



# Annual Report 2021–22

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**mallee**  
catchment management authority

# Acknowledgements



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## Cover Images

- 1 Agricultural land with remnant corridor.
- 2 Icon Schools Project at Ornamental Lakes.
- 3 Landcare at Lake Cullulleraine.
- 4 Pelicans at Brickworks Billabong.

**The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges and respects Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and organisations. We recognise the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with Victoria's lands and waters.**

**We value partnerships with them for the health of people and country.**

**The Mallee CMA Board, management and staff pay their respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the primacy of Traditional Owners' obligations, rights and responsibilities to use and care for their traditional lands and waters.**

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Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
Annual Report 2021–22  
ISSN: 1833-0924

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### Sensitivity Warning

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# Declaration in Report of Operations

## **Responsible Body's declaration**

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic), I am pleased to present the Mallee Catchment Management Authority's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2022.



**Allison McTaggart**  
Board Chair  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

28 September 2022

# Part 1

## Year in Review

### Chair's Report

The work delivered by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) during 2021–22 demonstrates the organisation's enduring commitment to protecting and enhancing our region's natural, cultural and productive landscapes by working in close partnership with our communities and key regional stakeholders.

The Mallee CMA's Annual Report 2021–22 documents our progress toward delivering Victorian Government objectives and priorities, within the context of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act), the *Water Act 1989*, Ministerial expectations, and policy directions set out in Water for Victoria.

I am pleased to report that in delivering our work, we have continued to ensure our community has remained central to the planning, delivery and evaluation of Natural Resource Management (NRM) outcomes in the Victorian Mallee. We have worked in partnership with Traditional Owners, community members, partner agencies and key stakeholders such as Landcare and Friends of groups, with a focus on protecting and enhancing the region's land, water and biodiversity.

Highlights of our work are noted below and categorised according to the 2021–22 Ministerial Expectations for the organisation.

### Community engagement and partnerships

Adaptive management approaches continued to be employed by Mallee CMA throughout 2021–22 to ensure effective engagement of our stakeholders under COVID-19 restrictions (i.e. planning for in-person or virtual delivery scenario). Delivery included targeted events to build stakeholder capacity and enhance the region's cooperative delivery approaches; with activities such as field days, workshops, training events and meetings collectively engaging 6,900 participants and facilitating 95 formal partnerships over the year.

Communication materials produced in 2021–22 also provided effective engagement mechanisms by promoting our region, the NRM programs being delivered, and involvement opportunities to a large and diverse audience.

Key examples of the approaches employed to disseminate information included a regular segment on the local ABC radio station, media articles in each of the region's six local newspapers, regular social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube) content, and regionally specific educational resources (e.g. Wildlife Detective Activity Books).

### Recognise and support Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the water sector

In recognition of the important role Aboriginal people play in caring for Country, and supporting self-determined participation, we directly engaged Traditional Owners to deliver Cultural Heritage assessments, on-ground



Accessible canoe launch.

environmental works, and associated monitoring activities. These activities have provided formal ways of recognising Aboriginal cultural values and helped deliver economic inclusion in the water sector, this work has been crucial in continuing to develop strong relationships with the region's First Peoples and providing opportunities for meaningful involvement in NRM.

Delivery against the Mallee CMA's renewed Indigenous Participation Plan 2021–23 also commenced in 2021–22 to ensure alignment with the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal community regarding land and water management.

### **Recognise recreational values**

Mallee CMA recognises that enhancing the recreational values of priority waterways is integral to our waterway management role, and that effective stakeholder engagement is essential in ensuring alignment with local objectives and facilitating collaborative outcomes. In 2021–22 this included the development of Community-led Action Plans (CLAPs) for our two flagship waterways (Merbein Common and Kings Billabong), with local stakeholders directly engaged in the identification of recreational objectives and priorities relating to these sites.

### **Waterway and Catchment Health**

Delivery of over 60,000 hectares of environmental works by Mallee CMA in 2021–22 represents significant progress against targets set by the Mallee Waterway Strategy for the region's priority waterways. Management of the four sites identified by Water for Victoria (2016) as a priority for the Mallee (i.e. Merbein Common wetlands, Lindsay-Wallpolla Islands, Belsar-Yungera Floodplain complex, Kings Billabong and Woorlong complex) has continued to be a priority under state-funded Waterway Health programs; supporting the delivery of environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes at each site.

Of particular note is the suite of works implemented at Merbein Common, Mallee CMA's 2016–2024 Flagship Waterway site, and the new (2020–24) Kings Billabong Flagship site; which are collectively delivering significant improvements in habitat condition. Application of Seasonal Watering Plans for the region resulted in 34 watering regimes being implemented in 2021–22, inundating over 5,000 hectares to deliver against associated ecological, social and cultural objectives set out by site based Environmental Water Management Plans.

### **Water for Agriculture**

Mallee CMA has continued to support a productive and profitable irrigation sector by delivering irrigation and salinity management actions identified as a priority for the Mallee in the Water for Victoria plan. Delivery against two regional frameworks informing implementation of these actions in partnership with regional stakeholders (i.e. the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan and the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan), informs implementation of these actions in partnership with regional stakeholders and builds on previous achievements and supports continuous improvement in irrigation and salinity management. In 2021–22 this included the release of the 2021 Mallee Crop Report detailing irrigation land use across the region and providing for assessments of change over time; completion of two BSM2030 Register B entries (i.e. Legacy of History reviews for Dryland Clearance and Irrigation Development); and targeted research activities (e.g. climate change impacts on horticulture and validation of root zone drainage estimates) to support the development of regional and commodity specific decision support tools.

### **Improved performance and demonstrating outcomes**

Our commitment to a high level of corporate governance continues to be demonstrated by the ongoing effort invested in retaining ISO 9001:2015 certification for



Sand drift.

our Quality Management System. Since achieving accreditation in 2016, annual surveillance audits have not identified any major non-conformities, and the three yearly accreditation audit conducted in 2019–20 did not identify any major or minor non-conformities. Recertification for the 2019–2022 period was achieved in October 2019.

### Leadership, diversity and culture

Through implementation of Mallee CMA's Diversity and Inclusion Plan, our organisation has continued to demonstrate a commitment to building a diverse workforce, while encouraging leadership and culture. Key actions undertaken have included providing cultural awareness training, promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, ensuring appropriate gender balance in recruitment panels, promoting LGBTI awareness and inclusion, and making organisational health and wellbeing initiatives available to all staff. Establishment of the Mallee CMA Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) in June 2022 further demonstrates our commitment to gender equality throughout the organisation, and ensuring it is embedded in all workplace behaviour and decision-making processes.

Review and renewal of the Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy in 2022 established organisational objectives and associated reporting metrics for the 2022–25 period; ensuring alignment with, and support for Government direction in advancing social and sustainable outcomes.

### Climate Change

Mallee CMA has continued to plan for and respond to a changing climate by ensuring the ongoing delivery of regional programs incorporates priority landscapes and associated interventions established by the Mallee Natural Resource Management Plan for Climate Change (2016). In 2021–22 this included supporting initiatives

such as the 'State-wide Carbon Sequestration Analysis Project' undertaken in partnership with Victorian CMA's and Water Corporations to establish regional carbon yields and implementation costs associated with environmental planting offsets.

### Support resilient and liveable cities and towns

Initiatives that enhance public spaces and urban waterway values through integrated waterway management (IWM) collaborations have also continued to be supported. Key measures progressed in partnership with regional stakeholders over the 2021–22 reporting period included application of the Lake Ranfurly and Lake Hawthorn Integrated Management Plan; implementation of the Wetland Management Strategy for Kings Billabong, Psyche Bend Lagoon and Woorlong Wetland; and engagement with First People of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation to ensure Aboriginal values are recognised and supported by associated waterway management activities.

### Conclusion

It is with pleasure, I present to you the Mallee CMA's Annual Report 2021–22.



**Allison McTaggart**

Board Chair  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

28 September 2022

## Mission, Vision, Values

### Our Mission

To ensure natural resources in the region are managed in an integrated and ecologically sustainable way and in accordance with our community's expectations.

### Our Vision

Informed and active communities balancing the use of resources to generate wealth, with the protection and enhancement of our natural and cultural landscapes.

(Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy 2013–2019)

### Our Values

In delivering against these priorities the Mallee Catchment Management Authority Board, management and staff will demonstrate the following values and behaviours in all aspects of their work:



Figure 1 | Values and Behaviours

## Manner of establishment and responsible Ministers

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) was established under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (Vic) (CaLP Act). The responsible Ministers for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 were the Hon Lisa Neville MLA, Minister for Water 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 and the Hon Richard Wynne MP, Acting Minister for Water 1 July to 22 August 2021.

## Nature and range of services provided

The Mallee CMA region covers 39,939 km<sup>2</sup>, around one-fifth of Victoria. The largest catchment management area in the state, it runs along the Murray River from Nyah to the South Australian border and south through vast dryland cropping areas and public reserves.

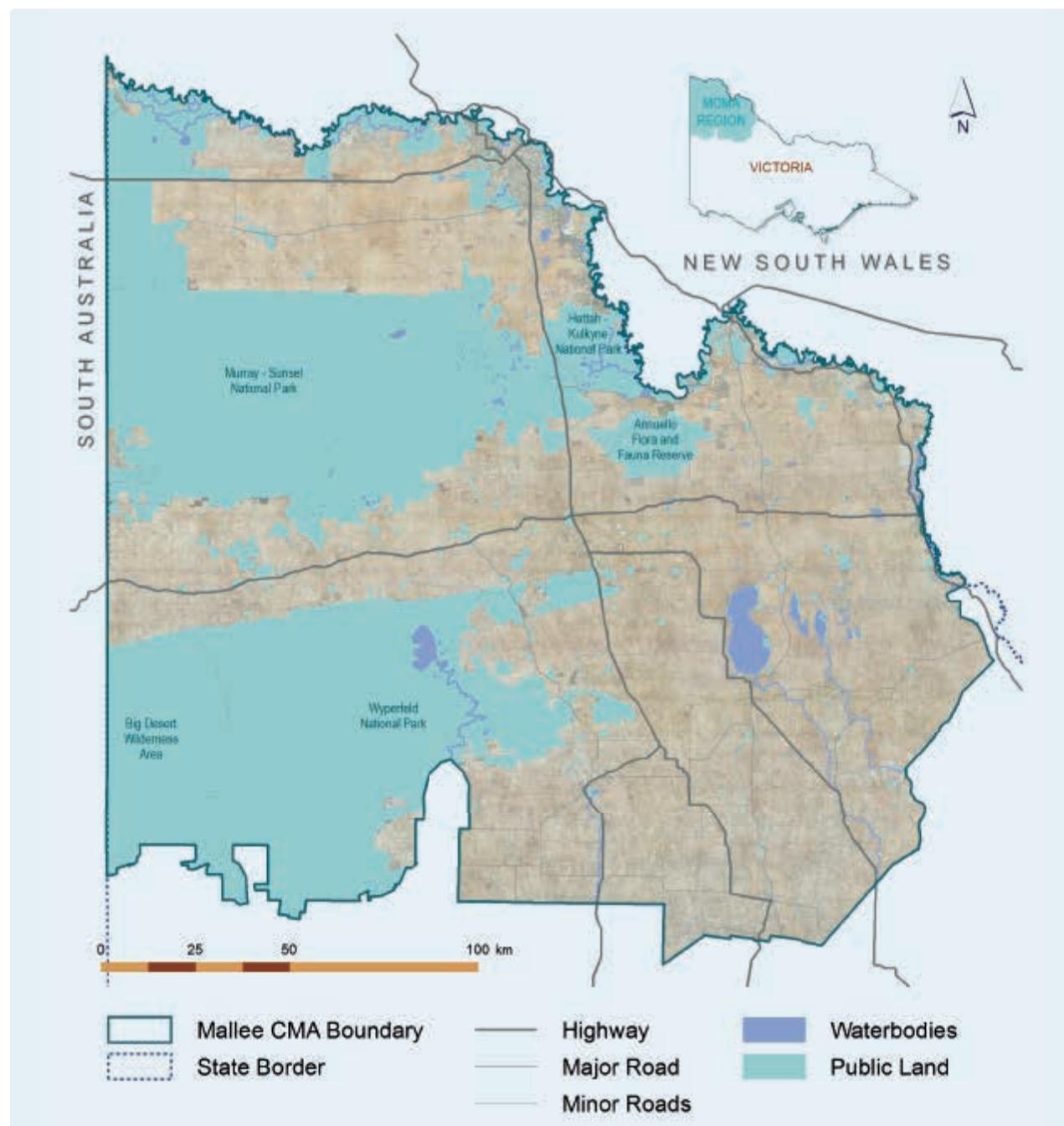


Figure 2 | Map of Mallee CMA region



Uttiwillock Wetland.

The primary role of Mallee CMA is to facilitate integrated and ecologically sustainable management of natural, cultural and productive landscapes occurring within the region. Programs and projects are developed to deliver against the region's priorities for these landscapes, as detailed in the Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) and its associated sub-strategies and plans. The Mallee RCS is prepared under provision of the CaLP Act, in partnership with regional stakeholders, as a framework for strategic action to support and focus the ongoing coordinated efforts of the region's land managers, government agencies and community groups.

Within this context, Mallee CMA investment planning and delivery are informed by the long-term (20 year) objectives and strategic (6 year) actions set by the RCS for each of the following regional asset themes:

- Waterways
- Biodiversity
- Agricultural Land
- Culture and Heritage
- Community Capacity for NRM.

A suite of RCS sub-strategies and plans (e.g. Mallee Waterway Strategy, Mallee Indigenous Participation Plan, Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan, Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy) provides additional detail on the activities required to protect and enhance regional assets, and the roles and responsibilities of regional stakeholders in the delivery of these activities.

These are further complemented by site-based plans (e.g. Environmental Watering Management Plans) which establish priorities and delivery mechanisms.

The RCS monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework is applied to all Mallee CMA activities to support continuous improvement and adaptive management processes.

Key regional stakeholders engaged in the development, delivery and review of the Mallee RCS and its associated sub-strategies include government agencies; local government; water corporations; community and industry-based groups; private land managers; and Traditional Owners (TOs). Participation by the broader Mallee community in Natural Resource Management (NRM) activities is also supported to facilitate awareness and skills-based outcomes.



Sulphur-crested cockatoo.

## Objectives, functions, powers and duties

As a statutory authority, Mallee CMA has clear duties and accountabilities set out in legislation. The Statement of Obligations for the CaLP Act and the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) set out the key business undertakings of the Mallee CMA as being to:

- Facilitate and coordinate the management of catchments in an integrated and sustainable manner as it relates to land, biodiversity and water resources
- Plan and make decisions within an Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) context that balance social, economic and environmental outcomes
- Target investment to address priorities and maximise improvement in resource condition of catchments, land, biodiversity and water resources
- Provide opportunities for community engagement in the integrated management of catchments and natural assets including land, biodiversity and water resources;
- Develop strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders including public authorities and government agencies

- Promote and apply a risk management approach which seeks to protect, enhance and restore natural assets and reduce the impact of climate change
- Promote and adopt an adaptive approach to ICM, including continuous review, innovation and improvement
- Manage business operations in a prudent, efficient and responsible manner
- Act as the caretaker of river health and provide regional leadership on issues relating to river health;
- Undertake the operational management of the Environmental Water Reserve as a key component of an integrated program of river, wetland, floodplain, and aquifer restoration.

The *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic) and the *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic) together with the Mallee CMA's Board Charter of Corporate Governance, also provide guidance for the Mallee CMA in relation to its governance requirements.

# Part 1

## Performance Reporting - Non-financial

### Achievements, Operational Performance and Key Initiatives

The Mallee CMA Corporate Plan 2021–2026 establishes three objectives to inform organisational priorities in delivering our vision over the next five years.

Thematic areas and strategic outcomes the Mallee CMA seek to achieve under each objective have been developed to reflect existing delivery and reporting frameworks (both regional and state), and the Mallee CMA's legislative obligations (see Table 1).

**Table 1 |** Mallee CMA 2021–2026 business objectives strategic outcomes

Business Objectives	Theme	Strategic Outcomes
Ensure that community is central to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of natural resource management (NRM).	Community Capacity for NRM	NRM stakeholders and the broader community are aware of and participating in efforts to protect the Mallee's natural, cultural and productive values. NRM stakeholders are being supported to identify, and where appropriate respond to emerging threats and opportunities.
Protect and enhance the region's natural, cultural and productive values.	Waterways	Priority waterways and associated riparian habitat are providing enhanced social, economic and environmental services to the community.
	Biodiversity	The ecosystem services provided by targeted terrestrial habitat are being protected and enhanced. The viability of targeted threatened species and communities is being protected and enhanced.
	Land	Management practices are being implemented to optimise the productive capacity of agricultural land, while protecting associated natural values.
	Culture & Heritage	Cultural heritage sites are being recognised and protected as an integral component of all land, water and biodiversity management processes.
Strengthen our capacity to operate as a corporately and socially responsible organisation.	Governance & Compliance	Internal governance processes are ensuring compliance with all legislative requirements and statutory functions.
	Integrated Catchment Management	Regional planning, delivery and evaluation processes are supporting integrated and targeted NRM outcomes.

Delivery against these strategic outcomes is guided by priority initiatives and activities identified within the Mallee CMA Corporate Plan 2021–2026. These priorities are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the organisation's core responsibilities (e.g. CaLP Act Statement of Obligations and *Water Act 1989* Statement of Obligations) and strategic framework (e.g. RCS). Identified activities also reflect Ministerial expectations and performance priorities for nine government policy areas; specifically:

1. Improved performance and demonstrating outcomes
2. Climate Change
3. Waterway and Catchment Health
4. Water for Agriculture
5. Community Engagement and Partnerships
6. Recognise and support Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the water sector
7. Recognise recreational values
8. Resilient and liveable cities and towns
9. Leadership, diversity and culture

Organisational performance against outcome indicators and activity measures established for each business objective and associated themes (i.e. as detailed by the 2021–2026 Corporate Plan) is provided in the following sections.

Figure 3 illustrates the 'Key to Results' system applied within the report to indicate the extent of underachievement or overachievement of activity indicator targets when reporting on their performance.

	Performance target achieved or exceeded or expected to be achieved.
	Performance target not achieved - exceeds 5% variance.
	Performance target not achieved - within 5% variance.

**Figure 3 | Activity performance key to results**



Mallee CMA Corporate Plan 2021–2026.

## Reporting progress towards Mallee CMA performance objectives, indicators and/or outputs (non-financial)

### Business Objective 1

#### Ensure the community is central to the planning, delivery and evaluation of natural resource management (NRM)

##### Theme: Community capacity for NRM

Communities of the Mallee are at the centre of the current and future management of our natural, cultural, and productive landscapes. NRM is a co-operative endeavour between the community, industry, and government, with effective action requiring effective partnerships founded on a well-informed community with the skills and confidence to identify, direct, and implement change. By working with our community and delivery partners, Mallee CMA is seeking to deliver against the following capacity related outcome:

*NRM stakeholders and the broader community are aware of and participating in efforts to protect the Mallee's natural, cultural and productive values.*

Implementation also directly aligns with and delivers against priorities established by:

- Community Engagement and Partnerships Framework for Victoria's Catchment Management Authorities (2017)
- Pupangari Mannmarnepu 'Owning Our Future' Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025
- Aboriginal Participation Guidelines for Victorian Catchment Management Authorities (2016)
- Mallee CMA Annual Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan (2021)
- Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (2021)
- Mallee CMA Reconciliation Action Plan (2018),

##### Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against these strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against eight key indicators. These indicators are presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 2).

Over the five-year reporting period, Mallee CMA programs have continued to apply a strong community focus as the cornerstone of NRM delivery. This approach is informed by, and aligns with the principles and best practice standards established by the Community Engagement and Partnerships Framework for Victoria's Catchment Management Authorities (2017); and delivers against annual priorities identified in the Mallee CMA Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan.

Delivery against this framework has included targeted events to build stakeholder capacity and enhance the region's cooperative delivery approach; with activities such as field days, workshops, and training events collectively engaging 35,779 participants over the 2017–2022 period. These activities are well received, with participants consistently providing positive feedback on their overall delivery. Since the introduction of participant evaluations in 2014–15, 64 percent of respondents have provided an 'excellent' rating and 32 percent 'good'; with only three percent rating them as 'poor' and one percent 'very poor'. The effectiveness of the engagement approaches being employed to build capacity is also demonstrated by ongoing evaluations; with an average 55 percent increase in 'awareness of NRM issues' being reported by participants, and an average 11 percent increase in skills to 'address threat processes'.

While COVID-19 restrictions continued to impact the number and type of activities undertaken throughout the 2021–22 reporting period, employing adaptive management approaches (i.e. planning for an in-person or virtual delivery scenario) ensured our stakeholders continued to be effectively engaged. This is supported by evaluations of the field trips, Citizen Science programs, and forums delivered by Mallee CMA in 2021–22; with 66 percent of participants rating their overall delivery as ‘excellent’ and a further 32 percent as ‘good’.

Aligning with State Government media guidelines to ensure a focus on COVIDSafe settings during extended lockdown periods also reduced the number of communication activities undertaken by the Mallee CMA throughout 2021–22. It is evident however that the information and materials that were produced continued to build on previous achievements by promoting our region, the NRM programs being delivered, and involvement opportunities to a large and diverse audience.

Key examples of the mechanisms employed to disseminate information included a regular segment on the local ABC radio station, media articles in each of the region’s six local newspapers, production of a monthly ‘Mallee Connections E-newsletter’ and biannual ‘Mallee Farmer’ magazine, development of regionally specific educational resources (e.g. Wildlife Detective Activity Books), and regular social media content across a range of platforms (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube). These mechanisms have collectively delivered 2,154 publications and some 2,108 Facebook posts (1.7 million views) over the 2017–22 reporting period.

Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the development and delivery of Mallee CMA programs continue to be supported through the implementation of activities which align with the Aboriginal Participation Guidelines for Victorian Catchment Management Authorities (2016) and directly progress objectives and priority actions identified within the Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (IPP).

Ongoing and effective engagement with the region’s two Registered Aboriginal Parties to inform program planning and development processes is facilitating self-determined participation in the delivery of NRM On-Country. In 2021–22 this included: First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC) undertaking cultural assessments, on-ground works (e.g. exclusion fencing, pest plant and animal control, revegetation) and monitoring activities across a number of significant sites; and the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) implementing Buloke Woodland revegetation programs in the southern Mallee.

The Mallee Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) continues to provide important, direct connections to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal community groups across the region. While COVID-19 restrictions impacted on the number of formal meetings that could be conducted over the past two years, adaptive management approaches (e.g. one-on-one discussions) supported member participation in regional planning processes and the identification of opportunities for Traditional Owner involvement in the delivery of associated activities. Traditional Owner/First Peoples engagement in program planning and delivery processes through participation in workshops, meetings, On-Country visits and cultural assessments also provide for the identification and incorporation of cultural knowledge, practice and objectives into NRM activity across the region.

The development of Community-led Action Plans (CLAPs) for our two flagship waterways (Merbein Common and Kings Billabong) has directly engaged local stakeholders in the identification of recreational objectives and priorities relating to these sites. Key activities delivered throughout 2021–22 included one-on-one interviews, surveys, community group meetings and targeted postal campaigns, with the aim of providing participants with an avenue to directly inform future waterway management actions.

*Further detail on Community Capacity for NRM condition benchmarks, medium-term trends, and the expected contribution of activities delivered in 2021–22 is provided in the Community Capacity for NRM section of the Condition and Management Report (see Appendix 2).*

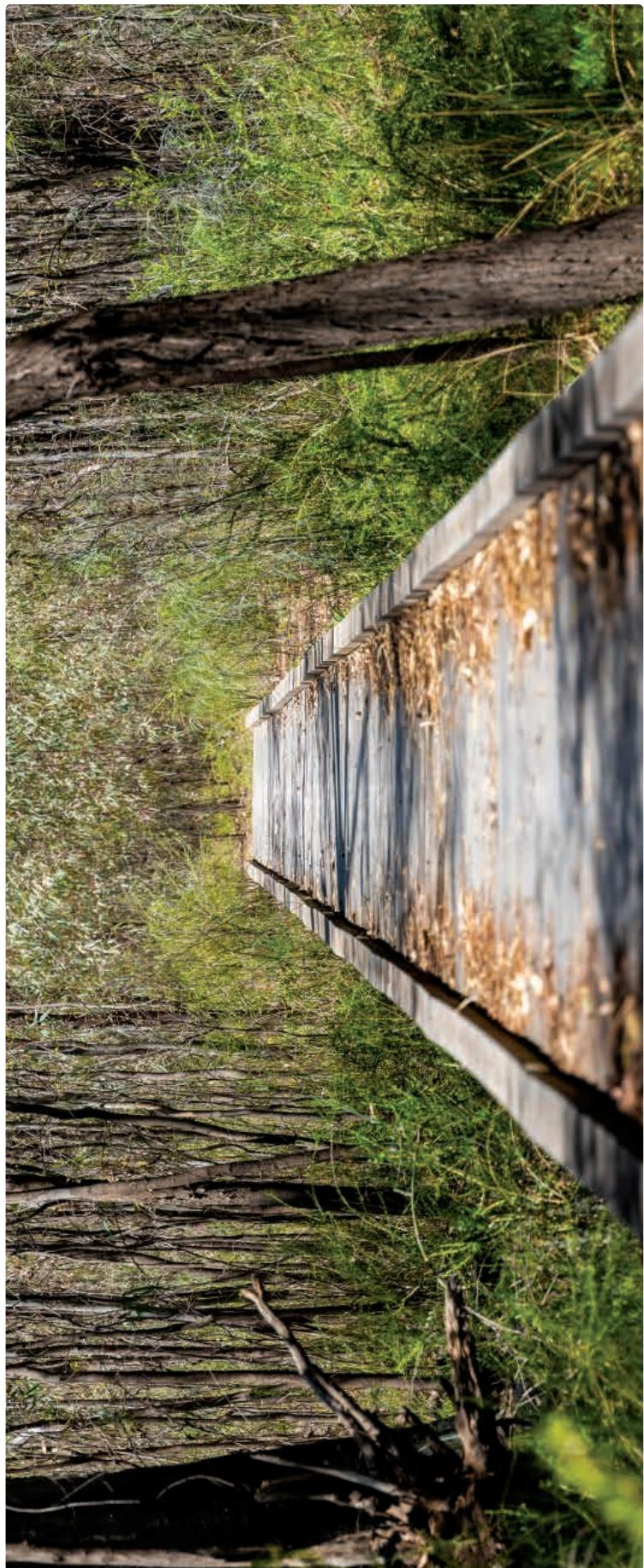
**Table 2 | Progress against performance measures for 'Community Capacity for NRM' strategic outcome indicators**

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
			2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Community engagement &amp; partnerships</b>							
<i>Ministerial Expectation: A strong community engagement focus that is a cornerstone of all MCMA functions</i>	Community Engagement and Partnering Framework for Victorian CMAs (2017) delivered against (i.e. meeting best practice standards)	percent	92	100	100	100	100
<i>Mallee RCS: Increased participation in community engagement and capacity building activities</i>	Delivery against Aboriginal Participation Guidelines for Victorian CMAs: Implementation Plan – Pathways to Participation' key outcomes	percent	91	100	100	100	100
	Community/stakeholder participation in engagement events/activities	number of participants	8,905	7,695	6,004	6,275	6,900
	Participants rating engagement activities as 'good' or 'excellent'	number of events	660	670	588	501	562
	Awareness of NRM issues reported by capacity building activity participants	percent of respondents	93	97	99	98	98
<i>Mallee RCS: Increased awareness of the region's natural, cultural and productive values</i>	Skills to address threat processes reported by capacity building focused activity participants	percent increase (average)	66	71	61	36	55
<i>Mallee RCS: Increased skills in identifying and delivering priority NRM activities</i>	Communication materials produced to promote programs, activities, etc.	number of publications	509	568	439	327	311
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; Mallee RCS: Increased information sharing in promoting NRM and associated evidence base</i>	Social media (Facebook) to promote activities, values, threats etc.	number of posts	330	554	408	348	468
		number of views	32,394	495,546	487,415	307,091	394,407
<b>Recognise and support Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the water sector</b>							
	TO groups participating in forums (formal & informal) to inform project planning and delivery processes	percent of Registered Aboriginal Parties	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; Mallee RCS: Effective engagement of Traditional Owners</i>	TO groups participating in the delivery of NRM focused activities	percent of Registered Aboriginal Parties	100	100	100	100	100
	Participants at engagement activities identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people	percent of respondents	12	17	28	10	16
<b>Recognise recreational values</b>							
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Effective engagement with the community to identify and prioritise opportunities to deliver recreational objectives relating to the management of water and waterways</i>	Opportunities for community stakeholders to inform recreational priorities for local waterways	number of events/surveys	-	-	19	18	21

Continued...

**Table 2 |** Progress against performance measures for ‘Community Capacity for NRM’ strategic outcome indicators

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Recognise recreational values</b>							
<i>Ministerial Expectation:</i> Effective collaboration with other organisations and government agencies to explore and progress opportunities to support recreational values	Watertway projects supporting recreational outcomes identified and progressed through collaboration with local stakeholders (number)	number	-	-	3	3	5
<i>Ministerial Expectation:</i> Accessible and user-friendly information for recreational users about waterway conditions to help community members plan their recreational activities	Mechanisms (e.g. online, local organisations, events) utilised to provide information promoting recreational opportunities provided by Mallee watertways	number	-	-	3	5	7



Boardwalk at Kings Billabong

## Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Performance against the organisations 2021–22 priority activities for progressing community capacity outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets is provided in Table 3.

Overall, 82 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with three of the 17 measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded 5% variance), specifically:

- **Formal partnerships:** Changes in project scheduling to allow for site access limitations following rainfall events throughout autumn-winter 2022 delayed the establishment of six associated partnership arrangements (e.g. project steering committee TOR, delivery contracts); representing a six percent (95/101) variance from the annual target.
- **Management Agreements:** Lower than forecast participation in the Mallee Irrigation Incentive Program (MIIP) reduced the number of formal agreements established with private landholders for the delivery of on-farm works; representing a 25 percent (53/71) variance from the annual target.
- **Incentives/grants:** All 2021–22 incentive funding allocated to private land managers under the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP), Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP) Our Catchment, Our Communities, and Victorian Landcare programs was fully expended over the reporting period, with the 32 percent (\$143k) under achievement relating to the MIIP. A combination of irrigation incentives not being open for ten months in 2020–21 (to allow for completion of a state-wide review of irrigation incentive programs) and the influence of COVID-19 restrictions on engagement approaches/outcomes when the new MIIP was released in April 2021 directly impacted landholder interest, and resulted in none of the associated funding being allocated to works projects in 2021–22.

Table 3 | Performance against 2021–22 Community Capacity for NRM activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Community engagement &amp; partnerships</b>						
	Communication and Engagement Plans developed, implemented and reported to meet internal and/or government requirements	number	6	6	0	✓
	Formal community and regional delivery partner forums facilitated/coordinated to meet government and/or internal requirements	number	24	24	0	✓
	Participants attending engagement events	number	6,900	4,052	70	✓
	Participants rating engagement activities as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’	percent of respondents	98	>90	0	✓
	Communication materials produced and disseminated	number	311	262	11	✓

Continued...

**Table 3 | Performance against 2021–22 Community Capacity for NRM activity measures**

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Community engagement &amp; partnerships</b>						
	Formal partnerships established/maintained	number	95	101	-6	■
	Management agreements established/maintained with land managers (public and private) to deliver targeted NRM activities	number	53	71	-25	■
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; Mallee RCS: Work collaboratively with organisations and communities to strengthen engagement approaches and capacity</i>	Funding allocated to Community Grants expended (i.e. provided to community groups)	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Funding allocated to land manager incentives/grants expended (i.e. provided to private land managers)	percent	68	100	-32	■
	Assessments undertaken to inform regional evidence base	number	555	574	-3	○
<b>Recognise and support Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the water sector</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Support Aboriginal communities to participate in the development, delivery and evaluation of NRM programs and activities</i>	Engagement event participants identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people	percent of respondents	16	>15	0	✓
	Aboriginal people represented on CMA committees/reference groups	percent of representation	28	>25	0	✓
<i>Mallee RCS: Partner with Traditional Owners in water planning and management to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal communities</i>	Engagements with Traditional Owner groups in water planning and management	number	35	20	75	✓
	Reports detailing outcomes of Traditional Owner engagements	number	6	6	0	✓
<b>Recognise recreational values</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Engage with the community to identify and prioritise opportunities to deliver recreational objectives relating to the management of water and waterways</i>	Community consultation events and/or surveys undertaken to identify recreational values/priorities for local waterways	number	21	6	250	✓
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Collaboration with other organisations and government agencies to explore and progress opportunities to support recreational values</i>	Activities supporting recreational outcomes identified/progressed through collaboration with local stakeholders	number	8	6	33	✓
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Provide accessible and user-friendly information for recreational users about waterway conditions to assist community members plan recreational activities</i>	Online information systems (i.e. Website, Facebook) promoting recreational opportunities provided by Mallee waterways	number	3	3	0	✓

## Key initiatives and projects

Initiatives that supported our delivery against stated priority activities and associated performance targets in 2021–22 included both State and Commonwealth funded programs. An overview of their contributions in relation to building Community Capacity for NRM is provided in Table 4.

**Table 4 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Community Capacity for NRM’ activities and associated performance target**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Aboriginal Water Officer	<p>The Aboriginal Water Officer project is supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting development of key planning documentation (e.g. Seasonal Watering Proposals, Environmental Water Management Plan (EWMP) updates), Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP) incorporating and promoting Aboriginal values and interests.</li> <li>Participating in key partnership forums, including the state-wide Aboriginal Water Officer Network, and the Mallee Aboriginal Reference Group.</li> <li>Building working relationships with local Aboriginal Elders, Traditional Owner groups, and other community groups (e.g. Mallee District Aboriginal Services).</li> <li>Talk Water events supported/hosted On-Country with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to promote Aboriginal water values and aspirations.</li> <li>Facilitated engagement events, with a focus on school-based activities (e.g. Koori Girls Academy and Killalaana Girls empowerment program) to build awareness of Traditional Owner/Aboriginal input into water regimes and planning.</li> </ul>
Environmental Water Program	<p>Projects including Environmental Water Reserve Officers, Refine Ecological Objectives, and Connecting Communities to Waterways are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government's Environmental Water Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 publications disseminated to promote the region's waterway values and the shared benefits of environmental watering. These included targeted materials (e.g. flyers, media articles, videos, social media posts) to promote seasonal watering proposals, opportunities for the community to be involved, and delivery outcomes.</li> <li>Review and renewal of 4 Environmental Watering Management Plans (i.e. Merbein Common, Psyche Bend Lagoon and Woorlong Wetland, Kings Billabong, Butlers Creek) to update associated ecological, social and cultural objectives.</li> <li>Development of 10 Environmental Water Delivery Plans for sites receiving water in 2021–22.</li> <li>14 agreements established / maintained with landholders / managers to enable delivery of water to privately owned wetlands and to undertake works at public sites.</li> <li>206 assessments (e.g. cultural, fauna, flora, surface water) undertaken to monitor inundation extent and ecological responses to watering.</li> <li>Seasonal Watering Proposals developed for 2022–23 in consultation with key stakeholders; encompassing priority waterways within the Hattah Lakes, Lower Murray Wetlands, Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Wetlands, and Lindsay, Wallpolla, and Mulcra areas.</li> <li>45 engagement activities delivered (448 participants) with a focus on developing water literacy for key stakeholders, facilitating local participation in ‘community-led action planning’, and connecting community to local waterways through Citizen Science based programs (e.g. bird and frog monitoring).</li> </ul>  <p>School group at Kings Billabong.</p>

*Continued...*

**Table 4 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority 'Community Capacity for NRM' activities and associated performance target**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Floodplain Management Program	<p>Implementation of the Flood and Emergency Resilience project is supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government's Floodplain Management Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 formal partnership maintained with the Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy Implementation Committee, responsible for overseeing the delivery, evaluation and reporting of priority floodplain management activities established by the Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (MFMS).</li> <li>• Delivery against priority actions established by the MFMS Regional Works Plan, including:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progressing the Mid-Murray, Birchip, Beulah and Robinvale Flood Studies to provide regional stakeholders with more accurate data and mapping for improved management of future flood events</li> <li>- Managing required processes within the online FloodZoom platform to support data accessibility and applicability outcomes</li> <li>- Progressing amendment to Mildura Rural City Council planning scheme to incorporate updated flood mapping.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Mallee Salinity Investment Plan	<p>Salinity Offsetting Charges are collected specifically to offset salinity impact of irrigation development from Nyah to the South Australian border.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 engagement events delivered/supported (258 participants), including; a site at the Mildura Field Days to provide salinity focused information and activities, and 9 'shed' meetings to engage local irrigators.</li> <li>• 15 publications developed/disseminated to promote and/or report key activities, including materials (media articles, brochure, guidelines) promoting the 2022 Mallee Irrigation Incentive Program.</li> <li>• 2 formal partnerships /maintained to facilitate stakeholder input into the development, delivery, and evaluation of program activities. This includes the ongoing operation of the Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee (SAAC), and participation on the Regional Water Monitoring Partnership (RWMP) forum.</li> <li>• Ongoing monitoring and reporting of 28 drainage outfall sites (flow and salinity) and 436 groundwater bores (depth and salinity) to inform associated modelling and reporting requirement.</li> <li>• Detailed designs for a regional Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) survey of the Mallee irrigation region to efficiently map subsurface salinity and increase certainty in the assessment of risk associated with salinity impacts to the river and landscape as a result of Victorian Mallee irrigation.</li> <li>• Development of an on-farm planning/decision support tool for irrigation areas to support landscape salinity management and restoration consistent with legislation and investment guidelines.</li> </ul> <p>Mildura Field Days 2022.</p>
Murray-Darling Basin Plan	<p>The Living Murray (TLM) is a joint initiative funded by the New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian, Australian Capital Territory, and Commonwealth governments, coordinated by the Murray Darling Basin Authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38 assessments undertaken to support ongoing monitoring of the impacts of TLM investment over time on both threat mitigation (short-term) and resource condition (long-term). Key activities included fish, water bird, frog, bat, and vegetation health surveys within the two Ikon Sites (Hattah and Lindsay, Mulwala, Wallipollai). Findings from these assessments were reported through 16 written publications.</li> <li>• 44 events engaged 577 participants in activities such as field days and workshops. Target audiences included Traditional Owners/First Peoples, land managers, school groups, Commonwealth and Victorian Environmental Water Holders, and the Operational Advisory Group (OAG).</li> </ul>

*Continued...*

## Part 1 Performance Reporting - Non-financial

**Table 4 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority 'Community Capacity for NRM' activities and associated performance target**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
National Landcare Program	<p>Regional Land Partnership (RLP) Projects including; Core Services, Threatened Species Services, Threatened Ecological Community Services, Soil Services and Ramsar Services are supported by the Mallee CMA through funding provided by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 94 engagement events delivered/supported (2,516 participants) to build stakeholder awareness of and capacity for regional delivery against program priorities including nationally significant threatened species (Malleefowl and Plains-wanderer) and communities (Buloke Woodlands); sustainable agriculture management practices; and Ramsar management activities. Activities included field days, workshops, meetings, and training events. Citizen Science approaches were also employed to engage the local community in monitoring priority species/communities and the impact/incidence of associated threat processes.</li> <li>• 7 stewardship management agreements maintained with private landowners covering 84 ha of priority Buloke Woodlands.</li> <li>• 13 community groups (Landcare, NRM community-based groups &amp; Farmer groups) to undertake the delivery of targeted on-ground works and/or community engagement events that support progress against RLP outcomes.</li> <li>• Continued, effective function of the Mallee CMA Aboriginal Reference Group in fostering communications with Aboriginal stakeholders and providing input into regional initiatives and plans.</li> <li>• 77 assessments undertaken to support ongoing monitoring of the impacts of investment over time on both threat mitigation (short-term) and resource condition (long-term). Key activities included an annual survey being undertaken by the Birchip Landcare Group to verify the persistence of Plains-wanderer in the southern Mallee; and delivery of the Adaptive Management Predator Experiment (AMPE) in partnership with the National Malleefowl Recovery Team to determine the efficacy and impact of fox baiting programs.</li> <li>• 62 publications disseminated to engage stakeholders and promote delivery against National Landcare priorities. These included social media posts; written publications (factsheets, media releases, poster displays, project reports); virtual tours of local research trials; and 2 editions of the Mallee Farmer newsletter.</li> </ul>  <p>Scout group training event to conduct monitoring.</p>
Our Catchments, Our Communities	<p>Projects to improve catchment stewardship and partnerships are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government's Our Catchments, Our Communities Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 formal partnerships established/maintained; including ongoing coordination/facilitation of Catchment Partnership Agreement (CPA) forums (i.e. the Biodiversity/Water and Sustainable Dryland Agriculture Catchment Partnership Committees), to support coordination and collaboration between key regional delivery partners.</li> <li>• 33 assessments (cultural, social, invasive species, and spatial) undertaken; including surveys of local stakeholders to inform the development of place-based project plans incorporating community and land manager priorities.</li> <li>• 11 management agreements established, including: 5 with private landholders to undertake stewardship focused actions on riparian habitat; and 1 with First People of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation for the delivery of works to protect a culturally significant site.</li> <li>• 61 engagement events delivered/supported (449 participants), including workshops with delivery partners and broader community stakeholders, training activities, and On-Country events to support project planning and delivery.</li> <li>• 17 publications (e.g. social media posts, media/ newsletter articles, project reports) disseminated to promote/report project delivery; including documentation of place-based plans developed in consultation with local stakeholders; and promotion of grants available for the delivery of associated stewardship actions.</li> <li>• 3 community-based groups receiving 'regional leadership' grants to support attendance at events such as the MDBA 'River Reflections' conference and deliver local environmental awareness activities.</li> </ul>

Continued...

**Table 4 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Community Capacity for NRM’ activities and associated performance target**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Sustainable Irrigation Program	<p>Mallee Irrigation Frameworks, Mallee Wise Water Use &amp; Best Practice, Mallee Irrigation Drainage Management, and Mallee BSM2030 projects are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government to progress implementation of the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 engagement events delivered/supported (687 participants), including: industry workshops, presentations at partnership forums, and a site at the Mildura Field Days.</li> <li>• 70 publications (i.e. media articles, reports, brochures, fact sheets) disseminated to promote and/or report key 2021–22 activities;</li> <li>• 6 formal partnerships established/maintained, including formation of the Land and Water Management Plan Implementation Committee.</li> <li>• Participation in other key policy and partnership forums, including: the Victorian Salt Disposal Working Group, statewide Sustainable Irrigation Program forum, and Seasonal Annual Use Limit (AUL) Adjustment Review Panel.</li> </ul>    <p>Mallee CMA tent at the Growing Smarter in the Mallee Summit.</p>
Threatened Species Initiative	<p>Biodiversity Response Planning and Icon Species projects are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government to progress implementation of the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 management agreements established and/or maintained with land managers (9 private / 5 public) to facilitate the delivery of priority works programs.</li> <li>• 70 assessments (cultural, flora, fauna) undertaken to evaluate the impact/effectiveness of on-ground works.</li> <li>• 54 engagement events delivered/supported (152 participants) to facilitate stakeholder participation in project delivery. This included training activities and workshops/meetings with land managers (public and private).</li> <li>• 11 publications (social media posts, project reports) disseminated to promote/report annual delivery. This included final reports on a feral cat control program undertaken in Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, and the release of Murray Hardyhead in Kootong Lake.</li> </ul>  <p>Blackbox monitoring at Hattah.</p>

Continued...

**Table 4 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Community Capacity for NRM’ activities and associated performance target**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
<b>Victorian Landcare Program</b>	<p>The Regional Landcare Coordinator and Victorian Landcare Grant projects are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships maintained with 25 regional Landcare groups to provide ongoing coordination and support.</li> <li>14 engagement activities (256 participants), including: regional Landcare facilitator and consortium meetings; Landcare for Country working group, and Victorian Landcare Team meetings.</li> <li>11 publications including a regular ‘Mallee Landcare’ newsletter, social media posts, fact sheets, and contributions to the Victorian Landcare magazine to promote achievements and opportunities.</li> <li>Agreements established with 21 Landcare and community groups for delivery of the 2021–22 round of Victorian Landcare Grants; with funded activities (i.e. pest plant and animal control, revegetation works, riparian habitat and health information session, and threatened species research) to be completed in 2022–23.</li> </ul>
<b>Waterway Environmental Works</b>	<p>The Catfish Environmental Regulator project is supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government’s Building Works stimulus package – Waterway Environmental Works component.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 management plan encompassing detailed designs and construction costs for planned infrastructure at Catfish Billabong.</li> <li>Ongoing implementation of stakeholder engagement plan, with 10 associated events delivered (82 participants). This included consultation with Traditional Owners and public land managers; and a community engagement campaign (e.g. attendance at local events and social media posts) to communicate the importance of the project, the benefits it will provide, and the significance of the site (Merbein Common).</li> <li>1 formal partnership maintained through operation of a stakeholder working group.</li> </ul>
<b>Waterway Health Program</b>	<p>Projects including the Flagship Waterways (Merbein Common, Kings Billabong), Water Statutory Functions, and Ramsar Management are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government’s Waterway Health Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>77 engagement events (1,052 participants) to promote the region’s riparian values and engage stakeholders in their management. This included working with Traditional Owners, land managers and community members to plan and deliver works at Merbein Common and Kings Billabong, the region’s 2020–24 Flagship Waterway sites.</li> <li>10 formal partnerships established/maintained to facilitate coordinated approaches to the development, implementation, and review of regional waterway health-related activities. This included ongoing coordination/facilitation of the Hattah Ramsar Coordinating Committee, which was established to manage implementation of the Ramsar site management plan; and establishment of project steering committees for each of the Flagship Waterway sites.</li> <li>4 plans developed, encompassing: MERI plans for the two Flagship sites, and review/renewal of the Hattah Ramsar site annual action plan and MER plan. These plans directly informed 63 assessments (cultural, property, social, faunal) undertaken to evaluate the impact/effectiveness of on-ground works and associated capacity building activities. Citizen Science approaches to MER activities were also employed, with local community members engaged in water quality, bird, bat, turtle, and frog surveys.</li> <li>1 management agreement established with a community group to deliver riparian restoration works through the Angler Partnership Grants program.</li> <li>11 publications (social media posts and media/newsletter articles) disseminated to promote project delivery and engage local stakeholders in associated planning processes.</li> </ul>



Bat monitoring at Cowanna Billabong.

## **Business Objective 2**

### **Protect and enhance the region's natural, cultural and productive values**

#### **Theme: Waterways**

Mallee CMA is the regional caretaker for waterway health and relies on the development and implementation of robust and effective management plans at a national, state, regional, and local level to address key threatening processes in an integrated and targeted way. By continuing to work with regional partners and local stakeholders to deliver against priorities identified under this framework, Mallee CMA is seeking to deliver against the following Waterway-related outcome:

*Priority waterways and associated riparian habitat are providing enhanced social, economic and environmental services to the community.*

Delivery against this outcome also contributes to achieving priorities established by key policy and strategic frameworks, including:

- Water for Victoria (2016)
- Mallee Waterway Strategy (2014–2022)
- Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (2018)
- Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar Site Ecological Character Description (2011) and Annual Work Plan (2021–22)
- Environmental Watering Management Plans
- Our Catchments, Our Communities: Building on the Legacy for Better Stewardship (2021)
- Ministerial Expectations for 'waterway and catchment health' and 'recognise recreational values' (2021–22).

#### **Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures**

Progress against these strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against three key indicators. These indicators are presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 5).

Delivery of over 168,000 hectares of environmental works over the 2017–2022 reporting period represents significant progress against both the short-term (activity/output) and medium-term (outcome) targets set by the Mallee Waterway Strategy 2014–2022 (MWS) for priority waterways within each of the region's 23 Waterway Management Units.

Management of the four sites identified by Water for Victoria (2016) as a priority for the Mallee (i.e. Merbein Common wetlands, Belsar-Wallpolla Islands, Lindsay-Yungera Floodplain complex, Kings Billabong and Woorlong complex) has continued to be a priority under state-funded Waterway Health programs; supporting the delivery of environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes at each site. Of particular note is the suite of works implemented at the Merbein Common wetlands site, Mallee CMA's 2016–2024 Flagship Waterway project titled 'There's nothing common about Merbein Common'. This initiative is delivering significant improvements in habitat condition by rationalising non-arterial user made tracks and repairing key access roads, controlling priority pest plants, and establishing native vegetation. Application of this approach is also being built on through the new (2020–24) flagship site at Kings Billabong, with track rationalisation and exclusion works to protect priority habitat that commenced in 2021–22.

Application of Seasonal Watering Plans for the region has resulted in 212 watering regimes being implemented over the past five years, inundating over 25,000 hectares to deliver against associated ecological, social and cultural objectives set out by site based Environmental Water Management Plans.

Delivery of targeted works programs through the Regional Land Partnership Ramsar Services project has facilitated an increase in the area of pest animal control undertaken over the 2020–22 period. The four-year (2019–2023) Commonwealth-funded project aims to maintain key invasive species (e.g. foxes, rabbits, goats, pigs) below critical thresholds within the Hattah Ramsar site, and ensure the benefits of environmental watering events can be fully realised.

Mallee CMA places high importance on enhancing the recreational values of our priority waterways to support the well-being of rural and regional communities; with 86 individual visitor facilities installed over the past five years. This has included picnic and camping facilities, fishing platforms, canoe launches, walking tracks, and interpretation/appreciation signage.

*Further detail on Waterway condition benchmarks, medium-term trends, and the expected contribution of activities delivered 2021–22 is provided in the Waterway section of the Condition and Management Report (see Appendix 2).*

Table 5 | Progress against performance measures for Waterway strategic outcome indicators

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Waterway and Catchment Health</b>							
	Waterways treated for priority pest animal species	hectares	34,748	8,624	5,714	16,986	57,958
	Waterways treated for priority weed species	hectares	8,149	3,310	2,178	3,139	2,524
	Native vegetation established	hectares	32	100	6	11	49
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; RCS: Improved health of priority waterways &amp; their catchments</i>	Road rationalisation and repair works	kilometres	4	37	18	0	3
	Exclusion fencing installed	kilometres	25	39	27	49	8
	Watering regimes delivered to meet environmental objectives (i.e. as per Environmental Watering Management Plan)	number	48	48	34	48	34
<i>Mallee RCS: Improved management of Mallee flood risks</i>	Flagship Waterways managed to deliver against Rivers 2040 targets	number	1	1	1	2	2
	Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy objectives progressed	percent	-	-	69	69	83
<b>Recognise recreational values</b>							
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Increased amenity and recreational values provided by regional waterways</i>	Watering regimes delivering against recreational objectives	percent	100	100	100	100	100
	Visitor facilities installed	number	7	25	25	3	26

## Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Performance against our organisation's 2021–22 priority activities for progressing Waterway outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets are provided in Table 6. Overall, 85 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with two of the 13 measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded 5% variance), specifically:

- **Road rationalisation and repair works:** While track upgrades (1.3 km) at the Kings Billabong flagship site were completed as scheduled, 44 percent (2.2 km) of a walking track being constructed at Lake Cullulleraine was delayed due to wet weather limiting site access throughout autumn-winter 2022. Remaining works will be completed in 2022–23.
- **Watering regimes:** Nine (21%) of 43 scheduled watering regimes were cancelled in 2021–22 in response to localised changes in seasonal conditions and high river flows across the basin; with sites receiving water via natural inundation being removed from the program.

The significant over-achievement against 2021–22 targets for pest animal control weed control, exclusion fencing and native vegetation was a result of participating land managers delivering additional works with allocated funding.

**Table 6 | Performance against 2021–22 Waterway activity measures**

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Waterway and Catchment Health</b>						
	Waterways treated for priority pest animal species	hectare	57,958	12,204	375	✓
	Waterways treated for priority weed species	hectare	2,524	2,033	24	✓
	Native vegetation established	hectare	49	14	250	✓
	Exclusion fencing installed/maintained	kilometre	8.2	4.2	95	✓
	Road rationalisation and repair works	kilometre	3.5	6.3	-44	■
	Water for Victoria identified priority sites managed to support delivery against identified environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes	number	4	4	0	✓
	TLM sites managed, monitored and reported as per contractual/government requirements	number	2	2	0	✓
<b>Water Act SoO: Implement the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's The Living Murray Program (TLM) at Lindsay, Mulcra and Walpolia Islands; and Hattah Lakes</b>						
	Seasonal Watering Proposals submitted annually in line with stated requirements and accepted by associated partners/stakeholders	number	4	4	0	✓
	EWMPs reviewed annually	percent	13	13	0	✓
	Watering regimes delivered annually	number	34	43	-21	■

*Continued..*

**Table 6 | Performance against 2021–22 Waterway activity measures**

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Waterway and Catchment Health</b>						
<i>Mallee RCS; Implement priority actions established by the Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (MFMS) (2018)</i>	MFMS priority management actions progressed by annual works programs	percent	77	>75	0	✓
<b>Recognise recreational values</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Plan for and provide water services that explicitly consider recreational values as part of existing frameworks</i>	Environmental water delivery events providing recreational benefits annually Visitor facilities established	percent number	100 21	100 13	0 62	✓

#### Key initiatives and projects

Initiatives that supported our delivery against the stated priority activities and associated performance targets in 2021–22 included both state and Commonwealth funded programs. An overview of their contribution in relation to waterway management is provided in Table 7.

**Table 7 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority 'Waterway' activities and associated performance targets**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Environmental Water Program	<p>Projects including Environmental Watering Reserve Officers are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government's Environmental Water Program. Works are focused on the delivery of appropriate water regimes to enhance the environmental and social values of priority waterways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application of 2021–22 Seasonal Watering Plans for Hattah, Lindsay–Mulcra–Wallpolla, Murray Wetlands, and Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Wetlands resulted in 34 environmental water deliveries (8 river reaches and 26 wetlands) inundating 5,633 ha of priority floodplain habitat. Alignment with site based Environmental Water Management Plans is supporting progress against the associated ecological, social and cultural objectives of the watering regimes.</li> </ul>



Environmental water delivery to Robertson's Creek

Continued...

**Table 7 |** Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Waterway’ activities and associated performance targets

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
National Landcare Program	<p>Regional Land Partnership Mallee Ramsar Services are supported by the Mallee CMA through funding provided by the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program to protect the ecological character of the Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar site (i.e. 12 listed lakes and associated floodplain habitat).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,800 ha managed for Weeds of National Significance (e.g. Boxthorn, Bridal Creeper, Prickly Pear) to reduce competition within priority Black Box floodplain habitat and fringing woody vegetation.</li> <li>• Rabbit and feral goat control to reduce grazing impacts within priority River Red Gum (4,367 ha) and Black Box (800 ha) floodplain habitat.</li> <li>• Targeted fox control to reduce predation within 319 ha of waterbird breeding habitat.</li> <li>• Targeted feral pig control to reduce soil disruption and weed incursion impacts within 319 ha of Lake Bed Herblan.</li> </ul>  <p>Pig trap at Hattah.</p>
Our Catchments, Our Communities	<p>The Islands in the Sand – Ancient Connections project is supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government’s Our Catchments, Our Communities Program.</p> <p>Delivery in 2021–22 represented the commencement of priority actions identified by associated site-based plans for the three target areas; Lake Cullulleraine, B16, and private land manager stewardship sites.</p> <p>• Lake Cullulleraine provides a community hub for the surrounding cropping and pastoral growers, as well as tourists and Traditional Owner communities. Through integrated catchment management, the project is seeking to improve the social, environmental and cultural values the site provides. In 2021–22 this included a 2.2 km walking track and 9 visitor facilities (i.e. picnic tables and interpretive signage).</p> <p>• 5 private land managers participating in a stewardship program to protect priority riparian habitat collectively delivered 2 km of exclusion fencing, 47 ha of revegetation, and 33 ha of rabbit and weed control.</p>  <p>First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation undertaking revegetation.</p>  <p>Installing new visitor facilities at Lake Cullulleraine.</p>

*Continued..*

**Table 7 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Waterway’ activities and associated performance targets**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Waterway Health Program	<p>Projects including the Flagship Waterways (Merbein Common, Kings Billabong), Water Statutory Functions, and Ramsar Management are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government's Waterway Health Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing delivery against Mallee Waterway Strategy (2014–22) priorities in 2021–22 focused on the region's two Flagship Waterways (Merbein Common and Kings Billabong) and the Rattah Lakes Ramsar site. Implementation of associated Action Plans for each site delivered 1.2 km of track upgrades, 4 km of exclusion fencing/bollards, and 12 visitor facilities (i.e. Interpretative signage) across the Flagship sites; and 46,000 ha of feral goat and pig control at the Ramsar site.</li> <li>The Angler Partnership Program provides annual grants that support community groups deliver riparian or instream works at waterways of local priority. In 2021–22 the successful applicant (Lake Coorong/Lake Lasselles Committee of Management) protected riparian areas at Lake Lasselles by installing 400m of recycled plastic bollards to restrict vehicle access and undertaking 631 ha of targeted pest plant and animal control works (rabbits and weeds).</li> </ul>  <p>Completed track upgrade works at Kings Billabong.</p>



## Theme: Biodiversity

The Mallee supports a diverse and unique range of flora and fauna. Several species occur here which are found nowhere else in Victoria, and many others are genetically distinct from their northern or southern relatives. This includes 32 species and six communities listed as threatened nationally (i.e. *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*); and 370 species and seven communities listed in Victoria (i.e. *Flora Fauna Guarantee Act*).

Native vegetation across the Mallee once covered some 3,919,887 hectares, of which 52 percent is estimated to have been cleared. Much of the region's remaining vegetation has been reserved in large parks such as Murray-Sunset, Big Desert, Wyperfeld and Hattah-Kulkyne National Parks, extensive tracts of riverine and dryland state forests, and over 500 small reserves scattered throughout the agricultural area. These areas of public land are particularly significant given the largely cleared and fragmented agricultural landscape in which they occur. Remnants on private land, and the roadsides and rail reserves dissecting this land, also represent significant areas of our native vegetation. These are of particular importance for the threatened flora they contain and for the connectivity opportunities they provide to our region's fauna.

Historic native vegetation removal and associated habitat loss and fragmentation makes much of the region's biodiversity vulnerable to a range of threatening processes. This can include invasive plants and animals, inappropriate fire regimes, constrained regenerative capacity, recreational pressures and land-use change. By working with our community and delivery partners to address these key threats, Mallee CMA is seeking to deliver against the following Biodiversity-related outcomes:

*The viability of targeted threatened species and communities is being protected and enhanced*

*The ecosystem services provided by targeted terrestrial habitat are being protected and enhanced*.

Delivery against these outcomes also contributes to achieving priorities established by key policy and strategic frameworks, including:

- Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 (2017)
- Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy (2015–20)<sup>1</sup>
- Commonwealth and Victorian Recovery Plans/Action Statements for target threatened species and communities.

### Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against these strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against two key indicators (see Table 8).

Delivery of over 1.9 million hectares of environmental works across the 2017–2022 reporting period represents significant progress against federal, state and regional targets for Mallee biodiversity. This includes the re-establishment or enhancement of priority habitat through tube stock planting and direct seeding; targeted pest plant and animal control to reduce competition, grazing and predation impacts; exclusion fencing to protect priority remnants from overgrazing; and the release of threatened fish species to reintroduce or enhance local populations.

The area of pest animal, weed and exclusion fencing works delivered in 2021–22 was lower than the previous four years, reflecting finalisation of several projects funded under the State Government's Threatened Species Initiative. These projects delivered against actions identified by the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy (Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037) as being a priority for the Mallee to support the recovery of 16 threatened species and four threatened ecological communities.

<sup>1</sup> The Australian Government released a new (2021–26) Threatened Species Strategy in October 2021. Reporting against the associated list of priority species will be incorporated into Mallee CMAs 2022–23 performance reporting.

Ongoing implementation of the National Landcare Program (NLP) is delivering against national priorities for threatened species and threatened ecological communities. Targeting delivery to improve the connectivity of critical Malleefowl habitat and to support the recovery of Buloke Woodlands in the southern Mallee is building on the outcomes achieved under previous (2013–18) NLP funding. An additional focus on Plains-wanderer is also delivering actions to validate the persistence of this priority species across the southern Mallee and support improvements in suitable habitat.

Broader terrestrial habitat improvement outcomes are also being progressed through the delivery of both targeted works and landscape-scale programs (e.g. works delivered under Victorian Landcare Grants).

*Further detail on Biodiversity condition benchmarks, medium-term trends, and the expected contribution of activities delivered 2021–22 is provided in the Biodiversity section of the Condition and Management Report (see Appendix 2).*

Table 8 | Progress against performance measures for Biodiversity outcome indicators

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<i>Mallee RCS: Improved ecosystem services provided by targeted terrestrial habitat</i>	Habitat treated for priority pest animal species	hectares	457,370	327,306	280,967	269,772	117,026
	Habitat treated for priority weed species	hectares	158,882	123,756	108,297	120,199	14,742
	Native vegetation established	hectares	269	463	434	523	593
	Exclusion fencing installed/maintained	kilometres	31	25	5	71	0
<i>Mallee RCS: Improved viability of targeted threatened species and communities</i>	Threatened flora species targeted by works programs to deliver against associated Action Statement/Recovery Plan	number	3	3	3	3	4
	Threatened fauna species targeted by work programs to deliver against associated Action Statement/Recovery Plan	number	18	18	16	16	17
	Threatened ecological communities targeted by works programs to deliver against associated Action Statement/Recovery Plan	number	4	4	4	4	4

## Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Performance against the organisation's 2021–22 priority activities for progressing Biodiversity outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets are provided in Table 9, with 100 percent of performance targets achieved or exceeded over the reporting period.

**Table 9 | Performance against 2021–22 Biodiversity activity measures**

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<i>Mallee RCS: Support implementation of Victoria's strategic plan for valuing and managing biodiversity into the future, Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 (2017); by delivering against actions identified as a priority for the Mallee</i>	Habitat treated for priority pest animal species	hectare	117,026	111,808	5	✓
	Habitat treated for priority weed species	hectare	14,742	14,672	0	✓
	Native vegetation established/maintained	hectare	1,153	667	73	✓
	Exclusion fencing installed/maintained	kilometre	0	0	0	✓
<i>Mallee RCS: Support implementation of Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy (2015–20); by delivering against species and actions identified as a priority for the Mallee</i>	Australian Government identified priority threatened species which occur in the Mallee targeted by works programs	percent	80	80	0	✓
	Priority habitat managed to support recovery of threatened species identified by the Australian Government as a priority for the Victorian Mallee	hectare	125,823	120,000	5	✓
	Threatened flora species targeted by works programs to deliver against associated Action Statement/Recovery Plan	number	4	4	0	✓
	Threatened fauna species targeted by works programs to deliver against associated Action Statement/Recovery Plan	number	17	17	0	✓
<i>Mallee RCS: Align the delivery of threatened species and communities' programs with associated Action Statements and Recovery Plans</i>	Threatened ecological communities targeted by works programs to deliver against associated Action Statement/Recovery Plan	number	4	4	0	✓

## Key initiatives and projects

Initiatives that supported our delivery against the priority activities and associated performance targets in 2021–22 included both state and Commonwealth-funded programs. An overview of their contribution in relation to Biodiversity is provided in Table 10.

**Table 10 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority Biodiversity activities and associated performance targets**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
<b>Mid Murray Floodplain Recovery Reach</b>	<p>The Tri-state alliance Fish project is supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Murray Darling Basin Authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400 Southern purple-spotted gudgeon (SPSG) released to complement captive breeding program by providing a secure, predator free site. The wetland near Mildura is one of six surrogate sites across the tri-state program area providing backup populations in the landscape. Ideally these also act as ‘natural hatcheries’ that can later be used to source larger numbers of SPPG for translocation into suitable wild sites (permanent floodplain wetlands) throughout the Murray Corridor.</li> </ul>
<b>National Landcare Program</b>	<p>Regional Land Partnership Threatened Species Services and Threatened Ecological Community Services are supported by the Mallee CMA through funding provided by the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program to progress delivery of the national Threatened Species Strategy (2015–20) and National Recovery Plans.</p> <p>Targeted works implemented in partnership with land managers and community groups to support the recovery of two threatened species (Malleefowl, Plains-wanderer) included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86 ha of vegetation corridors established/enhanced (tubestock and direct seeding) to reconnect isolated Malleefowl populations with core habitat; and 335 ha of 2018–21 planting maintained through supplementary planting and follow-up watering/invasive species management.</li> <li>• 22,949 ha of critical Malleefowl and Plains-wanderer habitat managed for rabbits and feral goats to reduce grazing impacts and support regeneration outcomes.</li> <li>• 13,243 ha of critical Malleefowl and Plains-wanderer habitat managed for Weeds of National Significance (e.g. Boxtorn, Bridal Creeper).</li> <li>• 14,597 ha of targeted fox control delivered in partnership with Malleefowl Recovery Group as part of the national Adaptive Management Predator Experiment.</li> </ul> <p>Delivery against priority actions identified by the National Recovery Plan for Buloke Woodlands progressed through the implementation of works programs within the Avoca Basin and Yarriambiack target areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86 ha of key canopy and understory species re-established (tubestock and direct seeding) within degraded remnants.</li> <li>• 860 ha managed for Weeds of National Significance (e.g. Boxtorn, Bridal Creeper, Hudsons Pear) to reduce competition.</li> <li>• 5,970 ha managed for rabbits to reduce grazing impacts and promote regeneration.</li> </ul>  <p>Buloke Woodlands revegetation in the Avoca Basin.</p>

Continued...



Targeted rabbit and weed control works are protecting Plains-wanderer habitat in the southern-Mallee.  
(Credit: Dr David Baker-Gabb)

**Table 10 |** Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority Biodiversity activities and associated performance targets

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
<b>Threatened Species Initiative</b>	<p>Biodiversity Response Planning and Icon Species projects are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government to progress implementation of the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>Delivery against actions identified by Victoria's Biodiversity Strategy (Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037) as being a priority for the Mallee. Targeted works implemented to support the recovery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17 threatened species (e.g. Mallee Emu-wren, Regent Parrot, Malleefowl, Carpet Python, Mallee Worm Lizard, Yellow Swainson-pea, and Murray Hardyhead).</li> <li>4 threatened ecological communities (e.g. Buloke Woodlands, Mallee Bird Community); across 11 priority landscapes (Annuello, Wandong, Cardross Lakes, Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes System &amp; National Park, Wyperfeld Dunefields, Wathie Dunefields, North Wimmera Creeklines, Pink Lakes, Murray River Floodplain: Nyah to Robinvale, Avoca Basin Terminal Lakes System and Creeklines, North West Woodlands).</li> </ul> <p>Key 2021–22 activities delivered in partnership with land managers and community groups included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>463 ha of native vegetation plantings maintained.</li> <li>639 ha of habitat managed for priority weeds (e.g., Boxthorn, cactus, Bridal Creeper, Buffel Grass).</li> <li>73,149 ha of habitat managed for priority pest animals to support reduced grazing, disturbance and predation outcomes (i.e. rabbits, feral goats, feral pigs, foxes, and feral cats).</li> <li>600 Murray Hardyhead released to increase numbers and genetic diversity of an established population in Koonlong Lake.</li> </ul>  <p>Feral cat baiting was conducted across the Hattah target area. (Credit: Tony Bowers)</p>  <p>Mallee Emu-wren is one of 17 threatened species targeted by program delivery. (Credit: Tom Hunt)</p>

## Theme: Land

Despite the semi-arid nature of the region, the predominance of winter rainfall and access to reliable water from the Murray River has allowed the Mallee to develop into an agriculturally diverse region, with important irrigation areas in the north along the Murray River, and extensive dryland cropping and grazing areas in the south, east and west. In total, some 62 percent of the region's area is utilised for agricultural production.

The productive capacity of our agricultural lands rose steadily over the last half of the twentieth century in response to increased mechanisation, improved management techniques, and genetic crop improvements. Today, agriculture remains our major land use and most economically-important industry. Dryland farming in the region covers some 2.4 million hectares and includes the cropping of a wide variety of cereals, pulse and oilseed crops such as wheat, barley, vetch, lupins, and canola.

The productivity of our agricultural land is, however, vulnerable to a number of processes and management practices (both historical and current), which play a major role in determining the impact of threats such as salinity, erosion, and invasive plants and animals. If not managed appropriately, these processes have the potential to degrade our agricultural land and potentially reduce the area available for production into the future.

By continuing to work with regional delivery partners, the Mallee CMA is seeking to support irrigators and dryland farmers to deliver against the following Land-related outcome:

*Management practices are being implemented to optimise the productive capacity of agricultural land while protecting associated natural values.*

Delivery against this outcome also contributes to achieving priorities established by key policy and strategic frameworks, including:

- Mallee Dryland Sustainable Agriculture Strategy (2017–2023)
- Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan (2020–2029)
- Water for Victoria (2016)
- Basin Salinity Management 2030 Strategy
- Ministerial Expectations for Water for Agriculture (2020–21).

## Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against two key indicators (see Table 11); one in relation to irrigated land, and one for dryland agriculture.

### Irrigated land

Between 1997 and 2021 (for which comprehensive irrigation crop data is available) irrigation development reliant on water from the Murray River has increased from 39,470 hectares to 81,140 hectares, representing a more than doubling of the irrigable area. There is a further 6,785 hectares of irrigable land in the Murrayville groundwater irrigation area, a 5,580 hectare increase since 1997.

Annual calculations of salinity credit consumption through irrigation development is a key regional reporting requirement under both Basin Salinity Management (BSM) 2030 and the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. The BSM2030 salinity accountability framework commits partner governments (including Victoria) to maintain agreed salinity levels and ensure their actions that increase river salinity are offset by investing in actions to reduce salinity.

Over the 2017–21 reporting period, significant changes were made to the Nyah to SA Border Salinity Management Plan Accountable Action: with its Register A entry revised down from 18.6 EC to 13.4 EC, and a shift from medium to high confidence. These changes represented a major achievement that concludes four years of investment in model development and salinity impact investigations.

The progressive total of salinity debits is now estimated at 13.94 EC; representing a 0.14 EC increase from June 2021 for the Nyah to SA border irrigation and no change to the 0.4 EC impact from Nyah to Colignan. With a total salinity credit allocation of 23.22 EC the region is currently 9.28 EC in credit overall, and remains compliant at a regional scale.

The Mallee Irrigation Incentive Program (MIIP), delivered in partnership with Agriculture Victoria, represents an integrated package of measures to encourage improved planning and management of irrigation and drainage systems. It provides financial assistance for improved irrigation management, for system upgrades, for skills development and planning at the farm level. All financial incentives are based on cost-sharing arrangements between the MIIP and irrigators and are supported by two separate initiatives:

- Incentives funded under the Victorian Sustainable Irrigation Program focus on supporting on-farm works and measures to improve irrigation management and water efficiency.
- Salinity impact offset charges collected by water authorities are managed under the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan and support the implementation of works which will secure future salinity benefits by reducing salt loads to the Murray River.

Over the 2017–2021 reporting period, these two programs collectively improved 2,237 hectares of irrigation infrastructure, encompassing 1,456 hectares of irrigation upgrades/conversions and the installation of 781 hectares of scheduling equipment. The water use efficiency gains achieved by these works is estimated to be 4,730 ML, with salinity benefits estimated to be a reduction of 13,848 tonnes/year in salt to the Murray River.

The contribution of these activities to regional outcome measures has however reduced since 2020. Delivery of the MIIP was delayed in 2020–21 to align with completion of a state-wide review of irrigation incentive programs, and enable associated recommendations to be incorporated into regional delivery processes; with a revised program launched in April 2021. Promotion of this new program was significantly impacted by ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, with many traditional engagement mechanisms (e.g. shed meetings) unable to be conducted and landholder interest limited throughout much of the 2021–22 reporting period.

While no incentive works (and associated WUE/Salinity benefits) were delivered in 2021–22, several expressions of interest were received over the April to June 2022 period following the return of face-to-face engagement opportunities.

#### Dryland agriculture

Mallee CMA's delivery against dryland agriculture outcomes is primarily funded under the Commonwealth's Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) funding initiative which identifies activities supporting increased groundcover (and reducing wind erosion) and soil organic carbon as investment priorities for the Victorian Mallee. The provision of incentives to private land managers to undertake associated threat mitigation works is not eligible under the program, meaning support for actions such as dune reclamation, stock containment, and discharge management is dependent on external initiatives such as dry seasonal conditions support packages.

Mallee CMA's RLP funded (2019–23) program focused on building the awareness, knowledge, and skills of land managers in relation to implementing improved management practices (as reported under Objective 1 - Community capacity for NRM of this performance report). The delivery of on-ground research and development sites to identify, validate and promote improved management practices also re-commenced in 2019–20 to further support these outcomes.

The Mallee Dryland Sustainable Agriculture Strategy (2017–2023) establishes a groundcover target of >50 percent to minimise the risk of wind erosion across the region's cropping areas. Performance against this target is reported annually in March, which represents a period of high erosion risk. Between 70 percent and 95 percent of the region achieved this target over the 2016–21 reporting period. The low (70–71%) figures reported for the 2018–20 period is largely a response to the well below average rainfall levels experienced across the region over an extended period, rather than any indication of widespread returns to inappropriate land management practices. Groundcover (75%) in March 2022 reflect relatively low rainfall over summer, with levels rising to 89 percent in April following the autumn break.

*Further detail on Land condition benchmarks, medium-term trends, and the expected contribution of activities delivered 2021–22 is provided in the Land section of the Condition and Management Report (see Appendix 2).*

**Table 11 | Progress against performance measures for Land strategic outcome indicators**

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Irrigated Land</b>							
	Irrigable area	hectares	78,775	81,150	81,245	81,245	88,125
	Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan management outcome targets progressed by program delivery	percent	-	-	-	89	98
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; RCS: Improved productivity and resilience of the Victorian Mallee irrigation sector</i>	Estimated water use efficiency (WUE) gains achieved by works	ML	1,199	1,036	1,066	137	0
	Estimated salinity benefits (i.e. reduced irrigation recharge) achieved by works	tonnes/year reduction in salt to Murray River	2,770	3,312	4,171	483	0
	Salinity credit uptake	EC at Morgan	17.86	18	18.46	13.8 <sup>2</sup>	13.94
<b>Dryland Agriculture</b>							
<i>Mallee RCS: Improved productive capacity &amp; resilience of dryland agricultural soils within the Victorian Mallee</i>	Mallee Dryland Sustainable Agriculture Strategy outcome targets progressed by program delivery	percent	100	100	100	100	100
	Proportion of the Mallee with more than 50 percent groundcover in March	percent	95	71	70	82	75

<sup>2</sup> Reported as 15.25 EC in 2020–21 Annual Report but revised following completion of accountable action review in 2021.

## Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Performance against the organisation's 2021–22 priority activities for progressing Land outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets are provided in Table 12. Overall, 63 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with three of the eight measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded 5% variance), specifically:

- Irrigation upgrades/conversions:** Variance in two measures was directly related to implementation of the MIIP which supports irrigators to implement on-farm works and measures (i.e. infrastructure upgrades/conversions and scheduling equipment) that provide water-use and salinity benefits. As detailed in the 'Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures' section above, a combination of the MIIP not being open for ten months in 2020–21 (to allow for completion of a state-wide review of irrigation incentive programs) and the influence of COVID-19 restrictions on engagement approaches/outcomes when the new MIIP was released in April 2021, directly impacted landholder interest and resulted in no incentive works (and associated WUE/Salinity benefits) delivered in 2021–22.
- Accountable Actions:** The third measure relates to the region's accountable actions, with two of the three activities progressed as per BSM2030 requirements (i.e. Legacy of History reviews for Dryland Clearance and Irrigation Development Register B entries were completed in July 2021 following Basin Salinity Management Advisory Panel endorsement of the report/modelling). The third, a combined Reduced Irrigation Salinity Impact (RISI) Stage 1 and Reduced Irrigation Salinity Impact Stage 2) Accountable Action Review, was delayed pending completion of the Sunraysia Model Update (SMU) project being undertaken by the Murray Darling Basin Authority. Outputs from the SMU upgrade include reviewed and endorsed RISI I & RISI II salinity BSMS register A values. Once the SMU project report is finalised and the model is approved (scheduled for August 2022) as fit for purpose, the accountable action review will be completed.

Table 12 | Performance against 2021–22 Land activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Irrigated land</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Promote sustainable irrigation management practices to support the growth and viability of regional communities</i>	Irrigation infrastructure upgrades/conversions for improved WUE Irrigation scheduling equipment installed for improved WUE	hectares	0	20	-100	■
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Support implementation and reporting of Victoria's salinity impact obligations under the Basin Salinity Management 2030 Strategy (BSM2030)</i>	Compliance with DELWP guidelines for Annual BSM2030 Implementation Report Accountable action reviews progressed as per BSM2030 Register	percent	100	100	0	✓
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Implement priorities established by the Mallee's Salinity Investment Plan to offset the salinity impact of new irrigation development between Nyah and the South Australian border</i>						
	Irrigation infrastructure upgrades/conversions for salinity benefits Irrigation scheduling equipment installed for salinity benefits Annual Mallee Salinity Investment Plan priority activities progressed	hectares	0	35	-100	■
		hectares	0	100	0	✓

Continued...

**Table 12 |** Performance against 2021–22 Land activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Dryland Agriculture</b>						
Mallee RCS: Implement priority actions established by the Mallee Dryland Sustainable Agriculture Strategy (2017–23)	On-ground research & Demonstration sites managed to identify, validate and promote improved management practices	number	4	4	0	✓
	Targeted extension programs delivered to promote sustainable agricultural production systems and improved management practices	number	2	2	0	✓
	Monitoring programs delivered for improved understanding of spatial/temporal variability in land management practices and associated soil health impacts	number	3	3	0	✓

### Key initiatives and projects

Initiatives which supported our delivery against the priority activities and associated performance targets in 2021–22 included state, Commonwealth and regionally funded programs. An overview of their contribution in relation to Land management is provided in Table 13.

**Table 13 |** Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority 'Land' activities and associated performance targets

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Sustainable Irrigation Program	<p>Mallee Irrigation Frameworks, Mallee Wise Water Use &amp; Best Practice, and Mallee BSM2030 projects are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government to progress implementation of the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation and submission of the 2020–21 BSM2030 Implementation Report as per government requirements, with the salinity impact of irrigation development for Nyah to SA Border SMP revised down from 18.6 EC to 13.4 EC to reflect improvements in associated modelling development and impact investigations. No change was determined for the Narngiloc-Colignan SMP, bringing the total Mallee salinity debit to 13.94 EC as of June 2022, within the 23.22 EC salinity credit allocations for these areas.</li> <li>2 BSM2030 Register B entities (Legacy of History reviews for Dryland Clearance and Irrigation Development) were completed in July 2021 with Basin Salinity Management Advisory Panel endorsement of the report/modelling (EM 1.3).</li> <li>Completion of Phase 2 of a research study investigating climate change impacts on horticulture within the Mallee, and associated commodity-specific decision support tools.</li> <li>Ongoing coordination and communication of the Seasonal Annual Use Limit (SAUL) adjustment process.</li> <li>Implementing a salinity flushing event for Psyche Bend lagoon in response to associated trigger points being reached.</li> </ul>  <p>Psyche Bend Lagoon.</p>

Continued...

**Table 13 |** Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Land’ activities and associated performance targets

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
<b>Mallee Salinity Investment Plan</b>	<p>Activities delivered by projects funded from Salinity Offsetting Charges (collected specifically to offset salinity impact of irrigation development from Nyah to the South Australian border).</p> <p>Seven priority activities established by the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan were progressed, encompassing: works and measures to gain salinity credits for Victoria; major projects development drainage monitoring; groundwater monitoring; refining salinity management policy; salinity research; and regional capacity development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 works and measures action commenced in 2021–22; improving the operational efficiency of the Mildura-Merbein Salt Interception Scheme to prevent a loss of 0.7 EC for Victoria.</li> <li>• Salinity research included field-based validation of regional estimates of root zone drainage (RZD) to improve the accuracy of, and confidence in modelled interactions between RZD and irrigation inputs, crop type, climate etc.</li> <li>• Refining salinity management policy included a study to identify Acid Sulphate Soils and assess their degree of hazard to the environmental values and water quality of 17 wetlands; with best practice management strategies to avoid and/or ameliorate adverse impacts also identified.</li> </ul>
<b>National Landcare Program</b>	<p>Regional Land Partnership Soils Services are supported by the Mallee CMA through funding provided by the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.</p> <p>Delivery against Regional Land Program priorities for wind erosion and soil organic carbon in partnership with Agriculture Victoria, Birchip Cropping Group, and Mallee Sustainable Farming included:</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted communication/engagement activities to improve awareness (and ultimately adoption) of alternative farming systems which have the potential to significantly enhance groundcover levels in the northern Mallee. Utilising existing research trial sites, delivery-focused sharing results/interpretations; identifying new emerging risks and appropriate responses, and validation of key barriers/drivers of change.</li> <li>• Ongoing implementation of the revised Mallee Soil Erosion and Land Use Monitoring Framework to deliver against federal, state and regional MFR requirements. This includes conducting roadside transect surveys twice annually (Autumn and Spring) to determine land management practices, and the application of remote sensing to identify groundcover interactions.</li> <li>• Supporting the maintenance and data collection/collation requirements of two DustWatch nodes located within the region (Walpeup and Werrimull). The data generated is utilised by the national monitoring framework which produces monthly reports on wind erosion indicators such as dust activity/ground cover at a range of scales.</li> <li>• Annual soil testing of 150 paddocks to further inform assessable soil carbon x land management data source collating both historical and additional soil test data) across the Mallee region. Providing local context for existing scientific knowledge and a key stakeholder engagement mechanism.</li> <li>• Ongoing management, monitoring and promotion of research/demonstration site established in 2020 to support increased awareness of practices influencing soil carbon in the southern Mallee.</li> </ul> <p>Trial site at Curnyo (credit Birchip Cropping Group).</p>

## Theme: Culture and Heritage

The region's rich and diverse Aboriginal culture and heritage has been formed through the historical and spiritual significance of sites associated with human occupation spanning thousands of years, together with the enduring connection Traditional Owners/First Peoples have with Mallee landscapes. The oldest dated Aboriginal heritage site in the Mallee region is located at Dierl (Lake Tyrrell), with human activity recorded as far back as between 26,600 and 32,000 years ago, although use of the site was possibly as early as 45,000 years ago.

Aboriginal cultural heritage is inextricably connected to our natural landscapes and as such is vulnerable to the same suite of threatening processes (e.g. altered hydrological regimes, soil erosion). Efforts to protect our natural values from these threats can also pose significant risks to cultural sites, particularly where soil disturbance is required (e.g. built infrastructure, invasive species management, and revegetation).

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016* provides for the protection of cultural heritage in Victoria, covering both tangible and intangible heritage. The Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 give effect to the Act, defining 'areas of cultural heritage sensitivity' and 'high impact activities'; and setting out the circumstances in which a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) should be prepared.

In delivering against its cultural heritage management responsibilities, Mallee CMA continues to work with regional partners and local stakeholders to deliver the following outcome:

*Cultural heritage sites are being recognised and protected as an integral component of all land, water, and biodiversity management processes.*

Delivery against this outcome also contributes to achieving priorities established by key policy and strategic frameworks, including:

- Mallee CMA Cultural Heritage Assessment Policy and Procedure (2020)
- DELWP Aboriginal Inclusion Plan: Mungarin – Gadhaba (2016–20)
- Pupangarli Mammarnepu 'Owning Our Future' Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025
- Aboriginal Participation Guidelines for Victorian Catchment Management Authorities (2016)
- Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (2021).

### Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against these strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against one key indicator (see Table 14).

Mallee CMA has undertaken 594 Cultural Heritage assessments at proposed works sites since 2017. These assessments have been delivered across all areas of our organisation's on-ground works programs (i.e. land, water, and biodiversity) as required by the Mallee CMA Cultural Heritage Assessment Policy and Procedure (2020); ensuring all obligations set out by the *Aboriginal / Heritage Amendment Act 2016* are met.

While only limited records exist in regard to the number of formal Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) that have been developed, approved, and lodged by Mallee CMA with First Peoples – State Relations; it is evident that these can vary in both number and area in any given year depending on the scale and type of works being implemented.

It is assumed that a site listed on a relevant heritage register is afforded some level of protection, and similarly that sites captured within a CHMP are protected through associated threat/risk mitigation activities. This assumption is applied in determining progress against the organisations stated outcome for Culture and Heritage. Mallee CMA Cultural Heritage Assessment and CHMP processes require that the location of any new (i.e. unregistered) sites identified as part of on-site inspections are provided to First Peoples – State Relations for inclusion on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) database. While records are not kept in regards to the number of sites specifically provided by Mallee CMA, performance at a regional scale is demonstrated by the total number of additional Aboriginal places and individual components registered in ACHRIS; which since 2017 has been 121 and 449 respectively.

*Further detail on Culture and Heritage condition benchmarks, medium-term trends, and the expected contribution of activities delivered 2020–21 is provided in the Culture and Heritage section of the Condition and Management Report (see Appendix 2).*

**Table 14 | Progress against performance measures for Culture and Heritage strategic outcome indicators**

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
	Cultural Heritage assessments undertaken by MCMA programs at proposed works sites	number	113	144	98	117	122
	CHMPs approved and lodged by MCMA with Aboriginal Victoria	number	5	7	2	1	0
<i>Mallee RCS: Increased recognition and protection of the region's cultural values</i>	hectare	17,916	300	812	2	0	
	Registered Aboriginal Places (ACHRIS)	number	4,334	4,345	4,405	4,463	4,455 <sup>3</sup>
	Components Recorded (ACHRIS)	number	5,832	6,031	6,128	6,214	6,281



Middens.

<sup>3</sup> The 2021–22 decrease in registered Places is likely due to the reclassification of the status of a site, or the merging of existing registered Places following further investigation.

## Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Performance against our organisation's 2021–22 priority activities for progressing Culture and Heritage outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets are provided in Table 15. Overall, 75 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with one of the four measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded 5% variance), specifically:

**Cultural Heritage Management Plan:** Completion of the CHMP being developed for planned works at the Merbein Common Flagship site was delayed by a combination of Traditional Owner availability throughout COVID-19 restrictions and rainfall events limiting site access throughout Autumn-Winter 2022.

Table 15 | Performance against 2021–22 Culture and Heritage activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<i>Mallee RCS: Implement all activities that may affect Indigenous sites, places, values or communities in line with the Mallee CMA Cultural Heritage Assessment Policy and Procedure (2020) to ensure that all obligations set out by the Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016 are met</i>	Non-compliance reports registered	number	0	0	0	↙
<i>Mallee RCS: Provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to be involved in Cultural Heritage assessments to build practical archaeological skills, facilitate connections with Country, and promote Indigenous ecological knowledge</i>	MCMIA Cultural Heritage field assessments engaging and/or employing Aboriginal people	percent	100	100	0	↙
<i>Mallee RCS: Provide the location of any new (i.e. unregistered) sites identified as part of on-site inspections to First Peoples – State Relations for inclusion on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) database</i>	MCMIA proposed works sites with completed Cultural Heritage assessments/approvals (%) Cultural Heritage Management Plans approved and lodged by MCMA with First Peoples – State Relations	percent number	100 0	100 1	0 100	■

## Key initiatives and projects

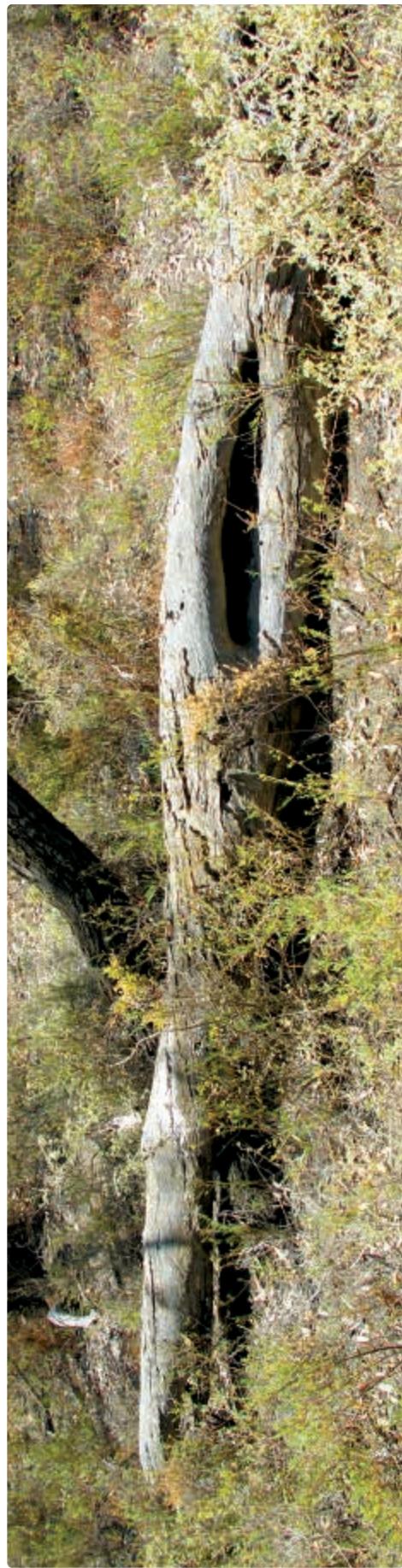
Initiatives that supported our delivery against the priority activities and associated performance targets in 2021–22 included both state and Commonwealth funded programs. An overview of their contribution in relation to Culture and Heritage management is provided in Table 16.

**Table 16 |** Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Culture and Heritage’ activities and associated performance targets

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Across all Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All 2021–22 funding initiatives delivering on-ground works programs have contributed to the delivery of 122 Cultural Heritage assessments undertaken at proposed works sites, encompassing &gt;400 000 ha.</li><li>Through these programs, Mallee CMA demonstrated 100% compliance with obligations as set out by the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016</i>.</li></ul>



Spearhead artefact.



Fallen Scat tree.

## Business Objective 3

### Strengthen our capacity to operate as a corporately and socially responsible organisation

#### Theme: Governance and Compliance

As a statutory authority, Mallee CMA has clear duties and accountabilities set out in legislation. The Statement of Obligations for the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CalP Act) and the *Water Act 1989*, the *Public Administration Act 2004*, the *Financial Management Act 1994*, and Mallee CMA's Board Charter of Corporate Governance all provide guidance for the Authority in relation to its governance requirements.

In delivering against these requirements, Mallee CMA is committed to a high level of corporate governance and to fostering a culture that values ethical behaviour, integrity, and respect. The Mallee CMA Board believes adopting and operating in accordance with high standards of corporate governance is essential for sustainable long-term performance and achievement of priority NRM outcomes.

Mallee CMA is also committed to building a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusion in all areas of our business by giving our staff a real voice and a sense of being valued for their difference of opinion, style and approach in order to achieve improvements in the way we do business. We do this through leveraging strengths from difference in gender, culture, generational groups, ethnicity, personal preferences, physical and mental abilities, and by respecting people as individuals.

By continuing to focus on strong governance and sustainable business practices for improved transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness, Mallee CMA is seeking to deliver against the following Governance and Compliance related outcome:

*Internal governance processes are ensuring compliance with all legislative requirements and statutory functions.*

Delivery against this outcome also contributes to achieving priorities established by key policy and strategic frameworks, including:

- Mallee CMA Risk Management Policy (2021)
- Mallee CMA Cultural Competency Framework (2016)
- Mallee CMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2017–22)
- Mallee CMA Gender Equality Plan (2021–2025)
- Mallee CMA Integrity, Fraud and Compliance Framework (2022)
- Mallee CMA Quality Objectives (2021)
- Mallee CMA Strategic Internal Audit Plan (2021–22)
- Mallee CMA Asset Management Strategy (2021)
- Mallee CMA Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan (2020–22)
- Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy (2021–24)
- Ministerial Expectations for 'leadership, diversity and culture', and 'improved performance and demonstrating outcomes' (2021–22).

## Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against this strategic outcome is measured through organisational performance against two key indicators. These indicators are presented according to the Ministerial ‘Priority Area’ with which they align (see Table 17).

Mallee CMA’s commitment to a high level of corporate governance continues to be demonstrated by the ongoing effort invested in retaining ISO 9001:2015 certification for our Quality Management System (QMS). Since achieving certification in 2016, annual surveillance audits have not identified any major non-conformities, and the three yearly Accreditation Audit conducted in 2019–20 did not identify any major or minor non-conformities. Recertification for the 2019–22 period was achieved in October 2019 with the next one scheduled for October 2022. Furthermore, 100 percent of areas identified for improvement by these audits and annual management reviews continue to be addressed on an ongoing basis.

Our organisation also continues to demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and statutory functions as set out by the CaLP and Water Acts. This has included incorporation of the ‘outcome’ based framework, introduced as a whole-of-government requirement in 2018–19, into annual planning and reporting processes (i.e. Corporate Plan and Annual Report).

Several regional strategies and plans have also been progressed in line with legislated requirements and government guidelines over the 2017–2022 reporting period. This has included completion of the Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (2018), Mallee CMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2017), the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan (2020), the Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (2021), the Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy (2022), and annual Seasonal Watering Proposals.

A review of the Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy in 2022 established organisational objectives and associated reporting metrics for the 2022–25 period; ensuring alignment with, and support for Government direction in advancing social and sustainable outcomes.

The Mallee CMA Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) was accepted by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in June 2022; demonstrating our commitment to gender equality throughout the organisation and ensuring it is embedded in all workplace behaviour and decision-making processes. Reporting against the strategies and measures set out by the GEAP will commence in 2022–23.

Implementation of the Mallee CMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan over the 2017–22 reporting period has also promoted leadership and culture across the organisation by providing cultural awareness training, promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, ensuring appropriate gender balance in recruitment panels, promoting LGBTI awareness and inclusion, and making organisational health and wellbeing initiatives available to all staff. program.

**Table 17 | Progress against performance measures for Governance and Compliance strategic outcome indicators**

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Improved performance and demonstrating outcomes</b>							
<i>Ministerial Expectation and MCMA QMS: Improved performance and demonstrated results against outcomes</i>	Ongoing maintenance of ISO 9001:2015 Certification achieved in 2016 (major non-conformities findings by annual surveillance audits and three yearly accreditation audits)	number	0	0	0	0	0

*Continued..*

**Table 17 | Progress against performance measures for Governance and Compliance strategic outcome indicators**

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
			2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Improved performance and demonstrating outcomes</b>							
	Quality Management System (QMS) initiatives implemented to support ongoing improvements/efficiencies	number		5	4	6	3
	Government approval/acceptance of MCMA Annual Reports, Corporate Plans, Board/Audit and Risk Committee performance assessment reports, and legislated regional strategy/action plans	percent	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Ministerial Expectation and MCMA QMS: Improved performance and demonstrated results against outcomes</b>	Statutory requirements (permits, referrals, advice, and licenses) responded to within the prescribed period (<20 working days)	percent	100	100	100	100	100
	Registered stakeholder feedback which is 'positive'	percent	98	89	100	89	96
	Participants rating the delivery of information at engagement activities as good/excellent	percent	92	97	98	98	98
<b>Leadership, diversity and culture</b>							
<b>Ministerial expectation and MCMA QMS: Increased diversity and inclusion in the workplace</b>	MCMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan workforce initiatives implemented	percent	n/a	97	100	100	87



NAIDOC celebration at Kings Billabong.

## Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Performance against the organisation's 2021–22 priority activities for progressing Governance and Compliance outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets is provided in Table 18; with 100 percent of performance targets achieved or exceeded (within 5% variance) over the reporting period.

**Table 18 | Performance against 2021–22 Governance and Compliance activity measures**

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Improved performance and demonstrating outcomes</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation and MCMA QMS: Collaborate with DELWP and other funding bodies to improve reporting systems and processes</i>	Reporting-focused forums coordinated and/or supported to meet government and internal requirements	number	5	5	0	✓
	Compliance with DELWP 2020–21 Annual Report guidelines	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Compliance with DELWP 2021–26 Corporate Plan guidelines	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Compliance with DELWP Guidelines for Board and Audit Committee performance assessment report	percent	100	100	0	✓
<i>Ministerial Expectation and MCMA QMS: Demonstrate outcomes of government investment into waterways &amp; catchment health</i>	Strategic planning, evaluation and reporting frameworks developed/reviewed in line with government/internal requirements	number	11	11	0	✓
	Compliance with Integrity Tender and HR panel member evaluation and selection processes (Nil non-compliance reports)	percent	100	100	0	✓
<i>Ministerial Expectation and MCMA QMS: Deliver efficiency through shared services, smarter procurement and lower-cost technology</i>	Management actions implemented to improve MCMA QMS including initiatives which support efficiencies	percent	100	100	0	✓
<i>MCMA QMS: Embed integrity within decision making processes</i>	MCMA staff, Board, and committee members completing Fraud and Corruption prevention awareness training	percent	100	96	4	○
	Alignment with DPC Cyber Security Strategy objectives	percent	100	100	0	✓
<b>Leadership, diversity and culture</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation and MCMA QMS: Implement strategies that will increase cultural diversity in the workforce and gender equality in executive leadership and throughout the organisation</i>	MCMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan key activities/initiatives progressed	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Priorities established by the MCMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan annual 'Action Plan' implemented	percent	100	100	0	✓

Continued...

Table 18 | Performance against 2021–22 Governance and Compliance activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Leadership, diversity and culture</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation:</i> Encourage staff participation in the Victorian Public Sector Commission 'People Matter' Survey	Staff participating in 'People Matter' survey	percent	55	50	5	✓
	Works on Waterway statutory referrals responded to within required timeframes (< 20 days)	percent	100	100	0	✓
<i>MCMA QMS:</i> Satisfy Customers	Registered stakeholder feedback which is positive	percent	96	>85	0	✓
	Participants rating the delivery of information at MCMA events/activities as good/excellent (not fair/poor)	percent	98	>90	0	✓



RLP Soils event.

## Key initiatives and projects

An overview of key initiatives that supported delivery against the stated Governance and Compliance priority activities and associated performance targets in 2021–22 is provided in Table 19.

**Table 19 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority ‘Governance and Compliance’ activities and associated performance targets**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Catchment Governance Program	<p>The Mallee CMA delivers against corporate and statutory functions set out under <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> through funding support provided by the Victorian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Ordinary Board Meetings conducted and ongoing operation of associated sub-committees, including the Audit and Risk Committee (9 meetings) and Remuneration Committee (1 meeting).</li> <li>• Ongoing operation of the Land and Water Advisory Committee, maintaining a two-way communication channel between Board and members of the Victorian Mallee community (3 meetings). Development, implementation and reporting of business plans to support compliance with legislative obligations, including the 2020–21 Annual Report, 2022–27 Corporate Plan, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2017–22, Learning and Development Framework 2021–23, Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–25, and Social Procurement Strategy 2022–24.</li> <li>• 10 information management systems maintained, including: social media platforms and Mallee CMA website; Technology One, financial and document management systems; and Rapid Global Staff and Contractor Induction and Incident Reporting system. Delivery against the organisation’s overarching Mallee CMA Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) strategy is ensuring that these individual components are part of a coordinated framework which continues to identify efficiency opportunities.</li> <li>• 60 publications (e.g. social media posts, E-newsletter) disseminated for general promotion of the region’s natural, cultural and productive landscapes, and Mallee CMA operations.</li> </ul>  <p>Aboriginal Reference Group members.</p>
Waterway Health Program	<p>Water Statutory Functions as required under Part 10 and 11 of the <i>Water Act 1989</i> are delivered by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government’s Waterway Health Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery against the Mallee CMA statutory responsibilities with regard to floodplain management and works on waterways included: 45 referrals, 23 approvals/advice, and no works on waterway permits were issued during this reporting year. Average response time in 2021–22 was 8 days.</li> <li>• Ongoing application of Floodzoom program, including Planning System module for processing and responding to integration floodplain referrals, advice and works on waterways permits.</li> <li>• Participation in 6 associated forums; including the state-wide Floodplain Managers Forum, and the Floodzoom planning, spatial and emergency groups.</li> </ul>

## Theme: Integrated Catchment Management

Mallee CMA programs and projects are developed to deliver against regional priorities detailed in the Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) and its associated sub-strategies and plans. The Mallee RCS is prepared under the provisions of the CaLP Act to establish a framework for the integrated and coordinated management of the region's natural, productive and cultural landscapes. Developed in partnership with regional stakeholders, it provides a six-year framework for strategic action to support and focus the ongoing coordinated effort of the region's land managers, government agencies and community groups.

Application of the RCS's integrated and targeted delivery framework to project planning further ensures available resources are applied effectively and efficiently. Under this framework key threatening processes are addressed across priority landscapes to deliver environmental, social and economic outcomes for multiple asset types (e.g. waterways, biodiversity and community capacity) and their associated natural, cultural and/or productive values.

The RCS monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework is applied to all Mallee CMA programs, projects and associated activities to support continuous improvement and adaptive management processes.

By continuing to apply this approach to the identification and implementation of regional NRM priorities, Mallee CMA is seeking to deliver against the following Integrated Catchment Management-related outcome:

*Regional planning, delivery and evaluation processes are supporting integrated and targeted NRM outcomes.*

Delivery against this stated outcome also contributes to achieving priorities established by key policy and strategic frameworks, including:

- Our Catchments Our Communities - Building on the Legacy for Better Stewardship (2020)
- Victoria's Climate Change Strategy (2021)
- Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria (2017)
- Vic Catchments Strategic Plan – Looking Forward 2020–23
- Mallee Natural Resource Management for Climate Change Plan (2017)
- Ministerial Expectations for 'catchment health', 'climate change', and 'resilient and liveable cities and towns' (2021–22).

## Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against the strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against four key indicators. These indicators are presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 20).

Mallee CMA programs and projects are collectively achieving ICM outcomes across the region through their alignment with regional priorities detailed within the Mallee RCS. Developed in partnership with regional stakeholders, review and renewal of this primary strategic planning document commenced in 2020–21 to establish the next six-year (2021–27) framework for strategic action that supports and focuses the ongoing coordinated effort of the region's land managers, government agencies, community groups, and Traditional Owners. With release of the revised 2022–28 RCS pending Ministerial endorsement, the previous (2013–19) framework has been applied in assessing performance against 2021–22 outcome indicators.

The 2013–19 RCS prioritises key threatening processes and associated interventions within 17 high value landscapes (Catchment Assets) to deliver environmental, social and economic outcomes for multiple asset types (e.g. waterways, biodiversity and community capacity) and their associated natural, cultural and/or productive values. Alignment with these priorities over the 2016–21 period is demonstrated by the extent to which Mallee CMA NRM activities are delivering against the strategic actions (94 percent average), and the high proportion of associated works that are being delivered within priority landscapes (93 percent average).

Completion of the 2016–2020-funded ‘Tyrrell Project – Ancient Landscapes, New Connections’ represented significant progress in applying the RCS ICM framework; delivering landscape-scale stewardship outcomes for multiple assets occurring within the Avoca Basin Terminal Lakes System and Creeklines target area. Application of this approach is being built on through commencement of a new ICM-focused initiative. This 2021–24 ‘Islands in the Sand’ project is delivering against community and Traditional Owner priorities for two Mallee RCS priority landscapes: the ‘Murray River and Floodplain – Merbein to SA Border’ and ‘North West Savannah Woodlands’.

Opportunities for integrated outcomes across the broader region are identified and progressed through stakeholder participation in the Mallee’s two Catchment Partnership Committees (CPCs). These Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity/Water focused forums are delivering against the objectives of the Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement by enhancing knowledge sharing between members and further strengthening collaborative approaches to NRM.

As an addendum to the Mallee RCS, Mallee NRM for Climate Change Plan identifies 17 priority management actions (interventions) to support regional adaptation and resilience outcomes. Mallee CMA has continued to plan for and respond to a changing climate by continuing to incorporate priority landscapes and associated interventions established by this Plan into the ongoing delivery of regional programs. This has included supporting carbon sequestration/offset initiatives such as the ‘State-wide Carbon Sequestration Analysis Project’ being undertaken in partnership with Victorian CMAs and Water Corporations to establish regional carbon yields/implementation costs associated with environmental planting offsets. Mallee CMA is also working with Birchchip Cropping Group to deliver soil carbon-focused activities which facilitate the identification, validation and communication of practices for improved sequestration outcomes in the southern Mallee.

Initiatives that enhance public spaces and urban waterway values through Integrated Waterway Management (IW/M) collaborations also continued to be supported. Key measures progressed in partnership with regional stakeholders over the reporting period have included: application of the Lake Ranfurly and Lake Hawthorn Integrated Management Plan; implementation of the Wetland Management Strategy for Kings Billabong, Psyche Bend Lagoon and Woorlong Wetland; and engagement with First People of the Milliewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation to ensure Aboriginal values are recognised and supported by associated waterway management activities.

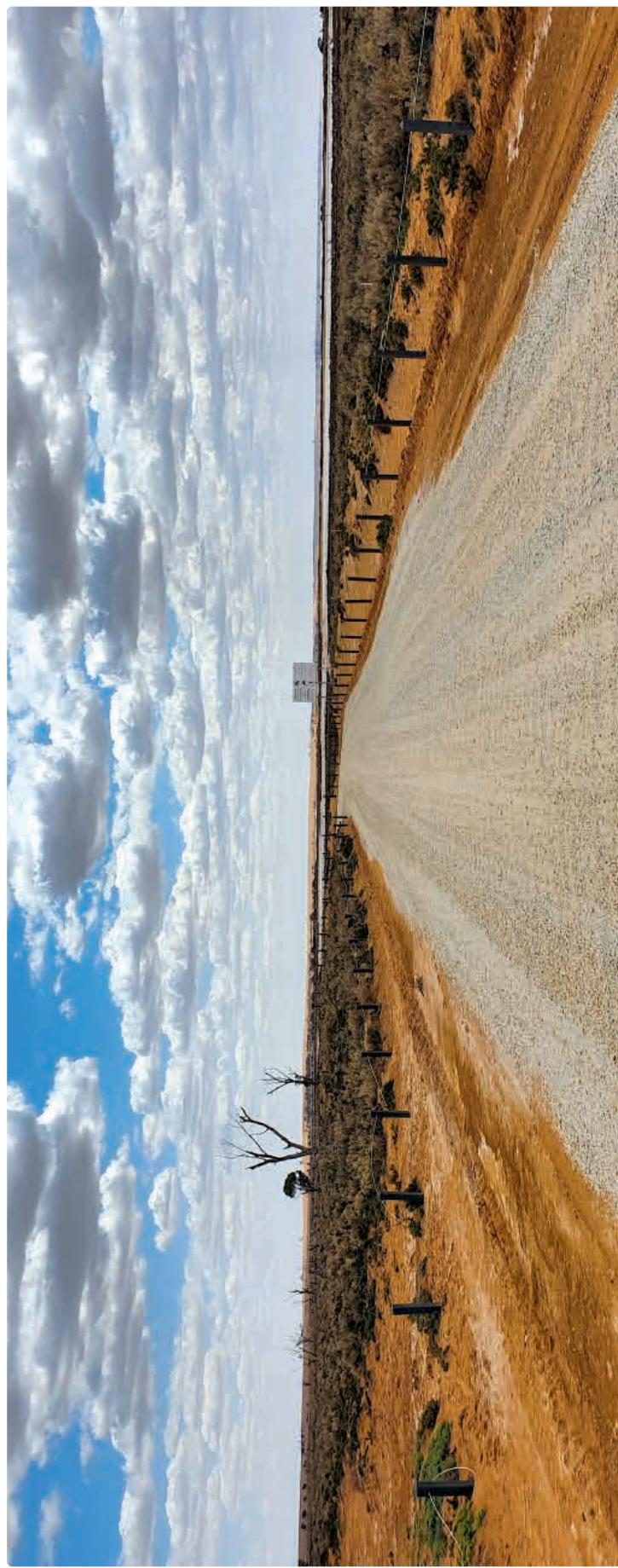
**Table 20 | Progress against performance measures for Integrated Catchment Management strategic outcome indicators**

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Catchment health	Mallee RCS strategic actions (6 year) delivered against	percent		93	95	93	95
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; RCS: Improved catchment health and resilience</i>	On-ground works delivered within Mallee RCS priority landscapes and corridors to support integrated catchment management outcomes	percent		92	99	96	92
	ICM priorities progressed under the Vic Catchments and Catchment Partnership Agreement Frameworks	percent		80	80	80	100

*Continued...*

**Table 20 | Progress against performance measures for Integrated Catchment Management strategic outcome indicators**

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
			2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Climate Change</b>							
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; RCS: Active/collaborative investigation into new opportunities to sequester carbon</i>	Carbon sequestration/offset initiatives supported.	number	-	2	3	3	3
<i>Ministerial Expectation &amp; RCS: Increased landscape resilience under a changing climate</i>	Mallee NRM Plan for Climate Change adaptation actions (6 year) delivered against	percent	88	94	94	88	94
<b>Resilient and liveable cities and towns</b>							
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Enhanced public spaces and urban waterway values</i>	Initiatives implemented through integrated waterway management collaborations	number	-	4	4	4	4



Track work at Lake Tyrell.

## Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Performance against our organisation's 2021–22 priority activities for progressing Integrated Catchment Management outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets is provided in Table 21.

Overall, 89 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with one of the nine measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded 5% variance), specifically:

- **Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy:** Development of the 2022–28 Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy is estimated to be 75 percent complete, with a public consultation draft released in May 2021 and associated activities to facilitate/incorporate stakeholder feedback completed in June 2022. The 15 percent variance relates to Mallee CMA Board approval of the final draft strategy (scheduled for August 2022) and subsequent Ministerial endorsement processes.

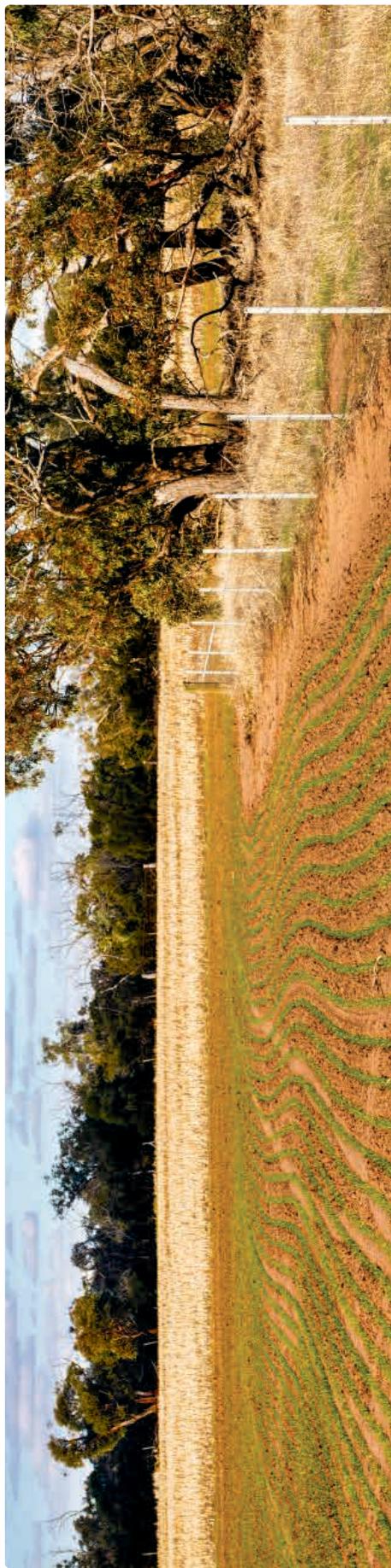
**Table 21 | Performance against 2021–22 Integrated Catchment Management activity measures**

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Catchment Health</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation and RCS: Develop and coordinate the implementation of renewed RCS according to legislative changes and Victorian Catchment Management Council guidelines.</i>	Mallee RCS renewed in line with legislative requirements and stakeholder expectations/ aspirations	percent	75	100	-25	■
<i>Ministerial Expectation and RCS: Deliver integrated catchment management (ICM) in line with Water for Victoria and building on the legacy of Our Catchments Our Communities (OCOC) with strengthened performance across environmental, social, and economic outcomes</i>	OCOC priority ICM objectives progressed	percent	100	100	0	✓
<i>Ministerial Expectation and RCS: Work collectively via Vic Catchments membership to strengthen collaboration/performance in the Catchment management sector in Victoria.</i>	Priority actions/projects identified within Vic Catchments Strategic Framework actively supported	percent	100	100	0	✓
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Lead the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement (CPA).</i>	Regional partnership forums delivering against Mallee CPA objectives CPA signatories participating in regional partnership forums	number percent	4 100	4 100	0 0	✓ ✓ ✓

*Continued...*

**Table 21 | Performance against 2021–22 Integrated Catchment Management activity measures**

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2021–22 actual	2021–22 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
<b>Climate change</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation and RCS: Explore opportunities to sequester carbon / provide carbon offsets in partnership with land managers and Traditional Owners</i>	Carbon sequestration/offsets opportunities progressed in partnership with land managers and other regional stakeholders	number	3	3	0	↙
<i>Ministerial Expectation and RCS: Progress on climate change adaptation initiatives outlined in Mallee climate change and catchment strategies</i>	Priority actions identified by the Mallee NRM Plan for Climate Change delivered against annually	percent	94	>75	0	↙
<b>Resilient and liveable cities and towns</b>						
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Participate in the development and implementation of integrated water management (IWM) Forums, to enhance public spaces through integrated water management in existing and new urban environments.</i>	IWM forums participated in	number	1	1	0	↙
<i>Ministerial Expectation: Participate in the development and implementation of IWM plans, particularly through prioritising measures to enhance urban waterway values</i>	IWM priority measures supported	number	8	4	100	↙



Cropped soil and remnant vegetation, Birchip.

## Key initiatives and projects

An overview of key initiatives that supported our delivery against the Integrated Catchment Management priority activities and associated performance targets in 2021–22 is provided in Table 22.

**Table 22 | Key outputs delivered under government programs/initiatives contributing to the achievement of 2021–22 priority 'Integrated Catchment Management' activities and associated performance targets**

Program/Initiative	Key 2021–22 outputs and achievements
Catchment Governance Program	<p>The Mallee CMA delivers against corporate and statutory functions set out under <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> through funding support provided by the Victorian Government</p> <p>Ongoing participation in regional, state-wide and national planning, evaluation and reporting forums, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vic Catchments forum, with support provided for delivery against Strategic Framework priority actions/projects (e.g. VCMA's Actions and Achievements Report, VCMA's Community Engagement and Partnering Framework, and VCMA websites collating Regional Catchment Strategies and Climate Ready Natural Resource Management Plan's).</li> <li>• Tri-State Murray NRM Regional Alliance, which consists of the Victorian North East, Goulburn Broken, North Central and Mallee Catchment Management Authorities; the New South Wales Murray Local Land Services; and the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board. The Alliance was formalised by the signing of the Tri-State Murray NRM Regional Alliance MOU in 2015.</li> <li>• NRM Regions Australia, which has representation from chairs of each of the 54 regional NRM bodies across Australia. The primary objectives of the group are to build networks, share information and receive briefings on strategic direction for NRM policies and programs.</li> <li>• Coordination of an internal MER working group to support the development and implementation of standardised MER approaches across all areas of MCMA operations. Includes facilitation of overarching MER framework to inform development and review of project/program-based plans.</li> <li>• Application and maintenance of regional evidence base to support the collection, collation and communication of information required by RCS and Corporate Plan reporting frameworks.</li> </ul>
Our Catchments Our Communities	<p>Projects supporting integrated catchment management (ICM) outcomes are supported by the Mallee CMA, through funding from the Victorian Government's Our Catchments, Our Communities Program, through funding from the Victorian Government.</p> <p>• Release of the Draft 2022–28 Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy for public comment, facilitating stakeholder feedback on the region's future ICM priorities and delivery framework.</p>  <p>Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy 2022–28 Photo: © Mallee CMA</p> <p>• 7 formal partnerships established/maintained to facilitate coordinated approaches to the identification, development, implementation, and review of integrated catchment management. This included ongoing coordination/facilitation of the Mallee RCS Steering Committee, with representation from key stakeholders to inform the review and renewal of this key strategic planning document.</p> <p>• Ongoing coordination of the region's two Catchment Partnership Committees (Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity/Water) to deliver against objectives of the Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement by enhancing knowledge sharing between members and further strengthening collaborative approaches to NRM in the region.</p> <p>• Completion of the 'Statewide Carbon Sequestration Analysis Project' in partnership with Victorian CMAs and Water Corporations to establish carbon yields and implementation costs associated with environmental plantings.</p> <p>• Implementation of the 2021–24 Mallee ICM project: 'Islands in the Sand – Ancient Connections' project to deliver against community and Traditional Owner priorities that provide multiple (environmental, economic and social) outcomes for two Mallee RCS priority landscapes; the 'Murray River and Foodplain – Merbein to SA Border' and 'North West Savannah Woodlands'.</p>

# Part 1

## Performance Reporting - Financial

### Five year financial summary

The Mallee CMA's financial results for this reporting year and the previous four years are detailed in Table 23.

**Table 23 | Five year financial summary**

Five year financial summary	2021–22 \$'000	2020–21 \$'000	2019–20 \$'000	2018–19 \$'000	2017–18 \$'000
<b>Revenue</b>					
Commonwealth Government contributions	6,061	4,881	4,538	4,650	5,646
State Government contributions	11,150	9,946	7,500	7,181	7,293
Other revenue	9,109	7,057	6,275	3,962	4,055
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>26,320</b>	<b>21,884</b>	<b>18,313</b>	<b>15,793</b>	<b>17,026</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee benefits expenses	6,365	5,817	4,957	5,000	4,789
Grants and Incentives	724	1,083	1,365	1,518	1,766
Other operating expenses	15,248	9,966	10,470	9,161	7,817
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>22,337</b>	<b>18,866</b>	<b>16,793</b>	<b>15,679</b>	<b>14,372</b>
<b>Assets</b>					
Current assets	50,270	46,406	42,768	41,544	41,990
Non-current assets	333	460	664	738	953
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>50,603</b>	<b>46,866</b>	<b>43,432</b>	<b>42,282</b>	<b>42,943</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Current liabilities	666	978	1,460	1,565	1,286
Non-current liabilities	1,205	1,139	161	122	80
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,871</b>	<b>2,117</b>	<b>1,621</b>	<b>1,687</b>	<b>1,366</b>

### Current year financial review

Mallee CMA is financially sound, with adequate provisions in place to fulfil its obligations to staff, and replacement of plant and equipment. Sufficient resources are allocated to deliver the Corporate Plan business objectives which form the organisation's strategic direction for 2022–23.

An increase in State Government contributions relates to the Working for Victoria employment program, while the increase in Other revenue relates to the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Program.

Mallee CMA reported a surplus of \$3,982,466 (2021: surplus \$2,939,83) for the financial year. Assets exceed liabilities by \$48,732,150 (2021: \$44,749,684).

### Significant changes in financial position

There were no significant matters which changed our financial position during the reporting period.

### Significant changes or factors affecting performance

There were no significant changes or factors which affected our performance during the reporting period.

## Disclosure of grants and transfer payments

Mallee CMA has provided financial assistance as part of the grants and incentives programs which it is responsible for administering. Grants provided in 2021–22 for the purposes of delivering targeted on-ground works (fencing, revegetation, pest plant and animal control, track restoration/maintenance, access improvement, and signage), and targeted engagement and capacity building activities, citizen science programs to address wind erosion and declining soil carbon, and increase drought resilience are presented in the following table.

**Table 24 | Disclosure of grants and transfer payments**

Organisation	Payments \$
<b>Victorian Landcare Grants</b>	
On-ground works that protect and restore the Victorian landscape	
Berriwillock Landcare Group	22,047
Beulah Landcare Group	22,047
Birchip Landcare Group	9,150
Culgoa Landcare Group	22,047
Curyo-Watchupga Landcare Group	22,047
Greening Mildura	20,500
Hopetoun Landcare Group	22,047
Kooloonong-Natya Landcare Group	22,047
Lalbert Landcare Group	22,047
Mallee Landcare Group	7,555
Millewa Carwarp Landcare	22,047
Murrayville Landcare Group	22,047
Nullawil Landcare Group	22,047
Nyah West Landcare Group	12,730
Oz Fish Unlimited	9,631
Sea Lake Landcare Group	22,047
Ultima Landcare Group	22,047
Waitchie & District Landcare Group	22,047
Woomelang Lascelles Landcare Group	22,047
Yelta Landcare Group	3,047
2 Landholders	12,900
<b>Getting Back to the Billabongs</b>	
Pest plant and animal control, habitat mapping, revegetation and track restoration	
Mildura Rural City Council	5,400
<b>Our Catchments Our Communities</b>	
Pest plant and animal control, fencing, revegetation works and track maintenance	
6 Landholders	74,909
<b>The Catfish Connection</b>	
Angler Partnership Project (e.g. Pest plant and animal, track rationalisation, access improvement, signage, information sessions, presentations)	
Hopetoun Landcare Group	25,000
<b>Annuello &amp; Wandown: Enhancing Mallee - Murray biolinks</b>	
Pest plant and animal control	
1 Landholder	2,000
<b>Improving conservation of the Southern Mallee Dunefields</b>	
Pest plant and animal control	
1 Landholder	2,000
<b>The Cowangie Connection</b>	
Pest plant and animal control	
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	11,068
Parks Victoria	16,600
1 Landholder	5,000
<b>Robinvale to Nyah: Conserving Robinvale Plains &amp; Murray</b>	
Pest plant and animal control	
2 Landholders	5,000

*Continued...*

## Part 1 Performance Reporting - Financial

**Table 24 | Disclosure of grants and transfer payments *Continued...***

Organisation	Payments \$
<b>Safeguarding Hattah and Raak Plain Catchment Areas</b>	
Pest plant and animal control	
2 Landholders	10,000
<b>Tyrrell: Preserving an Ancient Salina Landscape</b>	
Pest plant and animal control	
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	11,333
Parks Victoria	17,000
1 Landholder	2,500
<b>Yarrara Ridge: Conserving Victoria's Semi-arid Environments</b>	
Pest plant and animal control	
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	4,000
Parks Victoria	6,000
2 Landholders	10,000
<b>RLP Ramsar Services</b>	
Delivery of targeted on ground works (pest plant and animal control)	
Parks Victoria	190,000
<b>RLP Soils Services</b>	
Delivery of targeted engagement and capacity building activities to address wind erosion and declining soil carbon	
Birchip Cropping Group	100,000
Mallee Sustainable Farming	100,000
<b>RLP Threatened Species Services</b>	
Delivery of citizen science programs and targeted on ground works (revegetation, pest plant and animal control)	
Birchip Landcare Group	20,000
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning	259,543
Mallee Landcare Group	5,000
Mildura Rural City Council	5,249
National Malleefowl Recovery Group	11,000
Parks Victoria	30,500
Yarriambiack Shire Council	16,405
3 Landholders	26,321
<b>RLP Threatened Ecological Communities Services</b>	
Delivery of targeted on ground works (revegetation, pest plant and animal control) and Buleoke Stewardship program	
Buleoke Shire Council	30,000
Hopetoun Landcare Group	8,377
Nullawil Landcare Group	31,438
Nyah West Landcare Group	10,000
Swan Hill Rural City Council	10,000
Waitchie & District Landcare Group	7,163
Yarriambiack Shire Council	48,622
6 Landholders	167,755
<b>RLP Building Transformative Resilience of the Mallee to Drought</b>	
Delivery of targeted engagement and capacity building activities to increase drought resilience	
Mallee Sustainable Farming	45,570
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,714,924

## Subsequent events

There were no events occurring after the balance date which may significantly affect Mallee CMA's operations in subsequent reporting periods.

# Part 2

## Governance and Organisational Structure

### Organisational structure and corporate governance

The organisational and governance structure of the Mallee CMA (Figure 4) provides a framework for the integrated and effective management of the region's key assets. This structure allows for efficient program planning across all areas of operation and the sharing of resources, where possible, with partner agencies and the community.

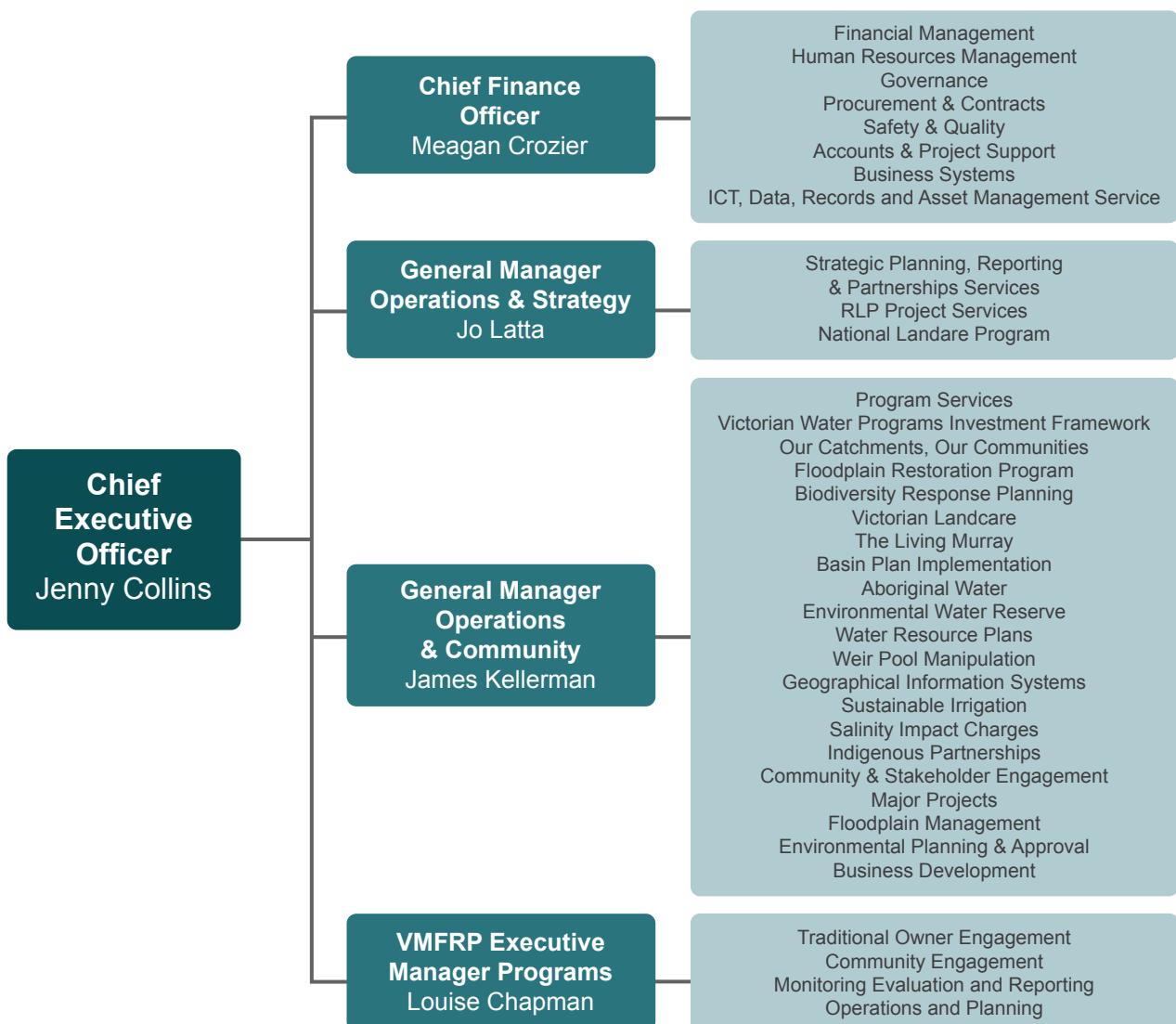


Figure 4 | Mallee CMA organisational structure 2021–22

Opportunities for stakeholder involvement in priority setting and funding allocations for Natural Resource Management in the region is enhanced through various advisory committees, comprising Board, agency and community members (see Figure 5).

The Mallee CMA Board sets governance level policies and establishes the organisation's vision, strategic directions and business objectives. The Board is ultimately responsible for all functions undertaken by the Authority and consists of up to nine members appointed by the Minister.

A number of sub-committees, including an Audit and Risk Committee, Remuneration Committee, Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee, Salinity Impact Charges Major Projects Project Control Group (PCG), Land and Water Advisory Committee, and Aboriginal Reference Group have been established by the Board to advise on specific areas of responsibility. Additional sub-committees are convened as necessary to ensure continued effective governance and performance.

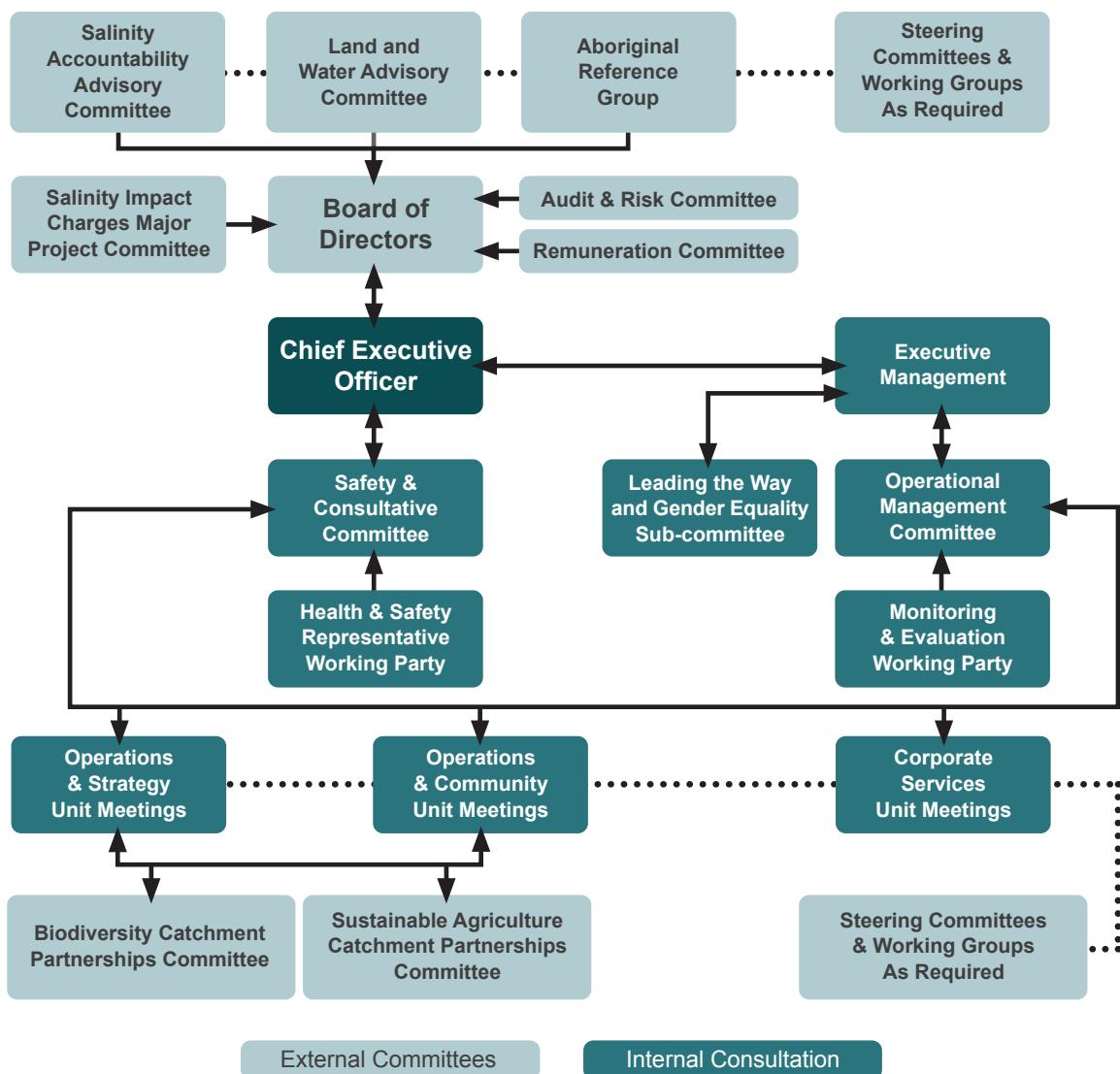


Figure 5 | Mallee CMA organisational and governance structure 2021–22

## Governing Board

The current Board represents a wide range of interests across the Mallee region, including: community engagement; agriculture; economic; horticulture; financial auditing; risk management; governance; workplace health and safety; human resource management; and the environment. As part of their responsibilities, each Board member has a specific leadership role reflecting their individual area of expertise. Through these leadership roles, a strong governance culture is realised that enables a measured and strategic approach to all business undertaken by Mallee CMA.

### Governing Board Members

#### ***Allison McTaggart - Chair***

Allison is the principal consultant at Allison McTaggart and Associates, a human resources and business consultancy business. Allison's consultancy work includes strategic planning, governance, recruitment, training, corporate communications, and workplace health and safety.

Allison is a Director of Western Murray Irrigation, and her family-owned earthmoving business. Allison Chaired the Murray Primary Health Network North West Community Consultative Committee until July 2022 and was Deputy Chair of Mallee District Aboriginal Service Finance Audit and Risk Committee until October 2021. Other former roles include working with the Australian Table Grape Association as Manager for Communications and Industry Analysis, the Murray Primary Health Network as a Workforce Development Officer, and Tandou Limited as Human Resource Manager.

Allison's diverse background includes agribusiness, earthmoving and small mines extraction, public relations, marketing, and workforce development.

Current memberships include: Australian Human Resource Institute; Governance Institute of Australia; Institute of Community Directors Australia; Australian Institute of Company Directors fellow.

Allison holds a Bachelor of Arts (Management Communication) and an Associate Diploma (Animal Production).

Allison currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:

- Chair - Mallee CMA Board
- Chair - Remuneration Committee
- Chair - Regional Catchment Strategy Steering Committee
- Member - Salinity Impact Charges Major Projects, Project Control Group

Allison was a Board member during the reporting year with her current term of appointment being from 01 October 2021 to 30 September 2025.

#### ***Kellie Nulty - Deputy Chair***

In addition to being a partner in a dryland farming operation at Carwarp, Kellie has a strong background in accounting and auditing. Kellie has worked as a practising accountant for more than 20 years.

Kellie has extensive internal and external auditing experience across a variety of industries. Her fields of expertise include: management and financial accounting; information technology; risk management; corporate governance; project management; and business consultancy.

Kellie is a Chartered Accountant, Registered Company Auditor, Registered Superannuation Fund Auditor, and holds degrees in both Business and Computer Science.

Kellie currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:

- Deputy Chair - Mallee CMA Board
- Member - Audit and Risk Committee
- Member - Remuneration Committee

Kellie was a Board member during the reporting year with her current term of appointment being from 01 October 2019 to 30 September 2023.

### **Sharyon Peart - Chair**

Sharyon moved from Melbourne to the Mallee in 2003, where she lived on a large citrus, dried fruit and wine grape growing property at Nangiloc.

Her background in corporate business, sales, marketing and team management provided inspiration for the small local business Sharyon owns and operates. Sharyon has been the sole director since she created the company in 2005, specialising in retail consultation, and managing women's health and wellbeing.

Sharyon served on the Mildura Rural City Council as a Councillor for nine years and gained much experience as portfolio councillor for art and education, community services and wellbeing, and governance and finance. Sharyon is committed to strengthening partnerships between community and government in the sustainable management of resources across our region.

During 2021–22 positions and memberships include/d: Lower Murray Water, Chair (Deputy Chair to October 2021); Mallee CMA, Chair (to October 2021); La Trobe University Mildura Regional Advisory Board, member; Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment Reference Group, member; Resilient Cities and Towns Reference Group, Victorian CMA representative.

Sharyon currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:

- Member - Aboriginal Reference Group
- Member - Regional Catchment Strategy Steering Committee
- Member - Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee

Sharyon was a Board member during the reporting year with her current term of appointment being from 01 October 2019 to 30 September 2023.

### **Robert Matthews**

Having grown up on the family farm at Meringur, Robert has been involved in dryland wheat and sheep farming his whole life. After 13 years in the Commonwealth public service working in employment counselling, Robert returned to full time farming in 1998.

With a keen focus on all areas of Natural Resource Management, combatting soil erosion, resource efficiency and the further development of biological farming methods are major priorities for Robert.

Robert is currently serving as: Director of the Red Cliffs Association Board; Secretary of the Koorlong Hall Committee; and member of the Mallee Natural Food Group Board. Robert is also sole director of Kurnwill Quarries.

Robert currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:

- Member - Land and Water Advisory Committee
- Member - Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee

Robert was a Board member during the reporting year with his current term of appointment being from 01 October 2021 to 30 September 2025.

### **Janice Kelly**

Janice Kelly has over 25 years' experience as a primary producer and 35 years' experience as a Chartered Accountant. Janice is an experienced Finance and Corporate Services Manager and has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course.

Janice has provided significant input into organisational strategic plans both as a board member and senior manager.

Janice currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:

- Chair - Audit and Risk Committee
- Member - Remuneration Committee

Janice was a Board member during the reporting year with her current term of appointment being from 01 October 2019 to 30 September 2023.

### ***Antonio (Tony) Alessi***

Tony is a registered, self-employed chiropractor who grew up on a vineyard specialising in fresh fruit and dried fruit. Since 2016, he has been a member of Mallee Regional Partnerships where he assists in assessing and advocating for projects that improve the liveability of communities, access to services and economic development.

Tony was an inaugural director on the Mildura Base Public Hospital board, where he was also a member of the Quality, Safety and Risk Committee. His previous positions include Deputy Chairman Arts Mildura (2018–2020) and member of the Regional Advisory Council: Victorian Multicultural Commission (2015–2020). Tony has attained

a Bachelor of Applied Science (Chiropractic) and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Tony brings skills, knowledge and experience in corporate governance, risk, audit, primary industry and community engagement.

Tony currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:

- Member - Audit and Risk Committee
- Member - Land and Water Advisory Committee

Tony was a Board member during the reporting year with his current term of appointment being from 01 October 2021 to 30 September 2025.

### ***Ann Hodge***

Ann Hodge is a primary producer with customer representative committee experience, including three years in executive positions. Ann has an ongoing interest in water policy and the environment, exemplified by her membership on the Irrigators' Share Committee, formed to make recommendations to DELWP regarding water policy and recent appointment to the Victorian Constraints Measures Program.

Having dairy farmed at Leitchville for the last 20 years, the Hodge family recently moved to Barham on the NSW-Victorian border. Ann is Chair of the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project Gunbower Stakeholder Advisory Group, and previous Chair of the Torrumbarry Water Services Committee at the Goulburn-Murray Water Corporation (2018–2020).

With a Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, Ann brings skills, knowledge and experience in committee leadership, primary production, water policy and community engagement.

Ann currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:

- Member - Regional Catchment Strategy Steering Committee
- Member - Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee

Ann was a Board member during the reporting year with her current term of appointment being from 01 October 2021 to 30 September 2025.

## Part 2 Governance and Organisational Structure

### Board meetings attended

Nine Ordinary Board Meetings were held during the 2021–22 financial year. The Board Chair approved all Board member absences during the reporting period.

**Table 25** | Board membership, terms and meeting attendance 2021–22

Board Member	Appointed	Appointment review	Eligible meetings	Attended meetings
Allison McTaggart	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	9	9
Sharyon Peart	01 October 2019	30 September 2023	9	8
Robert Matthews	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	9	9
Janice Kelly	01 October 2019	30 September 2023	9	8
Kellie Nulty	01 October 2019	30 September 2023	9	9
Tony Alessi	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	7	7
Ann Hodge	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	7	7
Monica Munro	01 October 2019	Resigned October 2021	2	2
John Cooke	01 October 2017	Expired 30 September 2021	2	2
Jacqualyn Turfrey	01 October 2017	Expired 30 September 2021	2	1

### Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) membership

The ARC's responsibilities are set out in Standing Direction 3.2.1.1. Key responsibilities are to:

- Review and report independently to the board on the annual report and all other financial information published by Mallee CMA
- Assist the board in reviewing the effectiveness of Mallee CMA's internal control environment covering: effectiveness and efficiency of operations; reliability of financial reporting; and compliance with applicable laws and regulations
- Determine the scope of the internal audit function and ensure its resources are adequate and used effectively, including coordination with the external auditors

- Maintain effective communication with external auditors, consider recommendations made by internal and external auditors and review the implementation of actions to resolve issues raised
- Oversee the effective operation of the risk management framework.

Mallee CMA Board appoints members to the ARC annually and endorses external independent members for three-year terms with extension of up to a further three years. ARC members are subject to the committee's terms of reference.

Meetings are scheduled monthly, and at any other time on request of a committee member or the internal or external auditor. In 2021–22, the committee met nine times. Attendance of committee members is detailed in Table 26 below.

**Table 26** | Audit and Risk Committee membership, terms and meeting attendance 2021–22

Member	Appointed	Appointment review	Eligible meetings	Attended meetings
Janice Kelly (Chair), Board member	27 October 2021	31 October 2022	7	6
Kellie Nulty, Board member	27 October 2021	31 October 2022	9	9
Tony Alessi, Board member	27 October 2021	31 October 2022	7	7
Inga Dalla Santa, Independent member	15 April 2020	30 April 2023	9	9
Grant Martinella, Independent member	15 April 2020	31 October 2022	9	7
Allison McTaggart, Board member	28 October 2020	Expired 31 October 2021	2	2
Jacqualyn Turfrey, Board member	28 October 2020	Expired 31 October 2021	2	2

## Board committees

The committees act on the Board's behalf, as deemed necessary. Appropriate advisory committees ensure projects are properly guided and funds are spent wisely.

### Remuneration Committee

The primary purpose of the Remuneration Committee is to assist the Board to discharge its responsibilities by managing the employment cycle of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), which includes:

- Encompassing the full employment cycle from advertising to contract negotiation, employment performance management and end of tenure
- Succession planning for the role in accordance with the CEO Succession, Recruitment and Appointment Policy
- Induction for the CEO and Board members
- Learning and development for the CEO and Board members
- Endorsing CEO backfill arrangements for periods of leave exceeding two weeks, up to and including six weeks. CEO backfill arrangements for periods of leave exceeding six weeks will require Board approval

- Annually reviewing The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal annual adjustment determinations for executives.

The Remuneration Committee achieves this by providing the following services on behalf of the Board:

- Ensuring reporting disclosures related to remuneration meet the Board's disclosure objectives and all relevant legal requirements
- Coordinating the Annual Board Assessment in accordance with DELWP Guidelines
- Conducting the Audit and Risk Committee annual self-assessment and three-year formal review, as per Ministerial Standing Directions
- Reviewing its Terms of Reference every two (2) years
- Ensuring all reviews incorporate relevant changes to the internal and external environment
- Ensuring procedures for agendas, minutes and reporting to the Board are adhered to, including providing minutes of committee meetings
- Ensuring records are managed securely and in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) Principles.

**Table 27 |** Remuneration Committee membership and attendance 2021–22

Member	Appointed	Appointment review	Eligible meetings	Attended meetings
Allison McTaggart: (Chair), Board Chair	27 October 2021	31 October 2022	1	1
Kellie Nulty, Board Member	27 October 2021	31 October 2022	1	1
Janice Kelly, Board Member	27 October 2021	31 October 2022	1	1



Mallee CMA Board site visit to Kings Billabong.

### **Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee**

The Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee (SAAC) is pursuant to Mallee CMA's obligations under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and delegated responsibilities under the *Water Act 1989*.

The prime responsibility of the SAAC is to provide advice to the Mallee CMA Board on:

- Annual reporting associated with Basin Salinity Management 2030 and salinity impact of irrigation
- Outputs, activities and reporting that relate to Mallee Accountable Actions under Schedule B of the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) Agreement; and Salinity Impact Charges and its uses which are collected to mitigate and offset the salinity impact of irrigation between Nyah and the South Australian Border
- Business as usual projects and low risk or low complexity projects valued under \$800,000.

The SAAC is not a decision-making body. In broad terms, it allows detailed attention to be given to particular matters, and then makes recommendations to the Board for consideration.

**Table 28 |** Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee membership 2021–22

Member	Appointment review
James Kellerman (Chair)	30 September 2022
Robert Matthews, Board member	30 September 2022
Ann Hodge, Board member	30 September 2022
Sharyon Peart, Board member	30 September 2022
Lewis Lo, DELWP	N/A
Craig Thornton, Lower Murray Water	N/A
Mark Potter, Goulburn-Murray Water	N/A
Peter Jones, Community member	30 June 2023
Owen Lloyd, Community member	30 June 2023
Terri Wilson, Community member	30 June 2023
Troy Richman, Community member	30 June 2023

The SAAC met three times during the 2021–22 reporting period.

### **Salinity Impact Charge Major Projects Project Control Group**

Salinity Impact Charges (SIC) Major Projects are defined as any SIC project with a value exceeding \$800,000.00 or deemed a Major Project due to the project's complexity and or risk level (e.g. complex delivery, high community interest).

The SIC Major Projects Project Control Group (PCG) is a skills-based group responsible for the oversight and delivery of approvals, and the design and delivery of the SIC Major Projects. The SIC Major Projects PCG

achieves this by providing the following services on behalf of the Board:

- Reviewing all SIC projects and confirm proposed project governance structure, either:
  1. Business as usual with Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee oversight for established low risk and low complexity projects less than \$800,000 in value; or
  2. Major Projects with PCG oversight for projects with a value exceeding \$800,000 or that are deemed high risk and or high complexity by the PCG.
- Efficiently and effectively delivering SIC Major Projects in accordance with delegated authority from Mallee CMA Board, Mallee CMA policies and procedures, and in alignment with funding guidelines and governance of SIC prepared by DELWP.
- Closely monitoring major project delivery, approving all variations to time, scope and budget as required.
- Quarterly reporting to the Mallee CMA Board on SIC Major Projects' progress.
- Immediately reporting material variations or risks to the Board.
- Ensuring effective relationships between SIC Major Project partners.
- Providing recommendations to the Board on matters relating to the approval of all Major Projects, in accordance with Mallee CMA procurement policy and procedures.

**Table 29 |** SIC Major Projects PCG membership 2021–22

Member
Jenny Collins, Chief Executive Officer
Allison McTaggart, Board member
James Kellerman (Chair)
John Cooke, Independent member
Campbell Fitzpatrick, Independent member
Andrew Fennessy, DELWP, (non-voting member, strategic advice only)

The SIC Major Projects PCG met three times during the 2021–22 reporting period.

### **Land and Water Advisory Committee**

The core function of the Land and Water Advisory Committee (LWAC) is to:

- Provide general advice to the Board on the development and delivery of projects and programs from a community perspective
- Advise management and the Board on process and appropriate levels of community ownership, consultation and engagement.

The LWAC may also be requested by the Board to provide feedback on issues identified as necessitating a community perspective.

**Table 30 | LWAC membership 2021–22**

Member	Appointment review
Robert Biggs (Chair)	30 June 2023
Christiane Jaegar	30 June 2023
Andrew Menzies	30 June 2023
Andrew Hudson	30 June 2023
Owen Lloyd	30 June 2023
Naomi Forbes-Wilson	30 June 2023
Brian Ebery	30 June 2023

The LWAC met three times during the 2021–22 reporting period.

The appointed Board representatives on the LWAC for the reporting period were:

- Robert Matthews
- Tony Alessi

### Aboriginal Reference Group

The core function of the Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) is to provide advice and guidance to the Board and Mallee CMA on:

- How to engage Aboriginal stakeholders in relevant NRM project planning
- Aboriginal stakeholder needs and environmental values, including how these may be addressed through the organisation's work
- Emerging Aboriginal stakeholder issues and perspectives relevant to NRM.

The ARG may also be requested by the Board to provide feedback on issues identified as necessitating a community perspective.

The Committee represents the interests of all Aboriginal community, not the interests of a specific group that a member may belong to.

**Table 31 | ARG membership 2021–22**

Member	Appointment review
Charlene Davis (Chair)	30 June 2023
Ben Muir, Barengi Gadjin Land Council representative	30 June 2023
Scotty Marks, Barengi Gadjin Land Council representative	30 June 2023
Veronica Harradine	30 June 2023
Rose Kirby	30 June 2023
Margaret Hannah	30 June 2023
Leigh Fuller	30 June 2023
Norman Wilson, First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation representative	30 June 2023

The ARG met once during the 2021–22 reporting period. At least one Board member attends ARG meetings.

The appointed Board representatives on the ARG for the reporting period was:

- Sharyon Peart



Aboriginal Reference Group and Land and Water Advisory Committee members at Hattah.

# Part 3

## Workforce Data

### Public Sector Values and Employment Principles

The *Public Administration Act 2004* established the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC). The VPSC's role is to strengthen public sector efficiency, effectiveness and capability, and advocate for public sector professionalism and integrity.

Mallee CMA is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. Selection processes ensure applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably on the basis of core capabilities against the *Mallee CMA Workforce Capability Framework Policy* without discrimination.

To ensure public sector values (Figure 1) are embedded within the workplace, Mallee CMA has introduced policies and practices that are consistent with the VPSC's employment standards and provide for fair treatment, career opportunities and the early resolution of workplace issues including recruitment, redeployment, managing under performance and discipline. Mallee CMA advises its employees on how to manage conflicts of interest, how to respond to offers of gifts and how the organisation deals with misconduct.

### Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Mallee CMA is committed to the effective management of occupational health, safety and wellbeing (OHS&W) which includes the promotion of mental health and wellbeing of all staff within the organisation. It is the aim of Mallee CMA to minimise the risk of injury and disease to its employees and other persons by adopting a planned and systematic approach to the management of OHS&W, ensuring the resources for its successful implementation and continuous improvement are provided.

During the reporting period Mallee CMA has focused on responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Leading the Way initiatives and training.

#### COVID-19 Pandemic

Mallee CMA has been flexible in responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic in line with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Minister of Health and the Victorian Public Sector guidance.

Mallee CMA's COVIDSafe Plan has been designed to protect its employees and other workplace participants (including contractors, clients, visitors and volunteers) by minimising the risk of exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace. In accordance with legislative requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act), this plan has been developed to provide clear and current guidance on undertaking workplace activity and responding in the event of a COVID-19 infection. Mallee CMA will continue to follow the advice of the Minister of Health under pandemic orders in part 8A of the *Public Health Act*, and will regularly update and amend this plan based on the most recent advice.

In readiness for the OHS Act obligations and requirements taking effect when Health Order No 8 ends, Mallee CMA has updated its vaccination policy in consultation with employees. Our priority is to ensure we consider the best medical advice and outcomes for our people's health and wellbeing. The policy addresses one of many risk controls that Mallee CMA applies to provide, so far as reasonably practicable, a safe working environment from COVID-19. In conjunction with the COVIDSafe plan, surveillance screening and other COVID-19 guidance and protocols, the vaccination policy ensures a holistic strategy is applied across the organisation.

## Leading the Way

Leading the Way is a Victorian Government Initiative to improve health and safety in government workplaces. The initiative is a commitment to Leading the Way in standardising OHS&W management, including psychological health and safety, and is designed to help Public Sector organisations strengthen senior management commitment, improve safety culture and OHS&W performance, and ensure accountability for continuous improvement. The Leading the Way framework and its embedded safety maturity model provides organisations with a vision for the future and guiding actions for change.

Four strategic priorities have been agreed to by the Leading the Way governance bodies. The Leading the Way approach has been developed to support delivery of these strategies, and includes a governance structure together with accountability process elements and tools based on leading practice.

Through participation in the initiative, Mallee CMA will further improve both existing OHS&W management foundations and a positive organisational safety culture.

## Training

Throughout 2021–22 Mallee CMA provided training to enhance employee OHS&W skills and competency in the following areas:

- First Aid and CPR
- Mental Health First Aid
- Hazard identification and risk control
- Defensive driving
- Warden training
- Kayak training
- 4WD.

Internal OHS&W training is completed within the Rapid system. Reminders for refresher training are automatically generated by the system, ensuring training is kept up to date and is easily monitored.

## Incident Management

Safety related occurrences across the Mallee CMA are reported by Hazard and Incident. Incidents of all types are grouped together to give an overall total, while injuries are noted for reporting purposes only.

Reporting hazards provides a way to monitor potential problems and identify root causes as they occur. The documentation of potential problems and root causes increases the likelihood that issues will be corrected before they cause actual incidents or injuries.

The Rapid Global system provides for hazard, incident and injury reporting and audit outcomes. Various reports can be exported from Rapid Global and reported to the relevant Mallee CMA committee.

Mallee CMA recognises the importance of incident reporting and supports continuous improvement through our commitment to retaining ISO 9001:2015 certification for our Quality Management System.

Mallee CMA had zero notifiable incidents during the reporting period. Notifiable incidents are those which must be reported to WorkSafe in accordance with s37 of the *Occupational Health Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act). Mallee CMA had one (FTE 56) WorkCover claim in the reporting period, the result of this claim was lost time.

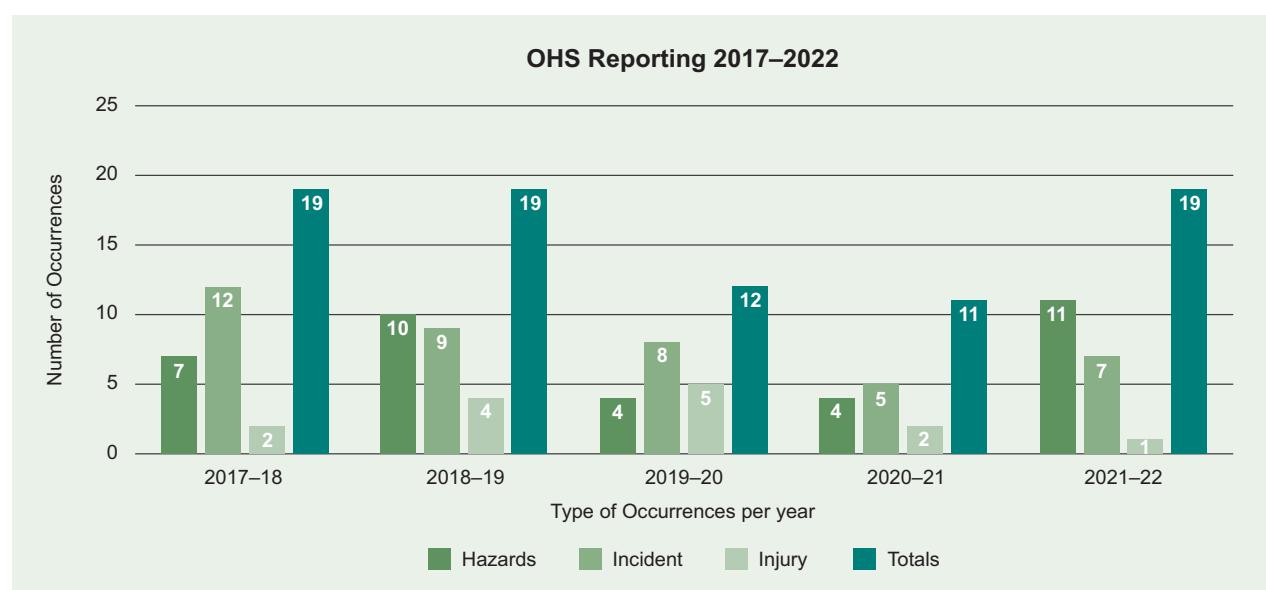


Figure 6 | Mallee CMA OHS reported occurrences 2017 to 2022

### Part 3 Workforce Data

**Table 32 | Performance against OHS management measures**

Measures	Key Performance Indicators	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
Incidents	Number of incidents (rate per 100 FTE)	12.6	9	24
Claims	Number of claims (rate per 100 FTE)	0	2	2
	Number of lost time claims (rate per 100 FTE)	0	2	2
	Number of claims exceeding 13 weeks (rate per 100 FTE)	0	2	2
Fatalities	Fatality claims	Nil	Nil	Nil
Claim costs	Average cost per standard claim	0	\$15,973	\$13,874
Return to work	Percentage of claims with return to work plans <30 days	Nil	Nil	Nil
Management commitment	Evidence of OH&S policy statement, OH&S objectives, regular reporting to senior management of OH&S, and OH&S plans (signed by CEO or equivalent)	Completed	Completed	Completed
	Evidence of OH&S criteria(s) in purchasing guidelines (including goods, services and personnel).	Completed	Completed	Completed
Consultation and participation	Evidence of agreed structure of designated workgroups (DWGs), health and safety representatives (HSRs), and issue resolution procedures (IRPs).	Completed	Completed	Completed
	Compliance with agreed structure on DWGs, HSRs, and IRPs	Completed	Completed	Completed
Risk management	Percentage of internal audits/inspections conducted as planned.	100%	100%	100%
	No. of Improvement Notices issued across the Department by WorkSafe Inspector	Nil	Nil	Nil
	<b>Percentage of issues identified actioned arising from:</b>			
	Internal audits	100%	100%	100%
	HSR provisional improvement notices (PINs)	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Worksafe Notices	Nil	Nil	Nil
	<b>Percentage of managers and staff that have received OH&amp;S training:</b>			
	Induction	100%	100%	100%
	Management training	100%	100%	100%
	Contractors, temps, and visitors	100%	100%	100%
	<b>Percentage of HSRs trained:</b>			
	Acceptance of role	100%	100%	100%
	Re-training or refresher training	100%	100%	100%
	Reporting of incidents and injuries	100%	100%	100%

## Workforce Data

Table 33 discloses the headcount and full-time staff equivalent (FTE) of all active public service employees of the Mallee CMA, employed in the last full pay period in June of the current reporting period (2022), and in the last full pay period in June of the previous reporting period (2021).

Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.

**Table 33** | Details of employment levels in the last full pay period in June 2022 and 2021 <sup>(i)</sup>

	June 2022						June 2021					
	All Employees		Ongoing <sup>(ii)</sup>		Fixed term & Casual		All Employees		Ongoing <sup>(ii)</sup>		Fixed term & Casual	
	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE
<b>Gender</b>												
Male	26	25.04	12	12	14	13.04	31	29	18	18	13	11
Female	34	30.65	16	15	18	15.65	29	27.13	15	14.40	14	12.73
Self-described	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
<b>Age</b>												
15-24	3	3	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	1	1
25-34	15	13.8	6	5.6	9	8.2	9	8.34	5	4.60	4	3.74
35-44	15	13.05	6	5.4	9	7.65	15	14.39	8	7.80	7	6.59
45-54	13	12.8	7	7	6	5.8	15	15	9	9	6	6
55-64	10	9.8	7	7	3	2.8	17	15.30	9	9	8	6.30
65+	4	3.24	2	2	2	1.24	3	2.10	2	2	1	0.10
<b>Classification</b>												
CEO	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
General Managers	3	3	3	3	0	0	4	3.80	4	3.80	0	0
Managers	8	7.4	7	6.4	1	1	9	9	8	8	1	1
Project/Support Staff	48	44.29	18	17.6	30	26.69	46	42.33	21	20.60	25	21.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>55.69</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>28.69</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56.13</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32.40</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23.73</b>

'n' denotes that no data has been collected

<sup>(i)</sup> Excluded are external contractors/consultants, and temporary staff employed by employment agencies.

<sup>(ii)</sup> Ongoing employees include people (full time and part time) engaged on an open ended contract of employment and executives engaged on a standard executive contract who were active in the last full pay period of June.

## Workforce Inclusion Policy

Mallee CMA is continually working towards improving workplace inclusion. The established Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategy and the D&I Policy developed to deliver diversity, inclusion and gender equality principles is currently under review and will include new targets and evaluation of focus areas to ensure progress against our Diversity and Inclusion Plan - Accountabilities and Reporting Framework, Reconciliation Action Plan and Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan.

Consistent with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Mallee CMA conducted a workplace gender audit in 2021 and implemented a Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–25. The action plan details strategies and measures for achieving workplace gender equality. A Leading the Way and Gender Equality sub-committee has been established to assist the Executive Management Team in implementing the action plan and promoting gender equality throughout the organisation ensuring it is embedded in all workplace behaviour, processes and decision making.

**Table 34 | Progress against Diversity and Inclusion policy initiative**

Diversity and Inclusion policy initiative	Target	Actual progress in 2021–22	Actual progress in 2020–21
1.1 Provide regular training and support to all Board members and staff to promote a strong understanding of, and support for, diversity and inclusion in the workplace	100% completion of diversity e-learning training within 12 months	100%	100%
	100% of Accredited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competency enrollees complete training as scheduled	100%	100%
	Board training session on Diversity and Inclusion to be held in 2020–21	100%	100%

## Executive Officer Data

A member of the Senior Executive Service (SES) is defined as an executive under Part 3 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic) or a person to whom the Victorian Government's *Public Entity Executive Remuneration (PEER) Policy* applies.

During the reporting period Mallee CMA had one employee on a PEER contract who is female.

Mallee CMA does not have any SES that meet the definition of FRD 15 and 21 disclosures of responsible persons and executive officers, other than ministers and the accountable officer, during the reporting period.

The Accountable Officer's remuneration has been disclosed in financial statements note 8.5 Related Parties.

# Part 4

## Other Disclosures

### Expenditure of funds within the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan 2021–22

The Ministerial Determination of Salinity Impact Zones and Salinity Impact Charges fixes the salinity impact charges for the purposes of section 232B of the *Water Act 1989*. Salinity Impact Charges are generated when a new water-use licence (WUL) is created or an existing WUL is varied to allow an increase in megalitres of annual use limit (AUL). The purpose of the charge is for the WUL holder to contribute towards the cost of works or measures to mitigate or offset the salinity impact of irrigation.

The charge is collected from WUL holders by the Minister's delegate, Lower Murray Water (LMW). The charge is transferred annually to Mallee CMA, less the portion required to meet LMW's costs and expenses. Mallee CMA must hold and apply the funds consistent with the direction, function and powers delegated to it by the Minister. Salinity Levies received by Mallee CMA in 2021–22 totalled \$3,182,304.

Total expenditure in 2021–22 within the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan was \$2,350,628. Projects delivered included:

- Managing statutory responsibilities through implementation of a governance framework to deliver regional monitoring and reporting obligations under the *Water Act 2007* (Cth) and *Catchment and Land Protection Act (1994)* as delegated to the Mallee CMA and support the functions of the Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee. Implement actions from the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan 2020–29 (\$181,637);
- Active participation in on-ground works and investigations to generate additional salinity credits for Victoria including salt interception and drainage diversion schemes is also a focus of the Salinity Investment Plan. One 'Expression of Interest' was submitted and approved for funding to upgrade the current operational capacity of the Mildura-Merbein Salt Interception Scheme (\$643,500);

- The Mallee On-farm Irrigation Incentives Program, which focused on assisting irrigators in the upgrade and management of on-farm infrastructure to generate water use efficiency outcomes resulting in salinity benefits. The Incentives Program recommenced in April 2021 after an extensive review to ensure the efficacy of the program. Since then, 10 applications have been received and are still being processed. Full expenditure of these applications (if approved after assessment) will be realised in the 2022–23 financial year (\$0);
- Five major projects listed on the Annual Salinity Major Projects Work Program that are critical to the offsetting and mitigation of salinity impacts from irrigation in waterways and landscapes. A program of works has been developed to deliver these projects. The first two of these projects underway are the Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Survey and the Irrigation Futures and Restoration Management (IFARM) project. Each project moves through a series of defined gateways, (concept, preliminary investigation, detailed design, delivery and ongoing monitoring). The major projects are overseen by an independent governance panel known as the Salinity Impact Charges Major Projects Project Control Group. All five projects progressed through gateways during the financial year (\$346,206);
- Project management to drive the development and implementation of projects, including AEM Survey, IFARM, Irrigation Rootzone Drainage and BSM2030 annual reporting (\$212,031);
- Completion of a peer review of the detailed design for an AEM survey to inform salinity management. Procurement of an Independent Technical Advisor to the project and formation of a stakeholder community group along with engagement collateral has begun. By providing more detailed data on subsurface geology, AEM provides Mallee CMA with the capability to reduce uncertainty and enable delivery of targeted efficient works to managing salinity (\$78,187);

- The operation of the Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee to provide advice to the Mallee CMA Board on salinity and irrigation management matters. This includes advice on Accountable Actions under Schedule B of the Murray Darling Basin Agreement, management and maintenance of the Mallee Regional Salinity Register and administration of the salinity impact charges Annual Program (\$41,800);
- Annual data collection from Mallee groundwater observation bores (\$198,768) and irrigation drainage monitoring stations (\$244,626), helped to support and refine salinity impact assessments that generated salinity credits and debits for the region. This project involved collection and management of groundwater level and salinity data at 433 monitoring bores visited on a quarterly, biannual or annual basis, along with the collection and management of salinity and flow data from 23 irrigation drainage outfall sites and three river sites. The data informs salinity impact models and reviews of specific accountable actions within the region (\$443,394);
- A program of work to progress achievement of Action 4.8 of the Victorian Government's Water for Victoria Water Plan. This action aims to improve salinity management in the Mallee and commits to investing revenue from salinity offset charges to update contemporary knowledge of salinity impacts, review salinity impact charges, and update policies under the Victorian Mallee salinity management framework (\$47,163);
- A program of field investigations to better understand and quantify the physical processes affecting the dynamics of water movement between crop rooting depth and regional groundwater under irrigated tree crops. The project results help to explain why the magnitude of root zone drainage (deep drainage) is quite different from the recharge to groundwater. When extended spatially and temporally it will reduce the uncertainty associated with recharge to groundwater used in modelling and explain discharge to the river and salinity impact estimates (\$189,200);
- Targeted communication efforts to address policies and frameworks that are current and emerging. This includes communication regarding, major projects, groundwater bore rationalisation, root zone drainage and irrigation impacts of groundwater systems. The activity also addresses the perception within the Victorian Mallee irrigation community that the salinity issue has been addressed and that salinity controls are no longer required (\$167,510).

The balance of funds as at 30 June 2022 is \$34,681,891. These funds are segregated for operational and capital expenditure for the purpose of mitigating or offsetting the salinity impact of irrigation in the Victorian Mallee and to maintain the region's compliance with state and federal requirements.

## Local Jobs First

During 2021–22, Mallee CMA commenced two Local Jobs First Standard projects totalling \$11.07M to be expended over multiple years. The projects are located in regional Victoria, with a commitment of 100 percent of local content. No projects were commenced that occurred state-wide. Whilst the AEM project has commenced, the first two packages of work have not met the threshold for a Local Industry Development Plan. Future packages of work within this project will meet the threshold.

The outcomes expected from the implementation of the Local Jobs First policy to these projects where information was provided are as follows:

- 100 percent of local content commitment was made
- A total of 1.18 jobs Annual Employee Equivalent (AEE) were created and 11.66 AEE jobs were retained.

Thirty-eight small to medium sized enterprises are engaged through the supply chain on the commencement of the Catfish Billabong Regulator project.

## Government advertising expenditure

Mallee CMA expenditure in the 2021–22 reporting period on government campaign expenditure was nil.

## Consultancy expenditure

### Details of consultancies (valued at \$10,000 or greater)

In 2021–22, there were 58 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were \$10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2021–22 in relation to these consultancies was \$4,063,732.00 (excl. GST).

Details of individual consultancies are outlined on the Mallee CMA's website, at [www.malleecma.com.au](http://www.malleecma.com.au) under the Resources tab.

### Details of consultancies (valued at less than \$10,000)

In 2021–22, there were 42 consultancies engaged during the year, where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than \$10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2021–22 in relation to these consultancies was \$193,662.76 (excl. GST).

For the purpose of this reporting requirement the following definitions are applied:

- Contractor - A contractor is an individual or organisation that is formally engaged to provide works or services for or on behalf of an entity; and

**Table 35 | ICT expenditure 2021–22**

All operational ICT expenditure	ICT expenditure relating to projects to create or enhance ICT capabilities		
Business As Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure	Non-BAU ICT expenditure (OPEX + CAPEX)	Operational expenditure (OPEX)	Capital expenditure (CAPEX)
\$540,298.90	\$232,498.63	\$160,176.23	\$72,322.40

- Consultant - A consultant is a particular type of contractor that is engaged primarily to perform a discrete task for an entity that facilitates decision making through: provision of expert analysis and advice; and/or development of a written report or other intellectual output.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by Mallee CMA. This comprises documents both created by Mallee CMA or supplied to Mallee CMA by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes. Information about the type of material produced by the Mallee CMA is available on its website at [www.malleecma.com.au/corporate-policies/](http://www.malleecma.com.au/corporate-policies/) under its Part II Information Statement.

## Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expenditure

For the 2021–22 reporting period Mallee CMA had a total ICT expenditure of \$722,797.53, as detailed in Table 35 above.

ICT expenditure refers to Mallee CMA's costs in providing business enabling ICT services within the current reporting period. It comprises Business as Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure and Non-Business as Usual (Non-BAU) ICT expenditure.

Non-BAU ICT expenditure relates to extending or enhancing Mallee CMA's current ICT capabilities.

BAU ICT expenditure is all remaining ICT expenditure, which primarily relates to ongoing activities to operate and maintain the current ICT capability.

The FOI Act allows Mallee CMA to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include: cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to the Mallee CMA in-confidence.

The FOI Act was amended on 1 September 2017 to reduce the Freedom of Information (FOI) processing time for requests received from 45 to 30 days. However, when external consultation is required under ss29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, the processing time automatically reverts to 45 days. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur any number of times. However, obtaining an applicant's agreement for an extension cannot occur after the expiry of the timeframe for deciding a request.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by Mallee CMA, under section 49A of the FOI Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

## Major contracts

The Mallee CMA did not enter into any major contracts during 2021–22.

A 'major contract' is a contract entered into during the reporting period valued at \$10 million or more.

## Making a request

FOI requests can be lodged online at [www.ovic.vic.gov.au](http://www.ovic.vic.gov.au). An application fee of **\$30.60** applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material, time consuming.

Access to documents can also be obtained through a written request to the Mallee CMA's Freedom of Information team, as detailed in s17 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

When making a FOI request, applicants should ensure requests are in writing, and clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought.

## Freedom of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by Mallee CMA. The purpose of the FOI Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the FOI Act.

Requests for documents in the possession of the Mallee CMA should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Team  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
Mail: PO Box 5017, Mildura, Victoria 3502  
Email: [foi@malleecma.com.au](mailto:foi@malleecma.com.au)

### FOI statistics

During 2021–22, Mallee EMC received **NIL** Freedom of Information applications.

### Further information

Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the FOI Act; regulations made under the FOI Act; and [www.ovic.vic.gov.au](http://www.ovic.vic.gov.au).

### Building Act 1993

The Mallee CMA does not own or control any government buildings and consequently is exempt from notifying its compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

### Competitive Neutrality Policy

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure where services compete, or potentially compete with the private sector, any advantage arising solely from their government ownership be removed if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses are required to cost and price these services as if they were privately owned. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service.

Mallee CMA continues to comply with the requirements of the Competitive Neutrality Policy.

### Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (PID Act) enables people to make a disclosure about corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body.

Mallee CMA is a public body for the purposes of the PID Act.

### What is a public interest disclosure?

A public interest disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body.

'Improper or corrupt conduct' involves substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health or safety or the environment, or corruption.

'Detimental action' is action taken against a person in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

### How do I make a public interest disclosure?

You can make a public interest disclosure about Mallee CMA or its board members, officers or employees by contacting Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) (details below).

Mallee CMA is not able to receive public interest disclosures.

Mallee CMA has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about Mallee CMA, its board members, officers or employees. You can access Mallee CMA's procedures on its website at [www.malleecma.com.au/corporate-policies/](http://www.malleecma.com.au/corporate-policies/).

### IBAC Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001  
Internet: [www.ibac.vic.gov.au](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au)  
Phone: 1300 735 135

**Table 36 |** Disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*

Disclosures under the <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012</i>	2021–22	2020–21
The number of disclosures made by an individual to the Mallee CMA and notified to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission.	0	0

### Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

The Mallee CMA was established in 1997 under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) and has responsibilities under the *Water Act 1989* (Vic), Statement of Obligations and the CaLP Act, Statement of Obligations.

The Statement of Obligations for both the CaLP Act and Water Act were re-issued in January 2018 and were applied to the Mallee CMA's 2018–2023 Corporate Plan and reported against in the 2018–19 and subsequent Annual Reports.

CaLP Act responsibilities are set out on page 7 of this Annual Report. The Mallee CMA is compliant with these establishing act requirements.

## Office-based environmental impacts

Mallee CMA strives to implement and improve sustainable practices in its operations in both the office and field environment, and has modified its business activities in accordance with the Environmental Sustainability Policy.

The policy identifies environmental impacts and measures for the reduction in usage of resources and waste production. As a member of the Victorian Government - Irymple site user group, Mallee CMA has made a commitment to modifying its practices to facilitate a site-wide reduction in environmental impacts via an improvement in sustainability.

As a tenant of the Victorian Government site at Irymple, utility resource usage is monitored and controlled by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) as the landlord. All steps taken to reduce environmental impact implemented by the Mallee CMA contribute to the whole of site energy efficiencies and contribute toward the reduction in (DJPR) energy resource usage.

Further information on office-based environmental impacts is presented in Table 37 below.

**Table 37 |** Mallee CMA office-based environmental impacts

Outputs	Activity	2021–22 Actual
Energy use	Total energy usage segmented by primary source, including Green Power (mega joules)	*
	Greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use, segmented by primary source and offsets (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e)	*
	Percentage of electricity purchased as Green Power (%)	*
	Units of energy used per full time employee (mega joules per FTE)	*
	Units of energy used per unit of office area (mega joules per m <sup>2</sup> )	*
Waste and recycling	Total units of office waste disposed of by destination (kilograms per year)	*
	Total units of office waste disposed of per FTE by destination (kilograms per FTE)	*
	Recycling rate (% of total waste by weight)	*
	Waste disposal - separation of office waste into 'classes' e.g. paper, recyclable plastics, rubbish	*
	Reduction and recycling of cartridges (through suppliers) and consumables containers (through site)	100%
	Re-use and/or recycling (recycled when replaced with new handsets) of mobile phones and unserviceable equipment Surplus or obsolete equipment sent to Waste Management Centre - Mildura Rural City Council 'Around Again' re-use facility	100%
Paper use	Total units of A4 equivalent copy paper used (reams) Default printer settings to double-sided and save to user boxes for release, to reduce paper usage	108
	Units of A4 equivalent copy paper reams used per FTE	1.6
	Percentage of recycled content in copy paper purchased	100%
Water consumption	Total units of metered water consumed by water source (kilolitres)	*
	Units of metered water consumed in offices per FTE (kilolitres per FTE)	*
	Units of metered water used in offices per unit of office area (kilolitres per m <sup>2</sup> )	*

*Continued...*

## Part 4 Other Disclosures

**Table 37 | Mallee CMA office-based environmental impacts *Continued...***

Outputs	Activity	2021–22 Actual
Transport	Total energy consumption by vehicle fleet segmented by vehicle/ fuel type (mega joules)	549,527 Diesel 103,383 Unleaded
	Total vehicle travel associated with operations segmented by vehicle/ fuel type (kilometres)	170,207 Diesel 56,194 Unleaded
		31,199
	Total distance travelled by air (kilometres)	
Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e)	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with vehicle fleet	56.4
	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with air travel	5.9
	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use	*
	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste disposal	*
	Greenhouse gas emissions offsets purchased	Nil
Procurement	The Mallee CMA Purchasing and Procurement Policy includes environmental procurement as an essential consideration. (Participation % of FTE)  Employees are required to purchase goods and services that have reduced impacts on the environment.  Employees are also required to consider environmental impacts and opportunities during the procurement process. Employees undertaking procurement should consider where appropriate the inclusion of minimum environmental requirements in specifications.  Environmental requirements can be defined in relation to performance standards, the impact of the good or service on the environment and/or in relation to supplier's environmental management practices.  The Mallee CMA policy also requires employees to undertake socially responsible procurement which includes the protection of the environment and the conservation of resources.	100%

Entries marked with an asterisk (\*) contribute to the whole of Victorian Government Site - Irymple managed by the landlord, DJPR.



Platform made from recycled plastics.

## Additional information available on request

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by the Mallee CMA and are available (in full) on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*:

- details of publications produced by Mallee CMA about itself, and how these can be obtained
- details of any major external reviews carried out on Mallee CMA
- details of major research and development activities undertaken by Mallee CMA
- details of major promotional and public relations activities undertaken by Mallee CMA to develop community awareness of the entity and its services
- details of changes in prices, fees, charges, rates and levies charged.

The information is available on request to:  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
Post: Mallee CMA, PO Box 5017, Mildura, Victoria 3502  
Phone: 03 5001 8600  
Email: [info@malleecma.com.au](mailto:info@malleecma.com.au)

## Additional information included in the annual report

Details in respect of the following items have been included on the pages indicated below:

- assessments and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees – page 68;
- a list of the Mallee CMA's major committees, the purposes of each committee and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved – from page 64;
- details of changes in FOI fees – page 75;
- training undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees – page 69.

## Information that is not applicable to the Mallee CMA

The following information is not relevant to the Mallee CMA for the reasons set out below:

- details of shares held by senior officers (no shares have ever been issued in the Mallee CMA)
- details of overseas visits undertaken (no Board members or senior executives took overseas work-related trips in 2021–22).

## Social Procurement Framework

In accordance with Victoria's Social Procurement Framework (SPF), the Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy was reviewed and updated in May 2022 for a

further three years. The Strategy remains fully committed to supporting the Government's direction in advancing social and sustainable outcomes not just for our region but for the State of Victoria.

Procurement has been outlined as a core business and strategic function by the Victorian Purchasing Government Board (VGPB) and Mallee CMA is committed to pursuing social and ethical objectives through procurement activities in accordance with the Victorian SPF.

The Mallee CMA Strategy has prioritised four key SPF objectives and associated reporting metrics which have been detailed in Tables 38 and 39. As managers of the largest catchment area in the State of Victoria, these objectives were selected in line with the Mallee CMA's strategic direction, values and project responsibilities.

The Mallee CMA SPF 2020–21 Case Study focused on collaboration with the First people of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC) in developing a series of activity books titled "The Wildlife Detective Activity Book" for the Merbein Common, Lindsay Island and Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. These books are providing education and information in an enjoyable format for the community while highlighting cultural values at the sites.

The FPMMAC is the appointed Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the North Western region of Victoria and is one of 11 RAPs in Victoria that are the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the appointed areas. The FPMMAC is comprised of individuals that identify as Latji Latji and Ngintait, who share a passion for the enrichment and protection of their Country.

The FPMMAC is a wholly aboriginal owned organisation, consisting of a community of family groups dedicated to developing employment and economic opportunity for the Aboriginal community, developing and supporting cultural activities, and expanding traditional languages knowledge and use. It provides cultural services such as Welcome to Country, smoking ceremonies and traditional dance and heritage services such as Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) assessments and surveys.

This engagement benefited both Mallee CMA and the wider community, with strong relationships built through the recognition of traditional language and art. The creation of the activity books provided a great resource that the Aboriginal Community are proud to share.

The activity books are being used for teaching children and adults alike about the cultural heritage present in the region. A number of schools are using the books for educational and recreational purposes with their students and this number is expected to grow.

## Part 4 Other Disclosures

This collaboration meets the following SPF Objectives:

- Sustainable Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal business sectors
- Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People.

It also achieved the following social or sustainable values:

- Increased employment opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people
- Engage suppliers who will provide employment for disadvantaged Victorians
- Increase employment opportunities for sustainable Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal business sectors.

**Table 38 | Prioritised SPF objectives 2021–22**

Objective prioritised	Outcome sought	SPF Reporting metric
Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People	Employment of Victorian Aboriginal people by suppliers to the Victorian Government  Purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses	Number as a proportion of the suppliers used by Mallee CMA and the monetary value  Number of suppliers that employ Victorian Aboriginal people on contracts awarded by Mallee CMA and the monetary value
Opportunities for Victorians with disability	Employment of Victorians with disability by suppliers to the Victorian Government Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Australian Disability Enterprises	Number as a proportion of the suppliers used by Mallee CMA and the monetary value
Women's Equality and Safety	Adoption of family violence leave by Victorian Government suppliers  Gender equality within Victorian Government suppliers  Improved gender equality within the construction sector	Number as a proportion of the suppliers used by Mallee CMA that have a gender equality policy and the monetary value
Sustainable Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal business sectors	Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses	Number as a proportion of the suppliers used by Mallee CMA and the monetary value



Children enjoying the Wildlife Detective Activity Books.

## Achievements

Mallee CMA's Social Procurement Strategy provides a framework for the continuous professional development and implementation of social and sustainable outcomes in its procurement activities.

In addressing Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People and Sustainable Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal business sectors, Mallee CMA has:

- implemented measures for identifying and tracking Victorian Aboriginal Businesses
- updated vendor and procurement templates to identify suppliers that employ Victorian Aboriginal Peoples
- tracked expenditure and employment (AEE) of Victorian Aboriginal people through our supplier contracts
- engaged regional RAPs and Aboriginal Peoples in the development of CHMP assessments at several sites in Victoria to identify any potential impacts to protecting cultural heritage in the region
- engaged Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) through our Regional Land Partnerships Program for strategic revegetation works to enhance the condition of the Buloke Woodlands through the reintroduction of keystone species across 50ha of woodlands.

In addressing Opportunities for Victorians with disability, Mallee CMA has:

- continued its support and utilisation of the services provided by Around Again's confidential document destruction service
- updated vendor and procurement templates to identify suppliers that are a registered Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE).

In addressing Women's Equality and Safety, Mallee CMA has:

- updated vendor and procurement templates to identify suppliers that have adopted a gender equality policy and/or family violence leave policy
- tracked expenditure with these suppliers through our system.

The Victorian SPF requires mandatory reporting against all objectives for regional projects that have a value greater than \$1,000,000. This year Mallee CMA commenced construction of the Catfish Billabong Regulator at Merbein Common which is Mallee CMA's first project above this threshold. This project endeavours to target at least two of our priority objectives as well as other objectives relating to both social and sustainable outcomes. The structure is due to be completed in September 2022.

The Mallee CMA Procurement Team regularly participates in SPF training sessions through the Innovation Network. This ensures awareness of relevant government changes that need to be implemented to remain compliant with SPF and enhances continuous improvement of business practices including the review of all procurement policies and processes as required.

System enhancements have been refined to ensure SPF suppliers can be easily identified and the newly required reporting metrics captured for 2021–22. Mallee CMA will continue to develop its processes and systems as required.

Two years of data for comparison is provided in Table 39.

**Table 39 | Achievements against SPF objectives and metrics**

<b>SPF Objective: Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people*</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
<b>SPF reporting metrics</b>	Number of suppliers that employ Victorian Aboriginal people on Victorian Government contracts	9	4
	Total number of Victorian Aboriginal people employed by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts (AEE)	-	8.14
	Number of Victorian Aboriginal businesses engaged	4	3
	Total expenditure with Victorian Aboriginal businesses	\$889.13	\$1,312.15
<b>SPF Objective: Opportunities for Victorians with disability*</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
<b>SPF reporting metrics</b>	Number of suppliers that employ Victorians with disability on Victorian Government contracts	1	3
	Total number of Victorians with disability employed by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts	-	-
	Number of Victorian social enterprises and Australian Disability Enterprises	3	4
	Total expenditure with Victorian social enterprises and Australian Disability Enterprises	\$77.65	\$208.83
<b>SPF Objective: Women's equality and safety*</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
<b>SPF reporting metrics</b>	Number of Victorian Government suppliers that have implemented a family violence leave policy	1	4
	Proportion of Victorian Government suppliers that have implemented a family violence leave policy	0.3%	1.2%
	Number of Victorian Government suppliers that have a gender equality policy	5	8
	Proportion of Victorian Government suppliers that have a gender equality policy	1.6%	2.3%
	<i>For applicable construction projects (\$20M), the Building Equality Policy replaces this objective;</i>	-	-
	Submission of completed Gender Equality Action Plans (Organisation wide and Project specific)	-	-
	Progress tracking against specified gender equality targets	-	-

*Continued...*

## Part 4 Other Disclosures

**Table 39** | Achievements against SPF objectives and metrics *Continued...*

<b>SPF Objective: Opportunities for disadvantaged Victorians</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
SPF reporting metrics	Number of Victorian Government suppliers that employ disadvantaged Victorians on Victorian Government contracts	-	3
	Total number of disadvantaged Victorians employed by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts	-	-
	Total number of hours dedicated to supporting disadvantaged Victorians with job readiness opportunities by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts	-	-
	Total number of disadvantaged Victorians who received job readiness opportunities by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts	-	-
	Number of Victorian social enterprises (led by a social mission for one of the five disadvantaged cohorts) engaged		4
	Total expenditure with Victorian social enterprises (led by a social mission for one of the five disadvantaged cohorts)		\$208.83
<b>SPF Objective: Supporting safe and fair workplaces</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
SPF reporting metrics	Number of Victorian Government suppliers that attest to compliance with the Supplier Code of Conduct	55	51
	Proportion of suppliers that attest to comply with the Supplier Code of Conduct	18%	15%
<b>SPF Objective: Sustainable Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal business sectors*</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
SPF reporting metrics	Number of Victorian social enterprises engaged	3	2
	Number of Victorian Aboriginal businesses engaged	4	3
	Total expenditure with Victorian social enterprises	\$294.10	\$117.48
	Total expenditure with Victorian Aboriginal businesses	\$889.13	\$1,312.15
<b>SPF Objective: Sustainable Victorian regions</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
SPF reporting metrics	Number of Victorian suppliers that employ people who live in regions experiencing entrenched disadvantage on Victorian Government contracts	36	32
	Total number of people employed by Victorian Government suppliers working on Victorian Government contracts who live in regions experiencing entrenched disadvantage	-	8.14
	Number of hours dedicated to supporting people into work who are experiencing barriers to employment due to living in regions with entrenched disadvantage by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts	-	-
	Total number of people who received job readiness support by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts who live in regions experiencing entrenched disadvantage	-	-
	Number of business engaged within regions experiencing entrenched disadvantage	36	33
	Total expenditure with businesses within the region experiencing entrenched disadvantage	\$7,825	\$7,383
<b>SPF Objective: Environmentally sustainable outputs</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
SPF reporting metrics	Total number of contracts entered into with Victorian Government suppliers that have clauses relating to both sustainable resources and to manage waste and pollution. This may cover items such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recycled/reused water as a percentage of total;</li> <li>• percentage or measure of water consumption; and</li> <li>• percentage of procurement materials sourced from accredited supply chains.</li> </ul>	-	3
	Total number of contracts entered into with Victorian Government suppliers that have clauses relating to recycled content in construction works. This may cover items such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tonnes of recycled content specified in clauses in contracts or where not specified in tonnes, percentage of recycled content required;</li> <li>• measurement of recycled asphalt products used in asphalt surface; and</li> <li>• measurement of the repurposing of construction waste.</li> </ul>	-	3
<b>SPF Objective: Environmentally sustainable business practices</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
Total number of contracts entered into with Victorian Government suppliers that have a clause for environmentally sustainable business practices. This may cover items such as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• percentage of procurement materials to be sourced from sustainable accredited supply chains;</li> <li>• infrastructure sustainability design ratings (such as 'excellent');</li> <li>• application and achievement of Green Star Australia ratings;</li> <li>• application and achievement of ISO standards; and</li> <li>• application and achievement of industry recognised standards.</li> </ul>	39	35	
<b>SPF Objective: Implementation of the Climate Change Policy Objectives</b>		<b>2020–21</b>	<b>2021–22</b>
SPF reporting metrics	Total number of contracts entered into with Victorian Government suppliers that have a clause for project-specific requirements to minimise greenhouse gas emissions. This may cover items such as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• application and achievement of a specific rating and levels within a nominated industry rating system (for example, the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA) and Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) Frameworks) for design, delivery and operational phases of a project; and</li> <li>• application of an Environmental Management Plan to identify and manage risks to achieving and maintaining required rating levels through the design, delivery and operational phases of a project.</li> </ul>	-	-
	Total number of contracts entered into with Victorian Government suppliers that have a clause for procurement of outputs that are resilient against the impacts of climate change. This may cover items such as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• application and achievement of national and international standards related to the management of climate change risks; and</li> <li>• achievement of industry recognised sustainability ratings or certification.</li> </ul>	-	-

\* Annualised Employee Equivalent (AEE) calculation = total number of hours worked divided by total number of standard working hours per annum (38 hours x 52 weeks)

## Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

### **Mallee Catchment Management Authority Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement**

I, Allison McTaggart, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the Mallee Catchment Management Authority has the following Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.

- **Direction 4.2.4: Public Construction Accountability** the Mallee CMA commenced the construction of a regulator during the reporting year, this one-off project has extended Mallee CMA's compliance requirements to direction 4.2.4, which governs requirements for public construction accountability. The remedial actions undertaken include:
  - obtaining the services of a probity advisor and a consultant to assist with the compliance process
  - updating the scope of existing policies and procedures to ensure the mandatory requirements around public construction accountability align within standing direction 4.2.4.



**Allison McTaggart**  
Board Chair  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

28 September 2022

# Part 5

## Financial Statements

For the year ended

30 June 2022



### Declaration in Financial Statements

The attached financial statements for the Mallee Catchment Management Authority have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2022 and financial position of the Authority at 30 June 2022.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 24 August 2022.

**Allison McTaggart**  
Chairperson  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

**Jenny Collins**  
CEO and Accountable Officer  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

**Meagan Crozier CPA**  
Chief Finance Officer  
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

## Independent Auditor's Report

**To the Board of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority**

<b>Opinion</b>	<p>I have audited the financial report of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (the authority) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• balance sheet as at 30 June 2022</li> <li>• comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended</li> <li>• statement of changes in equity for the year then ended</li> <li>• cash flow statement for the year then ended</li> <li>• notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies</li> <li>• declaration in the financial statements.</li> </ul> <p>In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the authority as at 30 June 2022 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.</p>
<b>Basis for Opinion</b>	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the authority in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
<b>Board's responsibilities for the financial report</b>	<p>The Board of the authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

<b>Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report</b>	<p>As required by the <i>Audit Act 1994</i>, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.</p> <p>As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.</li><li>• obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the authority's internal control</li><li>• evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board</li><li>• conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the authority to cease to continue as a going concern.</li><li>• evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.</li></ul> <p>I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.</p>
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MELBOURNE  
2 September 2022

  
Paul Martin  
*as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria*

**Mallee Catchment Management Authority**  
**Comprehensive Operating Statement**  
For the financial year ended 30 June 2022

	Notes	\$	\$
		2022	2021
<b>Income from transactions</b>			
Government contributions	2.2.1	17,211,041	14,827,615
Interest	2.2.2	117,439	131,616
Other income	2.2.3	8,991,387	6,925,201
<b>Total income from transactions</b>		<b>26,319,867</b>	<b>21,884,432</b>
<b>Expenses from transactions</b>			
Employee expenses	3.1.1	6,365,315	5,777,705
Grants and incentives	3.2	724,276	257,505
Depreciation	4.1.1	199,738	210,395
Other operating expenses	3.3	15,048,072	12,699,544
<b>Total expenses from transactions</b>		<b>22,337,401</b>	<b>18,945,149</b>
<b>Net result from transactions (net operating balance)</b>		<b>3,982,466</b>	<b>2,939,283</b>
<b>Comprehensive result</b>		<b>3,982,466</b>	<b>2,939,283</b>

Notes:

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

(ii) Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets includes unrealised and realised gains/(losses) from revaluations, impairments, and disposals of all physical assets and intangible assets, except when these are taken through the asset revaluation surplus.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**Mallee Catchment Management Authority**

**Balance Sheet**

As at 30 June 2022

	Notes	\$	\$
		2022	2021
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Financial assets</b>			
Cash and deposits	6.1	45,534,021	43,118,256
Receivables	5.1	4,736,004	3,287,660
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>50,270,025</b>	<b>46,405,916</b>
<b>Non-financial assets</b>			
Plant and equipment	4.1	333,067	460,484
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>		<b>333,067</b>	<b>460,484</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>50,603,092</b>	<b>46,866,400</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Payables	5.2	666,242	978,166
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	1,204,700	1,138,550
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>1,870,942</b>	<b>2,116,716</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>48,732,150</b>	<b>44,749,684</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Accumulated surplus		3,254,207	3,333,639
Reserves	8.1	41,380,608	37,318,710
Contributed capital		4,097,335	4,097,335
<b>Net worth</b>		<b>48,732,150</b>	<b>44,749,684</b>

Note:

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**Mallee Catchment Management Authority**

**Cash Flow Statement**

For the financial year ended 30 June 2022

	Notes	\$ 2022	\$ 2021
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
<b>Receipts</b>			
Receipts from government		16,397,847	16,363,421
Interest received		117,439	131,616
Goods and services tax received from the ATO (a)		381,055	186,473
Other receipts		8,991,387	6,925,201
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>25,887,728</b>	<b>23,606,711</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(23,399,641)	(19,913,873)
<b>Total payments</b>		<b>(23,399,641)</b>	<b>(19,913,873)</b>
<b>Net cashflows from/(used in) operating activities</b>	6.1.1	<b>2,488,087</b>	<b>3,692,838</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchases of non-financial assets		(72,322)	(72,646)
<b>Net cashflows from/(used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(72,322)</b>	<b>(72,646)</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>2,415,765</b>	<b>3,620,192</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		43,118,256	39,498,064
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b>	6.1	<b>45,534,021</b>	<b>43,118,256</b>

Notes:

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

(a) GST received from the Australian Taxation Office is presented on a net basis

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**Mallee Catchment Management Authority**  
**Statement of Changes in Equity**  
For the financial year ended 30 June 2022

	Notes	Reserves	Accumulated surplus / (deficit)	Contributed capital	\$ Total
<b>Balance at 1 July 2020</b>		37,013,815	699,251	4,097,335	41,810,401
Net result for the year		-	2,939,283	-	2,939,283
Transfers to/(from) reserves		304,895	(304,895)	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2021</b>		37,318,710	3,333,639	4,097,335	44,749,684
Net result for the year		-	3,982,467	-	3,982,467
Transfers to/(from) reserves	8.1	4,061,898	(4,061,898)	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>		41,380,608	3,254,208	4,097,335	48,732,150

*Notes:*

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**1. ABOUT THIS REPORT**

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The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (the Authority) is a government authority of the State of Victoria, established by the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities is included in the **Report of Operations**, which does not form part of these financial statements.

Its principal address is:

Agriculture Victoria Complex  
315-341 Koorlong Avenue  
Irymple, Victoria, 3498

**Basis of preparation**

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the Authority. Additions to net assets which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners. Transfers of net assets arising from administrative restructurings are treated as distributions to or contributions by owners. Transfers of net liabilities arising from administrative restructurings are treated as distributions to owners.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Rewards to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in applying AAS that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading: 'Significant judgement or estimates', and relate to:

- Employee benefit provisions (Note 3.1.2);
- Accrued expenses (Note 5.2);
- Determining whether the performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether the arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 or AASB 1058 (Note 2.2.1);
- Commitments for expenditure (Note 6.2);
- Fair value determination of assets and liabilities (Note 7.3).

All amounts have been rounded to the nearest dollar unless otherwise stated. Figures in the financial statements may not equate due to rounding.

**COVID-19 impact**

During the 2022 reporting period, the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continued to be pervasive, impacting across industries, both domestically and internationally.

While the Authority has been affected by COVID-19, the effects continue to be limited. The Authority continues to be well placed to work remotely when required, and as such the closure of our offices had minimal affect on our activities.

The Authority has utilised several initiatives to attempt to combat the effects on our employees and the community by COVID 19 and its accompanying restrictions, which to date have showed some success. The Authority has also been able to maintain its existing employment levels throughout the crisis.

From a financial perspective, as the Authority's funding is predominantly through State and Commonwealth Government Contributions, and the majority of the Authority's dealings are with other Government Departments and Agencies, management does not currently consider COVID-19 to have a material affect on any judgements or assumptions applied in the preparation of these financial statements.

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

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#### Compliance information

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASs) which include Interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). In particular, they are presented in a manner consistent with the requirements of AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Where appropriate, those AASs paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES**

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**Introduction**

The Authority's primary objective is to facilitate integrated and ecological sustainable management of the natural, cultural and productive landscapes occurring within the region. Programs and projects are developed to deliver against the region's priorities for these landscapes.

To enable the Authority to fulfil its objective and provide outputs it receives income (predominantly accrual based government contributions). The Authority also receives Salinity levies collected specifically to offset salinity impact of irrigation development.

**Structure**

- 2.1 Summary of income that funds the delivery of our services
- 2.2 Income from transactions

**2.1 Summary of income that funds the delivery of our services**

**Significant Judgement: Grants Contributions**

The Authority has made the judgement that amounts received in relation to government contributions should be recognised under AASB 1058 on the basis that the relevant funding agreements do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations to satisfy the application of AASB 15.

	Notes	\$	\$
		2022	2021
Government Contributions	2.2.1	17,211,041	14,827,615
Interest	2.2.2	117,439	131,616
Other Income	2.2.3	8,991,387	6,925,201
<b>Total income that funds delivery of services</b>		<b>26,319,867</b>	<b>21,884,432</b>

Revenue and income that fund delivery of the Authority's services are accounted for consistently with the requirements of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes.

**2.2 Income from transactions**

**2.2.1 Government contributions**

**Income recognised under AASB 1058**

	2022	\$	\$
<b>State Government</b>			
State Government Contributions	4,150,297	3,355,163	
Catchment Governance	853,200	843,200	
Threatened Species Protection Initiative	563,050	1,539,950	
Sustainable Irrigation Program	635,800	396,700	
Landcare Program	826,743	431,729	
Environmental Water Program	731,000	478,000	
Environmental Water Holder	835,632	609,414	
Water Management Program	2,005,000	1,661,000	
Our Catchment Our Communities	549,000	631,000	
<b>Total State Government contributions</b>	<b>11,149,722</b>	<b>9,946,156</b>	
<b>Commonwealth Government</b>			
Commonwealth Contributions	1,137,112	5,000	
The Living Murray	2,513,692	2,425,042	
National Landcare Program	2,410,515	2,451,417	
<b>Total Commonwealth Government contributions</b>	<b>6,061,319</b>	<b>4,881,459</b>	
<b>Total Government contributions</b>	<b>17,211,041</b>	<b>14,827,615</b>	

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### Grants recognised under AASB 1058

The Authority has determined that the grant income included in the table above under AASB 1058 has been earned under arrangements that are either not enforceable and/or linked to sufficiently specific performance obligations.

Income from grants without any sufficiently specific performance obligations, or that are not enforceable, is recognised when the Authority has an unconditional right to receive cash which usually coincides with receipt of cash. On initial recognition of the asset, the Authority recognises any related contributions by owners, increases in liabilities, decreases in assets, and revenue ('related amounts') in accordance with other Australian Accounting Standards. Related amounts may take the form of:

- (a) contributions by owners, in accordance with AASB 1004;
- (b) revenue or a contract liability arising from a contract with a customer, in accordance with AASB 15;
- (c) a lease liability in accordance with AASB 16;
- (d) a financial instrument, in accordance with AASB 9; or
- (e) a provision, in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*.

Income received for specific purpose grants for on-passing is recognised simultaneously as the funds are immediately on passed to the relevant recipient entities.

#### Grants recognised under AASB 15

Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations are accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers under AASB 15. Consideration received in advance of recognising the associated revenue from the customer is recorded as a contract liability. Where the performance obligations are satisfied but not yet billed, a contract asset is recorded. In 2021-22 the Authority has not recognised any revenue as a contract asset under AASB 15 (2021: Nil), and has not recognised any revenue as a contract liability under AASB 15 (Note 5.2) (2021: \$489,291).

#### 2.2.2 Interest income

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Interest from financial assets not at fair value through profit and loss</b>		
Interest on bank deposits	117,439	131,616
<b>Total interest from financial assets not at fair value through profit and loss</b>	<b>117,439</b>	<b>131,616</b>

Interest income includes interest received on bank deposits. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method, which allocates interest over the relevant period.

#### 2.2.3 Other income

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Salinity levies</b>		
Salinity levies	3,182,818	3,364,491
<b>Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project</b>		
Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project	5,608,091	3,487,609
<b>Sundry income</b>		
Sundry income	200,478	73,101
<b>Total other income</b>	<b>8,991,387</b>	<b>6,925,201</b>

Salinity levies are collected under the Ministerial 'policies for managing water use licences in salinity impact zones (2007)', whereby each mega litre of new or increased Annual Use Limit (AUL) attracts a capital or ongoing charge to contribute to the costs of works and measures to offset salinity impacts.

The Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project is a regional partnership coordinated by Lower Murray Water and supported by Mallee Catchment Management Authority to deliver ecological benefits to wetlands, native fish, birds and plants at nine sites along the Murray River in northern Victoria. Works on these nine sites is ongoing.

Sundry income is paid parental leave and reimbursements for trainees.

The Authority has determined that the other income included in the table above under AASB 1058 has been earned under arrangements that are either not enforceable and/or linked to sufficiently specific performance obligations.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**3. THE COST OF DELIVERING OUR SERVICES**

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**Introduction**

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Authority in delivering services and outputs. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the cost associated with provision of services are recorded.

**Structure**

- 3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services
- 3.2 Grant expenses
- 3.3 Other operating expenses

**3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services**

	Notes	\$	\$
		2022	2021
Employee benefits expense	3.1.1	6,365,315	5,777,705
Grants and incentives	3.2	724,276	257,505
Other operating expenses	3.3	15,048,072	12,699,415
<b>Total expenses incurred in delivery of services</b>		<b>22,137,663</b>	<b>18,734,625</b>

**3.1.1 Employee benefits in the comprehensive operating statement**

	Notes	\$	\$
		2022	2021
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave		5,824,445	5,289,159
Termination benefits		1,657	4,279
Defined contribution superannuation	3.1.3	539,213	484,267
<b>Total employee benefits expenses</b>		<b>6,365,315</b>	<b>5,777,705</b>

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, termination payments, payroll tax and workcover premiums.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period. The Authority does not contribute to any defined benefit superannuation plans.

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated before normal retirement date, or when an employee accepts an offer of benefits in exchange for the termination of employment. Termination benefits are recognised when the Authority is demonstrably committed to terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal or providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

**3.1.2 Employee benefits in the balance sheet**

**Significant judgement, employee benefit provisions:** In measuring employee benefits, consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using a single weighted average discount rate based on market yields of national government bonds in Australia that reflects the estimated timing and amount of benefit payment.

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave (LSL) for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Current provisions:</b>		
<i>Annual leave</i>		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	293,346	294,919
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	124,067	101,951
<i>Time in lieu and rostered days off</i>		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	-	4,360
<i>Long service leave</i>		
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	522,141	472,636
<i>Provisions for on-costs</i>		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	32,837	32,711
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	88,466	78,881
<b>Total current provisions for employee benefits</b>	<b>1,060,857</b>	<b>985,458</b>
<b>Non-current provisions</b>		
Employee benefits	125,963	134,063
On-costs	17,880	19,029
<b>Total non-current provisions for employee benefits</b>	<b>143,843</b>	<b>153,092</b>
<b>Total provisions for employee benefits</b>	<b>1,204,700</b>	<b>1,138,550</b>

	\$
	2022
<b>Reconciliation of movement in on-cost provision</b>	
<i>Opening balance</i>	
Additional provisions recognised	130,621
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>8,562</b>
<i>Current</i>	
Non-current	139,183
	121,303
	17,880

**Wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave:** Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities, because the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages are recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As the Authority expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, as the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

**Unconditional annual leave and LSL** are disclosed as a current liability; even where the Authority does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave within 12 months.

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at either undiscounted value, if the Authority expects to wholly settle within 12 months, or present value, if the Authority does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority**  
**for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**Conditional LSL** is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is an unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current LSL is measured at present value.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current LSL liability is recognised as a transaction.

### 3.1.3 Superannuation contributions

Employees of the Authority are entitled to receive superannuation benefits. The Authority only contributes to defined contribution plans.

The name, details and amounts expensed in relation to the major employee superannuation funds and contributions made by the Authority, and outstanding at year end, are as follows:

	Paid contributions for the year		Contributions outstanding at year end	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
<b>Defined contribution plans</b>				
VicSuper	211,990	238,995	17,813	27,919
Other superannuation funds	327,223	245,272	29,582	36,577
<b>Total</b>	<b>539,213</b>	<b>484,267</b>	<b>47,395</b>	<b>64,496</b>

### 3.2 Grant expenses

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
Payments for specific purposes	724,276	257,505
<b>Total grant expenses</b>	<b>724,276</b>	<b>257,505</b>

Grant expenses are contributions of the Authority's resources to another party for specific purposes where there is no expectation that the amount will be repaid in equal value (either by money, goods or services).

Grants can be either operating or capital in nature. The Authority only makes special purpose grants which are paid for a particular purpose and/or have conditions attached regarding their use.

Grant expenses are recognised in the reporting period in which they are paid or payable. Grants only take the form of money.

### 3.3 Other operating expenses

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Supplies and services</b>		
Purchase of services (including remuneration of auditors)	1,970,123	1,009,670
Consultancies - project based	4,350,951	2,856,334
Contractors - project based	5,228,421	6,446,477
Project operations and maintenance	2,878,834	1,869,057
Office expenses	277,604	192,472
Leases - short term	342,139	325,534
<b>Total other operating expenses</b>	<b>15,048,072</b>	<b>12,699,544</b>

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

**Supplies and services** are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

Project based consultancy and contractor expenses relate to specific on ground projects undertaken by the Authority and do not include similar expenses of a corporate nature.

Operating lease payments (including contingent rentals) are recognised on a straight line basis over the lease term, except where another systematic basis is more representative of the time pattern of the benefits derived from the use of the leased asset

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### 4. KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OUTPUT DELIVERY

##### Introduction

The Authority controls non-financial physical assets and investments that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. They represent the resources that have been entrusted to the Authority to be utilised for delivery of those outputs.

*Fair value measurement:* Where the assets included in this section are carried at fair value, additional information is disclosed in Note 7.3 in connection with how those fair values were determined.

##### Structure

###### 4.1 Total plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Motor vehicles at fair value	787,311	787,311	(583,734)	(429,797)	203,577	357,514
Office furniture and equipment at fair value	42,535	46,951	(25,459)	(30,873)	17,076	16,078
Plant and equipment at fair value	212,724	216,013	(100,310)	(129,121)	112,414	86,892
<b>Net carrying amount</b>	<b>1,042,570</b>	<b>1,050,275</b>	<b>(709,503)</b>	<b>(589,791)</b>	<b>333,067</b>	<b>460,484</b>

**Initial recognition:** Items of plant and equipment, are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

The cost of a leasehold improvements is capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the remaining term of the lease or their estimated useful lives.

**Subsequent measurement:** Plant and equipment are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Fair value is determined with regard to the asset's highest and best use (considering legal or physical restrictions imposed on the asset, public announcements or commitments made in relation to the intended use of the asset) and is summarised below by asset category.

**Motor vehicles** are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Authority acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by an experienced fleet manager in the Authority who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

Fair value for **plant and equipment** that are specialised in use (such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern) is determined using the current replacement cost method.

Refer to Note 7.3 for additional information on fair value determination of plant and equipment.

##### Impairment of plant and equipment

The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash-generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority**  
**for the year ended 30 June 2022**

**4.1.1 Depreciation and amortisation**

Charge for the period	\$	\$
	2022	2021
Motor vehicles	153,937	152,322
Office furniture and equipment	7,312	8,441
Plant and equipment	38,489	49,633
<b>Total depreciation and amortisation</b>	<b>199,738</b>	<b>210,396</b>

All plant and equipment and other non-financial physical assets that have finite useful lives, are depreciated.

Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

Asset	(years)	Useful life
Motor vehicles	4 to 8	
Office furniture and equipment	3 to 25	
Plant and equipment	3 to 15	

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives.

**4.1.2 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amounts of plant and equipment**

2022	Motor vehicles at fair value	Office furniture and equipment at fair value	Plant and equipment at fair value	\$ Total
<b>Opening balance</b>	357,514	16,078	86,892	460,484
Additions	-	8,310	64,011	72,321
Depreciation	(153,937)	(7,312)	(38,489)	(199,738)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>203,577</b>	<b>17,076</b>	<b>112,414</b>	<b>333,067</b>

2021	Motor vehicles at fair value	Office furniture and equipment at fair value	Plant and equipment at fair value	\$ Total
<b>Opening balance</b>	470,592	24,907	102,734	598,233
Additions	39,244	-	33,791	73,035
Disposals	-	(388)	-	(388)
Depreciation	(152,322)	(8,441)	(49,633)	(210,396)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>357,514</b>	<b>16,078</b>	<b>86,892</b>	<b>460,484</b>

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### 5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

##### Introduction

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Authority's controlled operations

##### Structure

- 5.1 Receivables
- 5.2 Payables
- 5.3 Prepayments

##### 5.1 Receivables

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Contractual</b>		
Other receivables	4,736,004	3,233,810
<b>Statutory</b>		
GST input tax receivable	-	53,850
<b>Total receivables</b>	<b>4,736,004</b>	<b>3,287,660</b>
Represented by:		
Current receivables	4,736,004	3,287,660

Receivables consist of:

**Contractual receivables** are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised costs'. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. The Authority holds the contractual receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

**Statutory receivables** do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment), but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes. The Authority applies AASB 9 for initial measurement of the statutory receivables and as a result statutory receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction cost.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority**  
**for the year ended 30 June 2022**

**5.2 Payables**

**Significant judgement: Accrued expenses**

Accrued expenses represent goods or services that have been received or supplied but have not been invoiced by the supplier. In estimating the amount of an accrued expense, consideration is given to the stage of completion of the services being performed.

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Contractual</b>		
Supplies and services	613,390	488,574
Amounts payable to government and agencies	-	301
Contract liabilities	-	489,291
<b>Statutory</b>		
Other taxes payable	52,852	-
<b>Total payables</b>	<b>666,242</b>	<b>978,166</b>
Represented by		
Current payables	666,242	978,166

Payables consist of:

**Contractual payables**, classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Authority prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid. An amount has also been recognised for revenue received in advance, which has been assessed under AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*; and

**Statutory payables**, that are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but are not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of less than 30 days. No interest is charged on contractual payables.

The terms and conditions of amounts payable to the government and agencies vary according to the particular agreements and as they are not legislative payables, they are not classified as financial instruments.

**Maturity analysis of contractual payables <sup>(a)</sup>**

2022	Carrying amount	Nominal amount	Less than 1 month	1 - 3 months	Maturity dates		
					3 months - 1 year	1-5 years	5+ years
Supplies and services	613,390	613,390	613,390	-	-	-	-
Amounts payable to government and agencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>613,390</b>	<b>613,390</b>	<b>613,390</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

2021							
Supplies and services	488,574	488,574	488,574	-	-	-	-
Amounts payable to government and agencies	301	301	301	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>488,875</b>	<b>488,875</b>	<b>488,875</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

(a) Maturity analysis is presented using the contractual undiscounted cash flows.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

**5.2.1 Contract liabilities**

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Contract liabilities</b>		
Opening balance brought forward	489,291	-
Less: transfer to revenue recognition	(489,291)	-
Plus: liability recognised based on measure of progress during the year	-	489,291
<b>Total contract liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>489,291</b>
represented by:		
Current contract liabilities	-	489,291

**Contract liabilities** includes amounts recognised for revenue received in advance, which has been assessed under AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. While this amount has been disclosed under liabilities for completeness of disclosures, it is not an amount payable by the Authority.

Contract liabilities are derecognised and recorded as revenue when the contracted services have been completed and the revenue earned. There are no contract liabilities recognised for the Authority during the reporting period, and all prior year contract liabilities have since been derecognised.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**6. HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS**

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**Introduction**

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by the Authority during its operations and other information related to financing activities of the Authority.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as cash balances). Notes 7.1 and 7.3 provide additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

**Structure**

- 6.1 Cash flow information and balances
- 6.2 Commitments for expenditure

**6.1 Cash flow information and balances**

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank, deposits at call and those highly liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less, which are held for the purpose of meeting short-term cash commitments rather than for investment purposes, and which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
Cash on hand	1,000	1,000
Cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet	45,533,021	43,117,256
<b>Balance as per cash flow statement</b>	<b>45,534,021</b>	<b>43,118,256</b>

The Authority is responsible for the facilitation and coordination of catchments in an integrated and sustainable manner. This is achieved by undertaking projects funded by state and federal government. The Authority receives funding for specific projects which are guided by the Regional Catchment Strategy and delivered in line with the Authority's Corporate Plan approved by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and the Minister for Water.

The projects funded by the state and commonwealth governments can be undertaken over multiple financial years and is received at various stages of the project life based on contractual agreements. At the end of the financial year there are some projects that have not reached completion but will be completed within the contractual terms in future financial periods. At balance date the Authority has significant cash and cash equivalents that will be utilised to complete these projects in future financial years.

**6.1.1 Reconciliation of net result for the period to cash flow from operating activities**

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Net result for the period</b>	<b>3,982,466</b>	<b>2,939,412</b>
<b>Non-cash movements</b>		
(Gain)/loss on disposal of non-current assets	-	-
Depreciation and amortisation of non-current assets	199,738	210,395
<b>Movements in assets and liabilities</b>		
Decrease/(increase) in receivables	(1,448,345)	(17,925)
(Decrease)/increase in employee related provisions	66,150	32,539
Decrease/(increase) in prepayments	-	65,799
(Decrease)/Increase in payables	(311,922)	462,618
<b>Net cash flows from/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>2,488,087</b>	<b>3,692,838</b>

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### 6.2 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments for future expenditure include operating and capital commitments arising from contracts. These commitments are recorded below at their nominal value and are exclusive of GST. Where it is considered appropriate and provides additional relevant information to users, the net present values of significant individual projects are stated. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet.

##### 6.2.1 Total commitments payable

					\$
Nominal amounts		Less than 1 year	1 - 5 years	5+ years	Total
2022					
Other commitments payable		6,031,339	166,824	-	6,198,163
<b>Total commitments</b>		<b>6,031,339</b>	<b>166,824</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,198,163</b>

					\$
Nominal amounts		Less than 1 year	1 - 5 years	5+ years	Total
2021					
Other commitments payable		4,072,559	662,493	-	4,735,052
<b>Total commitments</b>		<b>4,072,559</b>	<b>662,493</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,735,052</b>

#### 6.2.2 Leases

For any new contracts entered into, the Authority considers whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'. To apply this definition the Authority assesses whether the contract meets three key evaluations:

Whether the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to the Authority and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights;

Whether the Authority has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and the Authority has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use; and

Whether the Authority has the right to take decisions in respect of 'how and for what purpose' the asset is used throughout the period of use.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

At 30 June 2022 the Authority does not have any lease liabilities (2021 - \$0).

##### Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The Authority has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

At 30 June 2022 the Authority does not have any commitments for short-term or low value leases that are not already disclosed in note 3.3.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**7. RISKS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS**

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**Introduction**

The Authority is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, (including exposures to financial risks) as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Authority related mainly to fair value determination.

**Structure**

- 7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures
- 7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities
- 7.3 Fair value determination

**7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures**

**Introduction**

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of the Authority's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than a contract (for example taxes, fines and penalties). Such assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments in AASB 132 *Financial Instruments: Presentation*.

**Categories of financial assets**

**Financial assets at amortised cost**

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- the assets are held by the Authority to collect the contractual cash flows, and
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interests.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Authority recognises the following assets in this category

- cash and deposits; and
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables)

**Categories of financial liabilities**

**Financial liabilities at amortised cost** are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. The Authority recognises accounts payable (excluding statutory payables) in this category.

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### 7.1.1 Financial instruments: Categorisation

2022	\$			
	Cash and deposits	Financial assets at amortised cost (AC)	Financial liabilities at amortised cost (AC)	Total
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>				
Cash and deposits	45,534,021	-	-	45,534,021
<b>Receivables <sup>(a)</sup></b>				
Other contractual receivables	-	4,736,004	-	4,736,004
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>45,534,021</b>	<b>4,736,004</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,270,025</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>				
Supplies and services	-	-	613,390	613,390
Amounts payable to government and agencies	-	-	-	-
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>613,390</b>	<b>613,390</b>

2021	\$			
	Cash and deposits	Financial assets at amortised cost (AC)	Financial liabilities at amortised cost (AC)	Total
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>				
Cash and deposits	43,118,256	-	-	43,118,256
<b>Receivables <sup>(a)</sup></b>				
Other contractual receivables	-	3,233,810	-	3,233,810
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>43,118,256</b>	<b>3,233,810</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>46,352,066</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>				
Supplies and services	-	-	488,574	488,574
Amounts payable to government and agencies	-	-	301	301
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>488,875</b>	<b>488,875</b>

Note:

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

**7.1.2 Financial instruments: Net holding gain/(loss) by category**

2022	\$	Total interest income/ (expense)	Total
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>			
Financial assets at amortised cost – other than on derecognition		117,439	117,439
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>		117,439	117,439
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>			
Financial liabilities at amortised cost		-	-
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>		-	-
2021	\$	Total interest income/ (expense)	Total
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>			
Financial assets at amortised cost – other than on derecognition		131,616	131,616
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>		131,616	131,616
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>			
Financial liabilities at amortised cost		-	-
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>		-	-

The net holding gains or losses disclosed above are determined as follows:

For financial liabilities measured at amortised cost, the net gain or loss is calculated by taking the interest expense, plus or minus foreign exchange gains or losses arising from the revaluation of financial liabilities measured at amortised cost; and

For financial asset and liabilities that are mandatorily measured at or designated at fair value through net result, the net gain or loss is calculated by taking the movement in the fair value of the financial asset or liability.

**7.1.3 Financial risk management objectives and policies**

As a whole, the Authority's financial risk management program seeks to manage credit, liquidity and interest rate risks and the associated volatility of its financial performance. The Authority is not exposed to foreign currency or equity price risks.

Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement, and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, with respect to each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument above are disclosed in Note 7.3 to the financial statements.

The main purpose in holding financial instruments is to prudentially manage the Authority's financial risks within the government policy parameters.

The Authority's main financial risks include credit risk, liquidity risk and interest rate risk. The Authority manages these financial risks in accordance with its financial risk management policy.

The Authority uses different methods to measure and manage the different risks to which it is exposed. Primary responsibility for the identification and management of financial risks rests with the Board of the Authority.

**Financial instruments: Credit risk**

Credit risk refers to the possibility that a borrower will default on its financial obligations as and when they fall due. The Authority's exposure to credit risk arises from the potential default of a counter party on their contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to the Authority. Credit risk is measured at fair value and is monitored on a regular basis.

Credit risk associated with the Authority's contractual financial assets is minimal because the main debtors are the Victorian and Commonwealth Government. For debtors other than the Government, it is the Authority's policy to only deal with entities with high credit ratings, where appropriate.

In addition, the Authority does not engage in hedging for its contractual financial assets and mainly obtains contractual financial assets that are on fixed interest, except for cash and deposits, which are mainly cash at bank. As with the policy for debtors, the Authority's policy is to only deal with banks with high credit rating.

Provision of impairment for contractual financial assets is recognised when there is objective evidence that the Authority will not be able to collect a receivable. Objective evidence includes financial difficulties of the debtor, default payments, debts that are more than 60 days overdue, and changes in debtor credit ratings.

Except as otherwise detailed in the following table, the carrying amount of contractual financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents the Authority's maximum exposure to credit risk without taking account of the value of any collateral obtained.

There has been no material change to the Authority's credit risk profile in 2021-22.

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### Credit quality of contractual financial assets

					\$
2022		Financial institution (triple-A credit rating)	Government agencies (triple-A credit rating)	Other (min triple-B credit rating)	Total
<b>Financial assets</b>					
<b>Financial assets with loss allowance measured at 12-month expected credit loss</b>					
Cash and deposits (not assessed for impairment due to materiality)	44,657,153	875,868	-	45,533,021	
Statutory receivables (with no impairment loss recognised)	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>44,657,153</b>	<b>875,868</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45,533,021</b>	

#### Credit quality of contractual financial assets that are neither past due nor impaired

					\$
2021		Financial institution (triple-A credit rating)	Government agencies (triple-A credit rating)	Other (min triple-B credit rating)	Total
<b>Financial assets</b>					
Cash and deposits					
Cash and deposits	42,753,266	363,990	-	43,117,256	
Contractual receivables <sup>(a)</sup>					
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>42,753,266</b>	<b>363,990</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>43,117,256</b>	

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts

#### Impairment of financial assets under AASB 9

The Authority records the allowance for expected credit loss for the relevant financial instruments, applying AASB 9 Expected Credit Loss approach. Subject to AASB 9 impairment assessment include the Authority's contractual receivables and statutory receivables.

While cash and cash equivalents are also subject to the impairment requirements of AASB 9, there was no identified impairment loss.

#### Contractual receivables at amortised cost

Contracted receivables are considered to have low credit risk, taking into account the counterparty's credit rating, risk of default and capacity to meet contractual cash flow obligations in the near term. As the result, the Authority does not estimate any doubtful debts or credit risk associated with its contracted receivables for the 12 month period.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**Statutory receivables at amortised cost**

The Authority's non-contractual receivables arising from statutory requirements are not financial instruments. However, they are nevertheless recognised and measured in accordance with AASB 9 requirements as if those receivables are financial instruments.

Statutory receivables are considered to have low credit risk, taking into account the counterparty's credit rating, risk of default and capacity to meet contractual cash flow obligations in the near term. As the result, the Authority does not estimate any credit risk associated with its statutory receivables for the 12 month period. No loss allowance has been recognised.

**Financial instruments: Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk arises from being unable to meet financial obligations as they fall due. The Authority settles financial obligations within 30 days and in the event of a dispute, making payments within 30 days from the date of resolution.

The Authority is exposed to liquidity risk mainly through the financial liabilities as disclosed in the face of the balance sheet. The Authority manages its liquidity risk by:

- maintaining an adequate level of uncommitted funds that can be drawn at short notice to meet its short-term obligations;
- holding investments and other contractual financial assets that are readily able to be liquidated; and
- careful maturity planning of its financial obligations based on forecasts of future cash flows.

The Authority's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk. Cash for unexpected events is generally sourced from liquidation of available-for-sale financial investments.

**Financial instruments: Interest rate risk**

Fair value interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Authority does not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk.

Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Authority has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risks through cash and deposits and term deposits that are at floating rate.

The Authority manages this risk by mainly undertaking fixed rate financial instruments with relatively even maturity profiles, with only insignificant amounts of financial instruments at floating rate. Management has concluded for cash at bank, as financial assets that can be left at floating rate without necessarily exposing the Authority to significant bad risk, management monitors movement in interest rates on a frequent basis.

The carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities that are exposed to interest rates and the Authority's sensitivity to interest rate risk are set out in the table that follows.

Interest rate exposure of financial instruments		\$					
2022		Weighted average interest rate	%	Carrying amount	Fixed interest rate	Variable interest rate	Non bearing interest
2022							
<b>Financial assets</b>							
Cash and deposits		0.26%		45,534,021	-	45,533,021	1,000
<b>Receivables <sup>(a)</sup></b>							
Other contractual receivables				4,736,004	-	-	4,736,004
<b>Total financial assets</b>				50,270,025	-	45,533,021	4,737,004
<b>Financial liabilities</b>							
<b>Payables <sup>(a)</sup></b>							
Supplies and services				613,390	-	-	613,390
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>				613,390	-	-	613,390

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable).

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

2021	Weighted average interest rate %	Carrying amount	Fixed interest rate	Variable interest rate	\$ Non bearing interest
<b>Financial assets</b>					
Cash and deposits	0.92%	43,118,256	-	43,117,256	1,000
<b>Receivables</b>					
Other contractual receivables		3,233,810	-	-	3,233,810
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>46,352,066</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>43,117,256</b>	<b>3,234,810</b>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>					
<b>Payables <sup>(a)</sup></b>					
Supplies and services		488,574	-	-	488,574
Amounts payable to government and agencies		301	-	-	301
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>		<b>488,875</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>488,875</b>

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts

2022	Carrying amount	-100 basis points	+100 basis points
		Net result	Net result
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>			
Cash and deposits	45,534,021	(455,340)	455,340
<b>Total impact</b>	<b>45,534,021</b>	<b>(455,340)</b>	<b>455,340</b>
<b>2021</b>			
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>			
Cash and deposits	43,118,256	(431,183)	431,183
Investments and other financial assets	-	-	-
<b>Total impact</b>	<b>43,118,256</b>	<b>(431,183)</b>	<b>431,183</b>

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities**

The Authority does not have any contingent assets or contingent liabilities.

**7.3 Fair value determination**

*Significant judgement: Fair value measurements of assets and liabilities*

Fair value determination requires judgement and the use of assumptions. This section discloses the most significant assumptions used in determining fair values. Changes to assumptions could have a material impact on the results and financial position of the Authority.

This section sets out information on how the Authority determined fair value for financial reporting purposes. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The following assets and liabilities are carried at fair value:

- plant and equipment and vehicles

In addition, the fair value of other assets and liabilities that are carried at amortised cost, also need to be determined for disclosure purposes.

The Authority determines the policies and procedures for determining fair values for both financial and non-financial assets and liabilities as required.

**Fair value hierarchy**

In determining fair values a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 - quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 - valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 - valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

The Authority determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by reassessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

The Authority monitors changes in the fair value of each asset and liability through relevant data sources to determine whether revaluation is required.

**How this section is structured**

For those assets and liabilities for which fair values are determined, the following disclosures are provided:

- carrying amount and the fair value (which would be the same for those assets measured at fair value);
- which level of the fair value hierarchy was used to determine the fair value; and
- in respect of those assets and liabilities subject to fair value determination using Level 3 inputs:
  - a reconciliation of the movements in fair values from the beginning of the year to the end; and
  - details of significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value determination.

This section is divided between disclosures in connection with fair value determination for financial instruments (refer to Note 7.3.1) and non-financial physical assets (refer to Note 7.3.2).

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### 7.3.1 Fair value determination of financial assets and liabilities

The fair values and net fair values of financial assets and liabilities are determined as follows:

- Level 1 – the fair value of financial instrument with standard terms and conditions and traded in active liquid markets are determined with reference to quoted market prices;
- Level 2 – the fair value is determined using inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the financial asset or liability, either directly or indirectly; and
- Level 3 – the fair value is determined in accordance with generally accepted pricing models based on discounted cash flow analysis using unobservable market inputs.

The Authority currently holds a range of financial instruments that are recorded in the financial statements where the carrying amounts are a reasonable approximation of fair value, either due to their short-term nature or with the expectation that they will be paid in full by the end of the 2021-22 reporting period.

These financial instruments include:

Financial assets	Financial liabilities
Cash and deposits	Payables:
Receivables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· supplies and services</li><li>· amounts payable to government and agencies</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· income receivable</li><li>· other contractual receivables</li></ul>	

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**7.3.2 Fair value determination of non-financial physical assets**

<b>Fair value measurement hierarchy</b>		Fair value measurement at end of reporting period using:		
	Carrying amount as at 30 June	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>2022</b>				\$
Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value:				
Motor vehicles	203,577	-	203,577	-
Office furniture and equipment	17,076	-	-	17,076
Plant and equipment	112,414	-	-	112,414
<b>Total of plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value</b>	<b>333,067</b>	-	<b>203,577</b>	<b>129,490</b>
<b>2021</b>				\$
Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value:				
Motor vehicles	357,514	-	357,514	-
Office furniture and equipment	16,078	-	-	16,078
Plant and equipment	86,892	-	-	86,892
<b>Total of plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value</b>	<b>460,484</b>	-	<b>357,514</b>	<b>102,970</b>

There have been no transfers between levels during the period.

**Vehicles** are held at fair value and fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method. The Authority acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by the Chief Finance Officer of the Authority who sets relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

**Plant and equipment** is held at fair value. When plant and equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method. As depreciation adjustments considered as significant, unobservable inputs, these assets are classified as Level 3 fair value measurements.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2022

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### Reconciliation of Level 3 fair value movements

		\$
<b>2022</b>		
<b>Opening balance</b>	16,078	86,892
Purchases (sales)	8,310	64,011
Depreciation	(7,312)	(38,489)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>17,076</b>	<b>112,414</b>
		<b>129,490</b>
<b>2021</b>		\$
<b>Opening balance</b>	24,907	102,734
Purchases (sales)	(388)	33,791
Depreciation	(8,441)	(49,633)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>16,078</b>	<b>86,892</b>
		<b>102,970</b>

There were no unrealised gains or losses (2021: nil) on non-financial assets.

#### Description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

2022	Valuation technique	Significant unobservable inputs
Office furniture and equipment	Replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of office furniture and equipment
Plant and equipment	Replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of plant and equipment

Significant unobservable inputs have remained unchanged since June 2020.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

**8. OTHER DISCLOSURES**

**Introduction**

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

**Structure**

- 8.1 Reserves
- 8.2 Responsible persons
- 8.3 Remuneration of executives
- 8.4 Related parties
- 8.5 Remuneration of auditors
- 8.6 Subsequent events
- 8.7 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective
- 8.8 Glossary of technical terms

**8.1 Reserves**

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Committed funds reserve <sup>(a)</sup></b>		
Balance at beginning of financial year	2,554,307	3,238,435
Transfers to/(from) accumulated surplus	3,144,410	(684,128)
<b>Balance at end of financial year</b>	<b>5,698,717</b>	<b>2,554,307</b>
<b>Salinity offset reserve <sup>(b)</sup></b>		
Balance at beginning of financial year	33,764,403	32,775,380
Transfers to/(from) accumulated surplus	917,488	989,023
<b>Balance at end of financial year</b>	<b>34,681,891</b>	<b>33,764,403</b>
<b>Capital renewals reserve <sup>(c)</sup></b>		
Balance at beginning of financial year	1,000,000	1,000,000
Transfers to/(from) accumulated surplus	-	-
<b>Balance at end of financial year</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>
<b>Total reserves</b>	<b>41,380,608</b>	<b>37,318,710</b>

(a) The committed funds reserve contains amounts allocated to the completion of specific projects.

(b) The salinity offset reserve contains the amount held by the Authority in accordance with ministerial policies for managing water use licences in salinity impact zones under the *Water Act 1989*.

(c) The capital renewals reserve contains amounts that have been set aside by the Authority for the purpose of funding capital projects.

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### 8.2 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

##### Names

The persons who held the positions of Ministers and Accountable Officer in the Authority are as follows:

The Hon. Lisa Neville MLA, Minister for Water	1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022
The Hon. Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water	27 June 2022 to 30 June 2022
The Hon. Richard Wynne MP, Acting Minister for Water	1 July 2021 to 22 August 2021
The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change	1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

##### Responsible Persons

Allison McTaggart, Board Chair	1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022
Sharyon Pearn, Board Chair	1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021
Kellie Nulty, Deputy Board Chair	1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022
Dr John Cooke, Deputy Board Chair	1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021
Allison McTaggart, Board Member	1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021
Sharyon Pearn, Board Member	1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022
Kellie Nulty, Board Member	1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021
Janice Kelly, Board Member	1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022
Robert Matthews, Board Member	1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022
Jacquelyn Turfey, Board Member	1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021
Monica Munro, Board Member	1 July 2021 to 11 October 2021
Ann Hodge, Board Member	1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022
Tony Alessi, Board Member	1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022

##### Accountable Officer

Jennifer Collins, Chief Executive Officer	1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022
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##### Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officer in connection with management of the Authority during the reporting period was in the range: PESES-2 \$257,112-\$370,331 (2021: \$255,000-\$265,000)

The number of responsible persons whose remuneration from the Authority were as follows:

	2022	2021
\$0 to \$9,999	3	-
\$10,000 to \$19,999	5	7
\$20,000 to \$29,999	2	-
\$30,000 to \$39,999	-	1
\$245,000 to \$255,000	-	-
\$255,000 to \$265,000	-	1
\$345,000 to \$355,000	1	-
<b>Total number of responsible persons</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total remuneration \$</b>	<b>501,057</b>	<b>418,447</b>

#### 8.3 Remuneration of executives

The Authority does not have any executive officers that meet the definition of Financial Reporting Directions (FRDs) 21C disclosures of executive officers, other than ministers and the CEO, during the reporting period.

The CEO, to whom the Victorian Government's Public Entity Executive Remuneration (PEER) Policy applies, is an accountable officer whose remuneration has been disclosed in note 8.2 Responsible Persons.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**8.4 Related parties**

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority is statutory authority established by the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

The Authority is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

Related parties of the authority include:

- all key management personnel and their close family members;
- all cabinet ministers and their close family members; and
- all departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

Any related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Key management personnel of the Authority includes Portfolio Ministers, board members and the chief executive officer;

- The Hon Lisa Neville MLA, Minister for Water
- The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
- The Hon Richard Wynne MP, Acting Minister for Water
  
- Allison McTaggart, Board Member, Chair
- Kellie Nulty, Board Member, Deputy Board Chair
- Janice Kelly, Board Member
- Dr John Cooke, Board Member
- Sharyon Peart, Board Member
- Kellie Nulty, Board Member
- Robert Matthews, Board Member
- Jacquelyn Turfey, Board Member
- Monica Munro, Board Member
- Tony Alessi, Board Member
- Ann Hodge, Board Member
- Jennifer Collins, Chief Executive Officer

The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Ministers receives. The Ministers' remuneration and allowances are set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the Department of Parliamentary Services' Financial Report.

Remuneration comprises employee benefits in all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by the entity, or on behalf of the entity, in exchange for services rendered, and is disclosed in the following categories.

**Short-term employee benefits** include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

**Post-employment benefits** include pensions and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

**Other long-term benefits** include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

**Termination benefits** include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
Compensation of KMP		
Short-term employee benefits	420,878	366,884
Post-employment benefits	38,396	39,751
Other long-term benefits	41,783	11,812
Termination benefits	-	-
<b>Total compensation <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>501,057</b>	<b>418,447</b>

(a) Note that KMP are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of executive officers (Note 8.2).

## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### Government Related Entities

During the year the Authority reported related party transactions with the following government related entities:

Name of Government Entity	Details Transaction	Nature of Relationship	Receipts	Outstanding Receipts	Payments	Commitments
Australian Communications and Media Authority	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Government service provider	-	-	480	-
Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DOTE)	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Significant influence	3,364,170	2,631,706	-	-
Department of Environment Land Water and Planning	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Significant influence	13,864,918	112,470	-	-
Department of Environment Land Water and Planning	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Significant influence	-	-	2,221,481	876,781
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Significant influence	-	-	709,842	100,000
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	-	-	275	-
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	22,121	-	-	-
Goulburn Murray Water	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	-	-	643,500	6,500
Lower Murray Water	Salinity levies for managing water use licences in salinity impact zones.	Joint responsibility	9,358,753	1,991,829	-	-
Lower Murray Water	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	-	-	22,136	-
Murray Darling Basin Authority	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	800	-	-	-

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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North Central Catchment Management Authority	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	48,720	-	-
Treasury Corporation Victoria	Banking - Interest on TCV term deposits	Government service provider	113,304	-	-
Parks Victoria	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Significant influence	-	110,000	-
Wimmera Catchment Management Authority	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	-	36,300	-
Victorian Auditor Generals Office	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Government service provider	-	18,040	-
Victorian Government Solicitors Office	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Government service provider	-	19,850	-

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## Part 5 Financial Statements

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

#### Other Related Party Transactions

During the year the Authority reported related party transactions with the following key management personnel:

Name of counterparty	Details Transaction	Relationship	Receipts	Outstanding Receipts	Payments	Commitments
Christie Centre Inc.	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Supplier	-	-	5,408	-
Department of Environment Land Water and Planning	Provision of grant funding to undertake projects	Contractor	13,864,918	112,470	-	-
Department of Environment Land Water and Planning	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Contractor	-	-	2,221,481	876,781
Lower Murray Water	Reimbursement of costs associated with joint project.	Board Deputy Chair	9,358,753	1,991,829	-	-
Lower Murray Water	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Board Deputy Chair	-	-	22,136	-
La Trobe University	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Member of La Trobe Advisory Board	-	-	267,314	223,000

All other transactions that have occurred with KMP and their related parties have not been considered material for disclosure. In this context, transactions are only disclosed when they are considered necessary to draw attention to the possibility that the Authority's financial position and profit or loss may have been affected by the existence of related parties, and by transactions and outstanding balances, including commitments, with such parties.

#### 8.5 Remuneration of auditors

	\$	\$
	2022	2021
<b>Victorian Auditor-General's Office</b>		
Audit or review of the financial statements	17,000	16,400
<b>Total remuneration of auditors</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>16,400</b>

(a) The Victorian Auditor-General's Office is not allowed to provide non-audit services

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**8.6 Subsequent events**

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the reporting period which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Authority, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Authority in future financial years.

The continuing COVID-19 Health Pandemic is not expected to significantly affect the operations, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Authority in future financial years.

**8.7 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective**

Certain new and revised accounting standards have been issued but are not effective for the 2021-22 reporting period. These accounting standards have not been applied to the Financial Statements. The Authority is reviewing its existing policies and assessing the potential implications of these accounting standards which includes:

**AASB 17 Insurance Contracts**

The operative date of this standard has been deferred by AASB 2020-5 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Insurance Contracts to reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023 and will supersede AASB 4 Insurance Contracts. AASB 17 seeks to eliminate inconsistencies and weakness in existing practices by providing a single principle-based framework to account for all types of insurance contracts, including reinsurance contracts that an insurer holds. The standard also provides requirements for presentation and disclosure to enhance comparability.

The Australian Accounting Standards Board has currently issued an Exposure Draft (ED) 319 – Insurance Contracts in the Public Sector, proposing public-sector modifications to AASB 17 to facilitate the application by public sector entities. It is proposed that public sector entities would apply AASB 17 to annual periods beginning or after 1 July 2025, with earlier application permitted.

The Authority is in the process of analysing the impacts of these Standard. However, it is not anticipated to have a material impact. The Authority will not early adopt the Standard.

**AASB 2020-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-Current**

This Standard amends AASB 101 to clarify requirements for the presentation of liabilities in the statement of financial position as current or non-current. A liability is classified as non-current if an entity has the right at the end of the reporting period to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. The meaning of settlement of a liability is also clarified.

AASB 2020-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current – Deferral of Effective Date was issued in August 2020 and defers the effective date to annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023 instead of 1 January 2022, with earlier application permitted.

The Authority is in the process of analysing the impacts of these Standards. However, it is not anticipated to have a material impact. The Authority will not early adopt the Standard.

**Other Amending Standards**

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to future reporting periods, but are considered to have limited impact on the Authority's reporting.

- AASB 2020-3 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Annual Improvements 2018-2020 and Other Amendments.
- AASB 2021-5 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Deferred Tax related to Assets and Liabilities arising from a Single Transaction.
- AASB 2021-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Disclosure of Accounting Policies and Definitions of Accounting Estimates.
- AASB 2021-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Disclosure of Accounting Policies: Tier 2 and Other Australian Accounting Standards.
- AASB 2021-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Effective Date of Amendments to AASB 10 and AASB 128 and Editorial Corrections.

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

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#### 8.8 Glossary of technical terms

The following is a summary of the major technical terms used in this report.

**Amortisation** is the expense which results from the consumption, extraction or use over time of a non-produced physical or intangible asset. This expense is classified as an 'other economic flow'.

**Commitments** include those operating, capital and other outsourcing commitments arising from non-cancellable contractual or statutory sources.

**Comprehensive result** is the amount included in the operating statement representing total change in net worth other than transactions with owners as owners.

**Controlled item** generally refers to the capacity of a department to benefit from that item in the pursuit of the entity's objectives and to deny or regulate the access of others to that benefit.

**Current grants** are amounts payable or receivable for current purposes for which no economic benefits of equal value are receivable or payable in return.

**Depreciation** is an expense that arises from the consumption through wear or time of a produced physical or intangible asset. This expense is classified as a 'transaction' and so reduces the 'net result from transaction'.

**Effective interest method** is the method used to calculate the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

**Employee benefits expenses** include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, redundancy payments, defined benefits superannuation plans, and defined contribution superannuation plans.

**Ex gratia expenses** mean the voluntary payment of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write-off) that is not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability or claim against the entity.

**Financial asset** is any asset that is:

- cash;
- an equity instrument of another entity;
- a contractual right:
  - to receive cash or another financial asset from another entity; or
  - to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the entity; or
- a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
  - a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to receive a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments; or
  - a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments.

**Financial instrument** is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

**Financial liability** is any liability that is:

- a contractual obligation:
  - to deliver cash or another financial asset to another entity; or
  - to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the entity; or
- a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
  - a non derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to deliver a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments; or
  - a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments. For this purpose, the entity's own equity instruments do not include instruments that are themselves contracts for the future receipt or delivery of the entity's own equity instruments.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**Financial statements** comprise:

- a balance sheet as at the end of the period;
- a comprehensive operating statement for the period;
- a statement of changes in equity for the period;
- a cash flow statement for the period;
- notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information;
- comparative information in respect of the preceding period as specified in paragraph 38 of AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements* ; and
- a statement of financial position as at the beginning of the preceding period when an entity applies an accounting policy retrospectively or makes a retrospective restatement of items in its financial statements, or when it reclassifies items in its financial statements in accordance with paragraphs 41 of AASB 101.

**Grant expenses and other transfers** are transactions in which one unit provides goods, services, assets (or extinguishes a liability) or labour to another unit without receiving approximately equal value in return. Grants can either be operating or capital in nature.

While grants to governments may result in the provision of some goods or services to the transferor, they do not give the transferor a claim to receive directly benefits of approximately equal value. For this reason, grants are referred to by the AASB as involuntary transfers and are termed non reciprocal transfers. Receipt and sacrifice of approximately equal value may occur, but only by coincidence. For example, governments are not obliged to provide commensurate benefits, in the form of goods or services, to particular taxpayers in return for their taxes.

Grants can be paid as general purpose grants which refer to grants that are not subject to conditions regarding their use. Alternatively, they may be paid as specific purpose grants which are paid for a particular purpose and/or have conditions attached regarding their use.

**General government sector** comprises all government departments, offices and other bodies engaged in providing services free of charge or at prices significantly below their cost of production. General government services include those which are mainly non market in nature, those which are largely for collective consumption by the community and those which involve the transfer or redistribution of income. These services are financed mainly through taxes, or other compulsory levies and user charges.

**Grants for on passing** are grants paid to one institutional sector (e.g. a State general government entity) to be passed on to another institutional sector (e.g. local government or a private non-profit institution).

**Infrastructure systems** provide essential services used in the delivery of final services or products. They are generally a complex interconnected network of individual assets and mainly include sewerage systems, water storage and supply systems, and public transport assets owned by the State.

**Interest expense** represents costs incurred in connection with borrowings. It includes interest on advances, loans, overdrafts, bonds and bills, deposits, interest components of finance lease repayments, and amortisation of discounts or premiums in relation to borrowings.

**Interest income** includes unwinding over time of discounts on financial assets and interest received on bank term deposits and other investments.

**Investment properties** are properties held to earn rentals or for capital appreciation or both. Investment properties exclude properties held to meet service delivery objectives of the State of Victoria.

**Joint ventures** are contractual arrangements between the Authority and one or more other parties to undertake an economic activity that is subject to joint control and have rights to the net assets of the arrangement. Joint control only exists when the strategic financial and operating decisions relating to the activity require the unanimous consent of the parties sharing control (the venturers).

**Leases** are rights conveyed in a contract, or part of a contract, the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration.

**Net acquisition of non-financial assets** (from transactions) are purchases (and other acquisitions) of non-financial assets less sales (or disposals) of non-financial assets less depreciation plus changes in inventories and other movements in non-financial assets. Includes only those increases or decreases in non-financial assets resulting from transactions and therefore excludes write offs, impairment write downs and revaluations.

**Net financial liabilities** is calculated as liabilities less financial assets, other than equity in PNFCs and PFCs. This measure is broader than net debt as it includes significant liabilities, other than borrowings (e.g. accrued employee liabilities such as superannuation and long service leave entitlements). For the PNFC and PFC sectors, it is equal to negative net financial worth.

**Net financial worth** is equal to financial assets minus liabilities. It is a broader measure than net debt as it incorporates provisions made (such as superannuation, but excluding depreciation and bad debts) as well as holdings of equity. Net financial worth includes all classes of financial assets and liabilities, only some of which are included in net debt.

**Net gain on equity investments in other sector entities** measured at proportional share of the carrying amount of net assets/(liabilities) comprises the net gains relating to the equity held by the general government sector in other sector entities. It arises from a change in the carrying amount of net assets of the subsidiaries. The net gains are measured based on the proportional share of the subsidiary's carrying amount of net assets/(liabilities) before elimination of inter sector balances.

### Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022

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**Net lending/borrowing** is the financing requirement of government, calculated as the net operating balance less the net acquisition of non-financial assets. It also equals transactions in financial assets less transactions in liabilities. A positive result reflects a net lending position and a negative result reflects a net borrowing position.

**Net operating balance – net result from transactions:** Net result from transactions or net operating balance is a key fiscal aggregate and is revenue from transactions minus expenses from transactions. It is a summary measure of the ongoing sustainability of operations. It excludes gains and losses resulting from changes in price levels and other changes in the volume of assets. It is the component of the change in net worth that is due to transactions and can be attributed directly to government policies.

**Net result** is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'.

**Net worth** is calculated as assets less liabilities, which is an economic measure of wealth.

**Non-financial assets** are all assets that are not financial assets. It includes inventories, land, buildings, infrastructure, road networks, land under roads, plant and equipment, cultural and heritage assets, intangibles and biological assets such as commercial forests.

**Non-financial public sector** represents the consolidated transactions and assets and liabilities of the general government and PNFC sectors. In compiling statistics for the non-financial public sector, transactions and debtor/creditor relationships between sub-sectors are eliminated to avoid double counting.

**Non-produced assets** are assets needed for production that have not themselves been produced. They include land, subsoil assets, and certain intangible assets. Non-produced intangibles are intangible assets needed for production that have not themselves been produced. They include constructs of society such as patents.

**Operating result** is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those that are classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'. Refer also 'net result'.

**Other economic flows included in net result** are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. In simple terms, other economic flows are changes arising from market remeasurements. They include gains and losses from disposals, revaluations and impairments of non-current physical and intangible assets; fair value changes of financial instruments and agricultural assets; and depletion of natural assets (non-produced) from their use or removal.

**Other economic flows – other comprehensive income** comprises items (including reclassification adjustments) that are not recognised in net result as required or permitted by other Australian Accounting Standards. They include changes in physical asset revaluation surplus; share of net movement in revaluation surplus of associates and joint ventures; and gains and losses on remeasuring available-for-sale financial assets.

**Payables** includes short and long-term trade debt and accounts payable, grants, taxes and interest payable.

**Notes to the Financial Report - Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

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**Produced assets** include buildings, plant and equipment, inventories, cultivated assets and certain intangible assets. Intangible produced assets may include computer software, motion picture films and research and development costs (which does not include the start-up costs associated with capital projects).

**Public financial corporations** are bodies primarily engaged in the provision of financial intermediation services or auxiliary financial services. They are able to incur financial liabilities on their own account (e.g. taking deposits, issuing securities or providing insurance services). Estimates are not published for the public financial corporation sector.

**The public non financial corporation** (PNFC) sector comprises bodies mainly engaged in the production of goods and services (of a non financial nature) for sale in the market place at prices that aim to recover most of the costs involved (e.g. water and port authorities). In general, PNFCs are legally distinguishable from the governments which own them.

**Receivables** include amounts owing from government through appropriation receivable, short and long-term trade credit and accounts receivable, accrued investment income, grants, taxes and interest receivable.

**Sales of goods and services** refers to income from the direct provision of goods and services and includes fees and charges for services rendered, sales of goods and services, fees from regulatory services and work done as an agent for private enterprises. It also includes rental income under operating leases and on produced assets such as buildings and entertainment, but excludes rent income from the use of non-produced assets such as land. User charges includes sale of goods and services income.

**Supplies and services** generally represent cost of goods sold and the day to day running costs, including maintenance costs, incurred in the normal operations of the Authority.

**Taxation income** represents income received from the State's taxpayers and includes:

- payroll tax, land tax and duties levied principally on conveyances and land transfers;
- gambling taxes levied mainly on private lotteries, electronic gaming machines, casino operations and racing;
- insurance duty relating to compulsory third party, life and non life policies;
- insurance company contributions to fire brigades;
- motor vehicle taxes, including registration fees and duty on registrations and transfers;
- levies (including the environmental levy) on statutory corporations in other sectors of government; and
- other taxes, including landfill levies, licence and concession fees.

**Transactions** are those economic flows that are considered to arise as a result of policy decisions, usually an interaction between two entities by mutual agreement. They also include flows into an entity such as depreciation, where the owner is simultaneously acting as the owner of the depreciating asset and as the consumer of the service provided by the asset. Taxation is regarded as mutually agreed interactions between the government and taxpayers. Transactions can be in kind (e.g. assets provided/given free of charge or for nominal consideration) or where the final consideration is cash. In simple terms, transactions arise from the policy decisions of the Government.

# Appendices

## 1 Disclosure Index

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) annual report is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation and pronouncements. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of the CMA's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

**Table 1 |** Ministerial Directions and Financial Reporting Directions Disclosure index

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<b>Standing Directions and Financial Reporting Directions</b>		
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<b>Charter and purpose</b>		
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FRD 22	Nature and range of services provided	7
FRD 22	Purpose, functions, powers and duties (Objectives, functions, powers and duties)	9
FRD 22	Key initiatives and projects	10
<b>Management and structure</b>		
FRD 22	Organisational structure	59
<b>Financial and other information</b>		
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**Table 1** | Ministerial Directions and Financial Reporting Directions Disclosure index *Continued...*

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<b>Financial Statements</b>		
<b>Declaration</b>		
SD 5.2.2	Declaration in Financial Statements	84
<b>Other requirements under Standing Directions 5.2</b>		
SD 5.2.1(a)	Compliance with Australian accounting standards and other authoritative pronouncements	84
SD 5.2.1(a)	Compliance with Standing Directions	84
SD 5.2.1(b)	Compliance with Model Financial Report	84
<b>Other disclosures as required by FRDs in notes to the financial statements</b>		
FRD 10	Disclosure index	126
FRD 12	Disclosure of major contracts	75
FRD 21	Disclosures of Responsible Persons, Executive Officers and other Personnel (Contractors with Significant Management Responsibilities) in the Financial Report	116
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FRD 114	Financial Instruments – general government entities and public non-financial corporations	105
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Building Act 1993		
Local Jobs First Act 2003		
Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012		
Financial Management Act 1994		
Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994		
Water Act 1989		

# Appendices

## 2 Condition and Management Report

### Introduction

This condition and management report for 2021–22 aims to fulfil the Mallee Catchment Management Authority's (CMA's) annual reporting requirements as outlined in Section 19B of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act), which states that: Each Authority must submit to the Minister each year, a report on the condition and management of land and water resources in its region and the carrying out of its functions.

The report provides an assessment of the condition of the region's environment and a reflection on the likely impact of annual scale actions, events and observed change within the previous year, and over the previous three years.

A key purpose of monitoring changes in the operating context is to help identify opportunities for adapting and changing the way we manage the environment.

Condition and management are reported against five headline themes (Table 1) to align with the state-wide outcome framework that links regional outcome indicators established by the Draft Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) 2022–28, to the high level policy outcomes of the Victorian and Australian Government.

An overview of any key events (e.g. climatic, policy changes) that occurred in 2021–22 which may have influenced the management and/or condition of our regional assets is also provided within this report.

**Table 1 |** Headline themes.

Headline theme	Definition / Scope
Biodiversity	Populations of threatened or significant species; occurrences of threatened ecological communities; and: terrestrial habitat provided by ecological vegetation classes and their contribution to landscape processes.
Waterways	Rivers, streams, their tributaries, surrounding riparian land (including the floodplain), individual wetlands, wetland complexes, and their associated floodplain ecosystems (including groundwater dependent ecosystems and the groundwater flow systems and aquifers they are reliant on).
Agricultural Land	All parts of the landscape that have been developed for the purpose of dryland and irrigated agricultural production (including the soil and water resources they rely on and impact on).
Culture and Heritage	All tangible and intangible Aboriginal culture and heritage that has recognised cultural, historical or spiritual significance, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge rejuvenation, protection and application in cultural landscapes management.
Community Capacity for NRM	The inherent knowledge, skills and motivation that the community has for effective and sustainable NRM (where 'community' encompasses all land managers, Traditional Owners, organisations, groups and individuals contributing to NRM related activity across the region).

## Assessment

The condition assessment for each theme describes the level of confidence or concern that catchment managers have in the future of the regional environment.

The assessment is based on a set of state-wide indicators outlined in the RCS outcomes framework, augmented with regionally specific indicators which have been selected based on criteria including availability and quality of data, and the linkages back to regional and policy outcomes.

As much as possible the reporting format attempts to provide a transparent path between the evidence and the assessment. It is not a definitive assessment but an assessment at a point in time based on the best available evidence.

Three ratings are applied to each indicator (Table 2), where:

- **Trend** is the change over time in the indicator, which could be an environmental asset, a pressure or a management activity. The trend is assessed against the direction required to contribute to the achievement of regional outcomes.
- **Condition** - where appropriate, a condition rating is provided that is based on the current state of the theme. A condition rating is based on assessments of the assets, pressures and management activities represented by the theme. The assessment is based on available science and expert advice as well as evidence gained during the preceding year.
- **Data** is assessed as being one of three tiers with tier 1 being the highest rating, based on a range of criteria including availability, reliability, and collection methods.

**Table 2 | Indicator ratings.**

Trend rating	Description	Condition rating	Description	Data rating	Description
 Positive	The indicator is moving in a positive direction and is expected to have a positive impact.	Good	The condition is classified as good.	Tier 1	An established methodology exists, and data is widely available.
 Neutral	The indicator is a neutral state, where movements may be significant but are within expected variation and will have little impact.	Moderate	The condition is classified as moderate.	Tier 2	An established methodology exists, but it and the data is not widely available.
 Concerned	The indicator is moving in a negative direction and is expected to have a detrimental impact.	Poor	The condition is classified as poor.	Tier 3	An established methodology is yet to be developed.
 Unknown	The trend is unknown.	Not applicable	A condition rating is not applicable for this indicator		
		Unknown	The condition for this indicator is not known and or assessable		

## Regional catchment condition summary

A summary of the condition and trend assessments detailed within this report for each theme, and sub-theme as applied, is provided in Table 3.

**Table 3 | Overview of regional condition assessments for each headline theme.**

Theme	Sub-theme	Trend 2021–22	Over last 5 years	Condition	Summary Comment
Threatened Species and Communities	Biodiversity			Poor	<p><b>Condition:</b> The overall condition of our threatened species and communities is considered to be poor on the basis of the proportion of both the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG) and Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) Threatened list which are recorded as occurring in the Mallee (i.e. FFG = 20% of species and EPBC = 6% of species / 12% of communities). This assessment is further supported by species/community specific studies that identify the significant influence of external factors (e.g. climate variability and large bushfire events) on the long-term viability of these species/communities, regardless of management.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> A neutral trend has however been identified for this current (2021) assessment and by previous reports. Several site-based assessments of individual threatened species and communities over this period indicate a stable condition trend, with evidence of increases in population numbers/distribution of threatened flora and fauna species experiencing favourable conditions (e.g. environmental watering). There is also some evidence to support the expectation that the significant area of targeted threat mitigation works undertaken over recent years will provide a basis for future improvements as favourable climatic conditions occur.</p>
				Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> While there has been an estimated three percent decline in native vegetation extent across the region since 1985, the overall condition and trajectory of terrestrial habitat is considered to be stable to improving when compared to a 21-year (2000–21) average. It is also acknowledged that condition measures for major parks and reserves would be higher than in more fragmented areas of the landscapes; with condition likely to be poor within smaller remnants that have not been subjected to ongoing management.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> Recent (2017–21) assessments of the region's natural landscapes (13,987 km<sup>2</sup>) identify a five percent average increase in vegetation growth from the long-term (2000–21) average, and a 3.5 percent improvement in condition. Significant variation in these indicators is however evident over the five-year period, reflecting annual climatic conditions. Assessments for 2021 found a four percent increase in vegetation condition from the long-term average, and a nine percent increase in vegetation growth<sup>1</sup>. Significant areas of targeted works undertaken over an extended period to protect and enhance priority habitat; with evidence that these management actions are having positive impact in the short (i.e. threat mitigation) to medium (i.e. condition improvements) term. This includes rabbits and feral goats being maintained below regional thresholds, and evidence of ecological functionality returning to revegetated sites.</p>
Waterways				Positive	<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of Mallee waterways is assessed as being moderate. This reflects the findings of previous regional scale assessments (i.e. the Index of Stream Condition and Index of Wetland Condition in 2010) and recognises site-based evidence of long-term improvements in response to both targeted and landscape scale protection/enhancement efforts. The ongoing decline in the extent of wetlands is of concern however; with the area of seasonal wetlands estimated to have declined by 23 percent (3,431 ha) between 1995 and 2019; and perennial wetlands by 53 percent (88 ha) over the same period.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> The condition of Mallee waterways is considered to be improving, with evidence that management actions are having a positive impact. Significant areas of inundation achieved through environmental watering is having a demonstrable impact on waterway connectivity and both aquatic and riparian habitat condition. There is also evidence that targeted threat mitigation works (e.g. invasive plant and animal management) are further securing environmental outcomes achieved by recent environmental watering events, and protecting priority riparian landscapes.</p>
				Positive	

Continued..

<sup>1</sup> Australia's Environment Explorer, 2022 (Australian National University)

**Table 3 |** Overview of regional condition assessments for each headline theme.

Theme	Sub-theme	Trend	2021–22	Over last 5 years	Condition	Summary Comment
Agricultural Land	Dryland		Neutral		Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of Mallee dryland agriculture is assessed as moderate. While widespread management changes over the past 30 years have provided for increased productivity, while also supporting increased vegetation cover, soil aggregation and overall soil stability; it is evident that there continues to be significant impacts on associated soil resources. Groundcover observations demonstrate that on average, 80 percent of agricultural land in the region exceeded the total vegetation cover (TVC) target of &gt;50% of &gt;50% of the region. More recently however, TVC levels have been consistently below average in response to ongoing dry conditions experienced throughout the region, resulting in significant erosion events and associated declines in soil health and productivity. Impacts that would have been further exacerbated had this practice change not occurred.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> While short to medium term trends in productivity and soil health are directly influenced by rainfall, there is evidence that the majority of dryland farmers are continuing to implement and adapt best management practices in response to seasonal conditions. It is also recognised however that ongoing support needs to be provided to farmers in susceptible landscapes to accelerate the identification, validation and adoption of practices that promote increased groundcover and reduce erosion risk, particularly in regards to providing effective management responses in dry seasons.</p>
	Irrigated		Positive		Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of irrigated agriculture in the Mallee is assessed as being moderate. This reflects improvements in irrigation management over the past 30 years that have decreased subsurface drainage flows to the river, to the floodplain and to inland drainage basins. This practice change has also supported a trend of decreased river salinity from Swan Hill to Lock 6 and decreased the groundwater mound under the older irrigation areas, reducing saline groundwater flows to the river and floodplain. Water supply and demand challenges for perennial horticulture plantings across the region are also recognised by this assessment, along with the potential impacts of both a variable and changing climate on the risks that this presents.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> The condition of irrigated agriculture in the Mallee is considered to be improving, with evidence that recent management actions are continuing to reduce the incidence and impact of key threat processes.</p>
Culture and Heritage	Community Capacity for NRM		Positive		Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of Culture and Heritage is assessed as moderate on the basis of ongoing increases in the number of Aboriginal Places and individual components being identified, registered and protected. Given that these formalised records only reflect locations where associated surveys have been undertaken however, it is likely that only a small proportion of sites are recognised, with the condition of broader culture and heritage values vulnerable to ongoing management impacts.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> The condition of Culture and Heritage is considered to be improving in the short to medium-term, with evidence of increased recognition and protection. There are 4,455 Registered Aboriginal Places in the Mallee, a four percent (181) increase since 2016–17. These Places were comprised of 6,281 individual components in 2021–22, an 11 percent (602) increase since 2016–17. Within the region, there are currently 125 Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) that have been approved and lodged with First Peoples – State Relations, and a further 32 in preparation. In total, these CHMPs cover 23,278 hectares.</p>
			Positive		Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of community capacity for NRM is assessed as moderate, with evidence that their awareness/knowledge of key issues implementation skills continuing to improve. The assessment also recognises that small rural communities are continuing to experience population decline and increasingly older age profiles, directly impacting the capacity of rural landholders and community NRM groups to co-invest time and resources. This is reflected in a decline in key indicators such as the 'proportion of agricultural businesses with Landcare membership' and 'proportion of agricultural businesses participating in NRM projects or receiving funding'.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> Ongoing participation by stakeholders and broader community in awareness, skill development, and collaboration events, with associated evaluations identifying a high level of participant satisfaction in regards to the delivery of these events. Improvements in capacity being reported by stakeholders engaged through education programs (i.e. awareness raising), incentive/grants programs (i.e. knowledge and skill development); and by those participating in community advisory/reference groups.</p>

## Key Events and Insights

### Climate

Annual climatic conditions can have a significant impact on both the condition and management of regional assets. In 2021–22, the Mallee region experienced ‘average’ to ‘below average’ rainfall over the cooler months (April to October) and ‘above average’ to ‘average’ in the warmer period (October to April) (Figure 1).

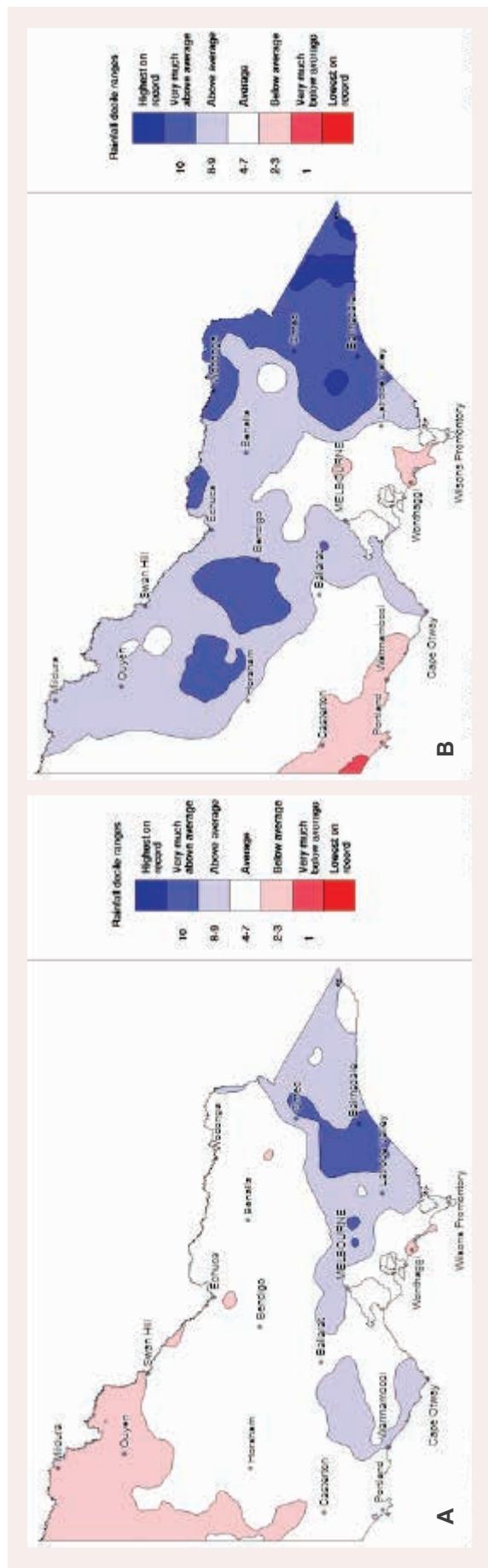
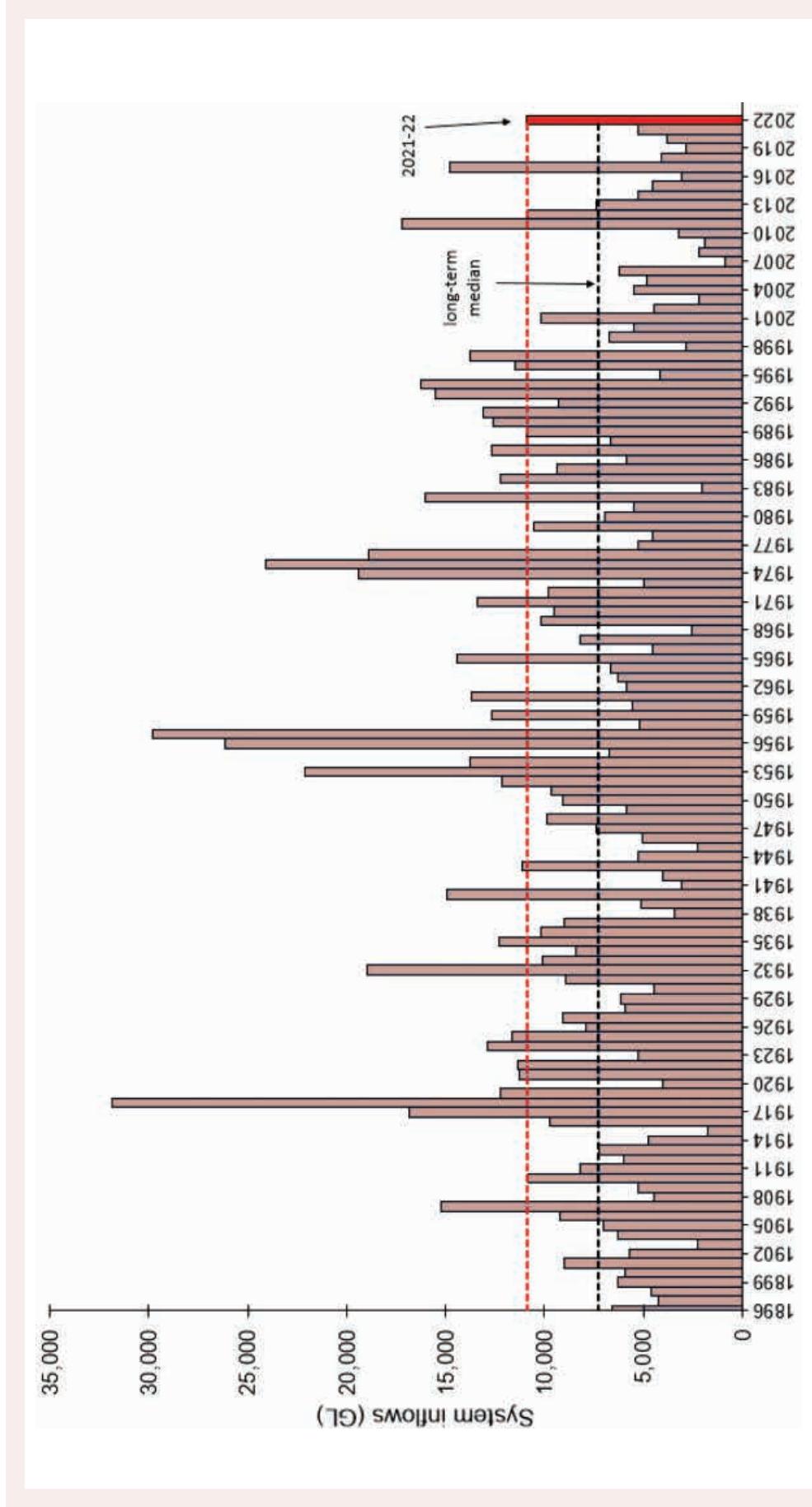


Figure 1 | Victorian Rainfall Deciles 1 April 2021 to 31 October 2021 (a) and 1 October 2021 to 30 April 2022 (b) (Source: Australian Bureau Meteorology).

Key climatic events experienced throughout 2021–22 included:

- A return to average rainfall across the region throughout winter and spring 2021, following below average falls for summer and autumn 2021.
- Significant rainfall events were recorded in summer 2021–22 for Mildura (135% of average), while Ouyen received 88 percent of average rainfall and Hopetoun only 11 percent. Maximum mean summer temperatures were slightly above average with the region’s hottest temperature recorded on 10th January 2022 as 41.1 degrees in Mildura.
- High autumn rainfall did however occur across the broader region throughout autumn 2022, ranging from 185 percent of average (Walpeup) to 210 percent (Hopetoun). This included Murrayville and Birchip recording their highest autumn total rainfall for 30 plus years.

- Water inflows to the key Murray, Goulburn and Darling storages were around double the volume recorded for the same period in 2020–21, and around 3,550 GL more than the long-term median inflow volume (Figure 2). Sustained inflows provided for Victorian Murray regulated high reliability water shares to be maintained at 100 percent allocation over the October 2021 to April 2022 period.



**Figure 2 | River Murray system inflows - water year totals (to end May) since 1892.** Black dashed line shows the long-term median for 130 years on record. The red dashed line shows the 2021–22 inflows compared with all years on record (Source: Murray Darling Basin Authority). Note: inflows exclude Menindee inflows, Snowy Mountains Scheme releases, and inter-valley transfers of consumptive and environmental allocations, and are based on modelled current conditions.

### Strategic Framework

Key strategic documents developed or reviewed by the region in 2021–22 to support ongoing advances in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of NRM focused activities, included:

- Loddon Mallee Joint Fuel Management Program (2021–24)
- Loddon Mallee Climate Ready Plan (2022)
- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28): Public Consultation Draft released May 2022
- Seasonal Watering Proposals (2022–23) for The Living Murray Icon Sites, Lower Murray wetlands and Wimmera Mallee Pipeline wetlands
- Four site based Environmental Water Management Plans
- Hattah-Kulkyne Ramsar Site Management Plan and Annual Action Plan (2022).

### Delivery Partnerships

Around 200,000 hectares of targeted environmental works were undertaken in 2021–22 to protect the region's priority natural, cultural and productive landscapes. Effective partnerships with our community and land managers are integral to the success of these on-ground activities, with 95 formal partnerships and 53 management agreements established/maintained throughout the year to support integrated delivery outcomes. This included the provision of 61 individual funding grants to community groups (23), public land managers (6), and private landholders (27)<sup>2</sup>.

Planning for delivery partnerships continues to be informed and enhanced by advice received from regional stakeholders through forums such as the Mallee CMA's Aboriginal Reference Group and the Land and Water Advisory Committee.

This regional partnership framework also includes the Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement which was established in 2017–18 with the aim of:

- Strengthening coordination, collaboration, and accountability
- Reducing duplication
- Providing clarity on roles and responsibilities between key catchment management partners.

Seven key regional organisations are signatories to the Agreement; spanning local government, water corporations, State Government departments/agencies, and non-governmental organisations.

Opportunities for partnerships that support integrated outcomes across the broader region were identified and progressed through participation in the Mallee's two Catchment Partnership Committees (CPCs). These Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity/Water focused forums deliver against the objectives of the Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement by enhancing knowledge sharing between members and further strengthening collaborative approaches to NRM.

<sup>2</sup> Represents works and delivery arrangements undertaken through Mallee CMA programs only (i.e. does not represent the significant areas actions and associated partnership arrangements undertaken on public and private land through other funding initiatives, or by individual (e.g. private, volunteer) efforts.

Mallee CMA also continued to operate several program delivery focussed forums to support delivery partner and stakeholder input into associated planning, implementation and evaluation processes. In 2021–22, these included:

- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy Steering Committee
- Salinity Accountability Committee
- Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (FMS) Implementation Steering Committee
- Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan Implementation Committee
- The Living Murray (Hattah and Lindsay, Mulcra, Wallpolla) Operations Groups
- Hattah Ramsar Site Coordinating Committee
- Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project Stakeholder Advisory Groups (West and Central)
- Integrated Water Management Forum
- Seasonal Adjustment to Annual Use Limits (AUL) Review Panel.

## Integrated Catchment Management

The Mallee RCS provides a framework for strategic action to support integrated and targeted efforts of the region's land managers, government agencies and community groups. The overall extent and distribution of 2021–22 management actions delivered within the region's priority landscapes (i.e. Catchment Assets and Corridors) under each headline theme are illustrated spatially in Figure 3. Catchment Assets represent significant landscapes for priority attention (i.e. deliver the greatest environmental, economic and social return on effort), while priority corridors have been identified as the best places for biodiversity corridors between two or more Catchment Assets to support ongoing adaptation processes<sup>3</sup>.

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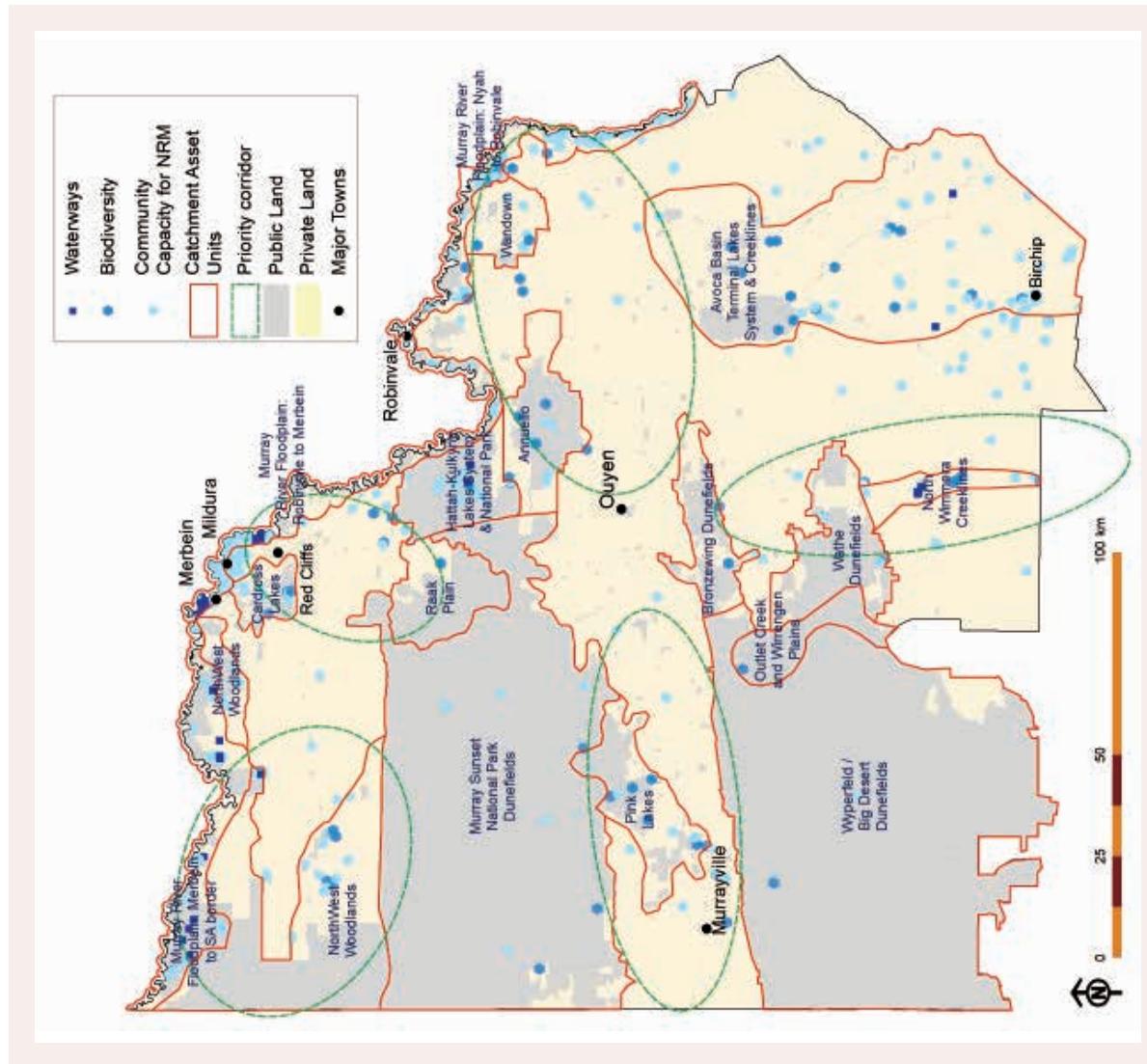
<sup>3</sup> Priority landscapes applied to 2021–22 reporting represent those established by the 2013–19 RCS. Reporting against 2022–28 RCS priorities will commence in 2022–23.

Overall, large proportion of 2021–22 on-ground management activity was delivered within the region's priority landscapes (Table 4). Ongoing application of this approach ensures the efficient and effective application of NRM investment in the region. The integrated nature of NRM delivery in the Mallee also means actions delivered under one theme often achieve benefits across multiple asset types within the same landscape.

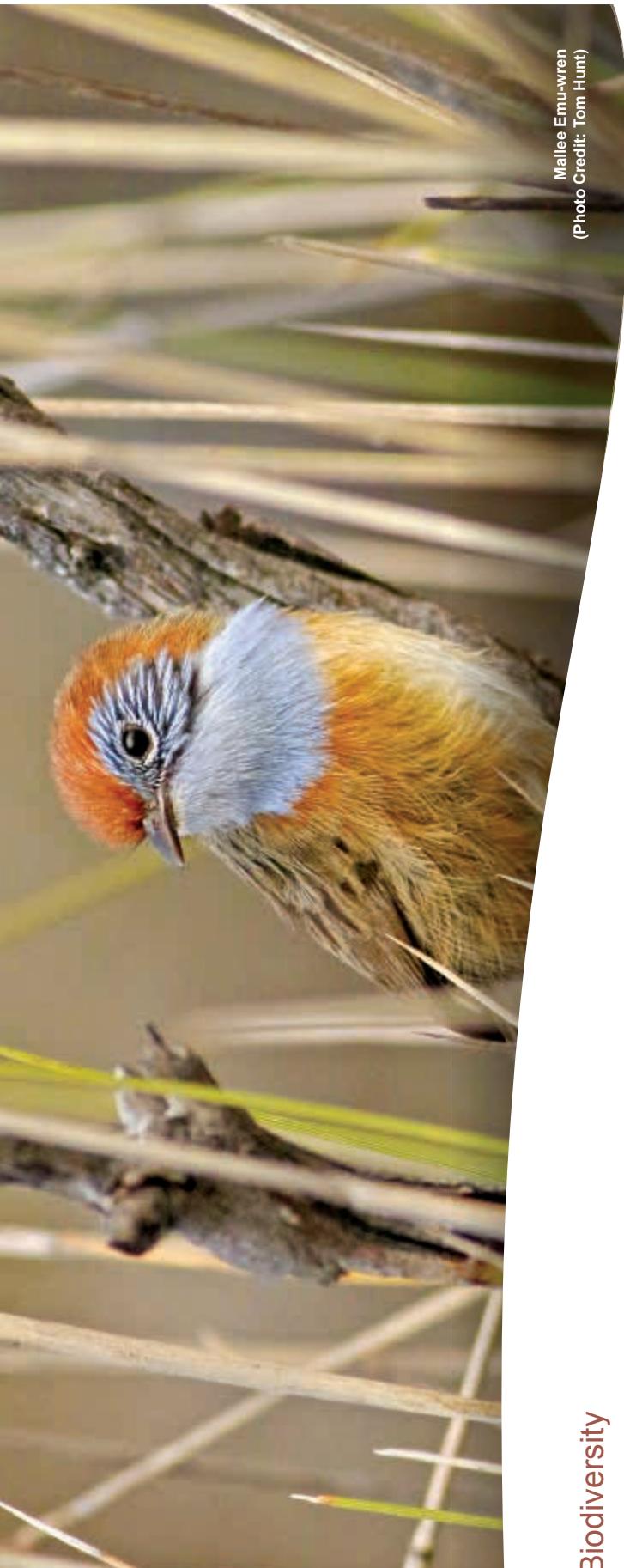
**Table 4 |** Proportion (percent) of 2021–22 on-ground outputs delivered within the region's priority landscapes (Catchment Assets and Priority Corridors)

Output type	Delivered in priority landscapes (percent)*
Catchment Assets	97
Priority Corridors	21
Pest Animal Control	96
Weed Control	18
Water Regime	100
Revegetation	97
Road	100
Fence	7
Visitor Facility	100
	38

\* Overlap of Catchment Asset and Priority Corridor boundaries means that the collective percentage of works occurring within can be greater than 100 per cent.



**Figure 3 |** Spatial distribution of management actions (outputs) delivered in 2021–22 under each of the RCS headline themes.



## Biodiversity

### Regional Context

**Scope:** *Populations of threatened or significant species; occurrences of threatened ecological communities, and terrestrial habitat provided by ecological vegetation classes and their contribution to landscape processes<sup>4</sup>.*

The Mallee supports a diverse and unique array of native flora and fauna, several of which occur nowhere else in Victoria and many others at the edge of their range (e.g. representing the southernmost distribution), yet genetically distinct from their northern or southern relatives. This includes a greater diversity of reptiles than any other region in Victoria.

In providing the basis for much of our complex and unique biodiversity, the region's terrestrial habitat is significant not only for the environmental values it supports; but also, for the economic, social, and cultural services it provides. This includes resilience against land degradation, protection from extreme weather events, carbon storage, connections to Country, recreational opportunities, and positive landscape aesthetics.

Overall, the survival of many native plants and animals is directly dependant on the extent and condition of our terrestrial habitat; with native vegetation also playing a critical role in mitigating the impact of threats such as salinity and erosion on our natural, cultural and productive landscapes.

The Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) sets the following long-term (20-year) condition outcomes for Threatened Species and Communities, and Terrestrial Habitat:

- The present diversity of Mallee threatened species and communities is protected
- The extent, condition and ecological connectivity of high value terrestrial habitat is enhanced across all Mallee land tenures.

Indicators applied to provide a benchmark of condition and assess progress against associated management outcomes are detailed below.

<sup>4</sup> While this Biodiversity theme considers both terrestrial and aquatic threatened species and communities, it focuses on terrestrial habitat. Aquatic, riparian and floodplain habitat/ecosystem processes are addressed in the Waterways theme.

## Threatened Species and Communities

### Condition Benchmark

One state-wide dataset is applied by this report as a regional indicator from which to establish a baseline, and where possible identify long-term trends in the condition of our threatened species and ecological communities.

#### Number of threatened species and communities

#### This indicator provides information on the number of threatened species and communities occurring in the Mallee CMA region.

The 2018 State of the Environment report highlighted that a third of all of Victoria's terrestrial plants, birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, invertebrates and ecological communities are threatened with extinction. As of June 2021, Victoria's *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) Threatened List included: 54 Extinct, 556 Critically endangered, 1,071 Endangered, and 303 Vulnerable species<sup>5</sup>. Of these: 87 Critically endangered, 240 Endangered, and 60 Vulnerable species have been recorded as occurring in the Mallee<sup>6</sup>.

Listed at a national (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC)) level are; 355 Critically endangered, 452 Endangered and 796 Vulnerable species/communities<sup>7</sup>. Of these, the Mallee region supports eight Critically endangered, 13 Endangered, and 18 Vulnerable species/communities<sup>8</sup>.

Table 5 shows the total number of flora and fauna species and communities currently listed as threatened under federal (EPBC) and state (FFG) instruments.

Key changes in 2021–22 included EPBC listing of the Mallee Bird Community (Endangered) and the Plains Mallee Box Woodlands ecological community (Critically Endangered); with the Victorian Mallee representing core habitat for both listings.

**Table 5 |** Number of threatened species and communities recorded as occurring in the Mallee at each level of listing.

Flora Species	National EPBC Act	State FFG Act <sup>9</sup>
Fauna Species	10	283
Fauna Communities	23	105
Fauna Communities	5	5
Fauna Communities	1	2

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning): vba.dse.vic.gov.au
		↑	Neutral	

<sup>5</sup> VAGO (Victorian Auditor-General's Office). 2021. Protecting Victoria's Biodiversity: Independent assurance report to Parliament, no. 266.

<sup>6</sup> Victorian Biodiversity Atlas: Database filtered to include records for 1990–2021 period only.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist>

<sup>8</sup> Victorian Biodiversity Atlas: Database filtered to include records for 1990–2021 period only.

<sup>9</sup> Note: Recent changes to the FFG Act Threatened list have removed duplication by establishing a single comprehensive list of threatened flora and fauna species. All non-statutory lists under the Victorian Threatened Species Advisory List have now been revoked (source: <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatenedspecies/threatened-list>).

## Management

In general, historical habitat loss has been the primary circumstance for so many of our species and communities to be considered as threatened. This loss of habitat has not only compromised the abundance and distribution of our species, but has also increased the incidence and subsequent impact of other threatening processes (such as land and water salinisation, invasive plants and animals, altered hydrological regimes, soil erosion and constrained regenerative capacity). As such, management actions to protect and enhance terrestrial, riparian and aquatic habitat (as detailed in associated sections of this report) will also directly influence threatened species and communities outcomes.

## Assessment 2021–22

### Summary of assessment

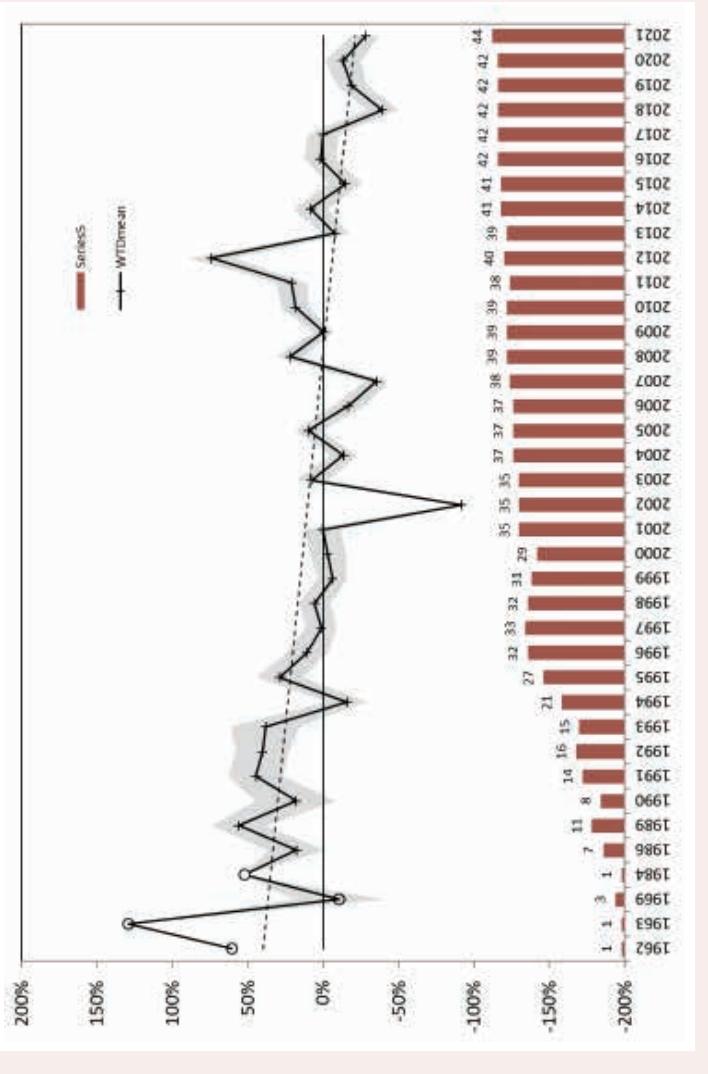
Trend	Over last 5 years	Condition	Summary Comment
			<p><b>Condition:</b> The overall condition of our threatened species and communities is considered to be poor on the basis of the proportion of both the FFG and EPBC Threatened list which are recorded as occurring in the Mallee (i.e. FFG = 20% of species and EPBC = 6% of species / 12% of communities). This assessment is further supported by species/community specific studies that identify the significant influence of external factors (e.g. climate variability and large bushfire events) on the long-term viability of these species/communities, regardless of management.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> A neutral trend has however been identified for this current (2021) assessment and by previous reports. Several site-based assessments of individual threatened species and communities over this period indicate a stable condition trend, with evidence of increases in population numbers/distribution of threatened flora and fauna species experiencing favourable conditions (e.g. environmental watering). There is also some evidence to support the expectation that the significant area of targeted threat mitigation works undertaken over recent years will provide a basis for future improvements as favourable climatic conditions occur.</p>

### Reason for assessment

It is difficult to provide an overall picture of the current condition of the region's threatened species and ecological communities. Some populations are comprehensively observed and reported on, while others remain somewhat cryptic due to insufficient resources to support systematic surveys, or the nature of the species itself. Without an understanding of the trajectory of a larger range of species and communities, the number of species/communities listed as threatened under federal (EPBC) and state (FFG) instruments, and their associated conservation status, is applied as a proxy indicator of condition.

Climatic factors can however have significant impacts on the Mallee's biodiversity assets, with the ability of specific species/communities to respond to seasonal conditions an important consideration when assessing their condition. For example:

- While long-term monitoring of active Malleefowl mounds in the Victorian Mallee shows a general decline of around two percent per annum across several decades, breeding numbers in 2012 were higher than at any time in the past 20 years; in response to good rains and maturing habitat (Figure 4). However, numbers have continued to decline over subsequent years as a result of ongoing dry winter conditions; with 2018 numbers in particular significantly below average. In 2021, breeding numbers were lower than the previous two seasons and 28 percent below the long-term average, with the trend index being the fourth lowest of 38 seasonal monitoring events<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, recent studies investigating the relationship between predator activity and Malleefowl breeding suggests climatic factors are having greater influence on declining numbers; with no conclusive evidence to date that Malleefowl breeding activity benefited from an apparent reduction in foxes<sup>11</sup>.
- Long-term monitoring (2010–2021) of representative sites across the Mallee has found that the presence or absence of threatened floristic species are also strongly influenced by external factors, particularly the interaction between seasonal conditions and grazing pressure. While several new species have been recorded in ungrazed remnants over the 11 years, other species recorded in 2010 are no longer present. Given grazing regimes have not changed over the monitoring periods, it is expected that dry conditions experienced across this period is a key factor influencing the decline of some species<sup>12</sup>.



**Figure 4 | Trends in Malleefowl breeding numbers at 44 sites and site parts represented by 38 monitoring seasons spanning 60 years (including historical survey data from some sites in the 1960s). Each point (cross) shows the degree to which breeding numbers were above or below the long-term average (LTA) for the sites monitored (trend). Shading indicates the standard error about the mean where multiple sites were monitored in a season. The number of sites monitored in a breeding season is shown by the histogram. The dashed line indicates a simple linear trend (Source: Malleefowl Monitoring in Victoria: 2021/22; Joe Benshemesh).**

<sup>10</sup> Benshemesh, J.: Malleefowl Monitoring in Victoria: 2021-22. Report to the Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group.

<sup>11</sup> Benshemesh, J., Southwell, D., Barker, R. and McCarthy, M. (2020) Citizen scientists reveal nationwide trends and drivers in the breeding activity of a threatened bird, the Malleefowl (*Lepidocolaptes occidentalis*). Biological Conservation, Volume 246.

<sup>12</sup> Moxham C., Downe J., Fanson B. and Kenny S. (2022). Quantifying vegetation change in the dryland Mallee landscape: Ten-year monitoring of stock exclusion. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Heidelberg, Victoria.

- Monitoring of Buloke woodlands within Murray Sunset National Park has shown limited recruitment of this nationally endangered ecological community. While juveniles were found at more sites in 2019 compared to the 2012 survey, the small number of young mature Buloke identified indicates juveniles are not progressing to maturity. A lack of herbivore damage and desiccated seedlings suggest juveniles are remaining in this stage due to climatic conditions<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, 10-year monitoring of Buloke in Wyperfeld National Park identified that below average rainfall in nine out of the 10 years between monitoring events has been a key factor in the lack of natural recruitment across all sites, with current Buloke populations assessed as ‘not viable’ on the basis of their regeneration and recruitment indices<sup>14</sup>.

Large bushfire events can also have a significant impact on the region’s threatened species and communities. A key example is the loss of Black-eared Miner habitat after the 2014 Bronzewing Flora and Fauna Reserve fire. This has reduced the range of this endangered species to just one site in Victoria, making the species extremely vulnerable to any future pressures<sup>15</sup>. The endangered Mallee Emu-wren, which also has a particularly poor capacity to disperse post-fire, is restricted to three populations within the Victorian Mallee following its extinction in South Australia after a series of fires during 2014. Efforts to mitigate this threat include the reintroduction of Mallee Emu-wren into South Australia’s Ngarkat Conservation Park<sup>16</sup>.

It is also evident that under favourable conditions, declining trends may be reversed. For example:

- Two listed flora species were recorded at Hattah Lakes for the first time in 2017–18. A population of 200+ plants of Slender Spurge, a species that has not been recorded in Victoria since 1982, and a population of around ten plants of Winged Plains-bush, representing a discovery of the first *Pluchea* species for Victoria and a massive range extension for the species (over 500 km). An outcome which is largely attributed to the magnitude of associated flood events<sup>17</sup>.
- Following environmental watering events at the Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla The Living Murray Icon Site, the FFG (Endangered) and EPBC (Vulnerable) listed Murray Cod was captured in record numbers in 2021, exceeding the previous record set in 2016; with numbers remaining notably higher over the 2017–22 period compared to 2010–2016. Total numbers of Silver Perch (FFG Endangered and EPBC Critically Endangered) were substantially higher in 2022 than at any time over the 12-year monitoring period. Olive Perchlet was also recorded in 2021–22 for the first time during the monitoring program, and the first time in Victoria for 93 years<sup>18</sup>.
- Monitoring at Hattah Lakes recorded double the abundance of vulnerable Regent Parrots in woodland near Lake Kramen as floodwaters receded following environmental watering in 2019. In 2020 flocks were observed feeding around the margins of receding lakes, and in previously flooded Black Box woodland, with groups up to 30 resting in trees on individual sites. In 2021 a large flock of more than 50 birds was observed<sup>19</sup>, and in 2022 they were recorded as being ‘ubiquitous’ across the survey area, having been seen or heard at most lakes<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Kenny S. and Moxham C. (2020). Semi-arid woodland condition monitoring: report for Lake Albula/ya and southern Murray-Sunset. Unpublished Report for Parks Victoria. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Heidelberg, Victoria.

<sup>14</sup> Kenny S. and Moxham C. (2022). Semi-arid woodland condition monitoring: Wyperfeld National Park. Unpublished Report for Parks Victoria. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Heidelberg, Victoria.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Environment and Energy (2019). Threatened Species Strategy – Year three Progress report.

<sup>16</sup> Department of Environment and Energy (2019). Threatened Species Strategy – Year three Progress report.

<sup>17</sup> Moxham C., Kenny S., Fanson B. (2018). The Living Murray Hattah Lakes Intervention Monitoring Annual Report 2018: Understorey Vegetation Program.

<sup>18</sup> Ecology Australia (2022). The Living Murray Condition Monitoring, LMW 2021–22, Part A (Main Report).

<sup>19</sup> Ecology Australia (2021). The Living Murray Condition Monitoring, Hattah 2020–21, Part A (Main Report).

<sup>20</sup> Ecology Australia (2022). The Living Murray Condition Monitoring, Hattah 2021–22, Part A (Main Report).

The conditions provided to riparian habitat by environmental watering and associated increases in threatened species populations has not however extended into the broader dryland areas, with average to below average rainfall being recorded across much of the region in recent years. Significant rainfall events throughout autumn and winter 2022 have however provided a basis for future improvements in response to the significant areas of threat mitigation works that have been undertaken within these terrestrial landscapes, should favourable climatic conditions continue. Localised examples of instances where responses to ongoing management actions may be occurring are evident within both the northern (<270mm rainfall) and southern (<380mm rainfall) areas of the Mallee. This includes:

- Following domestic stock removal, ongoing rabbit and weed control and revegetation at Neds Corner Station, a 30,000 hectare conservation reserve, more than 80 threatened species have been recorded in recent surveys, including the Multi-headed Sneezeweed that has not been recorded since 1853<sup>21</sup>.
- Monitoring of semi-arid grasslands being managed through targeted pest plant and animal programs has verified the presence of the FFG and EPBC listed (Critically Endangered) Plains-wander and Near-vulnerable Fat-tailed Dunnarts in the Birchip area, both of which have declined significantly across Victoria's northern and western plains in recent decades<sup>22</sup>. Ongoing work is being undertaken to determine the persistence and range of these species in the southern Mallee, and to improve associated habitat.



Yearling Murray Cod at Mullaroo Creek.

<sup>21</sup> Trust for Nature (2018) Neds Corner Station: One of the largest Victorian Private Conservation Reserves.

<sup>22</sup> Mallee CMA (2020) unpublished report.

## Terrestrial Habitat

### Condition Benchmark

Three state-wide datasets are applied by this report as regional indicators from which to establish a baseline, and where possible identify long-term trends in the condition of our terrestrial habitat.

#### Extent of native vegetation

##### This indicator aims to provide estimates of the current and previous extent of native vegetation on public and private land.

Just over half (2,047,645 ha) of the region's native vegetation has been cleared since European settlement, particularly those vegetation communities growing on the more fertile alluvial soils (i.e. suitable for agriculture). The region's remaining vegetation has primarily been reserved in large parks such as Murray-Sunset, Big Desert, Wyperfeld and Hattah-Kulkyne, extensive tracts of state forests, and over 500 small reserves scattered throughout the agricultural area. Remnants on private land, and the roadsides and rail reserves dissecting the region also represent significant areas of native vegetation (Figure 6).

The extensive clearing of Mallee vegetation for agricultural production has resulted in a mosaic of scattered, often small and isolated patches of remnant vegetation dispersed across the landscape. While much of the pattern of the Mallee landscape was set many decades ago, there has been an ongoing loss of small vegetation patches which continues to add to this fragmentation threat.

Added to this is the challenge of under-representation. While the large contiguous blocks of terrestrial habitat that remain in the Mallee are protected through the formal reserve system, they do not represent the entire diversity of the region's original habitat and associated ecosystems. A key example is the Buloke Woodland Community which was extensively cleared for agriculture and is now considered endangered at a national scale.

Modelling of native vegetation extent in the region over the past 30 years indicates significant variation within different vegetation classes. Overall however, it is estimated that there has been a three percent decline in vegetation cover since 1985 (Figure 5).

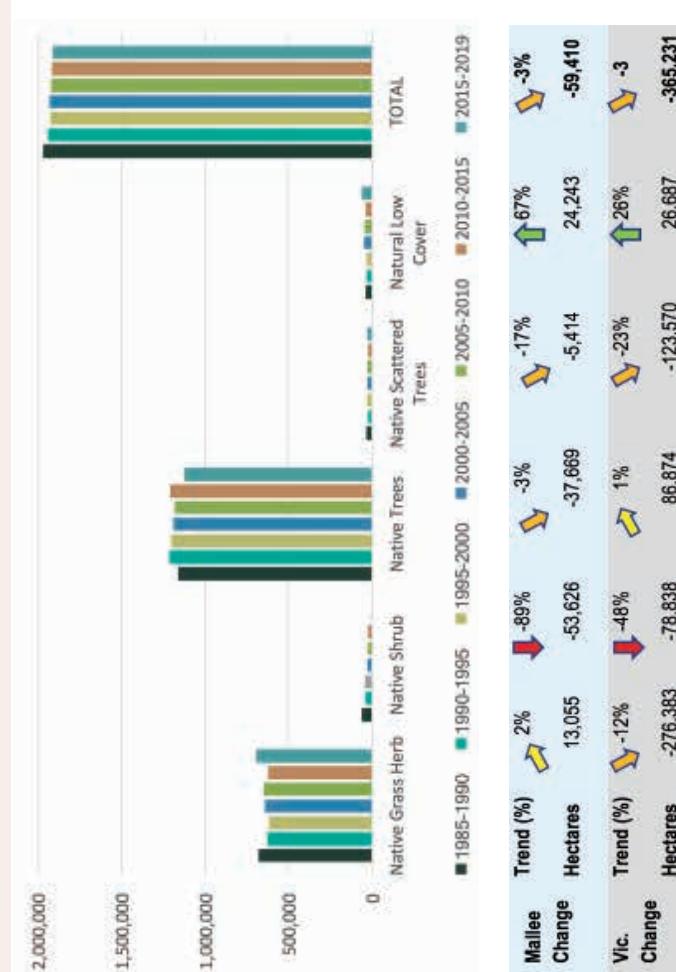


Figure 5 | Native land cover change over seven periods of time in the Mallee - change trend and hectares presented as a comparison between 1st and last time period (Source: Victorian Land Cover Time Series).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Neutral	Unknown	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Victorian Land Cover Time Series, 2020 (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning); Spatial Datamart Victoria
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## Native vegetation value and condition

### This indicator aims to provide estimates of the current and previous extent of native vegetation on public and private land.

State-wide modelling on the relative contribution of these areas to the protection of the full range of Victoria's biodiversity values demonstrates that a significant proportion of the Mallee has high importance for biodiversity conservation. Of particular value are our large tracts of public land, given the largely cleared and fragmented landscape in which they occur (Figure 6).

This Strategic Biodiversity Values (SBV v4.0) spatial tool ranks all locations across Victoria for their ability to represent threatened vertebrate fauna, vascular flora, and the full range of Victoria's native vegetation (on a scale of 0 to 100). It combines information on important areas for threatened flora and fauna, levels of depletion, connectivity, vegetation types and condition to provide a view of relative biodiversity importance of all parts of the Victorian landscape. This enables comparison of locations across the state, within the Mallee region, and at a landscape scale.

The total area and proportion of the region assessed as being within each of these five value ratings (i.e. 20% increments) is presented in Table 6; with 1 representing a low strategic value and 100 high.

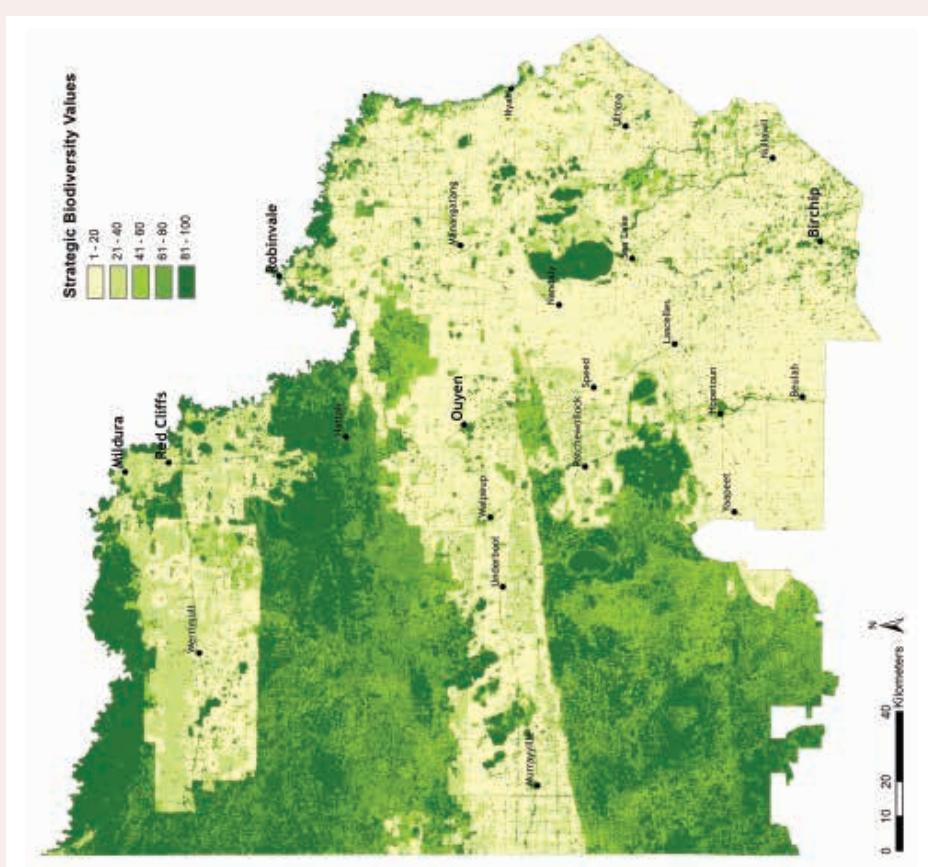
Overall, the current condition and trajectory of native vegetation is considered to be stable to improving, with recent (2017–21) assessments of the region's natural landscapes (13,987 km<sup>2</sup>) identifying a five percent average increase in vegetation growth from the long-term (2000–21) average, and a 3.5 percent improvement in condition. Significant variation in these indicators is however evident over the five-year period, reflecting annual climatic conditions.

Assessments for 2020–21 found a four percent increase in vegetation condition from the long-term average, and a nine percent increase in vegetation growth (Australia's Environment Explorer).

**Table 6 |** Area and proportion of the Mallee within each strategic biodiversity value classification (NaturePrint).

Strategic Value	Area (ha)	Proportion (%)
1 - 20	1,507,728	38
21 - 40	468,137	12
41 - 60	311,799	8
61 - 80	727,628	19
81 - 100	909,893	23

**Figure 6 |** Strategic Biodiversity Values (NaturePrint).



Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	Positive	2021-22 assessment	Positive	Datasets

Data Rating – Tier 1: NaturePrint, 2018 (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning); environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/natureprint  
Data Rating – Tier 1: Australia's Environment Explorer, 2022 (Australian National University); wald.anu.edu.au/

## Management

The area over which targeted management actions are delivered in the Mallee are applied as state-wide indicators of biodiversity outcomes. Consideration of site-based (point of investment) monitoring of these works enables associated changes in threat incidence/impact and asset condition (where available) to be quantified and applied to broader assessments of the effectiveness of regional efforts to conserve native vegetation and associated biodiversity values.

The data presented in this section represents works delivered through Mallee CMA programs over the past seven years. It does not however capture the significant areas of threat mitigation actions undertaken annually on public and private land through other funding initiatives, or by individual (e.g. private, volunteer) efforts.

### Area (ha) of pest herbivore, predator and weed control

#### This indicator provides information on the area treated for priority pest control; including herbivore, predator control and weed control, under Mallee CMA initiatives.

Pest plants and animals represent a key threat to Mallee biodiversity. Grazing and browsing by rabbits, feral goats, overabundant wildlife (i.e. kangaroos), feral pigs and, to a lesser extent deer, influences vegetation health by reducing floristic diversity and altering structure. This reduces resilience to shocks (e.g. drought, fire), and ultimately the ability to function as effective habitat.

Across Australia, it is estimated that foxes and cats combined are killing more than 2.6 billion mammals, birds, and reptiles every year, putting immense pressure on the survival of many native species. The introduced red fox and feral cat played a large part in the extinction of at least 34 mammal species at a national scale, and continue to be implicated in the ongoing decline of many threatened fauna species.

Foxes and feral cats are widespread across the Mallee and represent an ongoing threat to the persistence of native fauna species, further reducing the abundance and distribution of many threatened populations; with ground foraging and ground nesting species at particular risk.

Environmental weeds can outcompete native species for space, light, nutrients and water; impeding regeneration processes. They reduce the diversity of native species within a vegetation community, changing its composition and structure. Of particular concern are those weeds that have the capacity to change the character, condition, form or nature of ecosystems over substantial areas. Key terrestrial weeds currently impacting Mallee habitat include, African Boxthorn, Bridal Creeper, Prickly Pear and Wheel Cactus, Noogora Burr, Willows, Spiny Rush, Wards Weed, and exotic perennial grasses such as Buffel Grass.

In 2021–22, Mallee CMA funded programs provided for 102,682 hectares of herbivore (rabbit, goat, pig) control, 72,301 hectares of predator (fox, cat) control, and 17,267 hectares of weed (primarily boxthorn, cactus, Bridal Creeper) control (Figure 7). This builds on the 1,377,542 hectares of herbivore control, 439,442 hectares of predator control, and 675,418 hectares of weed control delivered over the previous seven years.

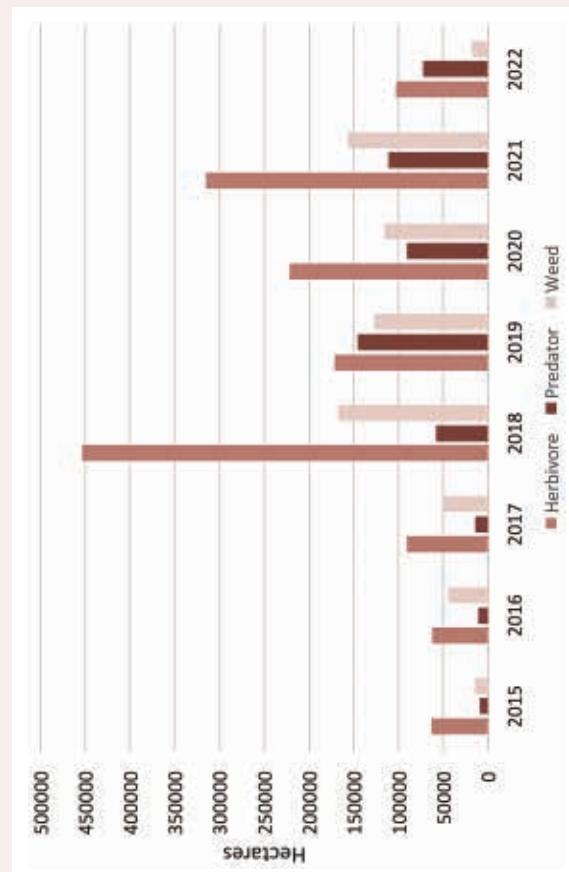
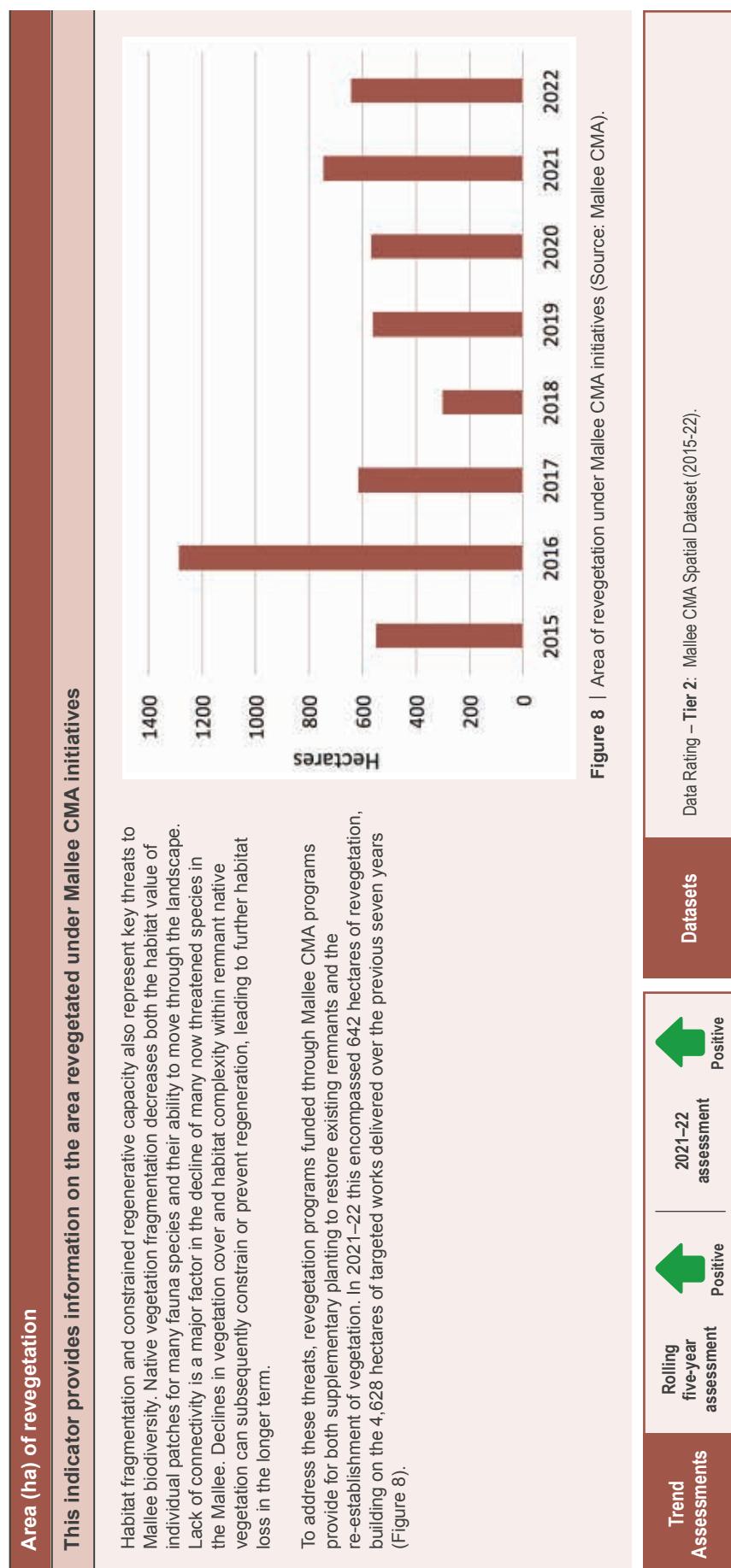


Figure 7 | Area managed for key threats under Mallee CMA initiatives (Source: Mallee CMA).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Victorian Land Cover Time Series, 2020 (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning); Spatial Datamart Victoria
				Positive



**Figure 8 |** Area of revegetation under Mallee CMA initiatives (Source: Mallee CMA).

## Area (ha) of permanent protection

### This indicator provides information on extent and distribution of government, Indigenous and privately protected areas.

Public land comprises 48 percent of the Victorian Mallee, which represents over 1.9 million hectares of permanent protection within National Parks (i.e. Murray Sunset, Hattah-Kulkyne and Wyperfeld), Wilderness Areas (e.g. Big Desert), and other public lands. A further 65,000 hectares of vegetation on private land is protected by conservation covenants and private reserves. This includes Neds Corner Station, a 30,000 hectare conservation reserve which was purchased by Trust for Nature in 2002. In May 2022 it was announced that Trust for Nature will be transferring ownership of the station to First People of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC). With the transfer scheduled to be completed within two years, this will represent the largest parcel of private land to be returned to traditional owners in Victoria.

Some 18,400 hectares of additional land has been protected over the past five years, primarily as public conservation parks; representing one percent of the total protected area.

Table 7 | Areas of permanent protection in the Mallee (Source: CAPAD).

Protection Type	Number of Protected Areas	Total Area (ha)	Proportion Total Protected Area (%)
National Park	3	1,075,372	54%
Wilderness Areas	10	554,005	28%
Other (public land)*	397	285,853	14%
Conservation Covenant	NA	35,000	2%
Private Nature Reserve	2	29,803	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>1,980,033</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Other (public land): Conservation Park, Heritage River, Natural Features Reserve, Nature Conservation Park, Reference Area, Remote and Natural Area.

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Datasets
	Neutral	Neutral	↑

Data Rating – Tier 1: Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water) - [deccew.gov.au/capad/2020](http://deccew.gov.au/capad/2020)  
Data Rating – Tier 2: Trust for Nature Records



Fenced revegetation

**Assessment 2021–22**

**Summary of assessment**

		Trend	Condition	Summary Comment
2021–22	Over last 5 years			
	Positive		Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> While there has been an estimated three percent decline in native vegetation extent across the region since 1985, the overall condition and trajectory of terrestrial habitat is considered to be stable to improving when compared to a 21-year (2000–21) average. It is also acknowledged that condition measures for major parks and reserves would be higher than in more fragmented areas of the landscapes; with condition likely to be poor within smaller remnants that have not been subjected to ongoing management.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> Recent (2017–21) assessments of the region's natural landscapes (13,987 km<sup>2</sup>) identify a five percent average increase in vegetation growth from the long-term (2000–21) average, and a 3.5 percent improvement in condition. Significant variation in these indicators is however evident over the five-year period, reflecting annual climatic conditions. Assessments for 2021 found a four percent increase in vegetation condition from the long-term average, and a nine percent increase in vegetation growth<sup>23</sup>. Significant areas of targeted works undertaken over an extended period to protect and enhance priority habitat, with evidence that these management actions are having a positive impact in the short (i.e. threat mitigation) to medium (i.e. condition improvements) term. This includes rabbits and feral goats being maintained below regional thresholds, and evidence of ecological functionality returning to revegetated sites.</p>
	Positive			

*Reason for assessment*

Trends in measures of condition within major parks and reserves remain stable, if not improving as a result of management interventions undertaken over the past 30 years (e.g. reducing grazing pressure), and some large rainfall events experienced in the region over the same period<sup>24</sup>. Within the more fragmented areas of the landscape, remnant vegetation subjected to management interventions has also remained generally stable. Due to continuing threatening processes, declines in some measures of condition would however be expected within many remnants, especially those where threat mitigation actions have not occurred.

Significant areas of priority habitat have been subject to ongoing management over recent years, with a broad range of funding initiatives providing for revegetation of native species to enhance priority linkages and/or degraded remnants, weed control to reduce competition, and herbivore control (rabbit, goats, pigs, kangaroos) to reduce grazing pressure and support regeneration outcomes. Site-based assessments (both ongoing and annual) have identified both a reduction in threat processes and associated habitat improvements resulting from these works.

Long-term control programs in the Mallee continue to maintain rabbit numbers below the regional threshold of <1 per spotlight km required to support regeneration processes. In 2022, ongoing transect monitoring of rabbit activity within the Mallee's four remnant rangeland communities reported 93 percent of the kilometres surveyed had one or less rabbits recorded<sup>25</sup>. Site-based monitoring of targeted control programs identified that 61 percent of pre-treatment rabbit numbers were less than one rabbit/ha (range between 4 and 0 per ha) and that this increased to 88 percent of sites post-treatment (range between 3.5 and 0 per ha)<sup>26</sup>. Monitoring of goat control programs has also identified a 42 percent reduction in their presence within surveyed areas, with the majority of sites below the target threshold of <0.35 goats per km<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Australia's Environment Explorer, 2022 (Australian National University)

<sup>24</sup> Parks Victoria: Conservation Action Plan for Parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria, Mallee (2019).

<sup>25</sup> Parks Victoria (2022), Rabbit Transect Monitoring Autumn 2022: unpublished data.

<sup>26</sup> Mallee CMA (2021), Rapid Rabbit Assessments, unpublished data.

<sup>27</sup> Mallee CMA (2021), Goat presence and impact assessments, unpublished data.

Site based monitoring of weed control programs also recorded significant reductions in the extent and density of targeted species. In 2020-21, these species were primarily weeds of national significance (WoNS) such as African Boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*), Wheel Cactus (*Opuntia robusta*), Common Prickly-pear (*Opuntia stricta*), and Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagooides*). Across sites surveyed, there was a reduction in the average percentage of weed cover from four percent pre-treatment to 1.5 percent post-treatment across all sites surveyed<sup>28</sup>.

The appropriateness of undertaking revegetation activities as a targeted threat mitigation option is also being assessed by long-term monitoring of a selection of representative sites across the region. Since monitoring commenced in 2011, 49 percent of planted tubestock are recorded as surviving, and 69 percent of directly seeded sites report germination; figures which continue to improve as previous learnings are employed. Furthermore, over the medium-term (i.e. >5 years) revegetation sites are showing evidence of ecological functionality returning to the site. Specific changes recorded include: improved soil condition (i.e. reduced erosion); a reduction in key threats (e.g., grazing impacts and herbaceous weed cover); evidence of habitat utilisation (i.e. movement/utilisation of species primarily birds using these areas as corridors); and improved ecosystem function (e.g. evidence of ongoing natural regeneration)<sup>29</sup>.



Monitoring Black Box.

<sup>28</sup> Mallee CMA (2021), Weed density and distribution assessments, unpublished data.

<sup>29</sup> Mallee CMA (2021), Revegetation Monitoring, unpublished data.



## Waterways

### Regional Context

**Scope:** Rivers, streams, their tributaries, and surrounding riparian land (including the floodplain), and individual wetlands, wetland complexes, and their associated floodplain ecosystems (including groundwater dependent ecosystems and the groundwater flow systems and aquifers they are reliant on)<sup>30</sup>.

The Mallee contains some 1,600 km of rivers/creeks and over 900 wetlands. Many of these waterways have been recognised as nationally and internationally important for the environmental, social, cultural and economic values they provide. This includes one Ramsar site (Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes); one Heritage River (Outlet Creek and Wirrengren Plain section of Wimmera River); and 16 sites listed on the Directory of Important Wetlands, Australia (e.g. Lindsay Island, Belsar Island, Kings Billabong, Lake Tyrrell and Raak Plain).

As defining features of the region, Mallee waterways and floodplains are significant not only for the specialised habitat and environmental values they support; but also for the broader ecosystem, social, cultural and economic services they provide. This includes, refugia and connectivity opportunities within largely cleared landscapes; carbon storage, salt interception, nutrient cycling, and water purification; replenishment of connected groundwater systems to support associated groundwater dependent ecosystems; flood mitigation, water supplies and storage for irrigation, industrial, domestic and stock use; connections to Country; diverse tourism and recreational opportunities; and positive landscape aesthetics.

The Mallee RCS sets the following long-term (20-year) condition outcomes for Waterways:

- The condition of high value aquatic and riparian habitat is improved
- Appropriate water regimes are restored to priority waterways and connectivity is improved
  - Water quality within priority waterways is improved

Indicators applied to provide a benchmark of condition and assess progress against associated management outcomes are detailed below.

<sup>30</sup> The threatened species and ecological communities supported by aquatic and riparian habitat are considered within the Biodiversity theme; and groundwater resources utilised for human use such as irrigation or stock and domestic water supply within the Agricultural Land theme.

## Condition Benchmark

Four state-wide datasets are applied by this report as regional indicators to establish a baseline, and where possible identify long term trends in the condition of our waterways.

### Condition of Rivers

#### This indicator provides estimates of the condition of rivers and streams and associated vegetation.

Periodic assessments on the condition of Mallee rivers and streams are conducted as part of state-wide Index of Stream Condition (ISC). Condition was measured by the ISC according to five sub-indices (hydrology, physical form, streamside zone, water quality and aquatic life) that contain 23 key indicators, to provide a summary of the extent of change from natural or ideal conditions.

Assessments of river condition using the ISC were first conducted in 1999 and again in 2004 and 2010. In general, this monitoring identified that no major changes occurred to the condition of these waterways over this timeframe. While no general improvement was detected, overall deterioration appears to have been controlled. This is an encouraging result given the data collected in the third assessment period coincided with the end of the severe Millennium Drought in south-eastern Australia. It is assumed that the targeted threat mitigation actions undertaken in the region over this period played an important role in minimising the impact of the drought and that they should assist with future improvements in condition under favourable climatic conditions.

The most recent (2010) ISC monitoring assessed 73 individual reaches in the region, with four percent of stream length identified as being in moderate condition and the remainder as being in poor (64%) or very poor (32%) condition. The proportion of reaches with poor scores was directly influenced by the ISC hydrology sub-indices attributing low scores for seasonally regulated flows. The high number of reaches subject to modified flow regimes to meet irrigated agriculture demands is subsequently reflected in overall condition scores.

Streamside vegetation (i.e. woody vegetation within 40 metres of rivers edge) was found to be in good condition for the majority (59%) of reaches, with the remainder in either excellent (1%), moderate (34%) or poor (6%) condition. Low scores were attributed predominantly to narrow, fragmented streamside vegetation, while the moderate and good scores reflected diverse streamside vegetation and the absence of willows.

Physical condition (i.e. bank condition, instream woody habitat, artificial barriers) was assessed as moderate for 67 percent of reaches, remainder ranging from poor (11%) to good (16%) and excellent (6%). The presence of downstream fish barriers in 96 percent of the assessed reaches reduced overall scores for this indicator.



The Lindsay River encompasses five reaches monitored by the Index of Stream Condition (ISC).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Department of Environment and Primary Industries (2013), Index of Stream Condition: The third benchmark of Victorian river condition
	○ Unknown	○ Unknown	○ Unknown	○ Unknown

## Extent and condition of wetlands

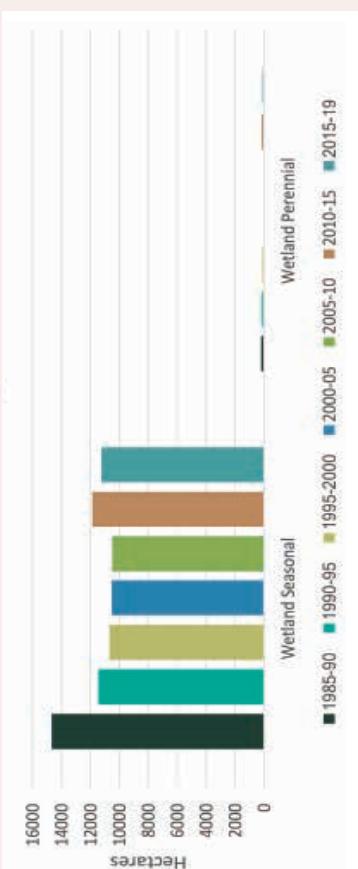
### This indicator provides estimates of the condition and overall rate of change in the extent and spatial distribution of wetlands and associated vegetation on public and private land.

Modelling of changes in wetland extent over the past 30 years indicates an overall decrease in the area of wetlands across the region, with the area of seasonal wetlands declining by 23 percent (3,431 ha) between 1985 and 2019; and perennial wetlands by 53 percent (88 ha) over the same period (Figure 9). With an estimated five percent (618ha) reduction in seasonal wetlands since 2015, and a 37 percent (46 ha) reduction in perennial wetlands over the same period.

The Index of Wetland Condition (IWC) provided a measure of condition across a subset of Victoria's high value wetlands according to six sub-indices (wetland catchment, hydrology, water properties, soils, biota, and physical form) comprised of 16 different measures. Monitoring was designed to allow for the identification of significant changes in wetland condition from a theoretical reference condition (i.e. unmodified by human impacts associated with European settlement).

The IWC was applied in the Mallee between spring 2009 and autumn 2010 following a period of extended drought. Monitoring was conducted on 79 wetlands considered to be of high conservation value and a priority for management. Over half (53%) of the assessed wetlands were identified as being in good or excellent condition, 42 percent as being in moderate condition, and only five percent as being in poor or very poor condition. It is also noted that although a high number of wetlands were assessed as being in good condition, there was significant variation evident in condition at the sub-index level. For example, 89 percent of wetlands were identified as having poor or very poor hydrology condition, while 96 percent had good to excellent physical form.

While the IWC is not currently scheduled to be repeated, it does provide the region with detailed benchmarks in specific indicators of condition, from which future change from natural or ideal conditions can be determined at both the site (i.e. individual wetland) and landscape (i.e. representative wetlands) scale.



**Figure 9 | Extent (ha) of Wetland Cover Classes in the Mallee CMA region over time**  
(Source: Victorian Land Cover Time Series).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Victorian Land Cover Time Series, 2020 (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning); Spatial Datamart Victoria Data Rating – Tier 1: Papas, P and Maloney, P (2012); Victoria's wetlands (2009–2011); state wide assessments and condition monitoring.
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Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Victorian Land Cover Time Series, 2020 (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning); Spatial Datamart Victoria Data Rating – Tier 1: Papas, P and Maloney, P (2012); Victoria's wetlands (2009–2011); state wide assessments and condition monitoring.
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## Groundwater levels

### This indicator provides information on groundwater levels.

Ongoing monitoring of regional groundwater trends allows for the identification of changes in the natural water balance through either extraction (e.g. irrigation), or accelerated recharge and/or discharge processes resulting from land use and land management changes. These changes can directly influence aquatic, riparian and terrestrial ecosystems through associated variations in aquifer levels, water quality and soil chemistry. This can be especially significant for ecosystems that rely on groundwater to meet all or some of their water requirements (i.e. Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems). In the Mallee this includes wetlands with both fresh and saline groundwater dependency, rivers, and some terrestrial vegetation communities.

Trend analysis from 2013 to 2021 of 549 regional groundwater bores monitored for water level and salinity has identified no trend for either indicator over the previous eight years (i.e. neither rising nor falling).

436 regionally managed groundwater bores and 113 bores from the State Observation Bore Network (SOBN) were monitored (i.e. 549 total) in 2021–22 for depth to groundwater (Figure 10). The results from the water level measurements showed a slight increase in the standing water level values from the measuring point (water levels falling) over 2021–22 compared to the previous year.

#The condition of groundwater utilised for human use such as irrigation or stock and domestic water supply is outlined in the Agricultural Land theme.

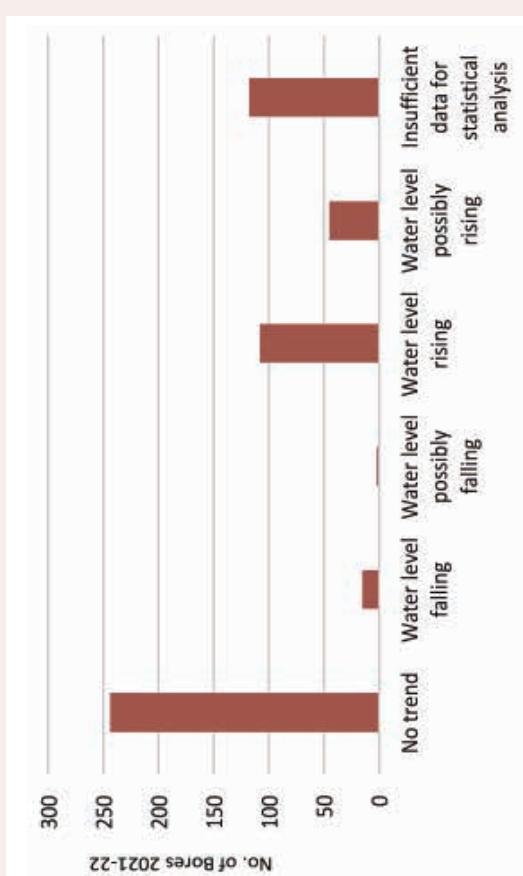


Figure 10 | Groundwater bore 2021–22 trend data (Source: Victorian Mallee BSM2030 Annual Report 2021–22).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Neutral	Upward arrow icon	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Water Measurement Information System (WMIS), DELWP
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## Management

The area over which targeted management actions are delivered in the Mallee are applied as state-wide indicators of waterway outcomes. Consideration of site-based (point of investment) monitoring of these works enables associated changes in threat, incidence/impact and asset condition (where available) to be quantified and applied to broader assessments of the effectiveness of regional efforts to conserve waterway and riparian/floodplain values.

The data presented in this section represents works delivered through Mallee CMA programs over the past seven years. It does not however capture the significant areas of threat mitigation actions undertaken annually on public and private land through other funding initiatives, or by individual (e.g. private, volunteer) efforts.

### Extent of protected or improved riparian land

#### The indicator reflects efforts to protect or improve the condition of riparian lands, including fencing, weed control, revegetation and pest control.

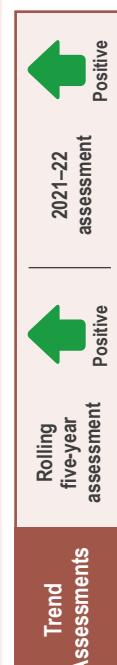
Mallee waterways continue to be threatened by a range of pressures which can directly influence their environmental condition, and therefore their capacity to provide the environmental, social, cultural and economic services we value.

The major threats to our waterways are those that impact on one or more of their core environmental attributes, specifically: habitat, water quality, flows, and connectivity. This includes processes such as altered hydrological regimes, land and water salinisation, erosion, invasive plants and animals, habitat loss and fragmentation, and recreational pressures.

Table 8 provides an overview of the works undertaken through Mallee CMA programs to mitigate these threats over the past seven years.

**Table 8 |** Waterway management actions implemented under Mallee CMA Programs (Source: Mallee CMA).

Actions	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Total
<b>Structural Works</b>								
Exclusion fencing (km)	13	80	25	39	27	49	8	241
Track rationalisation/repair (km)	52	2	4	37	18	0	4	117
<b>Waterway structure (no.)</b>								
Waterway structure (no.)	25	12	9	1	9	0	0	56
<b>Environmental Works</b>								
Native vegetation (ha)	6	6	32	100	6	11	49	210
Weed control (ha)	2,687	1,783	8,149	3,310	2,178	3,139	2,524	23,770
Pest animal control (ha)	15,262	8,716	34,748	8,624	5,714	16,986	57,958	148,008
Earth works (no.)	30	0	18	0	0	0	0	48
Water regime (no.)	58	54	48	48	34	48	34	324
Water regime (ha)	2,897	8,663	6,696	559	2,557	9,915	5,663	36,950



Data Rating – Tier 2: Mallee CMA Spatial Dataset (2015–22).

## Assessment 2021–22

### Summary of assessment

Trend	Condition	Summary Comment
2021–22	Over last 5 years	
 Positive	 Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of Mallee waterways is assessed as being moderate. This reflects the findings of previous regional scale assessments (i.e. the Index of Stream Condition and Index of Wetland Condition in 2010) and recognises site-based evidence of long-term improvements in response to both targeted and landscape scale protection/enhancement efforts. The ongoing decline in the extent of wetlands is of concern however; with the area of seasonal wetlands estimated to have declined by 23 percent (3,431 ha) between 1985 and 2019; and perennial wetlands by 53 percent (88 ha) over the same period.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> The condition of Mallee waterway's is considered to be improving, with evidence that management actions are having a positive impact. Significant areas of inundation achieved through environmental watering is having a demonstrable impact on waterway connectivity and both aquatic and riparian habitat condition. There is also evidence that targeted threat mitigation works (e.g. invasive plant and animal management) are further securing environmental outcomes achieved by recent environmental watering events, and protecting priority riparian landscapes.</p>

### Reason for assessment

Site-based assessments (both ongoing and annual) have identified improvements in the health of landscapes and associated species/communities where both environmental water and targeted threat mitigation activities are being delivered.

For example, significant areas of inundation being achieved through environmental watering actions is having a demonstrable impact on waterway connectivity and both aquatic and riparian habitat condition. This includes the Hattah Lakes and Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla Living Murray Icon Sites, where long-term monitoring (2006 to 2022) has identified that several measured indicators of environmental condition (i.e. River Red Gum, Black Box, wetland and floodplain vegetation, lignum, fish and waterbirds) continue to improve as a result of water application and associated works programs, with progress against the stated ecological objectives (condition targets) for each of these indicators recorded in 2021–22<sup>31,32</sup>.

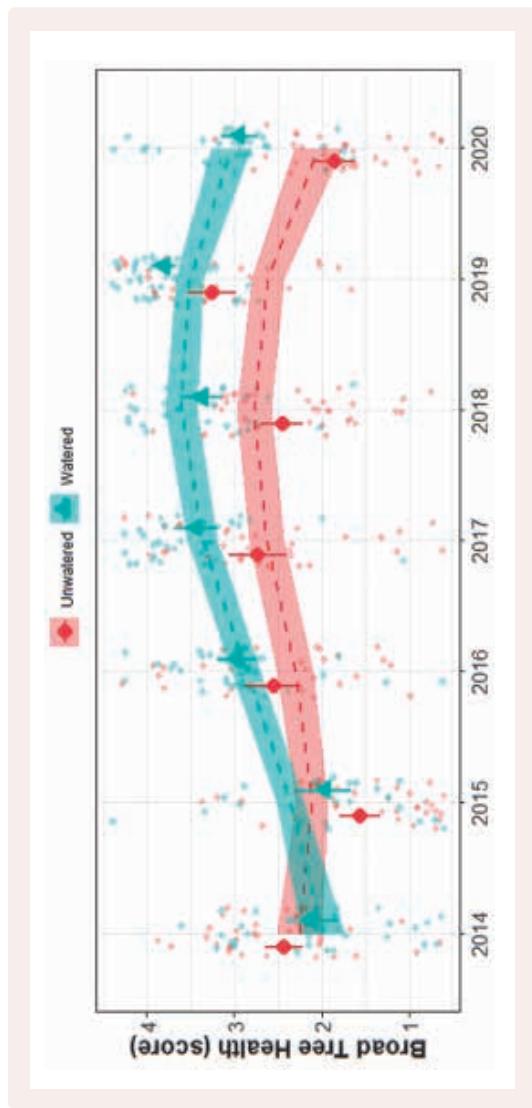
<sup>31</sup> Ecology Australia (2022) The Living Murray Condition Monitoring, Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla 2021–22, Part A (Main Report).

<sup>32</sup> Ecology Australia (2022) The Living Murray Condition Monitoring, Hattah Lakes 2021–22, Part A (Main Report).

Water availability in the form of both rainfall and flooding are key drivers of plant community composition. Responses to flooding indicate while systems benefit from the environmental water deliveries, the timeframes over which this change occurs can vary according to individual communities and metrics. For example, long-term intervention monitoring at Hattah Lakes comparing watered and unwatered sites is reporting a positive response in Black Box health across the watered sites after one environmental watering event, with subsequent events further improving tree health (Figure 11)<sup>33</sup>. Inundation of River Red Gum communities for between 50–60 days during spring and early summer was found to improve canopy condition by between 10 and 30 percent<sup>34</sup>.

Photo-point monitoring of priority wetlands, floodplains and creeks also provides important visual records to monitor changes in vegetation condition, structure and diversity in response to environmental water. Site-based observations for Wimmera Mallee Pipeline (WMP) connected wetlands throughout 2020–21 and 2021–22 observed these wetlands providing critical habitat for a range of fauna, including reptiles, frogs, kangaroos, and an influx of extensive waterbird diversity and abundance<sup>35</sup>.

Watering of the Hattah Lakes system in the autumn and spring of 2021 triggered a significant waterbird breeding event across the 2021–22 summer. Twenty-four waterbird species (including nine species considered as colonial nesting), 2,180 nests, and 7,374 chicks were recorded; with the majority of nests (1,897) and chicks (6,582 chicks) classified as colonial breeding species<sup>36</sup>.



**Figure 11 |** Raw Black Box health data means ( $\pm$  95% confidence interval) for each year sampled at the unwatered (red circles) and the 2014, 2016, 2017–18 and 2019 watered (blue triangles) case study sites. Individual points (jitter) and associated less smooth lines show trends in the raw data based on watering (unwatered – red; watered – blue) (Source: Moxham et al. 2020).

<sup>33</sup> Moxham C., et.al. (2020) The Living Murray Hattah Lakes Intervention Monitoring: Impact of Environmental Watering on Black Box health, reproduction and recruitment – Final Report 2020. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Heidelberg, Victoria.

<sup>34</sup> Moxham, C. and Gwin, D. (2021). Hattah Lakes floodplain tree condition: Modelling tree responses to environmental watering. Unpublished Report. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Heidelberg, Victoria.

<sup>35</sup> Mallee CMA (2022) Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Monitoring: unpublished data.

<sup>36</sup> GHD. (2022) Waterbird nesting and breeding activity - Hattah Lakes icon Site - 2021/22.

Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla surveys recorded 43,545 fish in 2020–21, the second highest number recorded over the 2010–2021 monitoring program; with record numbers of carp gudgeon and stable populations of large and most small-bodied native fish species<sup>37</sup>. While there was a substantial drop in the total raw numbers of fish caught in 2022, this was primarily due to a decline in carp gudgeon numbers; with other species increasing across the site. Golden and silver perch were recorded in their highest numbers to date, with a notably higher proportion of young and juvenile individuals<sup>38</sup>.

While the majority of the region's long-term environmental watering monitoring programs are focused on The Living Murray (TLM) sites (Hattah and Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla), this evidence base does support the assumption that positive outcomes are also being achieved at other watered sites. Given the scale and scope of environmental watering events delivered across the region over the past decade, it is anticipated the extent of these impacts is also relatively significant outside of the TLM sites.

Targeted threat mitigation works (e.g. invasive plant and animal management) are further securing environmental outcomes achieved by recent environmental watering events, and protecting priority riparian landscapes. Key examples of quantifiable reductions in threat extent include:

- Long-term rabbit control programs within priority riparian landscapes are continuing to maintain numbers below the regional threshold of <1 per spotlight km required to support regeneration processes<sup>39</sup>.
- Targeted feral goat control programs are reducing populations within priority riparian landscapes. For example, aerial and ground shooting programs conducted across the Hattah Ramsar site between 2020 and 2022 removed 431 goats from critical River Red Gum habitat. This represents a 79 percent reduction in goat abundance (i.e. 1.43 goats per km<sup>2</sup> to 0.3) and is within the threshold target of <0.35 goats per km<sup>2</sup><sup>40</sup>.
- Targeted fox control programs are reducing populations within critical waterbird breeding habitat. For example, baiting programs conducted at Ramsar wetlands in 2020 and 2021 removed 204 foxes from the target area, representing a 33 percent reduction from the pre-works baseline<sup>41</sup>.
- The diversity of invasive plants at Hattah Lakes in 2020 was the second lowest recorded over the seven-year monitoring period (2013–20), with targeted works to control invasive species undertaken over an extended period having a high level of success<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Ecology Australia (2021) The Living Murray Condition Monitoring, Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla 2020–21, Part A (Main Report).

<sup>38</sup> Ecology Australia (2022) The Living Murray Condition Monitoring, Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla 2021–22, Part A (Main Report).

<sup>39</sup> Parks Victoria (2022). Rabbit Transect Monitoring Autumn 2022: unpublished data.

<sup>40</sup> Mallee CMA (2022) Goat presence and impact monitoring: unpublished data.

<sup>41</sup> Mallee CMA (2022) Fox presence monitoring: unpublished data

<sup>42</sup> Moxham C., Duncan M., Leevers D. and Farmilo B. (2020) The Living Murray Hattah Lakes Intervention Monitoring



## Agricultural Land

### Regional Context

**Scope:** All parts of the landscape that have been developed for the purpose of dryland and irrigated agricultural production (including the soil and water resources they rely and impact on).

Some 62 percent of our region is under agricultural production, with an estimated 2.4 million hectares of dryland farming and a further 88,140 hectares of irrigation development (Figure 12). Natural and built up/urban environments represent the other primary land uses across the region's 3.99 million hectares.

Dryland agriculture occurs in the northern, central and southern parts of the region and includes the cropping of a wide variety of cereals and pulse crops such as wheat, barley, vetch, chickpeas, lentils and canola. Livestock also forms a part of many farm operations and primarily includes sheep for their wool products and lambs for their quality meat. Cattle and goats are also present in smaller numbers.

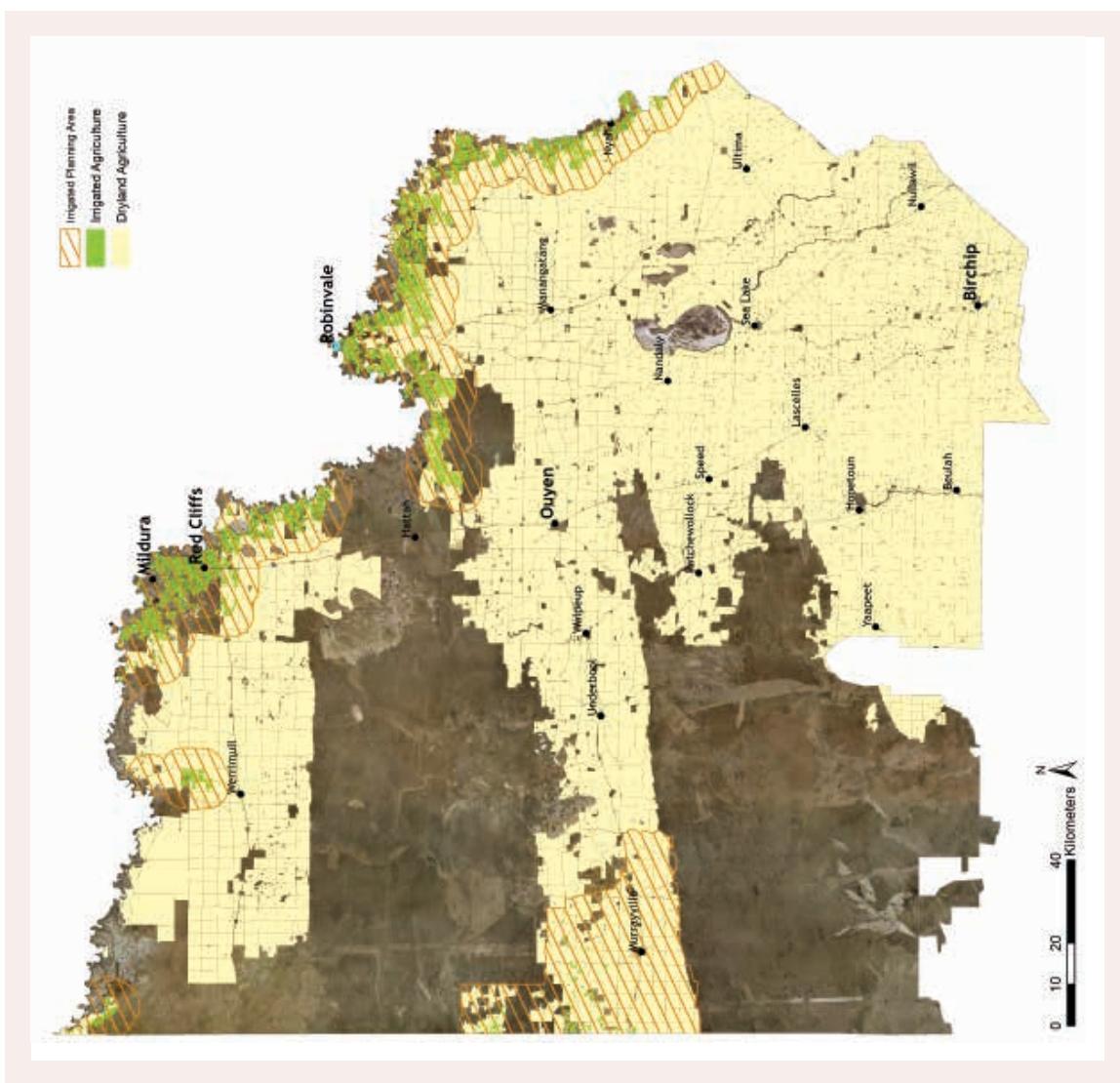


Figure 12 | Distribution of dryland and irrigated agriculture.

These agricultural industries have largely been established where they can be supported by our regional soils. The large blocks of remnant vegetation which remain in the landscape (such as in our parks and reserves) are often represented by their sandy infertile soils, which are unsuitable for agriculture.

Irrigation development reliant on surface water extends adjacent to the Murray River from Nyah to the South Australian border, encompassing private diverters and the pumped irrigation districts of Mildura, Merbein, Red Cliffs, Robinvale and Nyah. The primary crops produced in these areas include almonds, table and wine grapes, and citrus.

A 191,600 hectare groundwater irrigation district also exists centred on the town of Murraville, with groundwater from the Murray Group Limestone Aquifer the sole source of water for town, stock and domestic, and irrigation supply in the area. Irrigated production encompasses field crops, potatoes and olives.

The Mallee RCS sets the following long-term (20-year) condition outcomes for Agricultural Land:

- Improved health and productive capacity of agricultural soils
- Improved water-use efficiency for optimal returns from irrigation water use
- Improved water quality

Indicators applied by to provide a benchmark of condition and assess progress against associated management outcomes are detailed below.

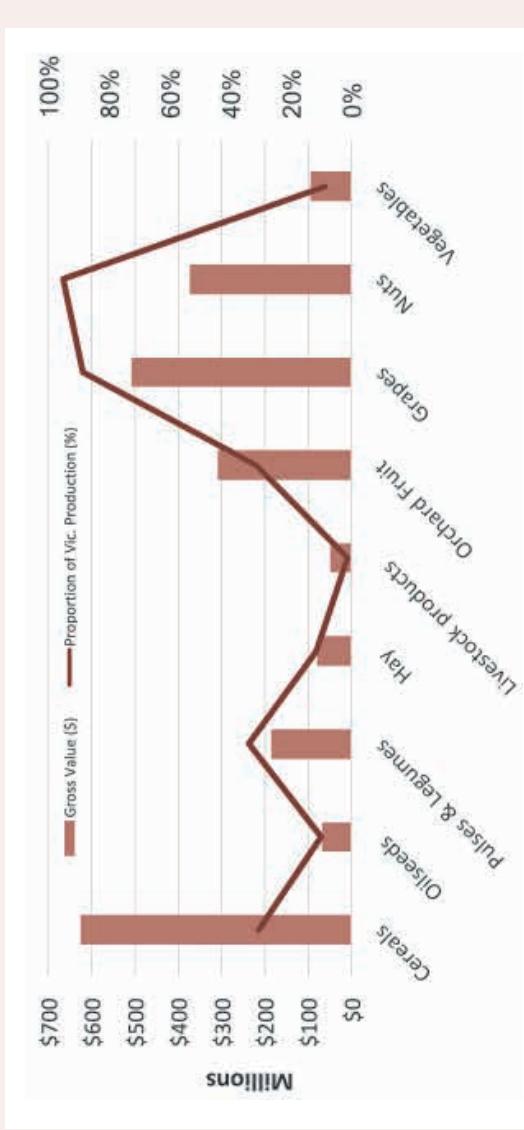
## Condition Benchmark

One state-wide and two regional datasets are applied by this report as indicators to establish a baseline, and where possible identify long term trends in the condition of our agricultural land.

### Agricultural commodities

#### This indicator aims to provide estimates of the type and gross value of agriculture commodities.

Agriculture plays a major role in sustaining the economy of the Mallee region, with the gross value of production in 2020–21 being some \$2.488 billion, a three percent increase from 2019–20 (\$2.43 billion) and 19 percent increase from 2016–17 (\$1.977 billion). The region's contribution to the total agricultural production value for the state across all industries has remained stable over this period however at 14 percent. The gross value of different commodity types has also remained relatively stable over this period, with some annual variations.



**Figure 13 |** Gross value and proportion of Victorian agricultural commodities produced in the Mallee  
(Source: ABS - Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, 2020–21).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Value of Agricultural Commodities Data Downloads: <a href="http://abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture">abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture</a>
				Positive

## Area of irrigation

### This indicator aims to provide estimates of the area of irrigable land irrigated, and major crop types.

Between 1997 and 2021 (for which comprehensive irrigation crop data is available) irrigation development reliant on water from the Murray River has increased from 39,470 hectares to 81,355 hectares, representing a more than doubling of the irrigable area. There is a further 6,785 hectares of irrigable land in the Murrayville groundwater irrigation area, a 5,580 hectare increase since 1997 (Figure 14a).

Almonds, 99 percent of which are grown by private diverters, have become the region's single largest irrigated crop by area and water demand. Within the irrigation districts there has also been a resurgence of table grapes in recent years (Figure 14b).

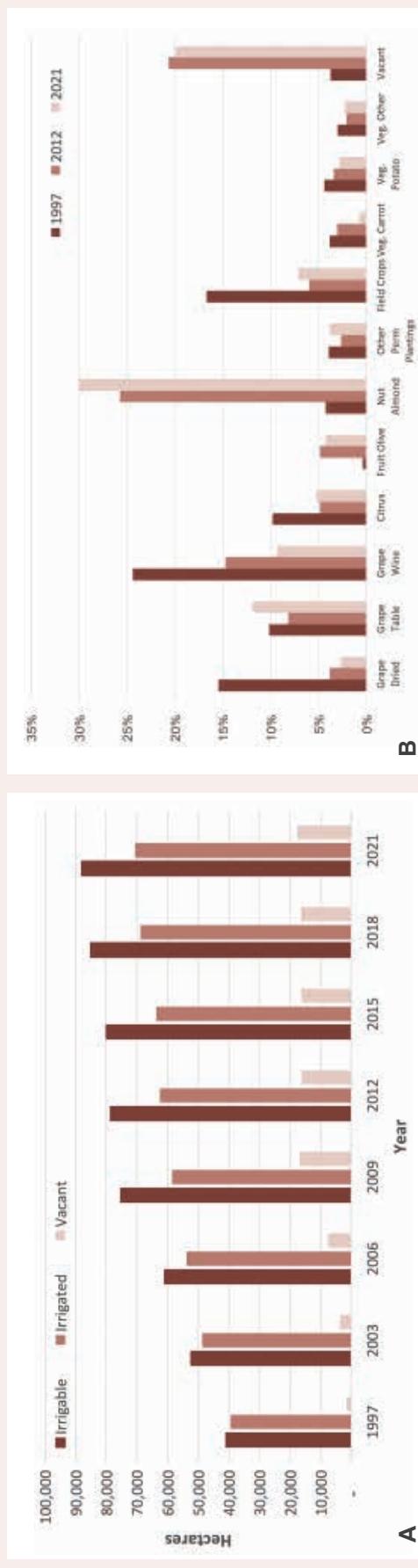
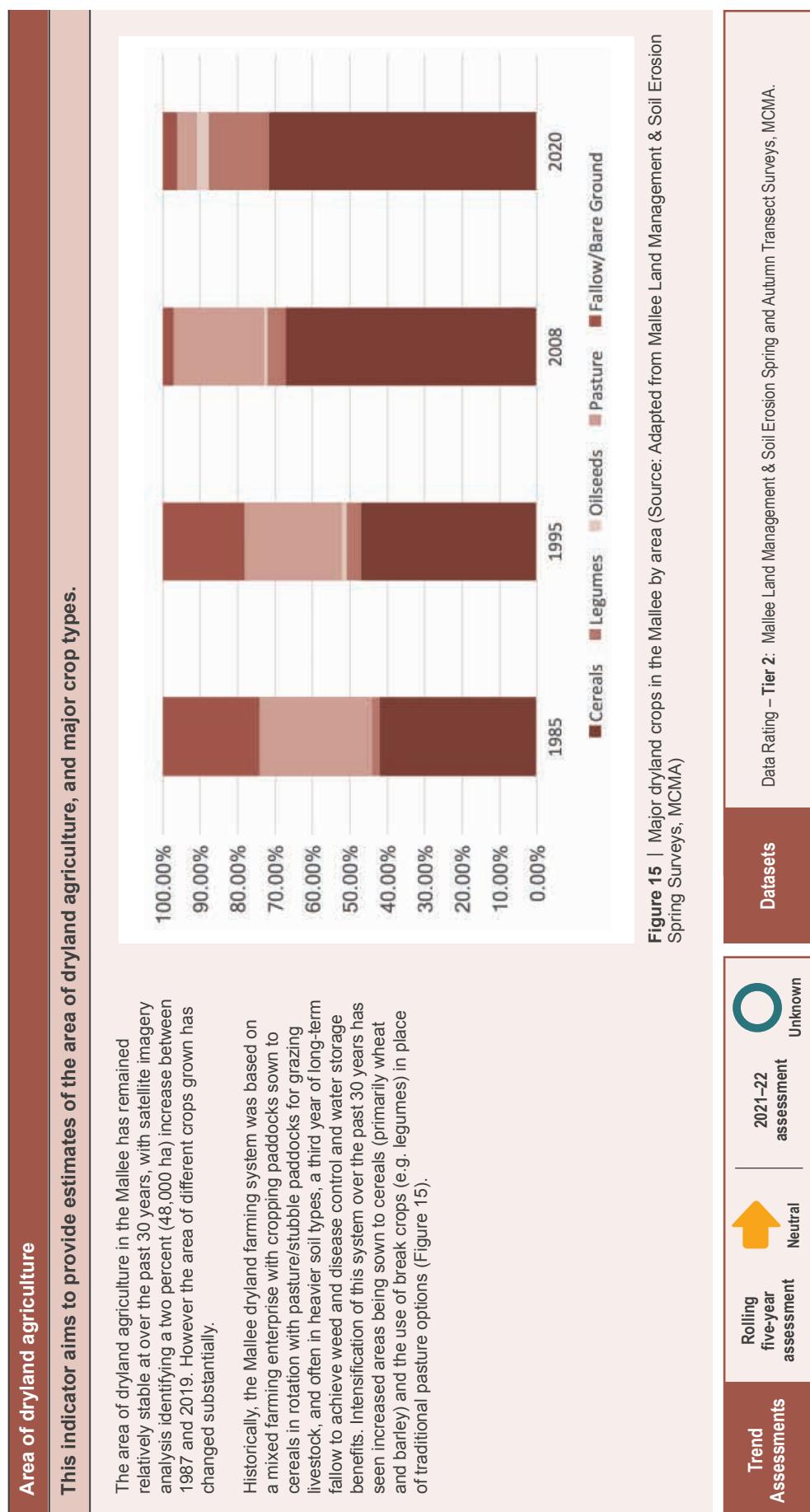


Figure 14 | Area of irrigable land irrigated and major crop types (Source: MCMA).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 2: 2021 Mallee Horticulture crop report, MCMA



**Figure 15 | Major dryland crops in the Mallee by area (Source: Adapted from Mallee Land Management & Soil Erosion Spring Surveys, MCMIA)**

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 2: Mallee Land Management & Soil Erosion Spring and Autumn Transect Surveys, MCMIA.
	▲ Neutral	○ Unknown		

## Management

Long-term changes in dryland and irrigated agriculture management practices, and associated impacts on the soil and water resources they rely on, are applied as indicators of agricultural land management outcomes.

### Groundcover

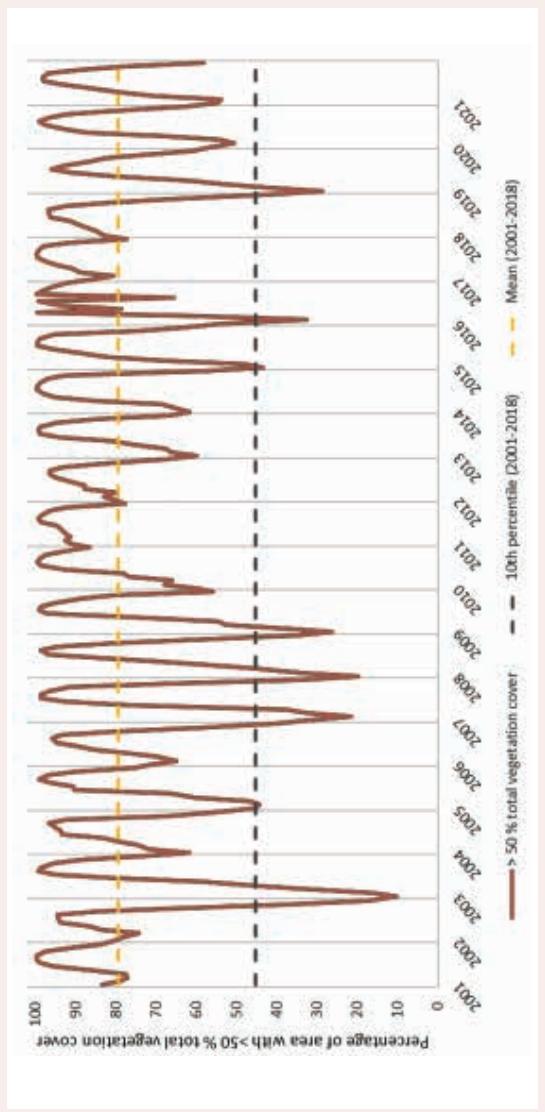
#### This indicator aims to provide estimates of the area of dryland agricultural land protected from wind erosion.

Widespread changes in dryland agriculture over the past 30 years have supported increased vegetation cover, soil aggregation and overall soil stability; reducing the risk, incidence and severity of soil erosion events.

The use of conventional fallow, for instance, has been reduced considerably, from between 30 to 50 percent of monitored sites in the 1990's to an average of less than five percent over the past five years. Conversely, the increased use of legumes as break crops can produce more fragile stubbles, which are prone to faster decomposition than cereals and may increase erosion risk.

The total vegetation cover (TVC) threshold for effective protection of soils from wind erosion is 50 percent. Groundcover observations demonstrate that on average, 80 percent of agricultural land in the region exceeded this target between 2001 and 2021; with the 10th percentile being 45 percent.

Over the past five years the area of agricultural land achieving the >50% TVC target has ranged from 81 percent in 2017 to 26 percent in 2019; corresponding largely with rainfall patterns.



**Figure 16 |** Percentage of agricultural land protected from wind erosion (>50% TVC) (Source: Monitoring wind erosion and land management in the Victorian Mallee – Annual Report 2021, DJPR 2022).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 2: Mallee Land Management & Soil Erosion Fractional Groundcover Datasets
	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

### Irrigation Method

#### This indicator aims to provide estimates of the proportion of total irrigated area watered by irrigation method.

Since water entitlement unbundling in 2007, the amount of water issued for irrigation from the Murray River as an Annual Use Limit (AUL) has increased by 60 percent, from 518 gigalitres AUL in 2007 to 828 gigalitres AUL in 2021 as a result of new irrigation developments and redevelopments. The actual water diverted from the Murray River for irrigation in 2021 however was 514 gigalitres, or 62 percent of AUL.

This corresponds with improvements in irrigation management over the past 30 years, with more water-use efficient methods replacing the use of both flood and overhead sprinklers. Drip irrigation methods are now applied across 73 percent of the total irrigated area, increasing from 10 percent in 1997 (Figure 17). While the majority of this change had occurred by 2015, ongoing uptake of new technologies and improved methods has continued to provide efficiencies annually.

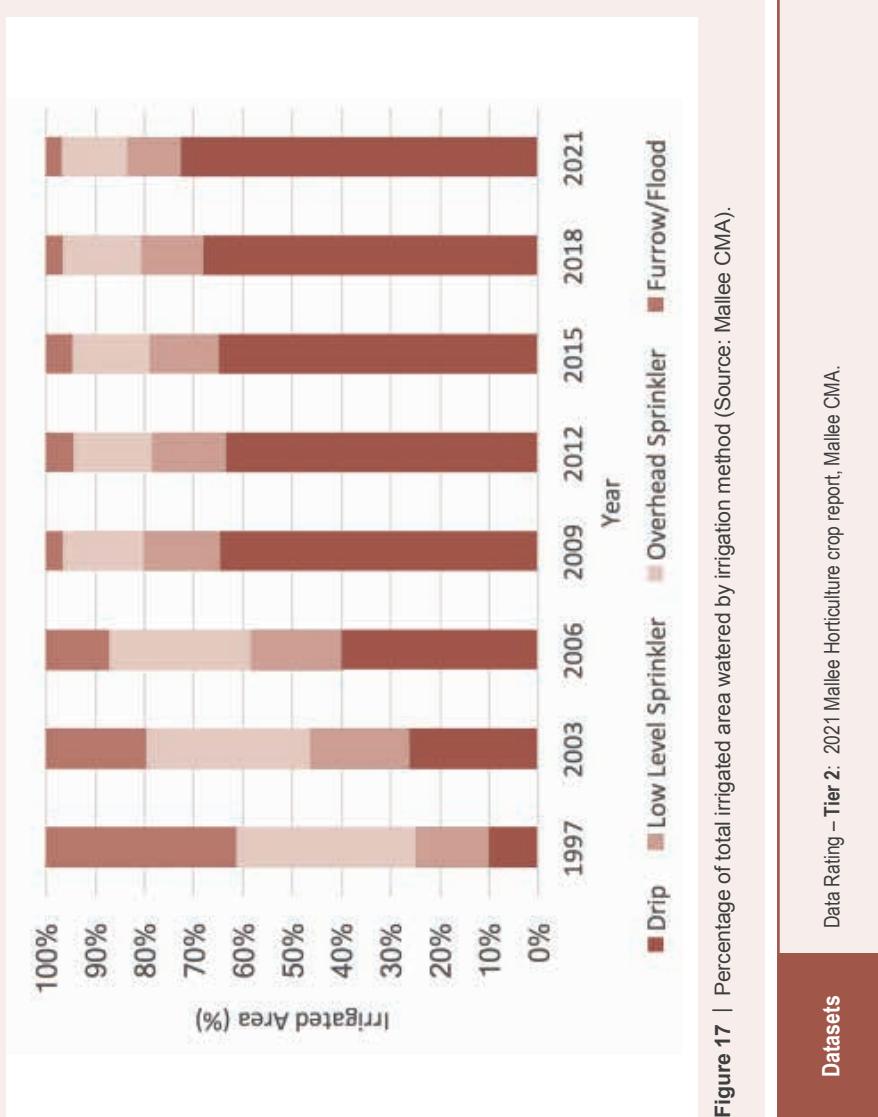


Figure 17 | Percentage of total irrigated area watered by irrigation method (Source: Mallee CMA).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 2: 2021 Mallee Horticulture crop report, Mallee CMA.
	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive

## Groundwater

### This indicator aims to provide estimates of groundwater use for irrigation.

In relation to groundwater, current levels of use in the Murrayville Groundwater Management Area (GMA) continue to be within the permissible consumptive volume (PCV) of 11,005 ML/year. In 2020–21 the total licence entitlement was 9,755 ML, with 63 percent (6,151 ML) of this volume extracted (Figure 18).

The Murrayville GMA Local Management Plan (2017) also establishes a drawdown resource condition threshold of 0.65m per year to ensure this non-renewable groundwater resource is managed as far as practicable for long-term sustainability, with the trigger for management intervention (e.g. restrictions) being two successive years of drawdown greater than the threshold based on a five year rolling average. Monitoring of water levels within five assessment areas indicates that while there are clear seasonal fluctuations in response to pumping, due to the confined nature of the aquifer, water levels continue to demonstrate a recovering trend and the drawdown threshold has not been exceeded for the 2017–21 period. Salinity levels also remain stable across the Murrayville GMA.

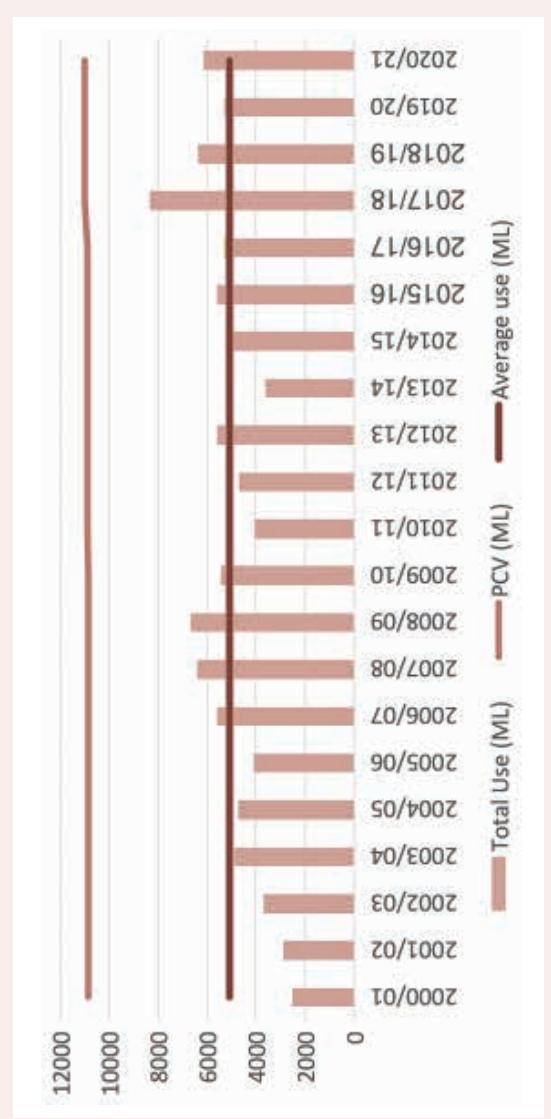


Figure 18 | Groundwater usage over time in the Murrayville GMA (Source: Murrayville Local Management Plan (Groundwater) Annual Report 2020–21, GWMWater 2021)

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021–22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 2: Murrayville Groundwater Management Area Monitoring Data (GWM)
	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive

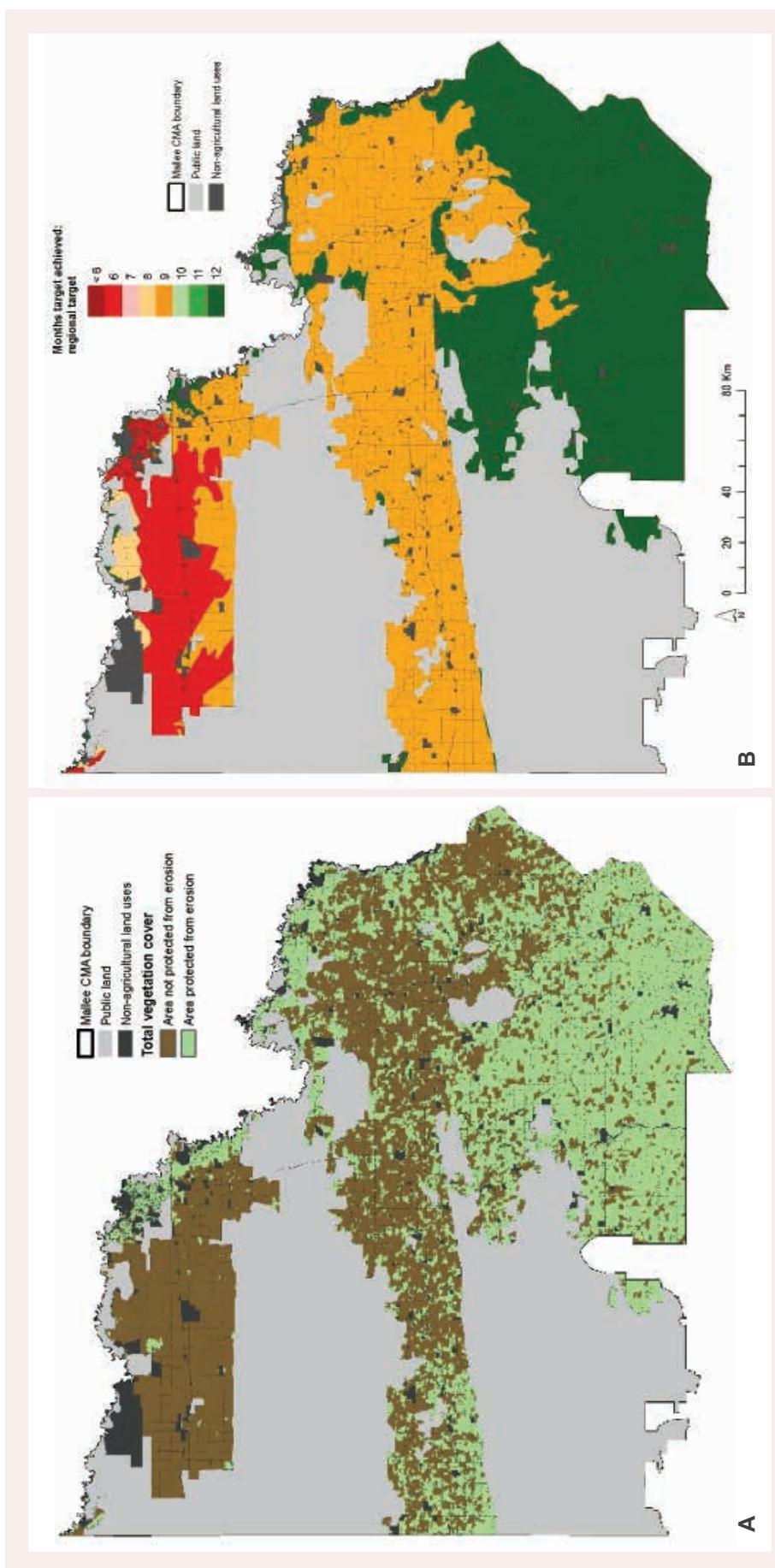
**Summary of assessment**

Trend		Condition	Summary Comment
2021–22	Over last 5 years		
	<b>Moderate</b>		<b>Condition:</b> Overall the condition of Mallee dryland agriculture is assessed as moderate. While widespread management changes over the past 30 years have provided for increased productivity, while also supporting increased vegetation cover, soil aggregation and overall soil stability; it is evident that there continues to be significant impacts on associated soil resources. Groundcover observations demonstrate that on average, 80 percent of agricultural land in the region exceeded the total vegetation cover (TVC) target of >50% between 2001 and 2021. More recently however, TVC levels have been consistently below average in response to ongoing dry conditions experienced throughout the region, resulting in significant erosion events and associated declines in soil health and productivity. Impacts that would have been further exacerbated had this practice change not occurred.
	<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Trend:</b> While short to medium term trends in productivity and soil health are directly influenced by rainfall, there is evidence of that the majority of dryland farmers are continuing to implement and adapt best management practices in response to seasonal conditions. It is also recognised that ongoing support needs to be provided to farmers in susceptible landscapes to accelerate the identification, validation and adoption of practices that promote increased groundcover and reduce erosion risk, particularly in regards to providing effective management responses in dry seasons.

**Reason for assessment**

Despite widespread changes in dryland agriculture over the past 30 years that have provided for increased productivity; while also supporting increased vegetation cover, soil aggregation and overall soil stability for reduced risk, incidence and severity of soil erosion events. Significant variability in groundcover continues to be evident across the region, with rainfall being a key influencing factor. For example, following their lowest annual total rainfall on record in 2019, less than 10 percent of the northern Mallee achieved the 50 percent groundcover target in February 2020. Erosion risk was also relatively high in the central and southern Mallee which recorded decile 1 and 2 conditions respectively for 2019 (Figure 19a).

Land system also has a major influence, with only 50 percent of land classified as having a 'high' inherent susceptibility to wind erosion (e.g. achieving the target of >50 percent groundcover in April 2020, whereas the target was achieved across 74 percent of land area with 'very low' susceptibility). Groundcover can be used as an indicator of landscape resilience to erosion. Figure 19b shows the number of months that the >50 per cent groundcover target was met for each of the region's land systems in 2020. Overall the wind erosion protection targets were met for longer periods of time in the southern Mallee (which includes the Hopetoun, Culgoa and Tempy land systems that have moderate to low wind erosion susceptibility) compared with the northern Mallee (which includes the Millewa land system that has moderate to high wind erosion susceptibility).



**Figure 19** | Area of agricultural land protected from wind erosion (>50% TVC) during February 2020 (a); and Number of months targets for area protected against wind erosion (>50 per cent TVC) were achieved for 2020 (b) (Source: Monitoring wind erosion and land management in the Victorian Mallee – Annual Report 2020, DJPR 2021).

## Appendix 2 Condition and Management Report

The region also recorded the most dust activity between July 2019 to April 2020 since monitoring commenced in 2005, with four to eight times more events (depending on location) than in the previous worst year of 2009<sup>43</sup>.

Groundcover has continued to remain relatively low over the 2021 and 2022 seasons, ranging from 99 percent of the region achieving the >50% TVC target in July/August 2021 to 71 percent in February 2022<sup>44</sup>.

While ongoing dry conditions experienced throughout the region have played a significant role in the groundcover levels recorded at both the whole of region and individual landscape (i.e. Millewa) scale, it is evident that this result would have been significantly worse without the widespread changes in management practices that have occurred throughout the region over past years, and which continue to adapt in response to seasonal conditions. It is also evident that ongoing support needs to be provided to farmers in susceptible landscapes to accelerate the identification, validation and adoption of practices that promote increased groundcover and reduce erosion risk, particularly in regards to providing effective management responses in dry seasons.

### Assessment 2021–22 - Irrigated Agriculture

#### Summary of assessment

		Trend	Over last 5 years	Condition	Summary Comment
				Moderate	<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of irrigated agriculture in the Mallee is assessed as being moderate. This reflects improvements in irrigation management over the past 30 years that have decreased subsurface drainage flows to the river, to the floodplain and to inland drainage basins. This practice change has also supported a trend of decreased river salinity from Swan Hill to Lock 6 and decreased the groundwater mound under the older irrigation areas, reducing saline groundwater flows to the river and floodplain. Water supply and demand challenges for perennial horticulture plantings across the region are also recognised by this assessment, along with the potential impacts of both a variable and changing climate on the risks that this presents.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> The condition of irrigated agriculture in the Mallee is considered to be improving, with evidence that recent management actions are continuing to reduce the incidence and impact of key threat processes.</p>
				Positive	

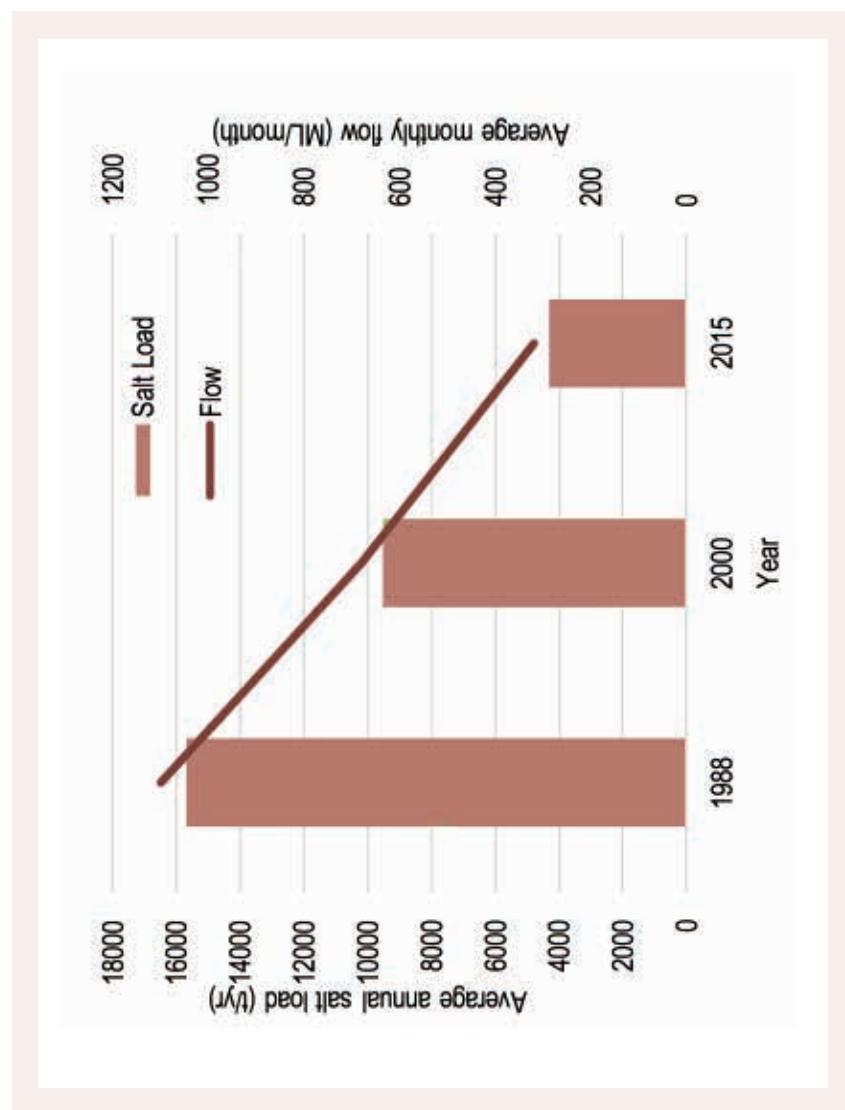
<sup>43</sup> DustWatch Monthly Reports: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.  
<sup>44</sup> DustWatch Monthly Reports: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

### Reason for assessment

Improvements in irrigation management over the past 30 years has increased water use efficiency and decreased subsurface drainage flows to the river, to the floodplain and to inland drainage basins. This practice change has also decreased the groundwater mound under the older irrigation areas, decreasing saline groundwater flows to the river and floodplain (Figure 20).

Improved irrigation practices have also supported a trend of decreased river salinity from Swan Hill to Lock 6 (Figure 21). A large decrease in salinity is evident in the early 2000s when, during the Millennium Drought, there was reduced irrigation supply and substantial investment in irrigation efficiencies. While spikes in salinity still occur, generally following major floods (i.e. 1993, 1999, 2011 and 2016), the overall trend of reduced salinity has continued.

Conversely, assessments of water supply and demand from perennial horticulture in the southern Murray-Darling Basin have identified increasing challenges for plantings in the lower Murray region to meet their water needs in dry years, and that any new plantings could exacerbate water supply risks. If irrigated horticulture continues to expand without associated reductions in water demand (i.e. adaptive management, industry restructuring), there will be increased risk to supply for existing businesses and increased competition in the water market. Irrigator understanding of the limits to water availability, and therefore the limits to expansion, and how they will be enforced will be central to facilitating change. The impact of climate change (e.g. increased risk/intensity of drought) on water allocations under climate change also requires ongoing consideration.



**Figure 20** | Mildura, Merbein and Red Cliffs Irrigation Districts average salt loads and average monthly flows from sub-surface drains (Source: DELWP 2019 Victorian Irrigation Drainage Program).

Changes in both demand and supply have also increased the challenges of delivering water to where and when it is needed. Continued expansion of horticultural plantings in the Mallee regions of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, has concentrated irrigation demand and shifted water use further away from major dams. Given that it takes three weeks to deliver water from the Hume Dam to Sunraysia, the challenge of providing peak demand (e.g. during heatwaves) is likely to become more difficult if peak irrigation continues to increase as existing plantings mature and new permanent planting are established across the tri-state Mallee regions. A challenge that will be further exacerbated under a changing climate where the frequency and duration of hot days are projected to increase.

Annual calculations of salinity credit consumption through irrigation development is a key regional reporting requirement under both Basin Salinity Management (BSM) 2030 and the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. The BSM2030 salinity accountability framework commits partner governments (including Victoria) to maintain agreed salinity levels and ensure their actions that increase river salinity are offset by investing in actions to reduce salinity.

This framework is implemented through the BSM2030 salinity registers, under which the Mallee currently holds a total salinity credit allocation of 23.22 EC. In June 2021, the progressive total of salinity debits in the Mallee was calculated to be 13.8 EC, representing a 9.42 EC credit and ongoing compliance at a regional scale<sup>45</sup>.

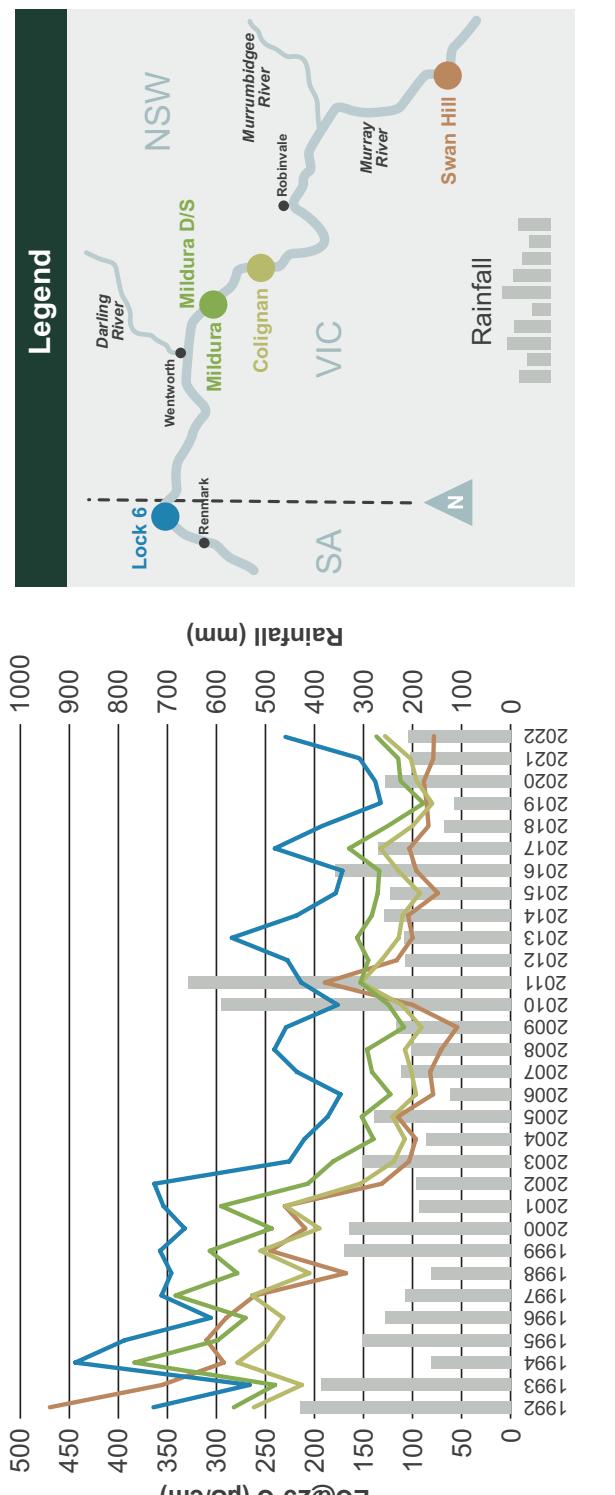


Figure 21 | Changes in Murray River salinity impacts over time.

<sup>45</sup> BSM2030 Annual Implementation Report 2020–21, Mallee CMA 2021.



## Culture and Heritage

### Regional Context

**Scope:** All tangible and intangible Aboriginal culture and heritage that has recognised cultural, historical or spiritual significance; and Traditional Ecological Knowledge rejuvenation, protection and application in cultural landscapes management.

The region's rich and diverse Aboriginal culture and heritage has been formed through the historical and spiritual significance of sites associated with human occupation spanning thousands of years, together with the enduring connection Traditional Owners/First Peoples have with Mallee landscapes. The oldest dated Aboriginal heritage site in the Mallee region is located at Direl (Lake Tyrrell), with human activity recorded as far back as between 26,600 and 32,000 years ago, although use of the site was possibly as early as 45,000 years ago<sup>45</sup>.

Given the semi-arid climate of the region, ready access to more permanent water has been a major determinant of human habitation, and as such the highest density of identified Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are located around, or close to areas of freshwater sources.

The Murray River and its associated lakes and waterways were important habitation areas for many Aboriginal groups, as the abundance of food, water and shelter allowed for more permanent occupation. The high number of cultural sites throughout the Murray floodplain is unique in Victoria, both for their concentration and diversity; including large numbers of burials, middens and hearth sites.

In the south of the region, freshwater lakes, streams and wetlands were focal points for Traditional Owners. Many lakes were the sites of large gatherings of several family groups that afforded trade and cultural exchanges. Direl (Lake Tyrrell) for example is identified by Traditional Owners as having unique spiritual and social values; with Dreamtime viewed and experienced in both the night sky and its reflections on the lake.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* provides for the protection of cultural heritage in Victoria, covering both tangible and intangible heritage. The Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 give effect to the Act, defining 'areas of cultural heritage sensitivity' and 'high impact activities'; and setting out the circumstances in which a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) should be prepared.

The Mallee RCS sets the following long-term (20-year) condition outcomes for Culture and Heritage:

- Traditional Owner led practices are rejuvenated and knowledge protected and applied to meet cultural objectives that include social, ecological and economic co-benefits
- Cultural landscapes are protected and improved as an integral component of land, water and biodiversity management processes.

Indicators applied to provide a benchmark of condition and assess progress against associated management outcomes are detailed below.

### Condition Benchmark

One state-wide dataset is applied by this report as a regional indicator to establish a baseline, and where possible identify long term trends in the condition of culture and heritage.

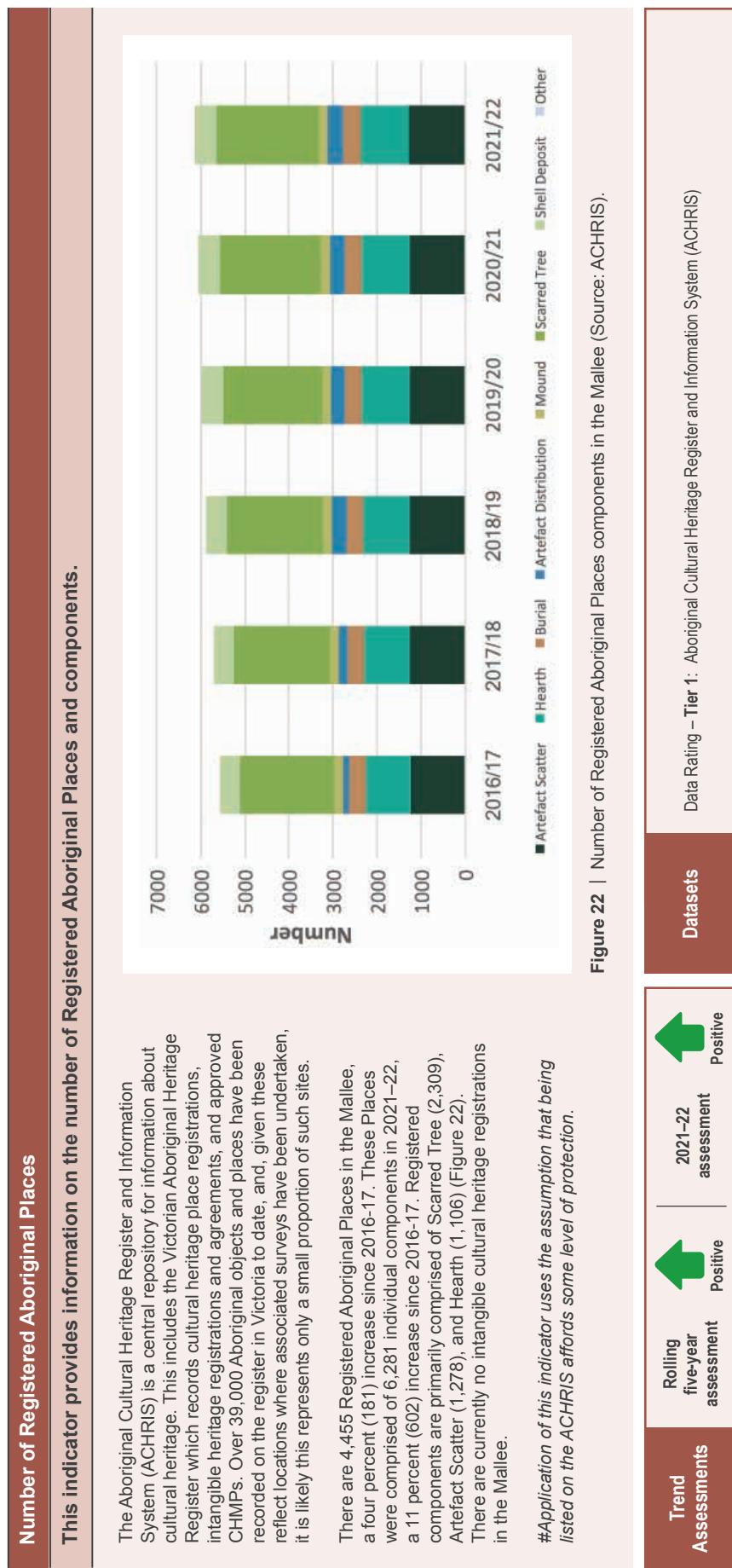


Figure 22 | Number of Registered Aboriginal Places components in the Mallee (Source: ACHRS).

## Management

The area over which culture and heritage values are being actively identified and managed is applied as a regional indicator of outcomes.

### Number and area of Cultural Heritage Management Plans

#### This indicator provides information on the number and area of Cultural Heritage Management Plans that are in preparation or approved and lodged.

CHMPs are prepared by a Heritage Advisor, setting out the results of an assessment on the potential impact of a proposed activity on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. It outlines measures to be taken before, during and after an activity, in order to manage and protect Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the activity area. A CHMP is required when a 'high impact activity' is planned in an area of 'cultural heritage sensitivity', as defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

There are currently 125 CHMPs within the Mallee that have been approved and lodged with First Peoples – State Relations, and a further 32 in preparation. In total, these CHMPs cover 23,278 hectares in 2021, with annual variations in area reflecting the area of associated CHMP's which are active at that particular time (Figure 23).

#Application of this indicator uses the assumption that sites captured within a Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be protected/enhanced through associated threat mitigation actions.

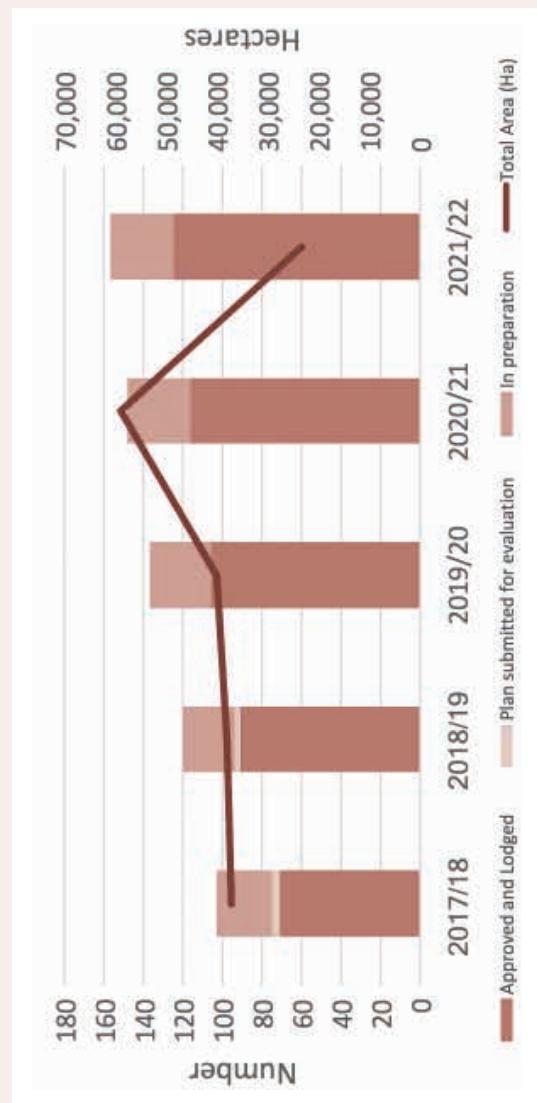


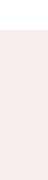
Figure 23 | Number and area (ha) of Cultural Heritage Management Plans in the Mallee (Source: ACHRS).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRS).
		Positive	Positive	Positive

## Appendix 2 Condition and Management Report

### Assessment 2021–22

#### Summary of assessment

		Trend	Condition	Summary Comment
	2021–22	Over last 5 years		
		<b>Moderate</b>		<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of culture and heritage is assessed as moderate on the basis of ongoing increases in the number of Aboriginal Places and individual components being identified, registered and protected. Given that these formalised records only reflect locations where associated surveys have been undertaken however, it is likely that only a small proportion of sites are recognised; with the condition of broader culture and heritage values vulnerable to ongoing management impacts.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> The condition of culture and heritage is considered to be improving in the short to medium-term, with evidence of increased recognition and protection. There are 4,455 Registered Aboriginal Places in the Mallee, a four percent (181) increase since 2016–17. These Places were comprised of 6,281 individual components in 2021–22, an 11 percent (602) increase since 2016–17. Within the region, there are currently 125 Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP's) that have been approved and lodged with First Peoples – State Relations, and a further 32 in preparation. In total, these CHMP's cover 23,278 hectares.</p>
		<b>Positive</b>		

#### Reason for assessment

As no regional-scale baseline information currently exists on the condition of the region's Culture and Heritage assets, proxy condition indicators have been established using the assumption that being listed on the relevant heritage register affords some level of protection, and similarly, if sites are captured within a Co-management Agreement or a CHMP, the asset is being protected through associated threat mitigation activities.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) records demonstrate ongoing increases in the number of Registered Aboriginal Places, individual components, and Cultural Heritage Management Plans.



## Community Capacity for NRM

### Regional Context

**Scope:** *The inherent knowledge, skills and motivation that the community has for effective and sustainable natural resource management (where ‘community’ encompasses all land managers, Traditional Owners, organisations, groups and individuals contributing to NRM related activity across the region).*

People of the Mallee are at the heart of the current and future management of our natural, productive and cultural landscapes. Natural resource management (NRM) is a cooperative endeavour between government, industry and the broader community; with effective action requiring effective partnerships. To maintain these partnerships and achieve the goals of the RCS, a well-informed community with the skills and confidence to identify, direct and implement change is essential.

Our communities' capacity is defined by their characteristics and resources which, when combined, determine their ability to identify, evaluate and address key issues.

In a natural resources context, community capacity involves the capability of Mallee communities to: work cooperatively; apply economic resources; use networks; and gain knowledge to achieve NRM outcomes. It is dependent not only on the financial, physical and natural resources contained within a community, but also its social resources.

The Mallee has a proud history of the community generating and implementing innovative and complex NRM projects and plans. Examples of the diverse range of stakeholders involved in NRM in the Mallee includes private landholders, government organisations, Traditional Owners/First Peoples, Landcare groups, Citizen Science based groups, 'Friends of' groups, community reference and advisory groups, Committees of Management, industry based groups, sporting and other special interest groups, schools, and private businesses. Collectively, the capacity of these groups and individuals represents an essential regional asset, with positive and long-lasting NRM outcomes dependent on an active, willing and capable community.

The Mallee RCS sets the following long-term (20-year) condition outcomes for Community Capacity for NRM:

- Increased community capacity for, and participation in efforts to protect and enhance the Mallee's natural, cultural and agricultural landscapes
- Increased collaborative efforts to protect and enhance the Mallee's natural, cultural and agricultural landscapes
- Traditional Owner self-determined participation and leadership in managing and healing Country.

Indicators applied to provide a benchmark of condition and assess progress against associated management outcomes are detailed below.

## Condition Benchmark

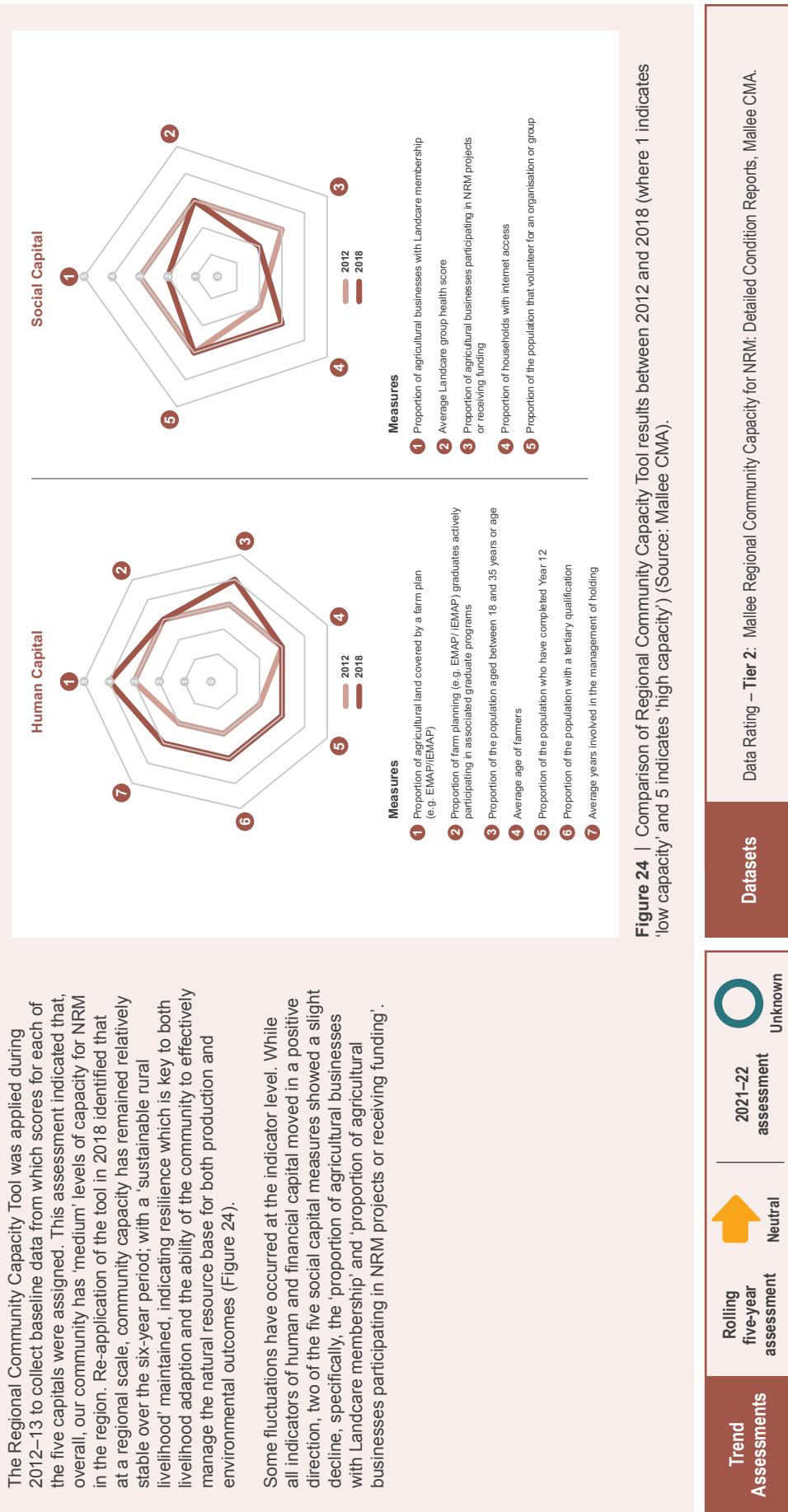
One state-wide and one regional dataset are applied by this report as indicators to establish a baseline, and where possible identify long term trends in the condition of community capacity for NRM.

### Regional Community Capacity

#### This indicator aims to provide estimates of the communities' capacity for natural resource management.

The Regional Community Capacity Tool was applied during 2012–13 to collect baseline data from which scores for each of the five capitals were assigned. This assessment indicated that, overall, our community has 'medium' levels of capacity for NRM in the region. Reapplication of the tool in 2018 identified that at a regional scale, community capacity has remained relatively stable over the six-year period; with a 'sustainable rural livelihood' maintained, indicating resilience which is key to both livelihood adaption and the ability of the community to effectively manage the natural resource base for both production and environmental outcomes (Figure 24).

Some fluctuations have occurred at the indicator level. While all indicators of human and financial capital moved in a positive direction, two of the five social capital measures showed a slight decline, specifically, the 'proportion of agricultural businesses with Landcare membership' and 'proportion of agricultural businesses participating in NRM projects or receiving funding'.



## Community Volunteering

### This indicator provides estimates of Landcare volunteering contributions and commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Volunteers provide significant contributions to regional NRM efforts, through both formally organised activities and their individual everyday actions. There are currently some 50 volunteer-based groups in the Mallee that support delivery against the objectives of the RCS.

Landcare represents the largest volunteer network in the Mallee, comprising 25 individual groups with some 500 members. The Landcare movement has been instrumental in harnessing and promoting the interests of local communities in NRM since our first group, Millewa-Carwarp, was established in 1989. Landcare groups complete group health surveys as part of the Victorian Landcare Grants program delivered by Mallee CMA. The survey provides a snapshot of the capacity of the region's Landcare groups to participate in NRM over time. Results generally indicate a 'moving forward' to 'rolling along' assessment, with average group scores increasing each year (Figure 25).

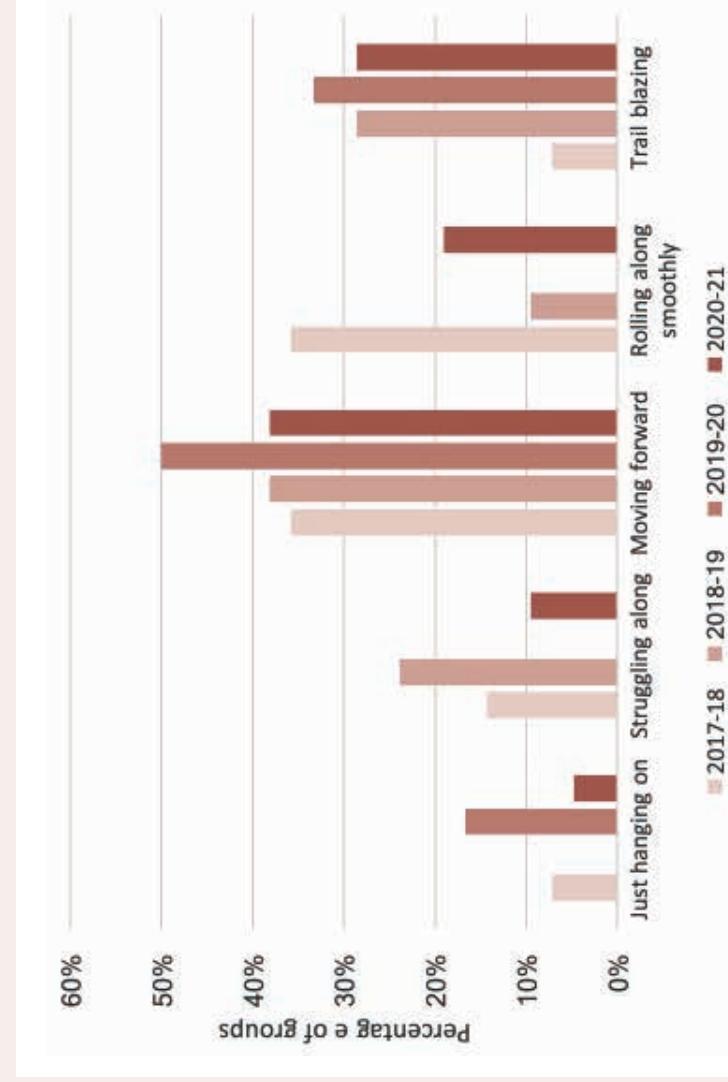


Figure 25 | Landcare Group Health (Source: DELWP).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Victorian Landcare Program: Group Health dataset (DELWP)
	↑	Positive	Unknown	

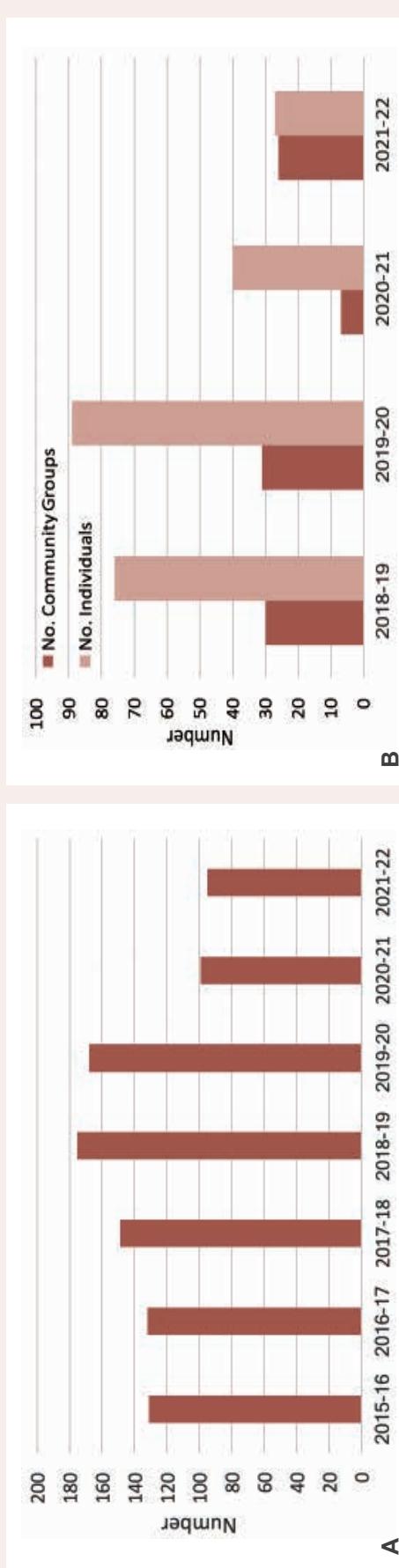
## Management

Changes in regional delivery partnerships and participation is applied as a regional indicator of community capacity outcomes.

### Number of Partnerships This indicator provides information on the number of formal partnerships established, modified, or maintained between organisations and individuals, under CMA initiatives.

The number of formal partnerships established and maintained between organisations, Traditional Owners, community-based groups, and individuals contributes to our understanding of the extent to which NRM partners are working collaboratively towards achieving regional outcomes. A partnership is defined as an association of two or more organisations/individuals that has been formalised in writing; including arrangements such as memorandums of understanding, committee/working group terms of reference, and funding terms/conditions. Data presented in Figure 26a represents partnerships established and/or maintained to deliver Mallee CMA funded programs over the past six years. An important component of these partnership arrangements is supporting the region's volunteer-based groups and individual land owners to undertake actions that deliver against both regional outcomes and their local priorities, objectives and aspirations.

Figure 26b shows the number of grants provided to community groups and individuals under Mallee CMA programs over the past four years. Grants have traditionally been utilised for actions such as revegetation, pest plant and animal control, stock exclusion fencing, Citizen Science programs, and irrigation system upgrades. These programs support stewardship outcomes that go beyond basic duty of care; providing environmental, economic, and social benefits at a local scale. They also provide participants with capacity building opportunities through their involvement in associated planning, implementation, and evaluation activities.

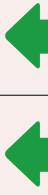


**Figure 26 |** Number of formal partnerships established and/or maintained (a), and number of grants provided to community groups and individual landholders (b) under Mallee CMA programs (Source: MCMA).

Trend Assessments	Rolling five-year assessment	Neutral	2021-22 assessment	Datasets	Data Rating – Tier 1: Mallee CMA Spatial Dataset (2015-22).
				▲	

## Assessment 2021–22

### Summary of assessment

Trend	Condition	Summary Comment
2021–22	Over last 5 years	
 Positive	 Positive	<b>Moderate</b>
		<p><b>Condition:</b> Overall, the condition of community capacity for NRM is assessed as moderate; with evidence that their awareness/knowledge of key issues implementation skills continuing to improve. The assessment also recognises that small rural communities are continuing to experience population decline and increasingly older age profiles; directly impacting the capacity of rural landholders and community NRM groups to co-invest time and resources. This is reflected in a decline in key indicators such as the 'proportion of agricultural businesses with Landcare membership' and 'proportion of agricultural businesses participating in NRM projects or receiving funding'.</p> <p><b>Trend:</b> Ongoing participation by stakeholders and broader community in awareness, skill development, and collaboration events, with associated evaluations identifying a high level of participant satisfaction in regards to the delivery of these events. Improvements in capacity being reported by stakeholders engaged through education programs (i.e. awareness rising), incentive/grants programs (i.e. knowledge and skill development); and by those participating in community advisory/reference groups.</p>

### Reason for assessment

Significant number (6,900) of stakeholders and broader community members participating in 2021–22 awareness, skill development, and collaboration events. Evaluations identified a high level of participant satisfaction in regards to the delivery of these events. Improvements in capacity being reported by stakeholders engaged through education programs (i.e. awareness rising), incentive/grants programs (i.e. knowledge and skill development); and by those participating in community advisory/reference groups.

Participant evaluation surveys can also be a useful tool to provide assessments on the 'effectiveness' of community engagement activities and some measures of community capacity, supporting adaptive management continuous improvement processes. For example, Mallee CMA apply a consistent evaluation framework (Targeted Community Capacity for NRM monitoring tool) to all engagement activities to allow data application at a range of scales (e.g. program, landscape, whole of region). Key findings from 2021–22 surveys included:

- Engagement event (e.g. workshops, field days, forums) participants identified 'learning about a topic' as their primary motivation for attending (70%), and a further 10 percent as 'contributing to a discussion'. Survey respondents also reported a 36 percent (average) increase in their awareness of specific NRM issues as a result of participation, and a 19 percent (average) increase in skills to 'address threat processes'.
- Participants in tender and incentive programs delivered over the past five years initially identified 'addressing priorities within my Farm Plan' (47%) as the primary reason for seeking support to undertake works. On completion, however, the 'desire to contribute to the general environmental management of the region' (39%) was the highest reported motivation. Increased awareness of key threatening processes, and an increase in skills to implement associated mitigation actions were also reported.

Processes impacting on the Mallee's Community Capacity for NRM are often a result of external drivers such as population dynamics and climate change. The impacts of these processes are wide-ranging and complex, and in many cases are outside the scope of regional programs to directly influence. Key points and common themes identified by the Mallee community as directly influencing their participation in NRM, and impacting on the effectiveness of their efforts, include: The growth of urban areas at the expense of rural population presents challenges in sourcing the necessary co-investment of time and resources from a diminishing (and ageing) population of rural landholders and community-based NRM groups. There is concern there will be insufficient people on the ground in large parts of the region to help deliver NRM focused activities. It is essential therefore that the capacity of rural communities is recognised at the planning stage, and that adequate support mechanisms are established where necessary. Reducing the administrative load required by government funded initiatives is an area identified by many of our volunteer based groups.

## Notes





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