was also developed for Rocklands Reservoir dam wall foreshore area which sets the direction for further work, such as upgrades to roads, campgrounds, drainage, foreshore access, to continue to improve recreational outcomes for the community and visitors to the region. Extensive drainage works and track upgrades have also been completed.



PHOTO CREDIT: FRANZISKA WEISS, COURTESY GOULBURN BROKEN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

11 Jamieson River recreation area upgrades

The Jamieson River, and the township of Jamieson just south of Mansfield, has long been a tourist drawcard in the Goulburn Broken region. The river's pristine waters, shallow depth and adjacent parks and gardens make it a desirable location for recreation, and is renowned for fishing, kayaking, swimming, and appreciation of its natural beauty.

Support from the Recreational Values program with a funding grant of \$240,000 has enabled Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority to carry out works to protect the riverbank from erosion, ensuring easy access is maintained while minimising environmental impacts.

The works will improve recreational access along the edge of the river and into the water by installing stone steps that will also prevent erosion to the riverbank. Revegetation with native shrubs and grasses will provide further bank stability during major flood events, while improving the visual amenity of the area.

These improvements to the Jamieson River mean the township and broader region can meet the increasing recreation and tourism demands and provide opportunities for people to directly engage with and enjoy the river and nature. Taungurung Land and Waters Council, Jamieson Community Group and Mansfield Shire Council have provided significant input through the Project Steering Committee to ensure this project protects cultural heritage values and satisfies the needs of the local community.

Supporting the water sector to enhance recreational values

Supported by the Recreational Values program, and driven by changes to the *Water Act 1989* which embeds recognition of recreational and social values in water entity operations, water corporations and catchment management authorities are improving and enhancing recreation on and around waterways and storages as business-as-usual. Following are some excellent recent examples of recreational access projects that water entities have delivered for their communities.



PHOTO COURTESY
BARWON WATER

PHOTO COURTESY
MELBOURNE WATER



Barwon Water

Barwon Water has secured \$650,000 funding through the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes program to reimagine the Bellarine Basin, near Ocean Grove, as a community asset. The site has been named Murrk Ngubitj Yarram Yaluk, meaning 'headwaters of continuous flowing river' in Wadawurrung language, and will bring many benefits to the local community – including recreation, environmental and cultural values.

Barwon Water is also working with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to transform the 66 hectares of land surrounding the Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct in Geelong into a new living cultural landscape and community precinct. This project is named Porrongitj Karrong, meaning place of the broлга, and the site will be progressively opened to the community from 2025. These are both great examples of how the water corporation is recognising the broader value of their assets and sharing the benefits with their local community.



Melbourne Water

Canoe and kayak access to the Yarra River at Westerfolds Park has been improved with the installation of new mudstone steps beneath Fitzsimons Lane Bridge. Improved access will help to ensure a diverse range of users can take part in canoeing and kayaking, and to enjoy being out in nature. Melbourne Water partnered with Manningham City Council, Parks Victoria and Paddling Victoria to improve the natural amenity and liveability of the area and to ensure the needs of paddlers were considered.

Melbourne Water delivers water that has been set aside for the environment to the Yarra, Tarago, Werribee and Maribyrnong Rivers. Timed releases of environmental water to these rivers means that the community can enjoy the social and recreational values rivers provide over key periods, such as the summer months. This is carefully planned to ensure that environmental objectives are being met, while benefits for the recreation community can also be realised. Melbourne Water engage with the community when river levels will rise, so that visitors can plan activities to take advantage of the additional flows, such as kayaking, picnicking and rowing.



Victorian Environmental Water Holder

The Victorian Environmental Water Holder has also successfully delivered water for the environment to the Wimmera River, to supplement natural flows and support water quality in the Horsham, Dimboola and Jeparit weir pools. Environmental flows and a healthy Wimmera River supports fish health, with good fish stocks meaning the region can continue to attract visitors and recreational anglers, particularly to premier fishing events, for years to come.

PHOTO COURTESY
WIMMERA CATCHMENT

PHOTO COURTESY
GIPPSLAND WATER

PHOTO COURTESY
GOULBURN VALLEY WATER

Gippsland Water

Upgrades to Gippsland Water’s Drouin wastewater treatment plant have included the development of a new bird hide. The new bird hide was opened in late 2023, giving birdwatchers the opportunity to observe native birds, including the blue-billed duck, pink-eared duck and dusky woodswallow. Native trees, including the silver wattle, woolly tea-tree and the black-panther lily have been planted at the site.

The bird hide sits within a fenced-off area to the west of the water treatment plant, with public access via Settlement Road, and is a fantastic example of how facilities such as this can contribute to recreation benefits for the local community.



Goulburn Valley Water

Dunyak Moira was developed in partnership with the Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club and Goulburn Valley Water, to transform unused water storage reservoirs at the Merrigum Water Treatment Plant into outdoor spaces for fishing and recreation.

The site’s 12.5 megalitre and 50 megalitre reservoirs, which had remained empty for 20 years after the water supply system was changed to a piped system from the nearby Kyabram Water Treatment Plant, were refilled in 2022 creating a water refuge for ducks and other wildlife. The reservoirs were also stocked with about 100 large native fish, including Murray cod and golden perch, relocated from local channels and lakes. Dunyak Moira, meaning fishing lake in Yorta Yorta language, is a catch-and-release facility to help protect native fish.

As part of the project, the site was transformed into a community space with multiple fishing pontoons made from recyclable materials, seating and carparking areas, as well as duck nesting boxes and the planting of new trees, shrubs and aquatic plants.



Coliban Water

Barkers Creek Reservoir in Harcourt North opened in 1868 to service local orchards and farms and continues to provide rural irrigation to the local area. The reservoir is a popular place to visit for fishing, boating, walking, bird watching, canoeing, kayaking and picnicking. Recent works carried out at the reservoir include the installation of new stairway over the dam embankment from the car park. The existing timber staircase was removed and replaced, which has improved safety and accessibility to the reservoir. New signage has also been installed, which includes a map of the reservoir.

PHOTO COURTESY
COLIBAN WATER

PHOTO COURTESY
SOUTHERN RURAL WATER



Southern Rural Water

In 2023, Southern Rural Water completed a \$750,000 project to rehabilitate Cowwarr Weir Recreation Area after the June 2021 flood. The flood saw flows reaching around 80,000 ML/d causing widespread damage to the site. The Victorian Government funded repairs to the weir structure, desilted the weir pool, cleared debris from the park, repairs to the road and fences and included the provision of new barbecues and picnic tables. The park is now looking better than ever and being enjoyed by the many visitors.



Where to next?

The Victorian Government will continue to work with water corporations and catchment management authorities to ensure social and recreational values of water and waterway planning are included as business-as-usual practice.

Working together with the water sector and local communities, we will continue to support projects that create and enhance opportunities for recreational activities on and around our waterways. Victoria's dams, lakes, wetlands, rivers and streams provide bountiful recreational opportunities to Victorians, and the health, social and economic benefits of recreation are significant, and highly valued by the community. We look forward to seeing what we can collectively achieve over the next four years.

water.vic.gov.au

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