

This appendix expands on the summary of achievements made by EC5 projects toward the EC5 End-of-Tranche and long-term outcomes provided in Section 4 of the End-of-Tranche EC5 Evaluation Report. It provides examples of some of the main ways that individual projects have contributed to each outcome area.

## What progress has been made toward secure and resilient water systems?

### Improved urban and rural planning for long-term water security

Five of the EC5 projects directly contributed to improving urban and rural planning for long-term water security, with others providing indirect contributions to this outcome. Some examples of significant progress toward this outcome include:

* **PSP1: Long-Term Water Security:** This project developed a long-term, coordinated approach for improving water security across Victoria. Review and update of the *Urban Water Strategy Guidelines* resulted in several key improvements, including increased Traditional Owner engagement, inclusion of stress test scenarios and alignment with other water planning frameworks. Assessment of the broader water planning framework also commenced to ensure it works efficiently and effectively to deliver water security for communities at an acceptable cost.
* **CWCT01: Integrated Water Management (IWM):** IWM is a key approach for diversifying water sources and approaches that support water security. Through facilitation of the 15 IWM Forums collaborative platforms to identify, assess, and implement IWM solutions, and through supporting relevant policy reforms, the program has increased the capacity and capabilities to apply IWM throughout Victoria. The program also made good progress towards entrenching IWM as a business-as-usual water management across the state.
* **PSP4: Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (CGRSWS) Funding Stream 4 Water Cycle Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan:** Building on a pilot plan developed in the fourth tranche of the Environmental Contribution (EC4), the first full *Water Cycle Adaptation Action Plan* was launched in mid-2022. Implementation of the plan in the fifth tranche of the Environmental Contribution (EC5) focused (in part) on ensuring the water sector can continue to provide safe, secure, and reliable water services under a changing climate.
* **WRS12: Long-Term Water Resource Assessments and Addressing the Impacts of Mining and Extractive Industries:** This project developed a response to the findings of the *Long-Term Water Resource Assessment* *for Southern Victoria*, by including a comprehensive set of actions in the CGRSWS that are targeted towards addressing decline in long-term water availability and promoting sustainable management of water in Victoria.
* **PSP2: Sustainable Water Strategies:** A Sustainable Water Strategy provides for the strategic planning of the use of water resources within a region to help address the challenges associated with providing affordable water securely. EC5 funded the development of the CGRSWS and Implementation Plan (published in 2022) and supported implementation of CGRSWS actions in the first two years of the CGRSWS. For the first progress report, 79 of 96 actions had been started and 9 actions were completed. For the second progress report, of the 111 actions and policies, 16 actions have been achieved (7 completed and 9 ongoing). Actions to date have contributed to an improved understanding of the water security challenges and solutions in the region.
* **WRS10: Understand and Apply Climate Science to Water:** Key findings from research undertaken through this project have been used to inform various water resource strategies (e.g. *Urban Water Strategy*, CGRSWS) and policy papers. The findings were specifically applied to assessments of the impact of climate change water availability.
* **WRS11: Surface Water Assessment and Modelling:** This project supported the sustainable management of Victoria’s water resources through transitioning all major Victorian surface water resource systems models from REALM (Resource Allocation Model) to the Source platform. Source is a comprehensive and more defensible surface water modelling platform consistent with Australian national modelling, with pilot automation of the platform and improved sharing across water corporations (and the broader modelling community to ensure transparency and consistency). Source next-generation models are also being used to support policy, planning and management decisions across urban and rural systems.
* **WRS13: Groundwater Assessment and Modelling:** This project provided an improved, shared understanding of groundwater and its uses for evidence-based management. In EC5, a state-wide assessment of groundwater availability was completed, which will inform a review of limit of takes. Specialist advice was also provided about existing and emerging water related risks associated with the water entitlement framework. The quality and accuracy of groundwater monitoring data was also improved through the refurbishment of 23 bores and construction of 39 new bores.

### Increased uptake of alternative water supplies

EC5 projects delivered of a range of on-ground works, designs, and planning targeted towards improving uptake of alternative water supplies. Three of the most significant contributions to increasing uptake of alternative water supplies were:

* **CWCT01: Integrated Water Management:** The IWM project co-invested in a grants program supporting 52 IWM projects, including capital works for 3 stormwater harvesting systems, 4 recycled water schemes, 2 rainwater harvesting systems and 8 detailed designs for alternative water projects. Once complete, the projects will generate an estimated 916 ML/year of alternative water for irrigation, alongside other benefits as described in the other outcome areas.
* **CWCT04: Recycled Water, Stormwater and Onsite Wastewater Policy:** This project contributed towards creating an enabling environment to increase the uptake of recycled water, rainwater and stormwater through updating regulatory guidelines, developing risk frameworks, undertaking cost benefit analysis and regulatory impact statements, and developing guidance for councils, planning system users, government and practitioners. Twenty educational sessions on Victoria’s stormwater planning requirements were delivered to over 900 people, with 100% of participants rating that they were satisfied with the training. Four local government councils implemented new stormwater offset schemes (City of Kingston, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Mooney Valley and City of Darebin), and several more are investigating options for setting up schemes within their municipalities. DEECA estimates that through the IWM grants program, DEECA has co-funded 550 ML/year of additional stormwater through 15 projects.
* **CWCT07: CGRSWS Funding Stream 2 Diversify Water Sources and Increase Water Efficiency:** EC5 supported the co-investment of $31.729 million in 17 IWM projects throughout the Central and Gippsland region. This included 8 capital on-ground projects that will generate an estimated 2,078 ML/year of alternative water supply. The largest of these is the Dingley Recycled Water Scheme, which includes 42 km of trunk and distribution mains and a reticulation network to 40 sites that will deliver recycled water from the Eastern Treatment Plant, saving up to 300 ML/year of potable water and reducing groundwater drawdown. This network could be expanded to support future populations of the Suburban Rail Loop Precincts. The project also supported, 9 feasibility studies, business cases or concept designs for alternative water supply projects.

### Reduced pressure on the water grid

Progress was made toward this outcome through the Water Grid Oversight project. Through establishment of an Executive Advisory Committee to provide oversight and guidance on urban water security, this project increased collaboration and coordination between the water industry and government.

### Improved efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of water markets

Improving the effectiveness of water markets allows for the sharing of water security benefits in ways that are equitable, responsive and transparent. Throughout EC5, significant progress toward this outcome has been achieved through:

* **WRS3: Water Market Reform:** This project made progress towards resolving water and cost sharing problems in South-Central Victoria through the collaborative design of a water sharing framework, which has been supported by stakeholders.
* **WRS4: Water Market Transparency:** This project improved water market transparency by publishing information on businesses that own over 2% of water entitlements within a system. Publication of this information helps foster transparency and openness in water markets and improves market participants’ trust in the integrity of water markets. Other work to support water market transparency include input to a Basin-wide workplan for the Australian Government’s *Water Market Reform Roadmap*, the development of an assessment framework for fair and equitable access to intervalley trade with NSW, a pilot for a water market exchange platform in the Macalister Irrigation District, and support to the Minister on market transparency and reform matters.
* **WRS19: Resilient Water Markets, Regional Communities and Infrastructure:** Through EC5, this project addressed community concerns about the practices of water brokers through broker reform and regulation and involvement in inter-governmental reforms. This included providing input on the Victorian component of an interstate broker regulation scheme that delivers an agreed interstate standard of conduct and developing foundational data to inform effective decision-making and long-term reform of Goulburn to Murray Trade rules (see WRS1: Retail Entitlements and Markets). Draft broker regulations were also released that will support better water market transparency and confidence once implemented. Interim shortfall sharing arrangements provide arrangements to effectively manage capacity and delivery risks in 2024.
* **WRS9: Water Register Operations and Improvements:** This project supported the operation of the Victorian Water Register, critical to enabling effective management of Victoria’s water entitlement framework. It also made efforts to transition the Victorian Water Register to a new technology platform that provides efficient application processing, new online services, security and reliability, improved communications, real-time data, and improved analytics and visualisation. However, delays in project delivery coupled with higher than planned use of project resources led to a review of the approach which found it to be infeasible based on forecast costs to complete the project and for ongoing operations. Following termination of the original project, a new project was established to develop an alternative approach to delivering a Victorian Water Register platform that maximises reuse of the investment made to date, while delivering a value for money outcome.
* **WRS15: Water Accounting and Reporting:** This project delivered critical business-as-usual functions, including accounting for operation of the Victorian Water Register, support for Victorian Water Register users, publishing the annual Victorian Water Accounts, regular reporting on water resource condition and water quantity data. It also delivered an upgrade of the Victorian Water Accounts platform, building a new interactive website to improve the ability of users to engage with the water accounts and download the data for use.

The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, in its 2021 audit of recycled water use in Victoria, stated that “DELWP (then Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, now Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)) is also working to improve publicly available water data. For example, DELWP (DEECA) developed the Victorian Water Accounts, which is an online, user-friendly and engaging overview of water use and availability across the state.”

### More robust water entitlement system

Examples of ways in which the EC5 projects have contributed to this outcome include:

* **WRS5: Managing Victoria’s Water Sharing Framework:** This project reviewed and enhanced the bulk entitlement and environmental entitlement framework to improve certainty of rights and obligations and increase flexibility for entitlement holders to better manage their water risks. In EC5, 96 changes (consisting of minor and major amendments, revocations, and granting of new entitlements) were made to bulk and environmental entitlements, with 36 of the changes made to realise water recovery from irrigation modernisation projects in northern Victoria.
* **WRS6: Licencing Framework Groundwater and Unregulated Systems:** This project performed the core business function of maintaining the management and licensing framework for groundwater and unregulated systems. It also developed Groundwater Management 2030 (GM2030), which sets clear priorities to enable better management and licencing of groundwater by 2030. The release of GM2030 contributes to improved confidence in the water entitlement framework and water management plans. The GM2030 implementation phase has started under several priority areas to review, streamline and identify any gaps within the entitlement and management framework, essential tools that underpin decision-making for water corporations. This will lay the foundation for new and amended licensing / management policies.
* **WRS1: Retail Entitlements and Markets:** This project contributed to protecting the integrity of the retail entitlement and market framework and increased fairness and equity in water markets by providing transparent trade information and monitoring market behaviour to ensure equitable access to trade opportunities. New water trading and operating rules mean that Victoria’s trading rules for the Goulburn system meet legislative requirements and enable water to be traded within ecological and cultural limits of the Goulburn River.
* **WRS8: Accounting for Water Recovery:** This project enabled the conversion of long-term water recovery from water savings projects into water entitlement volumes and reliabilities. The project also delivered the legally necessary amendments to bulk entitlements to be made, and funded the audit. This enabled distribution of water recovery benefits, and for Victoria to demonstrate its progress with meeting its water recovery target obligations under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

## What progress has been made toward efficient water use?

### Improved water awareness and water efficiency in schools and homes

The Water Efficiency Program has delivered water awareness and efficiency measures in schools and homes through the Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP), the Community Rebate Program (CRP) and the Community Housing Retrofit Program (CHRP). Key achievements for **CWCT05: Water Efficiency Program** include:

For CRP and CHRP:

* These programs undertook water audits, fixed leaks and upgraded water using appliances for 6,035 households and emergency community housing properties exceeding the EC5 Making Victorians Waterwise target of 5,275[[1]](#footnote-2) rebates by 15%. The accumulated water savings resulted in 298 ML of water saved during EC5, equating to $0.75 million[[2]](#footnote-3) in total bill savings from reduced water and wastewater charges or $124 average saving per customer assisted per year. Once water efficient products are installed, the water savings continue for the life of the product.
* Around 50% of customers who responded to an independent evaluation survey stated they had changed their behaviour to save water after participating in the CRP or the CHRP.
* An independent evaluation found that the programs were effective in reaching customers that are generally vulnerable or in hardship situations. For CRP, 81% were concession card holders and 29% had a disability. For CHRP housing, 34% of tenants identified as having a disability, 31% spoke a language other than English, and 31% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Almost 80% of customers would have not upgraded their appliances within the next 5 years without assistance from the CRP.

For SWEP:

* SWEP has delivered water use monitoring, leak alert services, and data visualisation through the online portal and provided dedicated science and maths curriculum materials to 1,452[[3]](#footnote-4) schools, with 212 of these registered during EC5. A total of $5 million was invested in SWEP over 4 years.
* SWEP data monitoring identified a total of 3,010 leak events[[4]](#footnote-5) in 905 schools (60% of registered schools) and saved 1.9 GL of potable water equating to $8.46 million in avoided water and wastewater costs to schools. This represents a payback period of 2.3 years.

The project also provided Victoria’s contribution to the Australian Government’s Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme, which regulates and provides consumer advice on water using products at the point of sale. This resulted in 4 GL of water savings and national economic return of $587,416.[[5]](#footnote-6)

During the EC5, Melbourne’s per capita water use remained relatively stable; from 160 litres per person per day in 2020-21, 163 litres in 2021-22, reducing to 161 litres per person per day in 2022-23.[[6]](#footnote-7) Since August 2021, Melbourne storages remained above 80% full and water restrictions were not required.[[7]](#footnote-8) The Melbourne 2022-23 per capita water use needs to reduce by 11 litres to meet the current voluntary target of 150 litres per person per day.

The **CWCT07: CGRSWS Funding Stream 2 Diversify Water Sources and Increase Water Efficiency** program also delivered water efficiency outcomes through delivery of WaterSmart across all 10 CGRSWS urban water corporations, assisting a minimum of 370 large and medium non-residential customers to implement on-site water use monitoring and/or undertake water efficiency audits (two-year delivery period from September 2023 to September 2025). At 30 June 2024, the program had assisted 408 customer sites, exceeding the minimum target of 370. This also included a synthesis of existing and planned water efficiency behaviour change activities in Victoria and other jurisdictions to identify gaps and opportunities for collaboration.

### Improved water awareness and water efficiency in irrigation communities

EC5 projects delivered of a range of infrastructure and modernisation projects to improve water efficiency in irrigation communities and provided educational tools and knowledge to irrigators to improve water awareness. The major projects supporting this outcome were:

* **SIRS1: Rural Water Infrastructure Project Oversight and Governance:** EC5 investment supported DEECA in providing governance and oversight of major water infrastructure projects focused on water efficiency in irrigation communities such as the Macalister Irrigation District Phase 2 Modernisation and the Goulburn-Murray Water Connections project. DEECA also engaged with stakeholders and the community to improve project outcomes and raise awareness of water efficiency, and secured funding for new strategic water efficiency infrastructure projects. As of June 2023, approximately $839 million of funding had been secured for strategic rural water infrastructure projects across 25 projects totalling $839 million. Since July 2023, DEECA has secured an additional 8 projects totaling approximately $157 million.
* **SIRS2: Sustainable Irrigation Program Implementation:** This project improved water awareness and water efficiency by providing educational tools and knowledge to irrigators to assist them with decision making, and future planning on farm. This included engaging with over 3000 participants, including field days aimed at improving knowledge and skills relating to irrigation. This project also included an irrigation extension program which provided incentives to irrigators to drive productive and sustainable irrigation practices, including irrigation system upgrades, whole farm plans, scheduling equipment, re-use systems, soil surveys and system checks. There was high uptake of the incentives during EC5, including 86 whole farm plans, which aim to maximise all aspects of on-farm operational capacity and efficiency, and prepare irrigators for a future with reduced water availability. The project tracked the implementation of whole farm plans, showing that physical works are being undertaken and are achieving improved practices and outcomes (72% of farms with a whole farm plan have completed over 50% of their planned infrastructure improvements).
* **SIRS5: Macalister Irrigation District Modernisation Project – Phase 2:** This project modernised just over 80 km of irrigation network which supports improved delivery efficiency as irrigated properties are connected to the modernised system. So far, over 250 properties are connected to the modernised system. The final project achievements and audited water savings of up to 10.3 GL will be reported following practical completion in late 2024, and will be reported in the next reporting period. The infrastructure works were complemented by whole farm planning and on-farm efficiency incentives to landholders to maximise the benefits of both modernisation and on-farm programs, delivering 25 on farm plans.

### Improved responsiveness of rural water policy to water wise use and climate change

Examples of ways in which the EC5 projects have contributed to this outcome include:

* **SIRS2: Sustainable Irrigation Program Implementation**: This project contributed to this outcome through publication of *Social and economic impacts of Basin Plan water recovery in Victoria*, and *Water supply and horticultural demand in the southern Murray-Darling Basin*, which examined future scenarios and implications for the irrigated agriculturalists and their communities under a changing climate. Extensive land use mapping was also undertaken in Victoria through the Regional Integrated Land and Water Use Mapping Program (RILWUM) which has shown significant land use change over time. Valuable data collection and information sharing achieved through RILWUM will support ongoing analysis to identify trends and emerging risks that support improved design of management frameworks and decision making.
* **PSP2: Sustainable Water Strategies:** TheCGRSWS includes a chapter outlining ways to support farmers to adapt and expand in a drying climate by using water more efficiently and through greater use of recycled water and treated stormwater (Chapter 7 - Water for agriculture). The CGRSWS commits to actions that work with farmers to encourage more efficient use of water and best-practice irrigation through advice and incentives via the Sustainable Irrigation Program and help farmers to reduce the effects of irrigation on the environment, including salinity, nutrient runoff and waterlogging, to support a sustainable and productive industry. This is evidenced by the Policy 7-1 which commits to maximising water efficiency in agriculture, which provides resources and industry commitment to continue to upgrade inefficient water supply infrastructure.

### Reduction in irrigation losses

The key project that contributed to this outcome was:

* **SIRS5: Macalister Irrigation District Modernisation Project – Phase 2:** This project is on track to deliver up to 10.3 GL of Water Recovery and has modernised just over 80 km of irrigation network. The final project achievements and audited water savings will be reported following practical completion in late 2024, and will be reported in the next reporting period.

### Improved regulation of water user compliance

The key project that contributed to this outcome was:

* **WRS7: Water Compliance Oversight and Reform:** This project implemented a modern regulatory regime for compliance and enforcement for unauthorised take of water. Victoria’s demonstration of strong compliance standards supports its position and advocacy for greater compliance in other states, protects, encourages a level playing field for water take and supports greater water security for all water uses (including the environment). The project successfully reduced unauthorised levels of take, with an independent review by former Victorian Auditor-General, Mr Des Pearson AO, finding there had been very good progress and significant reductions in unauthorised take since the reforms were introduced.

## How have risks to priority waterways and catchment health been reduced?

### Reduced risks from stormwater runoff into priority urban waterways

Improving stormwater management can reduce the adverse impacts of stormwater to waterways and support their ecological health. Throughout EC5, significant progress toward this outcome has been achieved through:

* **CWCT01: Integrated Water Management:** The IWM project co-invested in a grants program supporting 52 IWM projects including capital works for 3 stormwater harvesting systems, 4 recycled water schemes, 2 rainwater harvesting systems, construction of 1 wetland and improvement works to 4 wetlands to capture and treat stormwater to support ecological health of waterways and 8 detailed designs for alternative water projects. Once complete, the projects are expected to result in the prevention of 8,407 kgs of nitrogen, 2,299 kgs of phosphorus and 258 tonnes of total suspended solids from entering our waterways every year.
* **CWCT04: Recycled Water, Stormwater and Onsite Wastewater Policy:** This project provided guidance to councils on stormwater offset schemes, with four local government councils implementing new stormwater offset schemes (City of Kingston, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Mooney Valley and City of Darebin), and several more are investigating options for setting up schemes within their municipalities. A new tool was also developed to help planning system users (developers, engineers, councils) demonstrate compliance with their stormwater obligations under the Victorian Planning Provisions (due for launch early 2024-25). The project also supported implementation of stormwater management requirements under the planning scheme, delivering information sessions to over 900 participants. The project also provided 58 of 65 eligible councils with grants to focus on data improvements, updating Onsite Wastewater Management Projects or to undertake risk reducing activities, with 89% of councils having improved their management and planning processes.
* **CWCT07: CGRSWS Funding Stream 2 Diversify Water Sources and Increase Water Efficiency:** This project funded capital works and feasibility / design works for several stormwater projects which will reduce adverse impacts of stormwater to waterways. These include the Jan Juc daylighting project, the stormwater harvesting concept design for the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas and the Werribee Reconfiguration project.

### Improved stewardship in catchments & waterways

EC5 projects delivered of a range of projects to improve stewardship in catchments and waterways. The major projects supporting this outcome were:

* **CWCT08: CGRSWS Funding Stream 3 Waterway Health Complementary Measures and Catchment Management Improvement:** This project increased inclusive management by incorporating social and community values in waterway management. Examples of this include the Yering Gorge to Yarra Junction Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) project which engaged and worked with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to plan and deliver on-ground habitat restoration works at Nunganala Habitat Hub, and included the delivery of one habitat plan and 45 ha weed control. The I 'heart' Mornington Peninsula project also developed a template land management plan and started engaging landowners in the project area. In addition, leveraged investment through Melbourne Water is enabling the Bunurong Land Council's Environment Team to deliver complimentary natural resources management works in the project area. The Living Links Urban Forest Project made great progress in the establishment of Climate Ready Vegetation Plots, as well as setting up micro-forest demonstration sites.
* **CWCT11: Our Catchments Our Communities (OCOC) Program:** Throughout EC5, this project made progress toward healthy, sustainable and productive land, water and biodiversity maintained through ICM that is strongly community based, regionally focused and collaborative. OCOC delivered 46,764 ha of place-based on-ground catchment stewardship projects, resulting in water, biodiversity, land health and productivity benefits for regional and local communities and Traditional Owners. Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) also delivered engagement events (15,344 participants), partnerships (433), assessments (1,028), publications (383), management agreements (128) and plans (203).
* **CWCT09: Waterway Health Program**: In EC5, CMAs processed over 30,000 waterway licenses and permits, floodplain and planning referrals and advice for local councils and the general community, over 90% of which were processed within statutory timeframes. This is a core statutory function that CMAs perform to facilitate appropriate use and development of Victoria’s public waterways, protecting the health of our waterways. The project also funded a range of activities focused on increased community and landholder involvement in stewardship activities. One example of this is the Caring for the Campaspe project, which supported landholders to fence and revegetate the river to protect its important environmental and community values, achieving 90 km of fencing, over 270 ha revegetated with native plants and over 400 ha where weed control was undertaken, involving 150 landholders. The project also undertook many community events and engagement activities, from school and community group tree planting to ‘Chicks in the Sticks’ gatherings. Overall, nearly 4,000 people were involved in 45 community events.

### Improved condition of riparian land and habitat for key species

Improving the condition of riparian land and habitat is critical to supporting key species within waterways. Throughout EC5, significant progress toward this outcome has been achieved through:

* **CWCT09: Waterway Health Program:** In EC5, this project delivered:
  + 459 waterway structures, including rock chutes, fish “hotels”, large wood, erosion control structures, flow regulators, removal of fish barriers.
  + 331.5 km of fencing used to protect areas alongside waterways (especially from cattle grazing) so that local indigenous vegetation can be established.
  + 35,465 ha of vegetation and weed control established along waterways to improve the riparian zone, reduce erosion and provide habitat.
  + 482 management agreements between CMAs and landholders, to ensure works areas are maintained in good quality for at least ten years, allowing vegetation to properly establish.
  + 7,273 cultural, ecological, property-based, social, flora and fauna, surface-water assessments.
  + Several activities were completed related to improving state policy and regional planning for wetland and catchment health improvements, including characterising wetland hydrologic stress across Victoria, develop habitat distribution models for wetland-dependent species and analysis to understand current and likely flow alteration under a range of climate change scenarios for unregulated rivers.

As a result of these works, over 386 river reaches and wetlands in Victoria are being actively maintained or improved every year. The Flagship Waterway projects also continued and expanded during EC5. An initial 9 project sites (one per CMA) were started under EC4, and a further 9 commenced during EC5. While the delivery of physical works programs at these sites (along with related ICM activities) is a primary part of each project, community engagement is also considered a vital part.

An outstanding flagship project delivered in EC5 was the Agnes River / Corner Inlet Flagship Project. After many years of hard work and consistent investment from EC tranches, a major outcome was reached at the West Gippsland CMA Agnes River/Corner Inlet Flagship site with the last remaining stand of willow trees removed from the Agnes River, making it completely free of this highly invasive and damaging species. There are very few waterways in Victoria where all willows have been successfully removed. This is a first for the CMA and a win for the environment.

* **CWCT07: CGRSWS Funding Stream 2 Diversify Water Sources and Increase Water Efficiency:** This project co-invested in the Jan Juc daylighting project which seeks to return this highly disturbed urban waterway to a more natural state. This includes recreating habitat, biodiversity and amenity values, as well as delivering significant stormwater quality objectives to an older urban catchment that drains to a popular beach location.
* **CWCT08: CGRSWS Funding Stream 3 Waterway Health Complementary Measures and Catchment Management Improvement:** This project made progress in the planning and design of measures that improve overall waterway health. Works on the Lower Latrobe Wetlands, Maffra Weir Fishway, Moorabool Yulluk (Moorabool River) and Werribee diversion weir activities have so far focused on governance, investigations and infrastructure design, with construction works to follow.
* **CWCT10: Environmental Water:** This project delivered environmental water to 161 rivers and wetlands sites throughout the state in 2023-24, 154 sites in 2022-23, 170 sites in 2021-22, and 225 sites in 2020-21, fully or partially achieving a total of 934 watering actions. Water delivery equated to over 3,212,000 ML of water for the environment to rivers and wetlands throughout Victoria (including over 846,000 ML from the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, 1,869,000 ML from the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, over 497,000 ML from The Living Murray). It also delivered works to protect and restore Victoria’s waterways through providing grants to CMA delivery partners for employment of regional environmental water reserve officers, environmental water infrastructure works and measures projects, environmental water community engagement and shared benefit projects, plus engagement and involvement of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities in environmental water planning and management. It also funds the management of environmental water entitlements, the Victorian Environmental Water Holder and provided Murray-Darling Basin Plan program delivery during the EC5.
* **CWCT02: Iconic Urban Waterways:** This project is focused on reducing the adverse economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of urbanisation and population growth on iconic urban waterways –including the Birrarung / Yarra, Mirrangbamurn / Maribyrnong, Wirribi Yulluk / Werribee and Parwan / Barwon Rivers. Following delivery of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, the Yarra Strategic Plan (YSP) and Action Plans, implementation of the YSP commenced during EC5, which includes delivery of 88 projects focused on protecting and enhancing the river and its parklands. The project also delivered the Waterways of the West and Rivers of the Barwon (Barre Warre Yulluk) Action Plans and supported implementation through a grants program.
* **CWCT11: Our Catchments Our Communities:** CMAs delivered 46,764 ha of land under active catchment stewardship in Victoria. Active stewardship includes environment works, management services, management agreements, assessments and plans.

### Increased evidence base on effectiveness of waterway management

EC5 increased the evidence base on the effectiveness of waterway management with monitoring and evaluation of waterway and environmental water health to inform future strategies and decisions. Throughout EC5, significant progress toward this outcome has been achieved through:

* **CWCT09: Waterway Health Program:** This project collected important data that supports evaluation of waterway and environmental water health to guide improvements in waterway management practices, and to inform state and regional waterway planning, evaluation and reporting. It included the Stream Change Assessment: Riparian Woody Vegetation, [2021 Great Australian Platypus Search](https://www.thegreataustralianplatypussearch.org/results-2021) using eDNA, VEFMAP (Victorian Environmental Flows Monitoring and Assessment Program) and WetMAP (Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program) to evaluate ecological responses to environmental water management, Riparian Intervention Monitoring Program, and Victoria’s first Index of Estuary Condition. Some examples of findings from these projects includes:
  + The Stream Change Assessment Project compared the condition of woody riparian vegetation in 3,400 km of stream length between 2010 and 2018-20. It found that at statewide and regional extents, changes were small, however the largest changes occurred where substantial or sustained riparian management had been undertaken.
  + More than 20 projects were funded through VEFMAP and WetMAP focusing on fish, vegetation, birds and frogs, and outputs have been used by managers to guide the development and refinement of environmental water management plans, and environmental water operational decisions.
  + Riparian Intervention Monitoring Program found that after 3 years of management interventions, such as weed control, revegetation and livestock exclusion, there is evidence of positive changes such as increased density of native woody recruits and the number of native taxa.
* **CWCT10: Environmental Water:** In 2022-23, significant colonial waterbird breeding was recorded at sites that received water for the environment and natural flooding, including:
  + Approximately 2,000 nests of Australian White Ibis and Straw-necked Ibis (and possibly Royal Spoonbill) in Barmah Forest.
  + Ten species of colonial nesting waterbirds across the Hattah Lakes using 7,000 nests for over 25,500 chicks, with a further 18 waterbird species detected breeding with an additional 1,700 chicks recorded.
  + Over 15,000 birds from 21 species recorded at Gunbower Forest and the Kerang Ramsar wetlands during 69 surveys over spring 2022 and autumn 2023.

## To what extent were Traditional Owner priorities furthered?

### Increased involvement of Traditional Owners in water policy, management & decision making

Traditional Owners were a core focus of EC5 with increased involvement of Traditional Owners in water policy, management and decision making for the majority of project. Examples of ways in which the EC5 projects have contributed to this outcome include:

* **CWCT06: Aboriginal Water Program:** This project developed, released and commenced implementation of *Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap.* This nation-leading multi-lingual policy places government’s policy position and Traditional Owner voices side-by-side. The policy establishes pathways to increase Traditional Owner roles, responsibilities and resourcing in water management in Victoria and forms a key pillar of DEECA’s Aboriginal Water Program and its commitment to enabling Traditional Owner self-determination. Development of *Water is Life* (2021-22) included a total of 61 Traditional Owner Nation-level, regional and statewide workshops with Traditional Owners, as well as the publication of 27 Traditional Owners nation statements alongside the government’s policy commitments in the final *Water is Life* document. The launch of *Water is Life*, and the policy commitments within it, has changed how Government partners with Traditional Owners and has sharpened the focus on working towards Treaty. Continuation of the Aboriginal Water Program (established in 2016) throughout EC5 has supported Traditional Owners through the Water, Country and Community Program grants (stages 1 and 2). This project supported 24 full-time equivalent Aboriginal Water Officer roles and a range of Traditional Owner-led water-related projects across 18 Traditional Owner groups (including the 11 Registered Aboriginal Parties) and 4 CMAs, that have strengthened Traditional Owner capacity and enabled greater involvement in the way water is managed and delivered in Victoria.
* **CWCT01: Integrated Water Management:** This project contributed toward this outcome through a Traditional Owner stream of the grants program and the piloting of support for Traditional Owner IWM Officers. This included co-investment in a grants program that supported 14 Traditional Owner led IWM projects. However, the Traditional Owner groups indicated that more funding support is needed to enable them to develop the skills and capacity to effectively participate in the IWM Program in a way that enables self-determination objectives and aspirations. This project also often has an urban and peri-urban focus, which may not fully align with the priorities of some Traditional Owner groups, who place greater emphasis on rural and natural environments. The scope of this project may need to be adjusted to include rural and natural environment considerations to ensure that it better reflects Traditional Owner values and priorities.
* **CWCT02: Iconic Urban Waterways:** This project worked closely with Traditional Owner partners to provide funding to support their involvement in policy development, project-based work, Elder time, and capacity building and training. This included building in flexibility such that Traditional Owners could exercise self-determination within the scope of involvement in the urban water policy space.
* **CWCT03: Recreational Values Program:** Traditional Owner self-determination was supported through the development of the draft Greens Lake Action Plan, representing a new way of working collaboratively with water corporations, Traditional Owners and the recreation community to generate shared outcomes.
* **WRS6: Licensing framework groundwater and unregulated systems:** One of the priorities included in GM2030 that was delivered through this project was inviting Traditional Owners to participate in GM2030 and groundwater management.
* **PSP1: Long-term Water Security:** The updated *Urban Water Strategy Guidelines* include specific core requirements for including Traditional Owner engagement in urban water planning. On-going research as part of the Blue Community work program will build capability in water literacy with effective and targeted communication strategies and will include the incorporation of Traditional Owner knowledge, views and values in a way that emphasises self-determination.
* **PSP2: Sustainable Water Strategies:** The CGRSWS developed the Traditional Owner Partnership to ensure self-determined outcomes for Traditional Owners in the region. Chapter 6 of the CGRSWS commits the Victorian Government to addressing historical and ongoing exclusion from water planning. The CGRSWS will deliver shared benefits at a cultural landscape level by involving Traditional Owners in decisions for holding and using water that is culturally sensitive and uses the principles under caring for Country of the region’s waterways. The approach is evidenced by the development of the Cultural Benefits Framework. The Cultural Benefits Framework uses Traditional Owner ecological knowledge to identify the benefits of Traditional Owners managing and owning water. The Traditional Owner Partnership is considered a benchmark approach to collaboration and partnering with Registered Aboriginal Parties in the regions. It has resulted in an allocation of funding to continue the partnership as the CGRSWS is implemented. As a result, actions in the final CGRSWS identify ways to return water to Traditional Owners that is enduring. Feedback from Traditional Owners is that the CGRSWS building process is to be used as an example for other strategy building processes across Government.
* **PSP4: CGRSWS Funding Stream 4 Enable Adaptation to a Variable Climate:** Grants were provided to 15 Registered Aboriginal Parties and non-Registered Aboriginal Party groups to enable self-determined participation in the development of an updated *Victorian Waterway Management Strategy* that embeds climate adaptation into the management of rivers, estuaries and wetlands across the state. This is a significant increase in involvement in, and influence on, water policy and management decision making processes by non-Registered Aboriginal Party groups.
* **CWCT09: Waterway Health:** Across the project, partnerships between CMAs and Traditional Owners were facilitated through a variety of activities, such as:
  + Coordination and advisory committees, evaluation workshops, consultation and advice in project design, planning, strategy and delivery.
  + Delivery of on-ground works on Country, monitoring, surveying, and recording activities.
  + Review and development of key CMA policy & strategy.
  + Carrying out welcome to country & smoking ceremonies.
  + Incorporating traditional knowledge into existing activities.
  + Sharing of knowledge, research, and technology.
  + Training for Traditional Owner Corporation/s staff.
  + Aboriginal Waterway Assessments.
* **CWCT10: Environmental Water:** This project involved engagement with and participation of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities in environmental water planning and management.
* **SIRS6: Murray Programs:** New partnerships were developed and/or existing partnerships expanded across the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project area which includes 14 different Traditional Owner groups. Aboriginal Waterways Assessments have been a key aspect to inform land and water aspirations. In EC5, 48 were completed through the Mallee CMA, with 171 individual participants and 10 groups.
* **CWCT11: Our Catchments Our Communities:** Traditional Owner groups were key participants in the Catchment stewardship projects, with 12 formal partnerships with Traditional Owner groups and 22 with Aboriginal Victorians. Traditional Owner voices featured in planning (e.g. in the Regionals Catchment Strategies) and on-ground delivery and are supporting Aboriginal self-determination.

### Increased water availability for Traditional Owner groups

In EC5, the Victorian Government started returning water to Traditional Owners and has identified opportunities to increase water availability for Traditional Owner groups. Examples of ways in which the EC5 projects have contributed to this outcome include:

* **WRS2: Water Grid Oversight:** This project delivered a two-tier Quadruple Bottom Line assessment process and associated documentation that ensures the development of future large scale water supply will include consideration of how the project(s) may enable returning water to Traditional Owners and the environment.
* **WRS5: Managing Victoria’s Water Sharing Framework**: Provided support for the return of water to Traditional Owner groups across Victoria through administration of the entitlement framework.
* **WRS6: Licensing framework groundwater and unregulated systems:** This project supported commitments made in *Water is Life* and the CGSWS by identifying ways to reduce obstacles for Traditional Owners applying for section 51 licences and established an authorisation process allowing Traditional Owner Groups to nominate crown land parcels for a section 51 licence application, where the Traditional Owner group does not own or occupy land. Traditional Owners were also invited to participate in GM2030 and groundwater management.
* **PSP2: Sustainable Water Strategies:** The final CGRSWS identified where there is unallocated water on relevant Country and where there are other opportunities to return water to Traditional Owners in the region, such as:
  + Actions 4-3 and 4-4 related to the return of water in the Moorabool River to the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.
  + Actions 4-9 and 6-10 commit to returning water to Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, including from the Amcor licence.
  + Actions 6-7 commits to evaluating opportunities to return water to Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation currently used by the Royal Botanic Gardens.
  + Action 4-8 commits the government to a reallocation of the Latrobe 3 – 4 Bench bulk entitlement to share water with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and the environment.
  + Action 6-16 commits the Government to return water to the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation in the Barwon River.
* **CWCT07: CGRSWS Funding Stream 2 Diversify Water Sources and Increase Water Efficiency:** The Werribee Reconfiguration Project explored substituting recycled water volumes in the order of 16 GL/year for water return to Traditional Owners and the environment.
* **CWCT06: Aboriginal Water Program:** The Victorian Government recognises First Nations’ and Traditional Owners’ rights and connection to water through *Water for Victoria* (2016) and is committed to increasing the water available to Traditional Owners to use for self-determined purposes. *Water is Life* and the CGRSWS establishes pathways to increase water return to Traditional Owner groups, which forms an important foundational basis for progress toward this outcome. Delivery of the Cultural Water for Cultural Economies project and 10 Traditional Owner-led pilot projects (2019-2021) also focused on understanding the current barriers to Traditional Owners' accessing, using and managing water. These activities provided foundational information used to inform the pathways to increase water returns outlined in *Water is Life*. During EC5, the Victorian Government started returning water to Traditional Owners:
  + 2 GL section 51 licence on the Mitchell River returned to Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation in south-eastern Victoria.
  + 2.5 GL section 51 licence on the Fitzroy River system returned to Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in south-western Victoria.
  + Two licences for cultural water use (200 ML at Buchan Munji and 500 ML on the Tambo River) issued to Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.
  + A number of water returns in progress at the time of this End-Of-Tranche evaluation.
  + In March 2022, Victoria reported for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (Inland Waters Target) that Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorian organisations held 4,298 ML of water entitlements. As of 30 June 2024, the volume of water entitlements has increased to 9,228 ML.

### Increased Traditional Owner employment in the water sector

All projects supporting increased involvement by Traditional Owners in water policy, planning and decision making have supported Traditional Owner groups and/or individuals financially, leading to increased employment in the water sector. Some specific examples are provided below:

* **CWCT06: Aboriginal Water Program:** The Water Country and Community Program partners with, and directly funds, all 11 Traditional Owner Corporations recognised as Registered Aboriginal Parties, 4 CMAs, and 7 Traditional Owner groups without formal recognition. Program funding throughout EC5 has enabled improved relationships between Traditional Owner groups and water sector partners such as CMAs, including through the funding of 24 full-time equivalent Aboriginal Water Officer roles and a suite of water-related projects. Highlights include:
  + 10 Traditional Owner Organisations in the first year of the Water Country Community Program have reported a greater involvement in and influence on water policy and management decision making.
* **CWCT08: CGRSWS Funding Stream 3 Waterway Health Complementary Measures and Catchment Management Improvement**: This project involved direct engagement, funding support and work with the following Traditional Owner groups to support self-determination: Wurundjeri WoiWurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Wandoon Estate, Worawa College. This has supported all three Traditional Owner corporations’ growing interest in establishing nurseries and bush foods businesses. Direct funding for this work to support broader self-determination and leveraging wider partnerships totalled $223,000.
* **CWCT09: Waterway Health**: Out of the 61 Waterway Health projects, 48 were involved in partnership agreements (34) and/or engaged Aboriginal businesses (31). There were 31 different Traditional Owner groups engaged in project development and/or implementation in some capacity (or CMAs intended to engage them). In EC5, Traditional Owner groups/Aboriginal Victorians received $2,862,228 of funding from CMAs. Of this, $2,468,567 went to 15 different Traditional Owner groups, and $393,661 went to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, Aboriginal-owned private businesses, and employment programs.

## To what extent were social and community values incorporated into water management?

### Greater access to water-based spaces, creating opportunities to improve community health

Creating greater access to water-based spaces can also lead to new environmental, recreational and social opportunities to improve community health. Throughout EC5, significant progress toward this outcome has been achieved through:

* **CWCT03: Recreational Values:** This project completed a range of planning / policy actions focused on supporting improved access for the community to better enjoy waterways, including development of new Recreational Area (Water) Regulations 2023 to manage recreation at storages and embedding recreational values in the new Victorian Waterway Management Strategy. It also distributed $2.89 million of grant funds to support 19 projects and 11 organisations targeted towards improving recreational outcomes, including consideration of recreational access to drinking water storages, a policy statement in the CGRSWS and collaboration with Melbourne Water to consider access to Tarago Reservoir. It progressed the Flagship Water Wannon project, explored new ways to facilitate recreation using water corporation assets, and delivered 4 planning and community engagement projects.
* **CWCT02: Iconic Urban Waterways:** This project was targeted towards reducing the adverse economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of urbanisation and population growth on iconic urban waterways (including the Birrarung / Yarra, Mirrangbamurn / Maribyrnong, Wirribi Yulluk / Werribee and Parwan / Barwon Rivers). It has contributed towards achieving healthier local communities and environments and enhancement of values derived from water environments.
* **PSP2: Sustainable Water Strategies:** The CGRSWS recognises the importance of recreational users and recreational values. Actions in the CGRSWS underpin identifying opportunities to increase access to recreational opportunities.

### Improved community access to water resource information

EC5 projects delivered a range of projects to improve data availability and access to water resource information in formats that were more engaging and user-friendly. Three of the most significant contributions to improving community access to water resource information were:

* **WRS14: Surface Water and Groundwater Monitoring:** This project improved data availability through review and redevelopment of the Water Management Information System (WMIS) which led to an upgraded WMIS website available through the existing online portal: [data.water.vic.gov.au](https://jacobsengineering.sharepoint.com/sites/CPIS444200/Shared%20Documents/Working%20Documents/06%20EoT%20Evaluation/EoT%20evaluation%20report/data.water.vic.gov.au). WMIS publishes consistent statewide water quality information from the Regional Water Monitoring Partnership and has improved functionality like advanced search, data downloads and filtering capability with a GIS interface. Future enhancements planned for WMIS will further improve functionality and usability of the platform.
* **WRS16: Water Knowledge and Insights:** This project improved community access to water resource information through promoting water data, information and reports created by DEECA to the public through the development of user platforms, social media and improved online resources. Highlights of the work during EC5 included early development of the Water Education Portal, aimed at resources for students and teachers (yet to be launched), the Water Market Watch iOS app to provide real-time water market information, and the Visualising Our Communications project with Goulburn-Murray Water, Lower Murray Water, and Southern Rural Water, which leveraged collaboration to produce a suite of marketing products   
  (including photography, video and interviews) which has been used across DEECA, Goulburn-Murray Water, Lower Murray Water and Southern Rural Water policy documents, research and annual reports, online web content, customer information presentation, social media, fact sheets and other important water communications. This project has also been leading the discovery process for Building a Better Victorian Water Register Website project.
* **WRS15: Water Accounting and Reporting:** This project delivered a new interactive website to improve the ability of users to engage with the water accounts and download the data for use. The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, in its 2021 audit of recycled water use in Victoria, stated that “DELWP (DEECA) is also working to improve publicly available water data. For example, DELWP (DEECA) developed the Victorian Water Accounts, which is an online, user-friendly and engaging overview of water use and availability across the state.” Minor improvements to the website based on user feedback have been actioned for the 2022-23 accounts, and there will be further improvements in future releases.

### Improved reflection of the diversity of community values in water management

Waterways are shared public places and water management should seek to incorporate the diversity of community values. Throughout EC5, community input and insights were sought with community values integrated in water management through:

* **CWCT09: Waterway Health Program:** The My Victorian Waterway survey ran for five weeks in March/April 2022. A total of 6,240 online surveys were completed. The survey gathered a wealth of information about current waterway usage, attitudes and understandings about waterway health, current knowledge and language used by the community, and aspirations for the future. The story told by participants paints a clear picture of the great importance and value of healthy waterways for all Victorians and future generations. The data from the My Victorian Waterway survey will be used to help shape water-sector policy, guide investments and inform waterway programs and community engagement by the Victorian Government and other partners.
* **CWCT03: Recreational Values:** This project fostered ways to understand and integrate community values in water management, including through the new Goulburn-Murray Water platform for community survey to inform their recreation planning. There were high levels of engagement from the local and general community through Engage Vic consultation processes, for both the Draft Greens Lake Action Plan (144 survey respondents) and the Draft Water (Recreational Area) Regulations (85 respondents) including strong attendance at two online information sessions (23 and 29). It also introduced a new requirement for site-based management planning for Recreational Areas through the new regulations, including requirement for consultation with the community.

## To what extent was the effectiveness of water governance improved?

### Improved performance of water sector in meeting the needs of customers and the community

Examples of ways in which the EC5 projects have contributed to this outcome include:

* **SIRS4: Bendigo Minewater Project**: This project met customer and community expectations regarding prevention of mine impacted groundwater discharges to Central Bendigo through an interim solution, enabled Central Deborah Gold Mine to continue to offer underground tours, and developed and secured funding for implementation of a long-term management solution.
* All projects listed under the outcome - Improved community access to water resource information (see above)

### Improved management of risks and emergencies

EC5 improved on the management of water risks and emergencies with a particular focus on building flood resilience and mitigating small dam failure risks. Projects which have contributed to this outcome include:

* **SIRS3: Building Flood Resilience in Victoria:** This project reduced the exposure of Victorian communities to impacts of floods, with funding directed to 23 flood studies, 8 planning scheme amendments, 11 flood mitigation infrastructure projects, and 23 projects to develop or upgrade flood warning services. The project involved working with local councils to secure $9.299 million of federal government National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program funding to construct high priority flood mitigation levees in Numurkah, Wangaratta, Castlemaine, and Carisbrook. The project also completed all 56 strategy actions from the *Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy* as shown in an independent audit, and informed consistent decisions and actions for management of flood related issues. The project advanced the FloodZoom platform creating a one-stop shop experience for flood responders and analysts. Maps from 100% of completed flood studies stored by FloodZoom are now publicly available due to collaboration with the Victorian Government’s Digital Twin platform.
* **PSP3: Mitigating the risks of small dams:** This project reduced the dam failure risks posed by the three highest risk local government authority structures through implementing rehabilitation works, as well as developing operations and maintenance plans, surveillance plans and dam safety emergency plans. The project also improved dam safety through holding dam safety training programs for local government staff, dam safety exercises, and upgrades to the Dam Safety Portal to include local government dams.

### Increased embedment of climate change in water sector planning and decision making

Climate change will introduce new risks to the water sector and impact on availability of water in Victoria. Throughout EC5, significant progress toward embedding climate change in water sector planning and decision making has been achieved through:

* **WRS10: Understand and Apply Climate Science to Water**: This project made significant progress in equipping Victoria’s water sector stakeholders and communities to plan for, and adapt to, the impact of climate change on our water resources. The project developed the *Guidelines for Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Availability in Victoria*, which provide guidance to Victorian urban water corporations and are also used by rural water corporations, DEECA teams, and consultants. Support with application of the guidelines was a significant part of the work of the project over this period. An independent survey conducted to understand the usefulness of the guidelines to the water sector found:
  + “The guidelines appear to be universally used by urban water corporations for their Urban Water Strategies and associated water resource planning”.
  + “The consultants interviewed used the guidelines for Urban Water Strategies, but also for environmental type studies and investigations in the rural water area. DEECA teams use the guidelines in strategic areas such as Sustainable Water Strategies, Long-Term Water Resource Assessment as well as Urban Water Strategies, and modelling of the northern Victorian regulated systems”.
  + “Almost all participants commented on the high value of the guidelines, that they provide consistent and dependable advice, that they are of high quality and well researched and that they are a “point of truth” for the industry.”
* Research findings and advice from the project have also been applied in a diverse range of water resource planning processes, such as into long-term climate trend information in Annual Water Outlook reports produced each year by water corporations, informed the Victorian Annual Water Outlook produced by DEECA, Urban Water Strategies produced by all Victorian water corporations, and the 2023 Victorian State of the Environment Report produced by the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, Victoria. Information was also communicated to water sector stakeholders through webinars, newsletters, Victorian Water and Climate Initiative (VicWaCI) website, targeted stakeholder engagement such as workshops, interviews, and meetings, annual VicWaCI Science Day, presentations, research papers, conference papers and seminars.
* **PSP4: CGRSWS Funding Stream 4 Water Cycle Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan:** This project improved understanding of climate risks by providing feedback to the water sector on their Corporate Plans and Annual Reports to build capacity to better address the risks of climate change. This project also involved in-depth consultation with the water sector on their understanding and management of climate risks. The outcomes of this consultation have helped refine government’s service offering to the sector, resulting in the establishment of partnerships with CMA’s (through a grants program) and water corporations (by agreement with VicWater) to build their climate risk management capacity.

1. Combined target made up of *Making Victorians Water Wise* (4,235 rebates) and *Delivering community benefits through implementation of the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy* (1,040 rebates). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Based on 2023-24 average water and wastewater charges of $2.53 per kilolitre. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Accumulated number of schools registered to SWEP since launch in 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Leak event is occurrence where water used is above 0 litres between 12:00AM – 1:00AM. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. 2022, [WELS Strategic Plan 2022-25](https://www.waterrating.gov.au/about/review-evaluation/strategic-plan-2022-25), Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. 2024, [Melbourne’s Water Outlook 2024](https://www.melbournewater.com.au/about/what-we-do/publications/water-outlook), Greater Western Water, Melbourne Water, South East Water, Yarra Valley Water. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. [Historical Water Storage Levels](https://www.melbournewater.com.au/water-and-environment/water-management/water-storage-levels#/ws/freq/weekly/type/storage), Melbourne Water [↑](#footnote-ref-8)