Annual Report
2024–25

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mallee catchment management authority

Acknowledgements

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.

Cover Image
Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP) - Lindsay Island

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Sensitivity Warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images and names of deceased persons.

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Mallee Catchment Management Authority
Annual Report 2024–25
ISSN: 1833-0924

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Responsible Body's declaration

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic), I am pleased to present Mallee Catchment Management Authority's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2025.

Allison McTaggart
Board Chair
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

24 September 2025

Part 1

Year in Review

Chair's Report

The work delivered by Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) during 2024–25 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.

Mallee CMA's Annual Report 2024–25 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*, and Ministerial Expectations.

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 according to the 2024–25 Ministerial Expectations for the organisation.

Climate change

Mallee CMA has continued to plan for and respond to a changing climate by ensuring that the design and delivery of regional NRM programs considers opportunities to provide for adaptation and resilience outcomes. New 2024-25 initiatives to support this approach included the 'Delivering Water to High Value Cultural Heritage in a Changing Climate' project being delivered as part of the Water Cycle Adaptation Program; and participation in the BushBank program through delivery of the 'Restoring Mallee Connections – sequestering carbon and securing biodiversity' project.

Customer, Community and Engagement

Providing for extensive and effective engagement of our communities and delivery partners continued to be integral to the delivery of Mallee CMA programs in 2024–25. This 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 3,938 participants and facilitating 56 formal partnerships over the year. Seventy-three percent of participants evaluating Mallee CMA facilitated engagement activities rated them as excellent, 26% as good, 1% as fair and 0% as poor.

The 131 communication materials and 248 social media posts produced in 2024–25 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 segments on the local ABC radio station, media articles in local newspapers, regular social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) content, and regionally specific educational resources.

Recognise Aboriginal Values

Direct engagement of Traditional Owners to plan for and deliver Cultural Heritage Assessments, on-ground environmental works, and associated monitoring activities throughout 2024–25 has supported formal recognition of Aboriginal cultural values, and the important role Aboriginal people play in caring for Country, while also supporting self-determined participation and economic inclusion in NRM across the region.

This included the establishment of eight formal partnership agreements with Traditional Owners to support incorporation of and delivery against cultural objectives and priorities, and the application of Traditional Owner-led practices (e.g. environmental watering, revegetation, invasive species management) to manage and heal Country.

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 2024–25 this included community consultation activities being delivered to identify recreational values and priorities for the region’s Flagship Waterway sites (Merbein Common and Kings Billabong).

Recreational values and objectives also continued to be embedded within environmental watering processes, with the three Environmental Water Management Plans scheduled for review and updating also incorporating stakeholder priorities relating to associated sites.

Resilient and Liveable Cities and Towns

Initiatives that enhance public spaces and urban waterway values through integrated waterway management (IWM) collaborations continued to be supported through participation on the Northern Mallee Integrated Water Management Forum. Key measures progressed in partnership with forum members throughout 2024–25 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 were recognised and supported by associated waterway management activities.

Leadership, Diversity, and Culture

Through implementation of our Diversity and Inclusion Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan, Mallee CMA has continued to demonstrate a commitment to building a diverse workforce, while encouraging leadership and culture. Key actions progressed in 2024–25 included sponsoring ‘women in leadership’ learning and development opportunities, providing unconscious bias and workforce obligation training, ensuring gender balance in committee membership and recruitment processes, providing youth employment opportunities, and making health and wellbeing initiatives available to all employees.

Performance and Financial Management

Opportunities for integrated outcomes across the region continued to be 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.

Our commitment to a high level of corporate governance is demonstrated by the ongoing effort invested in retaining ISO 9001:2015 certification of our Quality Management System, with recertification for the 2022–25 period achieved in November 2022.

Waterway and Catchment Health

Mallee CMA programs and projects collectively delivered some 627,990 hectares of environmental works throughout 2024–25 to protect and improve the region's priority land, water, and biodiversity assets. Alignment with priorities set out by the 2022–28 Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) facilitated 92 percent of these works being delivered within the region's high value landscapes to support integrated catchment management outcomes for the multiple asset types occurring within these areas.

Implementation of the Mallee Waterway Strategy was also supported, with over 63,000 hectares of these works being targeted to the region's priority waterways to deliver against environmental, economic, social, and cultural objectives identified for each site. This included each of the four sites identified by Water for Victoria as a priority for the Mallee: Merbein Common wetlands, Lindsay-Wallpolla Islands, Belsar-Yungera Floodplain complex, and Kings Billabong and Woorlong complex.

Water for Agriculture

Mallee CMA has continued to support a productive and profitable irrigation sector by delivering irrigation and salinity management actions identified by Water for Victoria as a priority for the Mallee. Delivery against two regional frameworks (the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan, and the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan) informs the implementation of these actions in partnership with regional stakeholders and builds on previous achievements to support continuous improvement in irrigation and salinity management.

In 2024–25 this included preparation of the triennial Mallee Horticulture Crop Report to measure changes in irrigation status and development over the 1997–2024 period; ongoing implementation of regional surface and groundwater monitoring programs; and undertaking research to identify and validate the effectiveness of different actions to manage salinity across the landscape.

Conclusion

It is with pleasure, I present to you the Mallee CMA's Annual Report 2024–25.

Allison McTaggart
Board Chair
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

24 September 2025

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

Healthy and resilient landscapes being cared for by connected communities.

Our Values and Behaviours

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Board, management, and employees agree to work by the Victorian Public Service Values and Codes of Conduct. We will strive to be a workplace of first choice through the development of a positive can-do culture that strives for excellence. The Mallee CMA Board, management, and employees will demonstrate the following values and behaviours in all aspects of their work.

Figure 1 | Values and Behaviours

Manner of establishment and responsible Ministers

Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is established under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act). The Act is jointly and severally administered by the Minister for Water and the Minister for Environment. The responsible Ministers during the reporting period were:

- the Hon. Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water from 1 July 2024 to 18 December 2024, and the Hon. Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Water from 19 December 2024 to 30 June 2025.
- the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Environment from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Nature and range of services provided

The Mallee CMA region covers 39,939 km^2, 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.

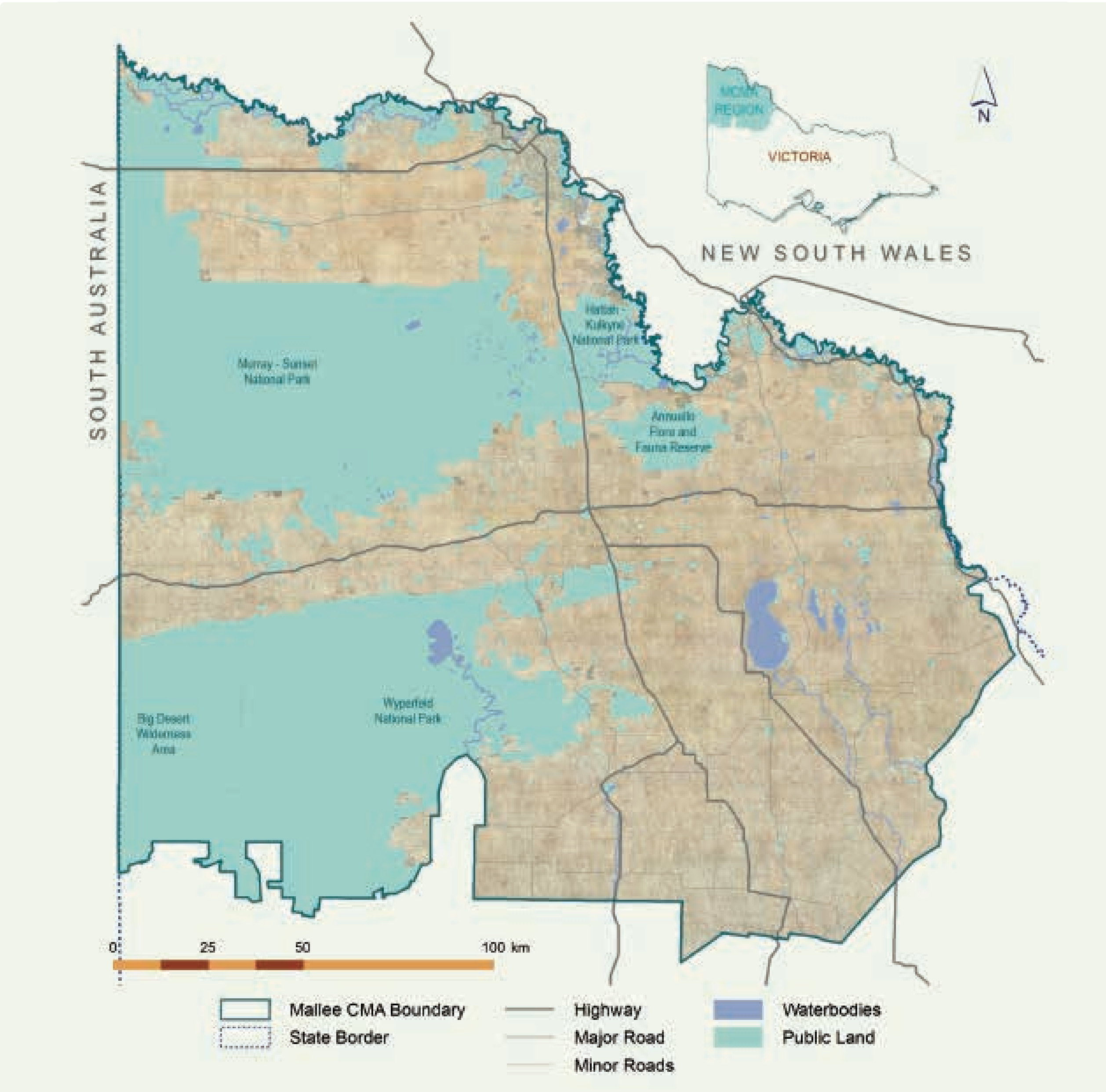


Figure 2 | Mallee CMA region

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) and medium-term (6-year) outcome targets established by the RCS for each of the following regional asset themes:

- Biodiversity
- Waterways
- Agricultural Land
- Culture and Heritage
- Community Capacity for Natural Resource Management (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, Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan) which establish annual priorities and delivery mechanisms.

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.

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

Performance Reporting - Non-financial

Achievements, Operational Performance and Key Initiatives

The Mallee CMA Corporate Plan 2024–29 establishes three objectives to inform organisational priorities in delivering our vision over the next five years. Thematic areas and strategic outcomes the Mallee CMA seeks to achieve under each objective have been developed to reflect existing delivery and reporting frameworks (both regional and state), Mallee CMA's legislative obligations, and Ministerial Expectations (see Table 1).

Delivery against these strategic outcomes is guided by priority initiatives and activities identified within the Mallee CMA Corporate Plan 2024–2029. 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). Priority activities also reflect Ministerial Expectations and performance priorities for the nine government policy areas and two additional areas of interest outlined in Table 1.

Organisational performance against outcome indicators and activity measures established for each of the business objectives strategic outcomes and Ministerial Expectations (i.e., as detailed by the 2024–29 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 under or over-achievement 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 2024–29.

Table 1 | Mallee CMA 2024–29 business objectives strategic outcomes and 2024–25 Ministerial Expectations

Mallee CMA 2024–29 Performance Framework			2024–25 Ministerial Priority Areas	
Business Objectives	**Theme**	**Strategic Outcomes**		
1: Ensure the community is central to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of Natural Resource Management (NRM)	1A: Community Capacity for NRM	Connected and resilient communities leading positive change across our natural, cultural, and productive landscapes	Customer, Community and Engagement (LOE2)	Ensure that all aspects of service delivery will be customer and community centred.
2: Protect and enhance the region's natural, cultural, and productive values	2A: Waterways	Waterways are healthy, resilient, and being managed for shared benefits	Waterway Health (LOE9)	Provide leadership in delivery of programs to improve the health of waterways at priority sites.
			Recognise Recreational Values (LOE4)	Support the wellbeing of communities by considering recreational values in waterway planning and management.
			Recognise Aboriginal Values (LOE3)	Support the implementation of Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap by building formal partnerships with Traditional Owners in waterway and environmental water management and decision-making and promote access to waterways and water for cultural, spiritual, and economic purposes.
	2B: Biodiversity	Biodiversity is healthy, resilient, and valued	-	-
	2C: Agricultural Land	Agricultural land is managed to optimise productive capacity while avoiding or minimising environmental impacts	Water for Agriculture (LOE10)	Support a productive and profitable irrigation sector and vibrant and resilient regional communities.
	2D: Culture & Heritage	Aboriginal culture and heritage are protected, and Traditional Owner led practices are embedded in the management and healing of Country	-	-
3: Strengthen our capacity to operate as a corporately and socially responsible organisation	3A: Governance and Compliance	Internal governance processes are ensuring compliance with all legislative requirements and statutory functions	Leadership, Diversity and Culture (LOE6)	Reflect the needs of our diverse communities and develop strategies and goals that will increase cultural diversity in the workforce and gender equity in both executive leadership and throughout the organisation.
			Performance and Financial Management (LOE7)	Improve performance and demonstrate outcomes.
			Customer Data Protection (AAoI)	Implement activities and actions identified within the Victorian Protective Data Security Framework.
			Cyber Security (AAoI)	Apply internationally recognised approach(es) to reducing cyber security risk and integrate cyber risk management into planning and decision making across the business.
	3B: Integrated Catchment Management	Regional planning, delivery and evaluation processes are supporting integrated and targeted NRM outcomes	Catchment Health (LOE9)	Provide leadership in delivery of programs to improve the health of catchments.
			Performance and Financial Management (LOE7)	Commit to delivering integrated catchment management, including leading the implementation and monitoring of catchment partnership agreements.
			Climate Change and Energy (LOE1)	Explore opportunities and/or deliver carbon sequestration initiatives and adapt to climate change and climate variability.
			Resilient and Liveable Cities and Towns (LOE5)	Contribute to healthy communities and support resilient, sustainable, and liveable environments.

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

Theme: 1A Community Capacity for Natural Resource Management

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.

Victoria's Catchment Management Framework is built on strong partnerships and community involvement. The Mallee CMA takes great pride in the relationship it has with the regional community and its ability to engage with key agencies, individuals, groups, and businesses, including TOs/First Peoples, to deliver priority NRM outcomes.

A range of factors can however directly impact the ability of NRM stakeholders to deliver change within our natural, cultural, and productive landscapes. External drivers such as population dynamics, extreme weather events, and a changing climate present key challenges that the Mallee CMA is assisting the community to identify and respond to.

In recognising that the region's capacity to effectively deliver NRM outcomes is dependent not only on the financial and physical resources available but also on the human and social resources it contains, and by working with our community and delivery partners, Mallee CMA is seeking to deliver against the following capacity related outcome:

Connected and resilient communities leading positive change across our natural, cultural, and productive landscapes

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

- Ministerial Expectations for 'Customer, Community and Engagement' (2024–25)
- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28) – Community Capacity for NRM theme
- Mallee CMA Engagement Strategy (2025–26)
- Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (2023–28)
- Mallee CMA Reconciliation Action Plan (2024–28)
- Victorians Volunteering for Nature: Environmental Volunteering Plan (2018)
- Pupangarli Marnmarnepu 'Owning Our Future' Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy (2020–2025)
- Our Catchments, Our Communities: Strengthening the Catchment Stewardship Framework in Victoria (2024).

Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress toward this strategic outcome is measured through organisational performance against one key indicator. This indicator is presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which it aligns (see Table 2).

Customer, Community and Engagement

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 29,698 participants over the 2020–25 period. These activities are well received, with participant evaluations reporting that on average over the five-year period, 65 percent of respondents have provided an 'excellent' rating and 32 percent 'good'; with only two percent rating them as 'fair' and one percent as 'poor'. The effectiveness of the engagement approaches being employed over the reporting period to build capacity is also demonstrated by ongoing evaluations; with an annual average 34 percent increase in 'awareness of NRM issues' being reported by participants, and 17 percent increase in skills to 'address threat processes'.

With COVID-19 restrictions throughout 2020–22 and a significant flood event in 2022–23 impacting the number and type of activities undertaken over the five-year (2020–25) reporting period, employing adaptive management approaches (i.e. planning for in-person and virtual delivery scenarios) has ensured our stakeholders continued to be effectively engaged. Hybrid approaches to engagement have continued to be built on and supported post-COVID, providing an effective means to address factors identified as being barriers to participation (e.g. distance).

An important component of these engagement activities has been the coordination of partnership forums with representation from key stakeholders (e.g. land managers, Traditional Owners, government agencies, industry, community) to facilitate cooperative action in the planning and delivery of NRM actions across the region. Over the 2020–25 reporting period, this has supported the establishment and maintenance of 431 (cumulative) partnerships formalised by associated documentation (e.g. MOU, Terms of Reference) and 241 management agreements with private and public land managers to deliver targeted NRM activities.

Incorperating 'citizen science' focused activities into engagement programs has also strenghtened collaborative approaches to delivery, with the local community providing key monitoring data (e.g. bird, frog, water quality surveys) to support project evaluation and reporting processes.

Annual varations in the number of communication focused activities largely reflects a combination of funding cycle impacts, alignment with State Government guidelines (e.g. COVIDSafe settings throughout 2020–22), and disaster response messaging (e.g. 2022 Flood event). It is evident however that the information and materials produced have 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 include media articles in local newspapers, the ongoing release of 'recognised' products (e.g. 'Mallee Connections' E-newsletter, a quarterly 'On-Country Connections' newsletter, and the biannual 'Mallee Farmer' magazine), development of regionally specific educational resources (e.g. virtual field days, information packs, activity books), and regular social media content across a range of platforms (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube). These mechanisms have collectively delivered 1,308 publications and some 1,893 Facebook posts (1.7 million views) over the 2020–25 reporting period.

Table 2 | Progress against performance measures for 'Community Capacity for NRM' strategic outcome indicators (NA applied to identify where annual data not available due to no assessment against baselines being undertaken within the reporting period)

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Customer, Community & Engagement							
A strong community engagement focus that is a cornerstone of all Mallee CMA functions *(Ministerial Expectation 2.5.1 – Community Engagement)*	Delivery against Community Engagement and Partnering Framework for Victorian CMAs (2017) key indicators (i.e., meeting best practice standards)	percent	100	100	100	100	100
	Community/stakeholder participation in engagement and capacity building events/ activities	number of participants	6,275	6,900	8,632	3,953	3,938
		number of events	501	562	477	370	346
	Participants rating engagement activities as 'good' or 'excellent'	percent of respondents	98	98	96	98	99
	Cooperative action in planning and delivering priority NRM activities	number of formal partnerships	99	95	97	84	56
		number of management agreements	47	53	49	36	56
	Awareness of NRM issues reported by capacity building focused activity participants[1]	percent increase (average)	36	55	17	27	NA
	Skills in identifying and delivering priority NRM activities reported by capacity building focused activity participants[2]	percent increase (average)	19	11	22	14	NA
	Landcare Group Health	annual self-assessment score (average)	3.6	3.2	3.6	3.6	3.7
	Information sharing in promoting NRM and associated evidence base	number of communication materials published	327	311	281	258	131
		number of social media posts	348	468	541	288	248
		number of social media views	307,091	394,407	333,287	154,469	522,717
	Citizen Science programs supported to engage community and inform MER processes.	number of programs	-	4	4	5	4

Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Key Initiatives and Projects

Project activities to progress Community Capacity outcomes and deliver against associated Ministerial Priority Areas were implemented through 12 key initiatives in 2024–25 as outlined below.

Catchment Governance Program (State)

- Ongoing operation of the Land and Water Advisory Committee, maintaining a two-way communication channel between Mallee CMA and members of the Victorian Mallee community (4 meetings); disseminating 63 publications (e.g., social media posts, E-newsletter) for general promotion of the region's natural, cultural, and productive landscapes, and Mallee CMA operations.

Community Action for Biodiversity - Icon Species (State):

- Undertaking field surveys of priority sites (Koorlong Lake and Brickworks Billabong) to inform planned Murray hardyhead translocation actions and future monitoring activities.
- Publishing social media posts (3) to increase awareness of Murray hardyhead and provide updates on project activities and delivery partnerships (i.e. Nature Glenelg Trust and First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation River Rangers).

Environmental Water Program (State)

- Producing 40 publications on the region's waterway values and the shared benefits of environmental watering, including targeted materials (e.g., flyers, newsletter articles, videos, social media posts, and reports) to promote Seasonal Watering Proposals, opportunities for the community to be involved, and delivery outcomes.
- Delivering 17 engagement activities (322 participants) with a focus on facilitating stakeholder participation planning processes and connecting community to local waterways through Citizen Science based programs (e.g., bird, bat and frog monitoring).
- Undertaking 290 assessments (e.g. fauna, flora, surface water, undertaken to monitor inundation extent and ecological responses to watering.

Mallee Salinity Investment Plan (Other)

- Delivering 17 engagement events (325 participants) to provide salinity focused information and activities, including implementation of a Traditional Owner water literacy focused program; and producing 19 publications to document (e.g. reports) and promote (e.g. social media posts, brochures) program activities and outcomes.
- Undertaking 8 assessments as part of the regional groundwater (436 bores monitored for water levels and salinity) and surface water (28 drainage outflow sites monitored for flow and salinity levels) programs to inform associated modelling and reporting requirements.

- Maintaining two formal partnerships to facilitate stakeholder input into the development, delivery, and evaluation of program activities. This encompassed ongoing operation of the Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee (SAAC) and participation in the Regional Water Monitoring Partnership (RWMP) forum.

Murray-Darling Basin Plan

- Preparing and implementing monitoring plans for two Living Murray Icon sites (Hattah and Lindsay, Mulcra, Wallpolla), with associated assessments undertaken to support ongoing monitoring of the impacts of The Living Murray (TLM) investment over time on both threat mitigation (short-term) and resource condition (long-term). Key activities included fish, water bird, and vegetation health surveys within the two Icon Sites Findings from these assessments were reported through 17 written publications.

Natural Heritage Trust (Commonwealth)

- Regional Capacity, Ramsar, Threatened Species, and Climate Smart Agriculture focused services included: 20 plans (engagement, management) to support delivery and evaluation processes; 56 engagement events (862 participants) and 24 publications (e.g. podcasts, fact sheets, 'Mallee Farmer' magazine, social media posts, and reports) to increase stakeholder awareness of and participation in project activities; and 126 assessments (agronomic, flora, invasive species, social) to support ongoing monitoring of the impacts of investment over time on both threat mitigation (short-term) and resource condition (long-term).

- Facilitating coordinated and collaborative approaches to delivery by: Continued, effective function of the Mallee CMA Aboriginal Reference Group in fostering communications with Aboriginal stakeholders and providing input into regional initiatives and plans; establishing formal partnership arrangements and/or management agreements with land managers (3 public and 18 private), Traditional Owner groups (2), and community groups (3) participating in project activities.

- Supporting Traditional Owner and community group participation through the provision of a grants to: Barenji Gadjin Land Council and First People of the Millewa-Mallee to support revegetation activities (i.e. seed collection and seedling propagation); Mallee Landcare Group for invasive species management and Mallee Birds Citizen Science activities; Murrayville Landcare Group for invasive species management; and Birchip Cropping Group for stubble management research and extension activities.

Our Catchments, Our Communities (State)

- Delivering 35 engagement events (304 participants) including workshops with delivery partners and broader community stakeholders, participation in statewide forums, and on-Country events to support project planning and delivery.

- Establishing/maintaining 13 formal partnerships, 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.

- Establishing 6 management agreements with private land managers (5) and Traditional Owner groups (1) and the provision of stewardship focused grants to deliver place-based NRM activities.

- Coordinating 'regional leadership' grants program to support community stakeholder participation in capacity building activities. This included supporting two 'Big Weather' community climate resilience workshops.

- Disseminating 6 publications (e.g. social media posts, case studies, reports) to promote project delivery and achievements.

Protecting Biodiversity Program (State)

- Supporting effective and collaborative approaches to the delivery of on-ground actions by: Conducting meetings (12) with land mangers (Parks Victoria, First People of the Millewa Mallee and Trust for Nature) to plan and review on-ground works programs; establishing formal partnerships (2) and associated management agreements (2) to facilitate works implementation; and providing a grant to First People of the Millewa-Mallee to deliver on Country monitoring activities (i.e. invasive species assessments) for the Ned's Corner target area.

Sustainable Irrigation Program (State)

- Delivering or supporting 9 engagement events (115 participants) including industry workshops, irrigation management training, and presentations at partnership forums/project steering committees.

- Producing 10 publications to promote and/or report key activities including the irrigation incentive guidelines and associated promotional material.

- Ongoing facilitation of the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan Implementation Committee and 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).

Victorian Landcare Program (State)

- Delivering targeted engagement activities (20 events x 499 participants) including best practice rabbit management soil health workshops, a 'Talk Fish' forum, an environmental art event, and tri-annual Regional Landcare Facilitator meetings; and producing 22 publications to promote program achievements and opportunities.

- Establishing formal partnerships with each of the 5 Regional Landcare Groups hosting facilitator positions; providing grants to 23 regional Landcare groups for landscape protection and restoration works; and undertaking 64 assessments (cultural, social, invasive species) to support the planning and evaluation of on-ground works delivered through the grants program.

Waterway Health Program (State)

- Delivering 73 engagement events (835 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; and providing opportunities for community to connect to these waterways through Citizen Science focused activities (e.g. turtle, frog, bird monitoring).

- Establishing 9 formal partnerships 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 operation of project steering committees for each of the Flagship Waterway sites.

- Updating MERI plans for the two Flagship sites and the Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar site Annual Action Plan and MER plan. These plans directly informed 44 assessments (e.g., cultural, social, fauna, flora, invasive species, surface water, property) undertaken to evaluate the impact/effectiveness of on-ground works and associated capacity building activities.

- Producing 9 publications (social media posts, newsletter articles and reports) to promote project delivery and engage local stakeholders in associated activities.

Waterways Recovery (State)

- Delivering targeted flood recovery actions, including: Undertaking 8 assessments of project target areas to identify key threatening processes; conducting 31 meetings with land mangers (public and private) and Traditional Owners to plan and review on-ground works programs; establishing 2 delivery partnerships and 5 associated management agreements to facilitate works implementation; and provision of a grant to First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation for the delivery of on Country wetland rehabilitation actions (e.g. revegetation).

Performance

Performance against 2024–25 Community Capacity activity indicators, including actual delivery against budgeted targets, is presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 3).

Overall, 90 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with one of the 10 measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded -5% variance), specifically:

- Assessments: The number of cultural heritage and property assessments required to inform on-ground works delivery was lower than forecast.

Table 3 | Performance against 2024–25 Community Capacity for NRM activity measures (NA applied to identify where annual targets have not been specified by associated funding agreement(s) or reporting framework)

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Customer, Community & Engagement – *Ensure that all aspects of service delivery will be customer and community centred.*						
Continue to build extensive, effective, and consistent approaches to community engagement and partnerships in regional planning and implementation *(Ministerial Expectation 2.5.1.001)*	Communication and Engagement Plans developed, implemented, and reported to meet internal and/or government requirements	number	8	8	0	✓
	Formal community and regional delivery partner forums facilitated/coordinated to meet government and/or internal requirements	number	13	13	0	✓
	Participants attending engagement events	number	3,938	3,308	+10	✓
	Participants rating engagement activities as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’	percent of respondents	99	>90	0	✓
	Communication products delivered	number	228	222	+1	✓
Work collaboratively with organisations and communities to strengthen engagement approaches and capacity *(Ministerial Expectation 2.5.1.002)*	Formal partnerships established/maintained to strengthen engagement approaches/capacity	number	56	54	+4	✓
	Management agreements established/maintained with land managers (public and private) to deliver targeted NRM activities	number	56	58	-3	○
	Grants provided to Traditional Owner and community groups to deliver targeted NRM activities	number	39	NA	NA	✓
	Grants/incentives provided to private land managers to deliver targeted NRM activities	number	6	NA	NA	✓
	Assessments undertaken to inform regional evidence base	number	607	643	-6	■

Business Objective 2	Protect and enhance the region's natural, cultural, and productive values

Theme: 2A Waterways

Extensive waterways are a key feature of the region. The Murray River, which forms the northern boundary of Mallee CMA's area, supports extensive creek and wetland systems, together with associated riparian habitat. North-flowing intermittent streams, including Yarriambiack and Tyrrell Creeks, and the ephemeral wetland complexes in which they terminate (e.g. Wirrengren Plain, Lake Corrong, and Lake Tyrrell), are defining features of the southern part of the Mallee catchment.

There are more than 900 wetlands in the Victorian Mallee, 14 of which are listed as 'nationally significant'. The Hattah Lakes system is internationally recognised (under the Ramsar Convention) for its value to waterfowl and its importance in maintaining regional biodiversity. The wetland and floodplain ecosystems of the Hattah Lakes and the Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla Islands have also been recognised as Icon Sites under The Living Murray Program.

The environmental condition of our waterways impacts directly on their capacity to provide the environmental, social, and economic services the community values. Mallee waterways continue to be threatened by a range of pressures that can directly impact one or more of their environmental attributes (e.g. connectivity, water quality). This can include altered water regimes, land and water salinisation, invasive plants and animals, land-use change, and recreational pressures.

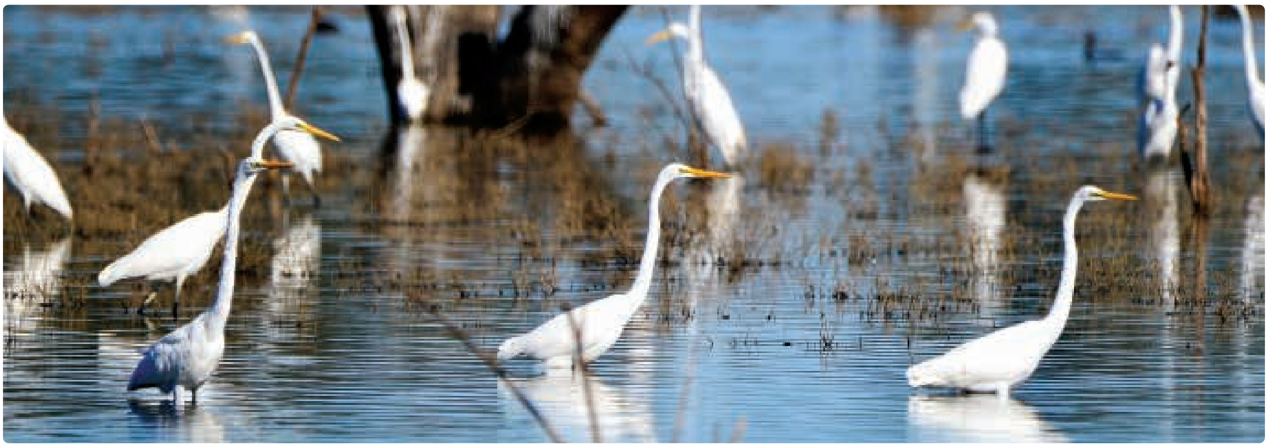
External factors such as climatic conditions (both variability and change) and water availability are also key determinants of both the effectiveness of our management actions and the long-term health of our waterways that will require ongoing attention and adaptive management responses.

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:

Waterways are healthy, resilient, and being managed for shared benefits

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

- Ministerial Expectations for Waterway Health, Recognition of Aboriginal Values, and Recognition of Recreational Values (2024–25)
- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28) – Waterways theme
- Mallee Waterway Strategy (2014–22)
- Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (2018–28)
- Environmental Watering Management Plans
- Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan (2021) and Annual Action Plan (2024–25)
- Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap (2022)
- Water for Victoria (2016).



Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against these strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against seven key indicators. These indicators are presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 4).

Waterway Health

Delivery of over 275,000 hectares of environmental works over the 2020–25 reporting period represents significant progress against both the short-term (activity/output) and medium-term (outcome) targets set by the Mallee Waterway Strategy (MWS) for priority waterways within each of the region's 23 Waterway Management Units.

Management of the 4 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 through Mallee CMA's 'Flagship Waterway' projects at Merbein Common and Kings Billabong. Commencing in 2016, 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 at these priority sites.

Application of Seasonal Watering Plans for the region has resulted in 193 watering regimes being implemented over the past five years, inundating over 20,000 hectares to deliver against associated ecological, social, and cultural objectives set out by site based Environmental Water Management Plans. The number and/or area of watering events in 2022–25 was reduced in response to high river flows and significant flooding across the basin in 2022–23, with most of the planned Murray River wetland sites receiving water via natural inundation.

Varation in the area of other threat mitigation activities (e.g. invasive species control and road rationalisation works) undertaken over the 2020–25 reporting period was primarily due to a combination of funding cycle impacts and disaster recovery actions. For example, State and Commonwealth funded initiatives focused on protecting ecological services critical to the Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar site provided for a significant increase in the area of pest animal control delivered over 2020–24 to mitigate associated grazing and predation impacts. Furthermore, funding for flood recovery actions supported extensive weed control programs being implemented in 2024–25 to support environmental responses (i.e. reduced competition) within priority habitat inundated by the 2022–23 flood event.

Recognise Aboriginal Values

Building and maintaining effective and genuine partnerships with Traditional Owners is an integral component of Mallee CMA's approach to the planning and delivery of waterway management activities. Over the 2020–25 reporting period this approach has facilitated the establishment of formal partnership arrangements with Traditional Owner groups for the co-design, implementation and assessment of several on-ground works programs, including:

- Undertaking Aboriginal Waterway Assessments to document the cultural health and use of priority waterways, identify associated aspirations for sites, support implementation of short-medium term priorities, and develop pathways to delivering against long-term goals.
- Planning and implementing waterway management actions (e.g. revegetation, pest plant and animal control, exclusion fencing, water delivery) to rehabilitate sites with significant cultural values.

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. Working with local communities over the past five years to identify their recreational priorities has facilitated the installation of 57 individual visitor facilities, including picnic and camping facilities, fishing platforms, canoe launches, walking tracks, and interpretation/appreciation signage; facilities which have enhanced the recreational values of priority waterways to support the well-being of rural and regional communities.

Table 4 | Progress against performance measures for Waterway strategic outcome indicators

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Waterway Health							
Improved waterway health and resilience *(Ministerial Expectation 9.1.1 – Regional Strategies & 9.2.1 – Waterway Management)*	Waterways treated for priority pest animal species	hectares	16,986	57,958	57,177	46,307	13,653
	Waterways treated for priority weed species	hectares	3,139	2,524	1,909	5,474	48,850
	Native vegetation established	hectares	11	49	15	14	15
	Road rationalisation and repair works	kilometres	0	3	19	24	0
	Exclusion fencing installed	kilometres	49	8	9	20	0.97
	Flagship Waterways managed to deliver against Rivers 2040 targets	number	2	2	2	2	2
	Watering regimes delivering against environmental, social, and cultural objectives (i.e. as per Environmental Watering Management Plan)	number	48	34	28	43	40
		hectares	9,915	5,633	3,542	603	1,262
Improved management of Mallee flood risks	Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy objectives progressed by program delivery	percent	69	83	50	69	75
Recognise Aboriginal Values							
Effective and genuine partnerships with Traditional Owners *(Ministerial Expectation 3.1.1: Partnerships with Traditional Owners)*	Programs/projects implemented in partnership with Traditional Owners	number	4	6	6	7	8
Recognise Recreational Values							
Increased amenity and recreational values provided by regional waterways *(Ministerial Expectation 4.2.1, 4.3.1, & 4.4.1 – Recreational Values)*	Recreational opportunities and infrastructure provided by waterway management programs	number	61	60	39	60	40

Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Key Initiatives and Projects

Project activities to progress Waterway outcomes and deliver against associated Ministerial Priority Areas were implemented through 10 key initiatives in 2024–25 as outlined below.

Environmental Water Program (State)

- Preparing 2024–25 Seasonal Watering Plans for Hattah, Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla, Murray Wetlands, and Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Wetlands in consultation with land managers, Traditional Owner Groups and community stakeholders.
- Maintaining a 'Water for the Environment' page on the Mallee CMA website to promote planning and delivery processes, including an interactive mapping tool detailing annual delivery sites.
- Delivering 40 environmental water events to inundate 1,262ha of priority floodplain habitat, including supporting Traditional Owners (First People of the Millewa Mallee) to deliver environmental water to Musk Duck wetland on Ned's Corner Station.
- Aligning water delivery with site based Environmental Water Management Plans (EWMPs) to support progress against associated ecological, social, recreational, and cultural objectives of the watering regimes; with three (Pound Bend, Karadoc Swamp and Bottle Bend) of the region's 32 EWMPs also being reviewed and updated in consultation with land managers, Traditional Owner groups and local community stakeholders.

Flood Reclamation Roadmap; Fast tracking flood studies in regional Victoria (State)

- Updating the Murray River flood study to incorporate 2022 flood data into associated planning shemes and support planning decisions, emergency management activities, and future mitigation actions.

Murray-Darling Basin Plan

- Delivering against management, monitoring (intervention and condition), and Indigenous partnership requirements for two of the six Living Murray sites; Hattah Lakes and Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla Islands.

Natural Heritage Trust (Commonwealth)

- Delivering annual works to protect the ecological character of the Hattak-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar sites, including: 5,480ha of herbivore control (rabbit and feral goat) to reduce grazing impacts; 70ha of fox control to reduce predation impacts; 1,797ha of pig control to reduce soil disruption impacts; and 4,228ha managed for Weeds of National Significance (e.g., African boxthorn), and 1ha of encroaching River Red Gum thickets thinned to reduce competition.

Our Catchments, Our Communities (State)

- Delivering actions to protect the ecological, cultural, and social values of two priority landsdcapes (i.e. Murray River Floodplain and Murray Scroll Belt Local Areas), including, 58ha of invasive species (rabbits and priority weed) control and 3ha of revegetation.
- Designing and implementing works programs for four project sites in partnership with Traditional Owners (First People of the Millewa Mallee) to support delivery against the groups asiprations for these landscapes.

Risk and Resilience Grants Program (State)

- Updating the Beulah, Birchip & Tyrrell Lalbert Flood Studies to validate modelling against the 2022 flood event to improve flood intelligence and future response/ mitigation actions across the Southern Mallee.
- Implementation of the 'Levees: Flood readiness and response strategies' project to improve understanding of the region's levees and their role during times of significant flooding.

Victorian Fish Habitat Fund (State)

- Designing and implementing a carp eradication program in partnership with land managers and Traditional Owners (First People of the Millewa Mallee) to imrove the condiion of Sandlilong Creek and support the recovery of native aquatic species following the 2022 flood event.

Water, Country, and Community Program

- Aboriginal Water Officer working with Traditional Owners to increase self-determined participation in water management decision making and their access, use and management of water. This included facilitating on-Country events (e.g. Talk Water) to support knowledge sharing processes and promote Aboriginal water values and aspirations, coordinating Aboriganal Waterway Assessments, and facilitating Tradional Owner engagement in regional planning and delivery activities.

Waterway Health Program (State)

- Coordinating Flagship Waterway (Merbein Common and Kings Billabong) Project Steering Committees to facilitate landmanager and Traditional Owner (First Perople of the Millewa Mallee) partcipation in project planning, delivery and evaluation processes.
- Conducting targeted engagement events to provide opportunities for community stakeholders to inform priorities (e.g. recreational, evironmental) at the two Flagship sites.
- Delivering priority actions at the Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar site and the region's two Flagship Waterways, including: installation and maintance of exclusion fencing/bollards (0.97km) to protect priority habitat from recreational and grazing impacts.

Waterways Recovery (State)

- Implementing recovery actions following the 2022 flood event to reduce threats to priority waterway habitat and repair damaged infrastructure. Actions included: Weed and rabbit control along Lalbert and Tyrrell Creeks (2,607ha) and the Merbein Common and Kings Billabong Flagship sites (3,226ha); weed control within the Wallpolla Island – Ned's Corner/Linsay Island target area (23,219ha); and rock beaching at Catfish Lagoon for erosion protection.

Performance

Performance against 2024–25 Waterway activity indicators, including actual delivery against budgeted targets, is presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 5).

Overall, 81 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with three of the 16 measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded -5% variance), specifically:

- *Exclusion fencing installed/maintained*: Damage to fencing previously installed at Merbein Common and Kings Billabong Flagship sites was lower than in previous years and did not require the expected level of maintenance.
- *Environmental Water Management Plans (EWMP) reviewed*: Four EWMP reviews were scheduled to be undertaken in 2024–25, with three being completed and one (Neds Corner) requiring an extension. The Neds Corner EWMP is being undertaken in collaboration with First People of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Cooperation, with addional time required to provide for incorporation of their input.
- *Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (FMS)*: The 2018–28 Strategy identifies Mallee CMA as being responsible for the delivery of 24 priority management actions, with 12 (50%) scheduled to be progressed in 2024–25. While delivery targets for 9 (75%) of these 12 actions were achieved (e.g. region wide flood mapping, LiDAR surveys, stormwater modelling, flood mitigation strategies, reporting flood information, and flood levee management), funding required to progress the remaining three actions (remote flood level gauging, flood mitigation infrastructure survey/assessments, and update to Mid Murray flood study to include stormwater modelling) was unable to be secured in 2024–25. Delivery timeframes for these two actions will be revised as part of ongoing reviews of the Mallee FMS Implementation Plan undertaken in consultation with regional stakeholders.

Table 5 | Performance against 2024–25 Waterway activity measures (NA applied to identify where annual targets have not been specified by associated funding agreement(s) or reporting framework)

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Waterway Health - *Provide leadership in delivery of programs to improve the health of waterways at priority sites*						
Coordinate implementation and reporting of the Mallee Waterway Strategy (2014–22) *(Ministerial Expectation 9.1.1.001)*	Waterways treated for priority pest animal species	hectare	13,653	13,350	+1	✓
	Waterways treated for priority weed species	hectare	48,850	33,286	+47	✓
	Native vegetation established/maintained	hectare	18	18	0	✓
	Exclusion fencing installed/maintained	kilometre	0.97	2.86	-66	■
Deliver waterway management in line with Water for Victoria (2016) and Victorian Waterway Management Strategy	Water for Victoria identified priority sites managed to support delivery against identified environmental, economic, social, and cultural outcomes	number	4	4	0	✓
Implement the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's The Living Murray Program (TLM) at Lindsay, Mulcra and Wallpolla Islands; and Hattah Lakes	TLM sites managed, monitored, and reported as per contractual/government requirements	number	2	2	0	✓
Develop and implement Seasonal Watering Proposals to align with and deliver against site based Environmental Watering Management Plans (EWMPs)	Seasonal Watering Proposals submitted annually in line with stated requirements and accepted by associated partners/stakeholders	number	4	4	0	✓
	Environmental water management plans reviewed	percent	3	4	-25	■
	Watering regimes delivered annually	number	40	40	0	✓
Implement priority actions established by the Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (2018)	Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy priority management actions progressed by annual works programs	number	9	12	-25	■
Recognise Aboriginal Values - *Support the implementation of Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap by building formal partnerships with Traditional Owners in waterway and environmental water management and decision-making and promote access to waterways and water for cultural, spiritual, and economic purposes*						
Formal partnership agreements with Traditional Owners for water planning and management *(Ministerial Expectation 3.1.1.001 & 3.1.1.002)*	Formal partnerships established/maintained	number	8	NA	NA	✓
Demonstrate how Traditional Owners' aspirations and recommendations have influenced water planning strategies and management *(Ministerial Expectation 3.1.1.005)*	Traditional Owners participating in forums to inform water planning and management	number	12	NA	NA	✓
	Programs/projects co-designed in partnership with Traditional Owners	number	6	NA	NA	✓

Continued...

Table 5 | Performance against 2024–25 Waterway activity measures (NA applied to identify where annual targets have not been specified by associated funding agreement(s) or reporting framework)

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Recognise Recreational Values - *Support the wellbeing of communities by considering recreational values in waterway planning and management*						
Engage with community to identify/consider opportunities to deliver recreational objectives relating to waterway health/water planning and management *(Ministerial Expectation 4.2.1.001)*	Opportunities for community stakeholders to inform recreational priorities for local waterways	number	10	NA	NA	✓
Improve information sources to help recreational users plan their activities *(Ministerial Expectation 4.3.1.001)*	Accessible and user-friendly information sources	number	4	4	0	✓
Collaborate with other organisations and government agencies to explore and progress opportunities to support recreational values *(Ministerial Expectation 4.4.1.001)*	Collaborations/cooperative action in identifying, prioritising, planning, and delivering recreational outcomes	number	5	NA	NA	✓

Theme: 2B 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 (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*); and 370 species and seven communities listed as threatened at the state level (*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).

Native vegetation across the Mallee once covered some 3,919,887 hectares, of which 52 percent is estimated to have been cleared, particularly those vegetation communities growing on more fertile alluvial soils (i.e., suitable for agriculture).

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.

Ongoing pressure from a range of long-term threats (e.g. climate variability, habitat loss, fragmentation, grazing pressure, competition from invasive weeds, introduced predators, inappropriate fire regimes, agricultural practices, recreational pressures, constrained regenerative capacity) and emerging threat processes (e.g. changing climate) are directly influencing the condition and resilience of Mallee biodiversity. Collaborative and sustained efforts to effectively manage these processes is vital to securing the long-term health of critical ecosystem processes and the services they provide to the region.

By working with our community and delivery partners to address these key threats, Mallee CMA is seeking to deliver against the following Biodiversity-related outcome:

Biodiversity is healthy, resilient, and valued

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

- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28) – *Biodiversity theme*
- Victoria's strategic plan for valuing and managing biodiversity into the future, Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 (2017)
- Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy (2022–32) and Threatened Species Action Plan (2022–32).

Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against this strategic long-term outcome is measured through organisational performance against two key indicators (see Table 6), one in relation to terrestrial habitat, and one for threatened species and ecological communities.

Delivery of over 1.5 million hectares of environmental works across the 2020–25 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 (i.e. rabbit, feral goat, fox, feral cat) control to reduce competition, grazing and predation impacts; and exclusion fencing to protect priority remnants from overgrazing.

Annual variations in the area of terrestrial habitat managed by each performance measure largely reflect changes in funding arrangements over the reporting period. For example several state funded projects to deliver pest animal, weed and exclusion works identified by the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy (Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037) as being a priority for the Mallee were completed in 2020–21. The area of pest animal works then increased significantly in 2022–23 with the commencement of new projects to deliver against state priorities. Simiarly, the area of native vegetation established in 2023–25 was significanly less than previous years following the completion of a large revegetation program delivered through 2018–23 Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding.

From 2022–23, biodiversity focused actions have applied the following principles to align with 2022–28 Mallee RCS management priorities:

- *Terrestrial habitat protection/restoration*: landscape-scale focused delivery which benefits multiple species and builds adaptive capacity, rather than planning for native vegetation and individual species conservation in isolation, or
- *Specialised interventions*: where specific threatened species or ecological communities (terrestrial and aquatic) will not benefit from a wider habitat focused landscape-scale approach, and will require specialised and/or site specific interventions for ther protection.

Over the subsequent 2022–25 reporting period terrestrial habitat protection/restroration programs have been delivered within six priority landscapes; Murray Scroll Belt, Murray Sunset Complex, Annuello-Wandown, Avoca Basin, Wyperfeld Complex, and North Wimmera Creeklines. Four threatened species (Malleefowl, Plains-wanderer, Murray Hardyhead, Southern Pygmy Perch, Growling Grass Frog) and three threatened ecological communities (Buloke Woodlands, Mallee Bird, Lowland Riverine Fish) have also been targeted by specialised works programs over this period.

Table 6 | Progress against performance measures for Biodiversity strategic outcome indicators (NA applied to identify where reporting against associated indicator had not commenced)

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Extent, condition, and ecological connectivity of high value terrestrial habitat is improved	Terrestrial habitat managed for priority pest animal species	hectares	269,772	117,026	62,211	357,119	551,418
	Terrestrial habitat managed for priority weed species	hectares	120,199	14,742	15,245	11,267	12,798
	Native vegetation established	hectares	523	593	534	11	84
	Exclusion fencing installed/maintained	kilometres	71	0	2	0	0
Present diversity of Mallee threatened species and communities is protected (terrestrial and aquatic)	Threatened species targeted by on-ground works programs (i.e., species x location specific interventions)	number	NA	NA	3	2	3
	Threatened ecological communities targeted by on-ground works programs (i.e., community x location specific interventions)	number	NA	NA	3	1	1

Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Key Initiatives and Projects

Project activities to progress Biodiversity outcomes were implemented through 7 key initiatives in 2024–25 as outlined below.

BushBank (State)

- Revegetating (seedlings and direct seeding) 44ha of public land to provide for biodiversity and carbon sequestration outcomes.

Community Action for Biodiversity - Icon Species (State)

- Translocation of Murray hardyhead from Koorlong Lake to Brickworks Billabong.

Natural Heritage Trust (Commonwealth)

- Implementing the 'Mallee Birds: Restoring landscape-scale connectivity to strengthen resilience' project to deliver targeted threat mitigation actions within habitat critical to the recovery of this threatened ecological community, including: 17,316ha of herbivore (rabbit and feral goat) control to reduce grazing impacts and support regeneration outcomes; 2,430ha of priority weed (Weeds of National Significance) control to reduce competition and support vegetation condition outcomes; and 25ha of revegetation to support connectivity outcomes.

Protecting Biodiversity Program (State)

- Delivering works programs across two target landscapes (Eastern Murray and Ned's Corner) to support biodiversity and threatened species outcomes, including: 70,702ha of herbivore (feral goat, rabbit, feral pig) control to reduce grazing impacts; 91,482ha of fox and feral cat control to reduce predation impacts; and 10,180ha of priority weed control to reduce competition.

Saving Native Species Program (Commonwealth)

- Delivering landscape-scale actions to protect and enhance critical Malleefowl habitat, including 15ha of revegetation to increase connectivity and 357,505ha of herbivore (feral goat and rabbit) control to reduce grazing impacts.

Victorian Landcare Program (State)

- Supporting 23 Landcare groups to deliver 14,412ha of rabbit control works and 189ha of weed control works within priority landscapes for the protection and restoration of important habitat.

Waterways Recovery (State)

- Delivering wetland rehabilitation actions to facilitate threatened species recovery following the 2022 flood event, including: 15ha of revegetation (riparian and aquatic) at Brickworks Billabong to support the reintroduction of Murray hardyhead; eradicating carp and removing priority weeds at Ducksfoot Lagoon to support Growling Grass frog populations; and eradicating carp at Wallpolla Horseshoe to support Silver Perch populations.

Performance

Performance against the organisation's 2024-25 priority activities for progressing Biodiversity outcomes, including actual delivery against budgeted targets are provided in Table 7.

Overall, 83 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with one of the six measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded -5% variance), specifically:

- *Native vegetation established/maintained*: The limited availability of some seedlings required the planned area of supplementary planting to be reduced by 14ha to ensure all sites contained an appropriate mix of species (i.e. as per EVC benchmarks).

Table 7 | Performance against 2024–25 Biodiversity activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Delivering against local, State and Federal priorities for the management of threatened species, threatened ecological communities, and terrestrial habitat in the Victorian Mallee						
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	Habitat treated for priority pest animal species	hectare	551,418	547,331	+1	✓
	Habitat treated for priority weed species	hectare	12,798	12,528	+2	✓
	Native vegetation established/maintained	hectare	84	98	-14%	■
Support implementation of Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy (2022–32); by delivering against species and places with actions identified as a priority for the Mallee	Australian Government identified priority threatened species and places which occur in the Mallee targeted by works programs	percent	50	50	0	✓
	Priority habitat managed to support recovery of threatened species identified by the Australian Government as a priority for the Victorian Mallee	hectare	141,928	140,000	+1	✓
Align the delivery of threatened species and communities' programs with stakeholder priorities (i.e. cultural importance and/or local significance)	Threatened species and ecological communities targeted by works programs identified as culturally important and/or locally significant	percent	100	100	0	✓

Theme: 2C Agricultural 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, 62 percent of the region's area is utilised for agricultural production.

The capacity of our productive agricultural lands rose steadily over the last half of the twentieth century in response to increased mechanisation, improved management techniques, and genetic improvement of crops. 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, lentils, and canola.

Irrigation in the Mallee extends adjacent to the Murray River corridor from Nyah to the South Australian Border, encompassing private diverters and the pumped irrigation districts of Mildura, Merbein, Red Cliffs, Robinvale, and Nyah. A groundwater irrigation district centred on the town of Murrayville also exists. The major irrigated sectors are almonds, wine grapes, table grapes, citrus, olives, dried fruit, and vegetables. The industry has seen increased diversity in crop types and is becoming far more dynamic in response to climatic conditions and market forces. Almonds have become the single largest crop in terms of area and water demand.

It is evident that despite the positive changes in land management being applied in the Mallee, the productivity of our dryland and irrigated agricultural lands continues to be vulnerable to a range of processes such as wind erosion, salinity, pests, and diseases. If not managed appropriately, these factors have the potential to degrade the soils and water resources they rely on and may reduce the area available for production into the future.

Land management practices not only have the potential to impact on the productivity of agricultural land, but also on adjacent natural and cultural values. Off-site impacts such as sand drift, salinity, waterlogging, nutrient enrichment, and spray drift can have significant impacts on the health of our native species, waterways, and culturally significant sites.

External factors such as climatic conditions (both variability and change), water availability and deliverability, and global markets are also key determinants of both overall productivity and the incidence of off-site impacts that require ongoing attention and adaptive management by our agricultural industries.

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

Agricultural land is managed to optimise productive capacity, while avoiding or minimising environmental impacts

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

- Ministerial Expectations for Water for Agriculture (2024–25)
- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28) - Agricultural Land theme
- Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan (2020–29)
- Victorian Mallee Irrigation Development Guidelines (2021)
- Mallee Salinity Investment Plan (2024–25)
- Mallee Drought Resilience Plan (2024)
- Basin Salinity Management 2030 Strategy (2015)
- Water for Victoria (2016).

Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against strategic outcomes is measured through organisational performance against two key indicators (see Table 8); one in relation to irrigated land, and one for dryland agriculture.

Irrigated land

Water for Agriculture

Between 1997 and 2024 (for which comprehensive irrigation crop data is available) irrigation development reliant on water from the Murray River has increased from 39,470 hectares to 82,155 hectares, representing a more than doubling of the irrigable area. There is a further 6,750 hectares of irrigable land in the Murrayville groundwater irrigation area, a 5,580 hectare increase since 1997. There was however a net decrease (-185ha) in the area of irrigable land irrigated between 2021 and 2024, the only period since 1997 where retired areas exceeded new developments.

The use of pressurised systems (drip, low level and overhead irrigation) has increased from 61% of the irrigated area in 1997 to 98% by 2024, with the majority of change occurring prior to this 2020–25 reporting period (1% increase from 2021). Gravity systems (furrow and flood) decreased from 39% in 1997 to 2% in 2024. This change has seen the dominant irrigation method move from furrow in 1997 (39%) to overhead in 2003 (33%) then to drip irrigation from 2006 (40%) to 2024 (60%).

Significant changes in crop types have also occurred across irrigation areas, with wine grapes the dominant crop from 1997 (25%) to 2006 (30%), then almonds from 2009 (34%) to 2024 (30%). Trends observed over the 2021–2024 period included the area of wine and dried grapes continiuing to decline, small increases in the area of citrus and table grape plantings, and a reduction (45ha) in almong planting for the first time 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 concluded four years of investment in model development and salinity impact investigations.The progressive total of salinity debits is now estimated at 14.73 EC; representing a 0.37 EC increase from June 2024 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 8.49 EC in credit overall and remains compliant at a regional scale.

Dryland agriculture

Mallee CMA's delivery against dryland agriculture outcomes is primarily funded under commonwealth initiatives which identify increased groundcover (and reduced wind erosion), soil organic carbon, and climate (variability/change) resilience/adaptation as priorities for the Victorian Mallee.

Over the 2020–25 reporting period, these programs 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) and the delivery of on-ground research and development programs to identify, validate and promote best practice for soil health, productivity, and climate resilience outcomes.

The Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy 2022–28 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 75 percent and 98 percent of the region achieved this target over the reporting period.

The low (75%) figure reported for March 2022 reflects relatively low rainfall across the region over the summer, rather than any indication of widespread returns to inappropriate land management practices; with levels rising to 89 percent in April 2022 following the autumn break and to 98 percent in March 2023 in response to the 'very much above' average rainfall to 'highest on record' falls experienced in the preceding months.

With a return to 'below average' to 'very much below average' rainfall over the 2024–25 summer and 2025 autumn, associated management responses to maximise groundcover levels under theese condition saw 87 percent of agricultural land achieving the >50 percent target in March 2025 and 93 percent by April 2025.

Table 8 | Progress against performance measures for Agricultural Land strategic outcome indicators (NA applied to identify where data is not available for associated reporting period - dependant on release of Mallee Crop Report)

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Irrigated Land (Water for Agriculture)							
Improved productivity and resilience of the Victorian Mallee irrigation sector *(Ministerial Expectation 10.1.1 – Sustainable Irrigation, 10.2.1 – Managing Agricultural Areas & 10.3.1- Adaption to Change)*	Irrigable area	hectares	85,055	88,125	NA	NA	88,908
	Irrigable area irrigated	percent	80	80	NA	NA	79
	Irrigated area under pressurised systems (drip, low level & overhead)	percent	NA	97	NA	NA	98
	Salinity credit uptake	EC at Morgan	13.82	13.94	14.34	14.36	14.73
Dryland Agriculture							
Improved productive capacity and resilience of dryland agricultural soils within the Victorian Mallee	Proportion of the Mallee with more than 50 percent groundcover in March	percent	82	75	98	94	87

Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Key Initiatives and Projects

Project activities to progress Agricultural Land outcomes and deliver against associated Ministerial Priority Areas were implemented through 3 key initiatives in 2024–25 as outlined below.

Natural Heritage Trust – Climate Smart Agriculture

- Dryland focused activities to identify, validate and promote innovative and resilient agricultural systems included the establishment of 15 trial sites across the region to demonstrate best practice strategies for protecting natural capital. Sites focused on legume-based cropping systems, stubble management, utilising innovative soil mapping tools, and increasing yield potential in a drying climate.

- Ongoing implementation of the Mallee Land Use and Wind Erosion Monitoring Program provided for landscape scale analysis of groundcover levels and associated management/climatic interactions to support targeted extension programs.

Mallee Salinity Investment Plan (Other)

- Salinity Offsetting Charges (collected to offset salinity impact of irrigation development from Nyah to the South Australian border) supported the delivery of 9 investment priorities for 2024–25: Supporting development and implementation of capital investment projects; major projects development (e.g. Psyche Bend management options); Airborne Electro Magnetic (AEM) survey data processing; reviewing the IFarm Planning pilot; delivering against statutory responsibilities; implementing regional surface and groundwater monitoring/maintenance programs; refining salinity management policy; undertaking salinity research (e.g. options for saline water disposal and rehabilitating wetlands/floodplains impacted by salinity management); and delivering communication and engagement activities.

Sustainable Irrigation Program (State)

- Progressing priority actions established by the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan through implementation of Mallee Irrigation Frameworks, Wise Water Use and Best Practice, Irrigation Drainage Management, and BSM2030 projects. Key activities included: Preparing and submitting the 2023–24 BSM2030 Implementation Report to provide an assessment of the salinity impact of irrigation development under the Nyah to South Australian Border Salinity Management Plan; commencing the BSM2030 Nyah to SA Border Accountable Action Review; releasing updated Regional Irrigation Development Guidelines and undertaking a review of associated Mallee Hydrological Buffers; ongoing coordination and communication of the Seasonal Annual Use Limit (SAUL) adjustment process; completion on the 2024 Mallee Crop Report, detailing irrigation development trends from 1997 to the end of 2023; and promotion of the Mallee Irrigation Incentive Program through media and at stakeholder focused events (e.g. Irrigator 'Shed' meetings and Mildura Field Days).

- Collaborations with key stakeholders (e.g. community, Traditional Owners, water corporations) to inform project delivery and build awareness of sustainable irrigation practices/water management was supported through: Coordination of the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan Stakeholder Implementation Committee; Coordination of the New Irrigation Development Group to consider all Irrigation Development applications and Irrigation Drainage Plans submitted for approval; and Delivery of a water literacy program with Traditional Owners to help build awareness and knowledge on water management in the Mallee.

- 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.

Performance

Performance against 2024–25 Agricultural Land activity indicators, including actual delivery against budgeted targets, is presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 9).

Overall, 90 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with one of the ten measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded -5% variance), specifically:

- *Irrigation infrastructure upgrades/conversions and/or scheduling equipment installed*: Performance against this measure is dependent on the number, nature and timing of expressions of interest (EOI) received from growers through the Mallee Irrigation Incentive Program (MIIP). The program, which provides financial assistance (based on cost-sharing arrangements) for system and equipment upgrades that deliver water use efficiency and salinity benefits, received limited interest from irrigators throughout 2024–25 and no associated works were completed within the reporting period. With most irrigators having already improved their management practices (e.g. 98% applying pressurised systems) a review of the MIIP is being undertaken to support adaptive management processes.

Table 9 | Performance against 2024–25 Agricultural Land activity measures (NA applied to identify where annual targets have not been specified by associated funding agreement(s) or reporting framework)

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Irrigated Land (Water for Agriculture) - *Support a productive and profitable irrigation sector and vibrant and resilient regional communities*						
Promote sustainable irrigation management practices to support the growth and viability of regional communities *(Ministerial Expectation 10.1.1.001)*	Collaborations with key stakeholders (community, Traditional Owners, water corporations) to identify/implement effective responses to the changing needs of irrigated agriculture in the Victorian Mallee	number	10	-	-	✓
		number	1	1	0	✓
	Regional Irrigation Development Guidelines prepared/maintained	number	1	1	0	✓
Plan and coordinate activities to manage salinity, waterlogging and water quality in agricultural areas *(Ministerial Expectation 10.2.1.001)*	2018–28 Land Water Management Plan (LWMP) priority management actions progressed	number	19	19	0	✓
	Alignment with Victorian Irrigation Drainage Program Strategic Directions 2021–2024	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Compliance with DEECA guidelines for Annual BSM2030 Implementation Report	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Accountable action reviews progressed as per BSM2030 Register	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Annual Mallee Salinity Investment Plan priority activities progressed	percent	100	100	0	✓
Improve flexibility for agriculture to continue to adapt to change and help the sector to increase water use efficiency (WUE) *(Ministerial Expectation 10.3.1.001)*	Irrigation scheduling equipment installed for improved water use efficiency (WUE) and salinity benefits	hectares	0	8	-100%	■
Dryland Agriculture - *Supporting improved productive capacity and resilience of dryland agricultural soils*						
Promote innovative, diverse, adaptable, and resilient agricultural systems that maximise production potential, minimise risk, and enhance viability – including drought preparedness actions, climate ready strategies, and new technology applications	2022–28 Mallee Dryland Sustainable Agriculture priorities progressed	percent	88	>75	0	✓
	2024 Mallee Drought Resilience Plan priorities progressed	percent	57	>50	0	✓

Theme: 2D 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 TOs/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.

The first inhabitants of our region were numerous Aboriginal tribes of different language groups, including: Ngintait, Ngarkat, Latji, Nyeri, Wergaia, Wadi, Wemba Wamba, Jari, and Tati. Given the semi-arid climate of the region, ready access to more permanent water has been a major determinant of human habitation, as such the highest density of identified Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are located around, or close to areas of freshwater sources.

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. There are also numerous meeting and ceremonial places, scarred trees, and artefact sites located across this landscape. In the south of the region, freshwater lakes, streams, and wetlands were focal points for TOs. Many lakes were the sites of large gatherings of several family groups that afforded trade and cultural exchanges.

Intangible cultural heritage is integral to these landscapes, including the Traditional knowledge, practice, and expressions (e.g. biocultural knowledge, ceremonies, language, dance, song, and stories) passed down from generation to generation. Natural elements of the landscape such as landforms, flora, and fauna can also have particular significance to TOs.

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.

For many thousands of years, the Country was managed and cared for by local First Peoples. As custodians of the oldest living culture in the world, TOs have always understood the responsibility that comes with looking after and speaking for the Country of their ancestors and future generations. Cultural landscapes are fundamental to Country and the cultural identity of First Peoples. Caring for and healing Country with Traditional ecological knowledge and customs built over thousands of years of practice is integral to this connection.

Regard for data sovereignty is fundamental to both Traditional practice and cultural landscapes. Specifically, that TO rights to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, Traditional knowledge, and Traditional cultural expressions, as well as their right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over these is recognised and meaningfully applied.

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

Aboriginal culture and heritage is protected, and Traditional Owner led practices are embedded in the management and healing of Country

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

- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28) – Culture and Heritage theme
- Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (2023–28)
- Mallee CMA Reconciliation Action Plan (2024–28)
- Pupangarli Marnmarnepu 'Owning Our Future' Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–25
- Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap (2022).

Outcome Indicators and Performance Measures

Progress against this strategic outcome is measured through organisational performance against two key indicators (see Table 10).

Achieving full compliance with Aboriginal Heritage Regulations over the reporting period has been facilitated by ongoing implementation of the Mallee CMA Cultural Heritage Assessment Policy and Procedure (2023). This has included 701 Cultural Heritage assessments being undertaken at proposed works sites over the 2020-25 reporting period, encompassing all areas of our organisation's on-ground works programs (i.e. land, water, and biodiversity). Nine CHMPs covering some 500 hectares have also been developed, approved, and lodged by Mallee CMA with First Peoples – State Relations to identify the potential impacts of proposed activities and establish the measures to be taken to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage.

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 organisation's 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 regarding 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 2019 has been 119 and 460 respectively.

Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the development and delivery of Mallee CMA programs continue to be supported through several Mallee CMA facilitated forums, with the Mallee Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) providing a central point for direct connections with Aboriginal community groups across the region. The ARG oversee implementation of the Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (IPP), facilitating member participation in regional planning processes and the identification of opportunities for Traditional Owner involvement in the delivery of associated activities.

Ongoing Traditional Owner participation in workshops, on-Country visits, and cultural assessments continues to enhance this partnership approach by providing for the identification, incorporation of cultural knowledge, practice, and objectives into NRM activity across the region.

Key examples of 2020–25 programs supporting the application of Tradional Owner led knowledge/practices that provide for the healing and strenghtening of Country and Culture have included:

- First People of the Millewa Mallee participating in the design of and implementation of actions (e.g. revegetation, pest plant and animal control, exclusion fencing, water delivery) to rehabilitate sites (e.g. Neds Corner, Merbein Common, Musk Duck wetland, Nalta Ruwe, B16) with significant culture and heritage values.

- Barengi Gadjin Land Coouncil restoring degraded Buloke Woodland habitat in the southern Mallee.

- Dalki Garringa Native Nursery (Baraenji Gadjin Land Council) and Belar Nursery (First People of the Millewa Mallee) undertaking seed collection and growing seedlings for riparian and terrestrial revegetation programs.

- Traditional Owners undertaking Aboriginal Waterway Assessments to document the cultural health and use of priority waterways, identify associated aspirations for sites, supporting implementation of short-medium term priorities, and develop pathways to delivering against long-term goals.

Table 10 | Progress against performance measures for Culture and Heritage strategic outcome indicators (NA applied to identify where reporting against associated indicator had not commenced)

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Increased recognition and protection of the region's cultural values	Compliance with Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016 (i.e. no non-compliance reports registered)	percent	100	100	100	100	100
	Registered Aboriginal Places (ACHRIS)	number	4,463	4,455[1]	4,457	4,470	4,582
	Components Recorded (ACHRIS)	number	6,214	6,281	6,302	6,401	6,674
Traditional Owner led practices rejuvenated and knowledge protected and applied to meet cultural objectives that include social, ecological, and economic co-benefits	Programs applying TO led practices/knowledge to manage and heal Country	number	NA	NA	3	5	7

[1] A decrease in registered Places from the previous year 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

Key Initiatives and Projects

Activities to progress Culture and Heritage outcomes implemented through 8 initiatives in 2024–25 as outlined below.

All Programs

- Application of Mallee CMA Cultural Heritage Assessment Policy and Procedure by all 2024–25 projects delivering on-ground works programs resulted in 193 Cultural Heritage assessments being undertaken at proposed works sites, encompassing >190,000ha. Through these programs, Mallee CMA demonstrated 100% compliance with obligations as set out by the *Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016*.

Community Action for Biodiversity - Icon Species (State)

- First People of the Millewa Mallee participating in the planning and delivery of the Murray hardyhead status project (field survey and translocation activities).

Environmental Water Program (State)

- Engaging Traditional Owner groups to inform the development and application of Seasonal Watering Proposals, and the incorporation of cultural objectives/priorities into site based Environmental Water Management Plans (EWMPs). This included supporting First People of the Millewa Mallee to deliver environmental water to Musk Duck wetland on Ned's Corner Station.

Our Catchments, Our Communities (State)

- First People of the Millewa Mallee participating as decision makers and delivery partners in the planning and implementation of place-based on-ground actions (revegetation, invasive species management, exclusion fencing) to support the rehabilitation of sites with significant cultural values.

- Maintaining formal partnership arrangements with Traditional Owners/Aboriginal Community through the Aboriginal Reference Group to progress Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement Annual Action Plan priorities, including delivery against Indigenous Participation Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan targets.

Protecting Biodiversity Program (State)

- First People of the Millewa Mallee participating as decision makers and delivery partners in the planning and implementation of on-ground actions (invasive species management) to support biodiversity and cultural outcomes across the 20,421ha Ned's Corner landscape.

Waterway Health Program (State)

- First People of the Millewa Mallee participating in Flagship Waterway Project Steering Committees to inform project planning, delivery and evaluation processes.

Waterway Recovery Program (State)

- First People of the Millewa Mallee participating as decision makers and delivery partners in the planning and implementation of riparian and aquatic revegetation works at Brickworks Billabong to support the reintroduction of Murray hardyhead.

Natural Heritage Trust (Commonwealth)

- Facilitating continued, effective function of the Mallee CMA Aboriginal Reference Group in fostering communications with Aboriginal stakeholders and providing input into regional initiatives and plans (e.g. NHT Action Plan as an addendum to the RCS, Mallee Drought Resilience Plan).

Performance

Performance against Culture and Heritage activity indicators, including actual delivery against budgeted targets, are provided in Table 11; with 100% of performance targets achieved over the reporting period.

Table 11 | Performance against 2024–25 Culture and Heritage activity measures (NA applied to identify where annual targets have not been specified by associated funding agreement(s) or reporting framework)

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Ensuring compliance with legal requirements for the protection of Cultural Heritage (intangible and tangible)						
Implement Mallee CMA Cultural Heritage Assessment Policy and Procedure (2018)	Proposed works sites with completed cultural heritage assessments/approvals	percent	100	100	0	✓
	CHMPs approved and lodged by Mallee CMA with First Peoples – State Relations	number	1	1	0	✓
Advancing opportunities for self-determined participation and leadership by Traditional Owners to deliver on cultural objectives and priorities						
Traditional Owners speaking for Country through self-determined processes	Program planning/investment processes including Traditional Owner groups as decision makers	number	9	NA	NA	✓
	Projects delivering against cultural objectives and priorities	number	8	NA	NA	✓

Business Objective 3 — Strengthen our capacity to operate as a corporately and socially responsible organisation

Theme: 3A 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 W*ater 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 valuing social and professional identity, diverse thinking, backgrounds, experiences, uniqueness, and creativity.

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:

- Ministerial Expectations for Performance and Financial Management and Leadership, Diversity and Culture (2024–25)
- Ministerial Additional Areas of Interest – Customer Data Protection and Cyber Security
- Mallee CMA Quality Objectives (2024–25)
- Mallee CMA Risk Management Framework (2024)
- Mallee CMA Cultural Competency Framework (2024–2025)
- Mallee CMA Gender Equality Action Plan (2021–2025)
- Mallee CMA Diversity Inclusion Plan (2024–2027)
- Mallee CMA Integrity, Fraud and Compliance Framework (2024–27)
- Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy (2025–2028)
- Mallee CMA Cyber Security Strategy (2024–25)
- Mallee CMA Protective Data Security Plan (2024)
- Mallee CMA Cyber Incident Response Plan (2025–2025)
- Mallee CMA Strategic Internal Audit Plan (2025–26)
- Mallee CMA Asset Management Accountability Strategy (2025–2028).

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 12).

Performance and Financial Management

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. Three yearly accreditation audits conducted in 2019 and 2022 did not identify any major or minor non-conformities, with recertification for the 2022–25 period achieved in November 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 were progressed in line with legislated requirements and government guidelines over the 2020–25 reporting period. This included completion of the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan (2020-2029), the Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–2028), the Mallee CMA Indigenous Participation Plan (2023–2028), the Mallee Reconcilation Action Plan (2024–26), and the Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy (2025–2028).

Leadership, diversity, and culture

The Mallee CMA Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) was accepted by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in June 2022. It provides our commitment to gender equality throughout the organisation and ensures it is embedded in all workplace behaviour and decision-making processes. Reporting against the strategies and measures set out by the GEAP commenced in 2022–23, with the first Gender Equality Progress Report being submitted in February 2024. The report demonstrated our progress towards achieving gender equality through Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs), strategies and measures in our GEAP, and the Workplace Gender Equality Indicators.

The Diversity and Inclusion Plan was updated in March 2025, and continues to demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive workplace and community. Implementation of the Plan over the reporting period has promoted the celebration of diversity within the organisation. This includes providing diversity training, encouraging diverse perspectives in decision-making, and ensuring equitable opportunities for all employees. Diversity and inclusion are integral parts of the organisation’s culture, policies, and practices, from leadership to everyday interactions and creates a culture of support and understanding by providing training on mental health awareness, encouraging open discussions about wellbeing, and offering resources such as employee assistance programs.

Table 12 | Progress against performance measures for Governance and Compliance strategic outcome indicators (NA applied to identify where reporting against associated indicator had not commenced)

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Improved performance and demonstrating outcomes							
Improved performance and demonstrated results against outcomes *(Ministerial Expectation 7.2.1 – Improved Efficiencies & 7.3.1 – Improved Performance)*	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
	QMS initiatives implemented to support ongoing improvements/efficiencies	number	3	8	7	6	8
	Government approval/acceptance of Mallee CMA Annual Reports, Corporate Plans, Board/Audit and Risk Committee performance assessment reports, and legislated regional strategies/action plans	percent	100	100	100	100	100
	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	89	87	83	100	100
	Participants rating the delivery of information at engagement activities as good/excellent	percent	98	98	98	98	99
Leadership, diversity, and culture							
Increased diversity and inclusion in the workplace *(Ministerial expectation G1)*	Mallee CMA Diversity and Inclusion Plan workforce initiatives implemented	percent	100	100	100	100	100
	Mallee CMA Gender Equality workforce initiatives implemented	percent	NA	NA	100	100	100

Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Key Initiatives and Projects

Project activities to progress Governance and Compliance outcomes and deliver against associated Ministerial Priority Areas were implemented through 3 key initiatives in 2024–25 as outlined below.

Catchment Governance Program (State)

- Developing, implementing and reporting of business plans to support compliance with legislative obligations including the 2023-24 Annual Report, 2025–30 Corporate Plan, and 2024–25 Board and Audit Committee performance assessment report.
- Delivering against the organisation's overarching Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) strategy to ensure that individual components are part of a coordinated framework which continues to identify efficiency opportunities.
- Key information management systems include social media platforms and Mallee CMA website; Technology One financial and document management systems; and Employee and Supplier Induction and Incident Reporting system (Rapid).
- Progressing priorities established by the Mallee CMA Gender Equality, and Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Implementation Plan, including D&I training, gender representation in recruitment and promotions, opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people, implementation of Reconcilation Action Plan, celebrate diverse cultures, opportunities for youth development, participate in gender identity days, opportunities for Victorians with disability, flexible work arrangements, and mental health safety.
- Progressing priorities established by the Mallee CMA Gender Equality Action Plan, including women in leadership; gender balance in committee membership; promoting internal committee observation; GEAP reporting; workforce obligation training; unconscious bias training; recruitment panel gender balance; People Matter Survey positive results; and youth employee opportunity.
- Implementing actions identified within the Victorian Protective Data Security Framework, including managing the secure disposal of public sector information; managing security, probity obligations and risk profile of personnel separating from the organisation; selecting physical security measures commensurate with the business impact level of the information; and implementing physical security measures when handling information out of the office.
- Undertaking a review of the Mallee CMA Cyber Incident Response Plan.
- Adopting Essential Eight approach to reduce cyber security risk and progressing actions to Maturity Level 1.

Waterway Health Program (State)

- Participating in reporting focused forums (e.g. Regional Investment Coordinators Working Group, DEECA Output and Delivery Standards Working Group) to support delivery against investor requirements and continuous improvement in internal systems/processes.
- Delivering against the Mallee CMA statutory responsibilities regarding floodplain management and works on waterways, including processing 20 planning referrals, providing 48 formal responses to enquiries, and issuing 5 waterway permits within required timeframes (<28 days).
- Ongoing application of the Floodzoom program, including Planning System module for processing and responding to integration floodplain referrals, advice, and works on waterways permits.

Natural Heritage Trust (Commonwealth)

- Participating in reporting focused forums (e.g. NHT MER Community of Practice, Ecological Monitoring System Australia Community of Practice) to support delivery against investor requirements and continuous improvement in internal systems/processes.

Performance

Performance against 2024–25 Governance and Compliance activity indicators, including actual delivery against budgeted targets, is presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 13); with 100 percent of performance targets achieved over the reporting period.

Table 13 | Performance against 2024–25 Governance and Compliance activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Implementing actions that improve performance & demonstrate outcomes						
Achieve efficiency and cost-savings through shared services, smarter procurement, and lower-cost technology *(Ministerial Expectation 7.2.1.001)*	Strategies undertaken to achieve efficiencies and cost savings	number	8	8	0	✓
Collaborate with DEECA and other funding bodies to improve reporting systems and processes *(Ministerial Expectation 7.3.1.001)*	Reporting-focused forums coordinated and/or supported to meet government and internal requirements	number	6	6	0	✓
	Compliance with DEECA 2023–24 Annual Report guidelines	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Compliance with DEECA 2024–29 Corporate Plan guidelines	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Compliance with DEECA Guidelines for Board and Audit and Risk Committee performance assessment report	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Strategic planning, evaluation and reporting frameworks developed/reviewed in line with government/internal requirements	number	13	13	0	✓
Reflect the needs of our diverse communities and develop strategies that will increase cultural diversity in the workplace and gender equity in both executive leadership and throughout the organisation						
Mallee CMA Diversity & Inclusion Plan published and implemented *(Ministerial Expectation 6.1.1.001 & 6.1.1.008)*	Diversity & Inclusion Plan available on Mallee CMA website	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Priorities established by the Mallee CMA Diversity & Inclusion Implementation Plan progressed/implemented	percent	100	100	0	✓
Mallee CMA Gender Equality Action Plan published and implemented *(Ministerial Expectation 6.1.1.002 & 6.1.1.008)*	Gender Equality Action Plan available on Mallee CMA website	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Priorities established by the Gender Equality Action Plan progressed/implemented	percent	100	100	0	✓
Staff participation in the Victorian Public Sector Commission 'People Matter' Survey (Ministerial Expectation 6.1.1.005)	Staff participating in 'People Matter' survey	percent	80	>75	0	✓
Satisfy Customers	Works on Waterway statutory referrals responded to within required timeframes (< 20 days)	percent	100	100	0	✓
	Registered stakeholder feedback which is positive	percent	100	>85	0	✓
	Participants rating the delivery of information at Mallee CMA events/activities as good/excellent (not fair/poor)	percent	99	>90	0	✓

Continued...

Table 13 | Performance against 2024–25 Governance and Compliance activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Implementing activities and actions identified within the Victorian Protective Data Security Framework						
Improve the information security maturity of the business and protect customer information from loss or exploitation by employees, contractors or malicious third parties *(Ministerial Expectation AAoI1)*	Strategies/measures in place	number	12	12	0	✓
Respond to data breaches that have, or had potential to, compromise customer information *(Ministerial Expectation AAoI1)*	Plans in place	number	1	1	0	✓
Adopt one of, or a combination of two, internationally recognised approaches to reduce cyber security risk *(Ministerial Expectation AAoI2)*	Approaches applied	number	1	1	0	✓
Demonstrate progress and an ongoing commitment to integrating cyber risk management capacity, capability, process and system improvements into planning and decision making across the business *(Ministerial Expectation AAoI2)*	Activities/actions to reduce exposure to cyber-attack, minimise the impacts of service disruption to customers, and restore services promptly following an attack	number	0	0	0	✓

Theme: 3B 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 RCSs' 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 (i.e. waterways, biodiversity, agricultural land, culture and heritage, and community capacity) and their associated natural, cultural, and productive values.

The RCS monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and improvement (MERI) framework is also applied to 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 ICM-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:

- Ministerial Expectations for Catchment Health, Climate Change and Energy and Resilient and Liveable Cities and Towns (2024–25)
- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28) - Local Area targets
- Mallee Drought Resilience Plan (2024)
- Our Catchments, Our Communities: Strengthening the Catchment Stewardship Framework in Victoria (2024)
- Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria (2017)
- Water for Victoria (2016)
- Victoria's Climate Change Strategy (2021).

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 14).

Catchment Health

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 the release of the revised

2022–28 document in January 2023, the new framework set out by the Strategy has been applied in assessing performance against 2022–24 outcome indicators; with the previous three years measured against the 2013–19 RCS.

The RCS prioritises key threatening processes and associated interventions within high value landscapes (Local Areas) 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 reporting period is demonstrated by the extent to which Mallee CMA NRM activities deliver against medium-term targets each year (87 percent average), and the high proportion of associated works that are being delivered annually within priority landscapes (94 percent average).

Progress against RCS targets is also considered as part of the Mallee Condition and Management Report (see Appendix 2). Developed to align with government guidelines, the report provides an annual assessment of the condition of biodiversity, waterway, agricultural land, culture and heritage, and community capacity assets; and the likely impact of management actions, climatic events and other influencing factors on condition outcomes.

Completion of the 2016–20-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 was subsquently applied to the implementation of another ICM-focused initiative, the 2021–28 'Islands in the Sand – Ancient Connections' project to deliver against community and Traditional Owner priorities for two Mallee RCS priority Local Areas: the 'Murray River and Floodplain and 'Murray Scroll Belt.

Opportunities for integrated outcomes across the broader region are identified and progressed through ongoing 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. Traditional Owner and Aboriginal Community participation in regional planning prioritisation, implementation and evaluation processes is also being facilitated through their representation on Mallee CMA's Aboriginal Reference Group.

Climate Change and Energy

The Mallee RCS (2022–28) identifies priority management directions required to support adaptation and resilience outcomes for Biodiversity, Waterways, Agrultural Land, and Community Capacity at both the regional and landscape (Local Area) scale. Preperation of the Mallee Biodiversity and Agricultural Natural Capital Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (2024), as an addendum to the RCS, has also provided for the identification of priority actions to build resilience to extreme weather events and improve recovery outcomes. Application of priorities established through both the RCS and this addendum into the ongoing delivery of regional programs is supporting Mallee CMA continue to plan for and respond to a changing and variable climate.

Ongoing participation on Victorian CMA's state-wide climate change forum is facilitating knowledge transfer and supporting coordinated approaches to associated planning processes. Key initiatives progressed by the forum over the 2020–25 period included the 'State-wide Carbon Sequestration Analysis Project' undertaken in partnership with Water Corporations to establish regional carbon yields/implementation costs associated with environmental planting offsets, improving stakeholder understanding of opportunities and challenges of co-benefits and co-investments related to carbon offsets in the water sector, identifying key knowledge gaps and associated opportunities to progress Teal carbon outcomes; implementing the Water Cycle Adaptation Action Program, and delivery of the Exploring Natural Capital Approaches for Victorian CMAs.

Througout 2020–25, Mallee CMA has also worked with regional stakeholders to deliver activities that provide for improved climate adaptation and/or carbon sequestration outcomes, including implementation of the Carbon Farming Outreach Program; a Bushbank native vegetation restoration grant; drought resilient and climate smart dryland farming system investigations; and actions to mitigate impacts on Cultural Heritiage values.

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 reporting period have included: application of the Lake Ranfurly and Lake Hawthorn Integrated Management Plan (including delivery of the Lake Hawthorn Pipeline Potential Feasibility Study Project); 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.

Table 14 | Progress against performance measures for Integrated Catchment Management strategic outcome indicators

Outcome Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Catchment Health							
Improved catchment health and resilience *(Ministerial Expectation (9.1.1 – Regional Strategies, 9.2.1 – Integrated Catchment Management & 9.3.1 – Partnership Agreements)*	Progress against Mallee RCS management outcome targets	percent	93	95	80	80	86
	Delivery within Mallee RCS Local Areas to support integrated catchment management (ICM) outcomes	percent	96	92	97	94	92
	Collaborative initiatives implemented through Catchment Partnership Agreement (CPA) forums	number	-	2	4	12	11
Climate Change and Energy							
Demonstrating progress in integrating climate change adaptation into planning and decision-making across the business *(Ministerial Expectation 1.4.1- Carbon Sequestration)*	Carbon sequestration/offsets and climate adaptation initiatives delivered	number	3	3	2	4	6
	Mallee RCS adaptation priorities progressed	percent	88	94	100	94	100
Resilient and liveable cities and towns							
Enhanced public spaces and urban waterway values *(Ministerial Expectation 5.1.1- Integrated Water Management))*	Initiatives implemented through integrated waterway management (IWM) collaborations	number	4	4	4	4	5

Activity Indicators and Performance Measures

Key Initiatives and Projects

Project activities to progress Integrated Catchment Management outcomes and deliver against associated Ministerial Priority Areas were implemented through 8 key initiatives in 2024–25 as outlined below.

BushBank Program (State)

- Delivery of the 'Restoring Mallee Connections – sequestering carbon and securing biodiversity' project, with carbon sequestration projected to be 12,009 tCO2-e over 25 years.

Catchment Governance Program (State)

- Monitoring implementation of the Mallee RCS (2022–28) was supported through the ongoing application and maintenance of a regional evidence base to facilitate the collection, collation and communication of information required by associated reporting frameworks (e.g. preparation of 2023-24 Condition and Management Report as per government guidelines).
- Participation on the Northern Mallee Integrated Water Management forum to facilitate collaboration with water corporations and local government, and provide for the preparation, monitoring and implementation of associated Plans.

Future Drought Fund – Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program (State)

- Coordination of Mallee Drought Resilience Plan Implementation Grants and associated Governance Group.

Integrated Water Management Program (State)

- Investigating the feasibility of repurposing disused irrigation infrastructure to provide a reliable and cost-effective way of delivering environmental water to Lake Hawthorn, while also providing possible flood mitigation measures.

Natural Heritage Trust (Commonwealth)

- Participation on forums supporting collaborations and information sharing on carbon sequestration initiatives and climate change/climate variability opportunities (e.g. Climate Risk Management CoP, Low Rainfall Zone Dryland Farming CoP, and Loddon Mallee Regional Drought Coordination Group, and Carbon Farming Outreach Program Working Group).
- Three 'Climate Smart Agriculture' projects being implemented across dryland agricultural landscapes: Increasing capacity of Mallee farmers to identify & adopt climate smart farming practices through the use of innovative soil mapping tools; More grain per drop of rain – increasing the yield potential of Mallee dryland cropping systems in a drying climate, and Mallee Sustainable Agriculture Services.

Our Catchments Our Communities (State)

- Eight place-based on-ground stewardship projects being delivered by local stakeholders and Traditional Owners, encompassing: 5 private landholders implementing actions to protect 1,080ha of priority riparian habitat; Traditional Owners (First People of the Millewa Mallee) implementing actions to protect 114ha of priority habitat from erosion impacts and planning actions that will protect a further 2,500ha from recreational and invasive species impacts; and local community/land managers maintaining works completed under previous (2020–24) OCOC investment to enhance environmental and recreational values of the 471ha Lake Cullulleraine target area. Collectively, these actions provided for multiple (environmental, economic, social and cultural) outcomes across two Mallee RCS priority local areas: the 'Murray River Floodplain' and 'Murray Scroll Belt'.

- Ongoing coordination of the region's two Catchment Partnership Committees (Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity/Water) and participation of Traditional Owners/Aboriginal Community through the Aboriginal Reference Group to progress Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement Annual Action Plan priorities, including delivery against Indigenous Participation Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan targets, identifying and progressing joint funding opportunities, emergency preparedness and response planning, information sharing to support adaptive management/continuous improvement, and undertaking mid-term review of the Mallee RCS).

- Participation on state-wide forums supporting collaborations and information sharing on carbon sequestration initiatives and climate change/climate variability opportunities (i.e. VCMA Climate Change Working Group and Natural Capital Project Steering Committee).

Protecting Biodiversity Program (State)

- One placed-based on-ground stewardship project being delivered in partnership with Traditional Owners (First People of the Millewa Mallee) to support biodiversity and cultural outcomes across the 20,421ha Ned's Corner landscape.

Saving Native Species (Commonwealth)

- Two place-based on-ground stewardship projects being delivered in partnership with private land managers to support landscape-scale action within the Mallee RCS Annuello- Wandown priority Local Area that enhance critical Malleefowl habitat.

Performance

Performance against 2024–25 Integrated Catchment Management activity indicators, including actual delivery against budgeted targets, is presented according to the Ministerial 'Priority Area' with which they align (see Table 15).

Overall, 83 percent of performance targets were achieved or exceeded over the reporting period; with one of the six measures unable to be progressed as originally scheduled (i.e. exceeded -5% variance), specifically:

- *Stewardship*: One of the six private land manager stewardship projects scheduled to be undertaken through the Our Catchments, Our Communities program has been deferred to 2025–26.

Table 15 | Performance against 2024–25 Integrated Catchment Management activity measures

Activity Indicators	Performance measures	Unit of measure	2024–25 actual	2024–25 target	Performance variation (%)	Result
Catchment health - *Provide leadership in delivery of programs to improve the health of priority catchments*						
Coordinate implementation and reporting of RCS in line with legislative changes *(Ministerial Expectation 9.1.1.001)*	Compliance with guidelines for development and dissemination of RCS Annual Report (Catchment Condition and Management Report)	percent	100	100	0	✓
Deliver integrated catchment management (ICM) in line with Our Catchments Our Communities (OCOC) – Building on the legacy for better stewardship *(Ministerial Expectation 9.2.1.001)*	Place-based on-ground catchment stewardship projects delivered in partnership with local stakeholders and Traditional Owners	number	13	14	-7	■
Partnership Agreements - *Committing to delivering integrated catchment management, including leading the implementation and monitoring of catchment partnership agreements*						
Report on Mallee Catchment Partnership Agreement (CPA) in accordance with the Framework for Catchment Partnership Agreements *(Ministerial Expectation 9.3.001)*	Delivery partners participating in Mallee CPA forums	number	15	15	0	✓
	Priority actions established by the CPA Annual Plan progressed	number	7	7	0	✓
Climate change - *Explore opportunities and/or deliver carbon sequestration initiatives and adapt to climate change and climate variability*						
Explore opportunities and/or deliver initiatives to: • sequester carbon and generate carbon offset credits, and • adapt to climate change and climate variability (Ministerial Expectation 1.4.1.001)	Opportunities explored in partnership with key stakeholders	number	12	-	0	✓
	Initiatives delivered	number	6	-	0	✓
Resilient and liveable cities and towns - *Contributing to healthy communities and supporting resilient, sustainable, and liveable environments*						
Actively participate and promote stakeholder collaboration with other organisations through IWM Forums, to help facilitate IWM *(Ministerial Expectation 5.1.1.006)*	IWM forums participated in	number	1	1	0	✓
Participate in the preparation and monitoring the implementation of IWM plans, particularly through prioritising measures to enhance waterway values *(Ministerial Expectation 5.1.1.007 and 5.1.1.008)*	IWM plans prepared/monitored/implemented	number	4	4	0	✓

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 16.

Table 16 | Five year financial summary

Five year financial summary	2024–25 $'000	2023–24 $'000	2022–23 $'000	2021–22 $'000	2020–21 $'000
Revenue					
Commonwealth Government contributions	7,412	5,035	5,110	6,061	4,881
State Government contributions	10,379	9,033	9,792	11,150	9,946
Other revenue	5,217	6,229	8,244	9,109	7,057
Total Revenue	**23,008**	**20,297**	**23,146**	**26,320**	**21,884**
Expenditure					
Employee benefits expenses	6,233	5,913	6.440	6,365	5,817
Grants and Incentives	1,145	1,581	1,902	724	1,083
Other operating expenses	13,942	15,255	12,973	15,248	9,966
Total Expenditure	**21,320**	**22,749**	**21,315**	**22,337**	**18,866**
Assets					
Current assets	52,854	49,995	52,395	50,270	46,406
Non-current assets	680	769	464	333	460
Total Assets	**53,534**	**50,764**	**52,859**	**50,603**	**46,866**
Liabilities					
Current liabilities	1,334	549	833	666	978
Non-current liabilities	1,379	1,238	836	1,205	1,139
Total Liabilities	**2,713**	**1,787**	**1,669**	**1,871**	**2,117**

Current year financial review

Mallee CMA is financially sound, with adequate provisions in place to fulfil its obligations to employees, and replacement of plant and equipment. Sufficient resources are allocated to deliver the Corporate Plan business objectives, forming the organisation's strategic direction for 2025–26.

Mallee CMA reported a surplus of $ 1,843,745 (2024: deficit $2,212,492) for the financial year. Assets exceed liabilities by $50,821,222 (2024: $48,977,477).

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 it is responsible for administering. Grants were provided in 2024–25 to deliver targeted on-ground works (i.e. fencing, revegetation, pest plant and animal control, track rationalisation and maintenance, access improvement, and signage), and capacity building activities (i.e. utilising new technology, demonstration sites, workshops, field days, citizen science).

Table 17 | Disclosure of grants and transfer payments

Organisation	Payments $
Implementing landscape-scale actions to conserve Malleefowl Pest animal control, fencing, and revegetation works	
Parks Victoria	50,000
National Malleefowl Recovery Group	20,000
First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation	897
Barengi Gadjin Land Council	2,182
Islands in the Sand (OCOC) 2024–28 Pest plant and animal control, fencing, revegetation works and track maintenance	
5 Landholders	9,077
First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation	10,000
Mallee Wise Water Use and Best Practice (Sustainable Irrigation Program) Irrigation infrastructure upgrades/conversions for improved water-use efficiency (WUE)	
1 Landholder	2,900
Protecting Biodiversity Program - Eastern Murray Pest plant and animal control on public land reserves, roadsides, and private remnants	
Parks Victoria	147,283
Protecting Biodiversity Program – Ned's Corner Pest plant and animal control on public land reserves, roadsides, and private remnants	
First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation	54,981
Flood recovery aquatic biodiversity Rehabilitation of wetlands following flooding to support threatened species	
First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation	16,666
Bush Bank - Restoring Mallee Connections Revegetation works, seed collection	
Barengi Gadjin Land Council	45,268
Narcooyia Creek fish habitat improvement project Habitat mapping of Narcooyia creek, followed by installation of woody habitat	
Oz Fish	3,455
Hattah Lakes Ramsar Site: Securing the environmental benefit Pest plant and animal control to ensure ecological benefits	
Parks Victoria	291,675
Sustainable Agriculture Services Identifying, validating and promoting improved soil management practices	
Birchip Cropping Group	44,540
Threatened Mallee Birds: Restoring landscape-scale connectivity Pest plant and animal control and revegetation on public land reserves and private remnants	
DEECA	105,427
Mallee Landcare Group	9,800
Murrayville Landcare Group	7,705
Barengi Gadjin Land Council	5,182
First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation	1,346
Victorian Landcare Grants (Victorian Landcare Program) On-ground works that protect and restore the Victorian landscape	
Annuello Landcare Group	13,752
Berriwillock Landcare Group	13,752
Beulah Landcare Group	24,553
Birchip Landcare Group	20,000
Culgoa Landcare Group	13,752
Curyo-Watchupga Landcare Group	13,752
Friends of Mallee Conservation	13,784
Hopetoun Landcare Group	13,752
Kooloonong-Natya Landcare Group	13,752
Lalbert Landcare Group	13,752
Mallee Landcare Group	13,752
Manangatang Landcare Group	13,752
Millewa Carwarp Landcare	13,752
Murrayville Landcare Group	15,332
Nullawil Landcare Group	18,329
Nyah West Landcare Group	13,752
Red Cliffs Community Landcare Group	4,276
Sea Lake Landcare Group	13,752
Ultima Landcare Group	13,752
Victorian Mallee Landcare Group	500
Waitchie & District Landcare Group	13,752
Weeah Landcare Group	13,752
Woomelang Lascelles Landcare Group	13,752
TOTAL	**$1,145,192**

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.

Chief Executive Officer
Jenny Collins

Chief Operations Officer
James Kellerman

General Manager Operations & Community
Rian Caccianiga

- Victorian Waterway Investment Framework
- Our Catchment, Our Communities
- Floodplain Restoration Program
- Biodiversity Response Planning
- Victorian Landcare
- The Living Murray
- Basin Plan Implementation
- Environmental Water Reserve
- Sustainable Irrigation & Salinity
- Major Projects
- Environmental Planning & Approval
- Traditional Owner Engagement
- Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Program
- Community & Stakeholder Engagement

General Manager Operations & Strategy
Jo Latta

- Strategic Planning, Reporting & Partnerships
- Protecting Threatened Species and Ecological Communities
- Enhancing Terrestrial Habitat
- Protecting Ramsar Wetlands
- Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture

Chief Finance Officer
Meagan Crozier

- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Quality
- Safety and Wellbeing
- Project Support
- Contracts
- Business Systems
- Information Technology & Security

Figure 4 | Mallee CMA organisational structure 2024–25

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

The Board sets governance level policies, establishes the strategic direction, vision, values and organisation-wide goals and objectives. The Board is responsible for all functions undertaken by Mallee CMA and consists of up to nine (voting) members appointed by the Minister.

Several 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.

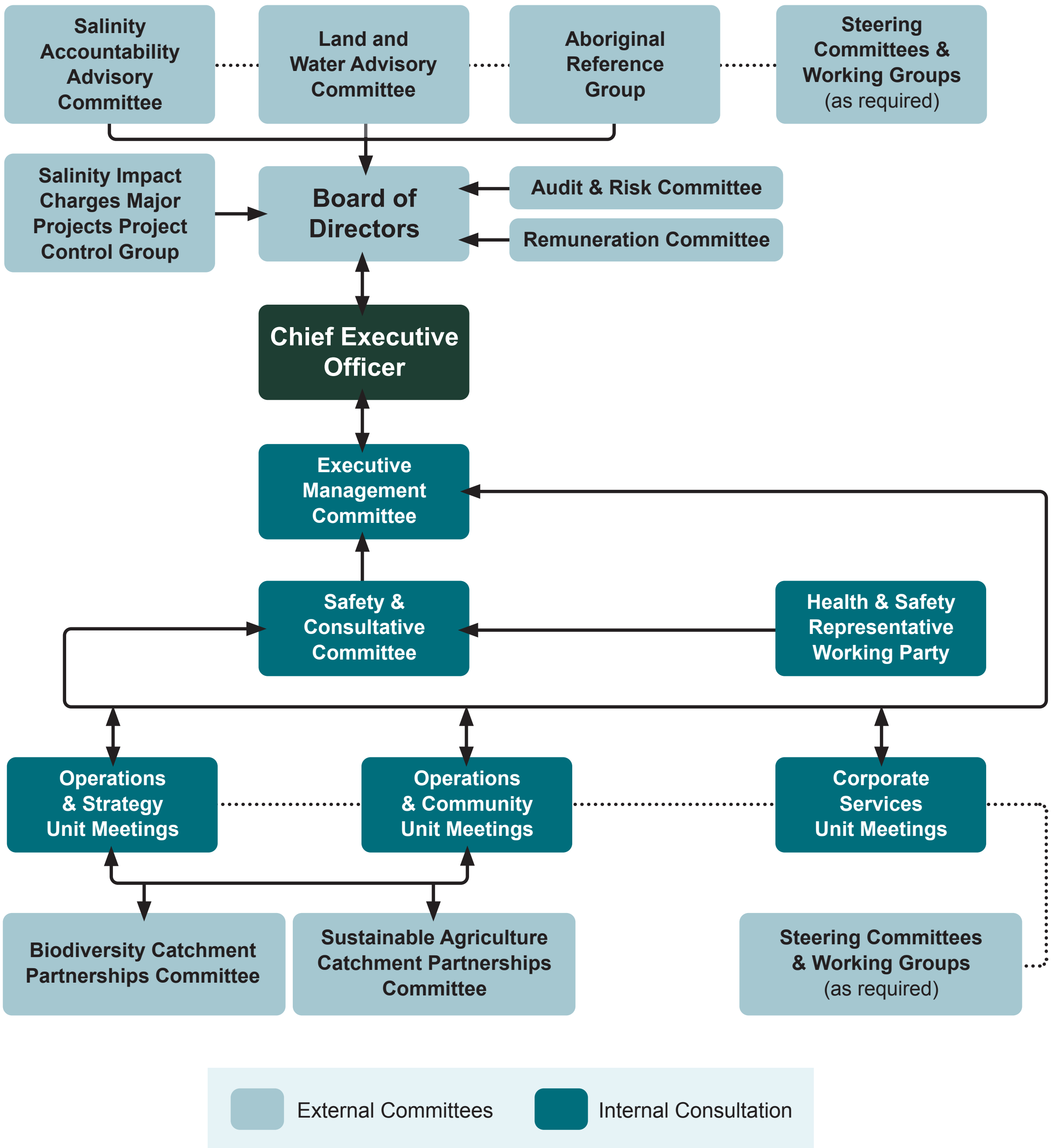


Figure 5 | Mallee CMA organisational and governance structure 2024–25

Governing Board

Mallee CMA's current Board represents a wide range of interests across the Mallee region, including community engagement; agriculture; economics; horticulture; financial auditing; risk management; governance; workplace health and safety; human resource management; community service; and the environment. As part of their responsibilities, each Board member has a specific leadership role that reflects their 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 Deputy Chair of Western Murray Irrigation and previously held employment with the Australian Table Grape Association as Manager for Communications and Industry Analysis, Murray Primary Health Network as a Workforce Development Officer, and Tandou Limited as Human Resource Manager. Her diverse background also includes agribusiness, earthmoving and small mines extraction, public relations, marketing, and workforce development.

Allison is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), member of Australian Human Resource Institute; Governance Institute of Australia; and Institute of Community Directors Australia.

Allison holds a Bachelor of Arts (Management Communication), an Associate Diploma in Animal Production and has completed the AICD Company Directors course.

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
- Member - Aboriginal Reference 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 is the current CEO at Jacaranda Village.

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 2023 to 30 September 2025.

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 Secretary of the Koorlong Hall Committee and is the 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 has over 30 years of experience as a primary producer and 35 years of 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 is an experienced company director and is currently Chair of Swan Hill District Health, and a member of its Community and Cultural Engagement Committee.

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 2023 to 30 September 2027.

Antonio (Tony) Alessi

Tony is a registered, self-employed chiropractor who grew up on a vineyard specialising in fresh and dried fruit.

From 2016–22 Tony was a member of Mallee Regional Partnerships where he assisted in assessing and advocating for projects that improved 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. Previous positions include Deputy Chair, Arts Mildura (2018–20) and member of the Regional Advisory Council; Victorian Multicultural Commission (2015–20).

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 brings over 25 years of Primary Production experience, particularly in dairy management and development. She has an ongoing interest in water policy and the environment, exemplified by the DEECA committee appointments: Irrigators' Share Committee; and Consultative Committee for Stage 1A of the Victorian Constraints Measures Program.

Ann is a Board member of the Barham based, Western Murray Land Improvement Group which is concerned with: Ag Research, Development and Extension; Industry Diversification; Landcare; Environmental Services; and Environmental Markets. Ann is also 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, Ann possesses skills, knowledge, and experience in committee leadership, primary production, water policy, and community engagement.

Currently Ann represents the Mallee CMA Board as:
- Member - Audit and Risk 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.

Kym McIntosh

Kym McIntosh grew up in north central Victoria on a mixed cattle sheep and cropping farm.

After completing a Bachelor of Recreation, Kym worked in community leisure and then took some time to travel. Kym went on to work in state government including roles with Sport and Recreation Victoria, and Services Australia (formerly the Department of Human Services) in project management/disability services and then undertook further studies to obtain a graduate certificate in Natural Resource Management through Deakin University.

Kym and her husband recently purchased her parent's small dryland farm near Kerang, where they manage a herd of Angus. Kym also assists her husband with his Melbourne-based landscaping business.

As an active member of her local Enhancing Northern Waterways Advisory Group (hosted by the North Central CMA) and the Mallee CMA Board, Kym is able to follow her passion of protecting and enhancing waterways and the environment.

Kym currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:
- Member - Land and Water Advisory Committee

Kym was a Board member during the reporting year with her current term of appointment being from 01 October 2023 to 30 September 2025.

Ruwan Jayasinghe

Ruwan is a chartered professional civil engineer and a fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia. He has worked extensively in floodplain management, asset management, and facilitated the delivery of multi-million-dollar capital works programs and flood overlay planning scheme amendments. Ruwan currently works for City of Stonnington in a leadership role in asset management.

Prior to 2022, Ruwan worked with all Catchment Management Authorities as a member of the Victorian Floodplain Manager's Forum for three years. One key function of this forum is sharing knowledge in flood management for the common good of all Victorians.

Ruwan also worked for Melbourne Water in various technical and leadership roles for 26 years. During this period Ruwan engaged constructively with many organisations and communities to facilitate positive outcomes across Victoria.

This included contributing to many statewide committees, projects, and publications such as the Victorian Flood Mapping and Data Guidelines; Melbourne Water's Flood Mapping Technical Specifications; Benchmarking Australian Rainfall and Runoff 2019 for Victoria; City of Melbourne's Integrated Climate Adaptation Model Steering Committee; and the Victorian Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme.

Ruwan currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:
- Member - Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee

Ruwan was a Board member during the reporting year with his current term of appointment being from 01 October 2023 to 30 September 2027.

Non-voting Board Members: 12-month appointments

Andy Charles

Andy Charles (a descendant of Yorta Yorta/Wemba Wemba Aboriginal tribes) brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise with over 15 years' experience within the Family and Community Services sector and has demonstrated a dedicated commitment to improving the well-being of families and communities through innovative and client-centred approaches.

Andy holds a master's degree of Management, Post Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy, and a Diploma of Community Services, and has developed his skills over time through hands-on experience in a variety of roles within the sector and community. He has a proven track record of advocating for vulnerable children, youth, and families, developing and implementing programs that address social inequalities, and fostering partnerships with local organisations to support families in need.

Andy approaches his work with empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a deep understanding of the complex issues facing families and communities today. He believes in the power of collaboration, community engagement, and a strengths-based approach to empower individuals to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential.

He is currently the Executive General Manager of Child and Family Services (Victoria/NSW) at Mallee Family Care, as well as the Executive Chair of the Mallee Child and Family Services Alliance and President of the Irymple Football Netball Club.

Andy was a Delegate member for a portion of the reporting year with his current term of appointment being from 03 June 2025 to 30 June 2026.

Gregory Lewis

Having grown up on a family farm near the Welsh border of England, Greg moved to Australia in 2012 and made this move permanent from 2014. Greg has since been employed by Olam Orchards Australia growing almonds throughout the Sunraysia region and is currently Operations Analyst based at the Carwarp Processing Facility.

Greg has a BSc (Hons) in Sports and Exercise Science from Cardiff Metropolitan University in the UK and a Graduate Certificate in Agribusiness from Marcus Oldham College.

Greg brings knowledge of agriculture and particularly irrigated horticulture combined with analytical skills and a keen interest in sports and recreation.

Greg currently represents the Mallee CMA Board as:
- Associate Board Member (ABM)

Greg was an Associate member for a portion of the reporting year with his current term of appointment being from 03 June 2024 to 02 June 2026.

Board meetings attended

Nine Ordinary Board Meetings were held during the 2024–25 financial year. The Chair approved all Board member absences during the reporting period.

Table 18 | Board membership, terms, and meeting attendance 2024–25

Board Member	Appointed	Appointment review	Attended	Eligible to attend
Allison McTaggart (Chair)	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	8	9
Ann Hodge	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	9	9
Janice Kelly	01 October 2023	30 September 2027	7	9
Kellie Nulty	01 October 2023	30 September 2025	8	9
Kym McIntosh	01 October 2023	30 September 2025	8	9
Robert Matthews	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	9	9
Ruwan Jayasinghe	01 October 2023	30 September 2027	8	9
Tony Alessi	01 October 2021	30 September 2025	8	9
Non-voting members: Independent Aboriginal Delegate (IAD) / Associate Board Member (ABM)				
Andy Charles (IAD)	03 June 2024	02 June 2026	8	9
Gregory Lewis (ABM)	03 June 2024	02 June 2026	7	9

Audit and Risk Committee membership and roles

The members of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) in 2024–25 is detailed in Table 19.

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.

Members are appointed by the board annually and are subject to the committee's terms of reference.

Meetings are typically scheduled monthly and at any other time at the request of a committee member or the internal or external auditor. In 2024–25 the committee met eight times. Attendance of committee members is detailed in Table 19.

Table 19 | Audit and Risk Committee membership, terms, and attendance 2024–25

Member	Appointed	Appointment review	Attended	Eligible to attend
Janice Kelly (Chair)	23 October 2024	30 September 2025	7	8
Anne Hodge	23 October 2024	30 September 2025	8	8
Kellie Nulty	23 October 2024	30 September 2025	7	8
Tony Alessi	23 October 2024	30 September 2025	7	8

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 as a central point for developing action plans and initiatives in relation to the Chief Executive Officer employment cycle, board inductions, learning and development, and assessments in accordance with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) guidelines. The Remuneration Committee:

- Aims to improve the performance of the CEO and Board, strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness, and capability of the public sector to meet existing and emerging needs and deliver high-quality services and maintain and advocate for public sector professionalism and integrity
- Takes a risk mitigation approach and establishes formal processes to address succession risk management (specifically vacancy, readiness, and transition risk).

The Remuneration Committee manages the employment cycle of the CEO by:

- Encompassing the full employment cycle from advertising to contract negotiation, employee performance management, and end of tenure
- Succession planning for the role.

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 DEECA Guidelines
- Ensuring procedures for agendas, decision items, and reporting to the Board are adhered to.

Table 20 | Remuneration Committee membership, and attendance 2024–25

Member	Appointed	Appointment review
Allison McTaggart (Chair), Board Chair	23 October 2024	30 September 2025
Janice Kelly	23 October 2024	30 September 2025
Kellie Nulty	23 October 2024	30 September 2025

The Remuneration Committee met once during the 2024–25 reporting period.

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 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 matters and then makes recommendations to the Board for consideration.

The SAAC met three times during the 2024–25 reporting period.

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

- Ann Hodge
- Robert Matthews
- Ruwan Jayasinghe

Table 21 | Salinity Accountability Advisory Committee membership 2024–25

Member	Organisation	Appointmented	Appointment review
James Kellerman (Chair)	Mallee CMA	25 October 2023	30 September 2025
Ann Hodge	Mallee CMA Board Member	23 October 2023	30 September 2025
Kaleb Sexton	Lower Murray Water	NA	NA
Samira Akhavan	DEECA	NA	NA
Mark Potter	Goulburn Murray Water	NA	NA
Peter Jones	Community member	30 June 2024	30 June 2026
Robert Matthews	Mallee CMA Board Member	23 October 2023	30 September 2025
Ruwan Jayasinghe	Mallee CMA Board Member	23 October 2023	30 September 2025
Kim Trigg	Community member	23 October 2024	30 June 2026

Salinity Impact Charges 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 confirming the proposed project governance structure, either:
  - Business as usual with SAAC oversight for established low-risk and low-complexity projects less than $800,000 in value; or
  - 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 DEECA.
- 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.

The SIC Major Projects PCG did not meet during the 2024–25 reporting period.

Table 22 | SIC Major Projects PCG membership 2024–25

Member	
James Kellerman (Chair)	Chief Operations Officer, Mallee CMA
Allison McTaggart	Board Chair, Mallee CMA
Melinda Knapp	Executive Director Catchments and Communities, DEECA
Campbell Fitzpatrick	Independent Member
Jenny Collins	Chief Executive Officer, Mallee CMA

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 the 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.

The LWAC met four times during the 2024–25 reporting period.

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

- Kym McIntosh
- Robert Matthews
- Tony Alessi

Table 23 | LWAC membership 2024–25

Member	Appointment review
Jo Latta (Chair)	NA
Andrew Hudson	30 June 2026
Annette Lambert	30 June 2026
Brian Ebery	30 June 2026
Christiane Jaeger	30 June 2026
Fiona Willersdorf	30 June 2026
Kim Trigg	30 June 2026
Marissa Shean	30 June 2026
Robert Biggs	30 June 2026

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 natural resource management (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 specific issues identified as requiring a community perspective.

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

The ARG met three times during the 2024–25 reporting period. At least one Board member attends ARG meetings.

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

- Allison McTaggart

Table 24 | ARG membership 2024–25

Member	Appointment review
Charlene Davis (Chair)	30 June 2026
Ken Stewart	30 June 2026
Rose Kirby	30 June 2026
Barenji Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	30 June 2026
First People of Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation	30 June 2026

Public Sector Values and Employment Principles

The *Public Administration Act 2004* establishes values to guide conduct and performance in the Victorian Public Sector. The Victorian Public Sector Commission's (VPSC) 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 employees. Selection processes ensure applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably based on core capabilities against the Mallee CMA Workforce Capability Framework Policy and without discrimination.

To ensure public sector values (Figure 1) are embedded within the workplace, Mallee CMA's policies and practices are consistent with VPSC's employment and conduct principles and provide for fair treatment, career opportunities and the early resolution of workplace issues. Mallee CMA advises its employees on how to manage conflicts of interest, how to respond to offers of gifts, benefits, and/or hospitality 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 (OHSW) which includes the promotion of mental health and wellbeing for all employees 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 OHSW, ensuring the resources for its successful implementation and continuous improvement are provided.

During the reporting period Mallee CMA has focused on psychosocial initiatives and training.

Training

Throughout 2024-25 Mallee CMA provided training to enhance employee OHSW skills and competency in the following areas:

- Health and Safety Representative (HSR) training
- Certificate II in First Aid and annual CPR refresher training
- Psychosocial awareness training
- Hazard identification and risk control
- Root cause analysis training
- Snake and Wildlife awareness
- Basic wildfire awareness training
- 4WD and Defensive driver training
- Kayak safety raining
- Site Emergency Warden training
- Safety in the Construction Industry (White Card)
- Dam Safety inspection training
- Team Connect and Harassment training

Internal OHSW training is completed via the Rapid Induct application. Reminders for refresher training are automatically generated by the system, ensuring training up to date and easily monitored.

Incident Management

Safety related occurrences across the Mallee CMA are reported under the categories of hazard and incident. Incidents of all types are grouped 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.

Mallee CMA uses Rapid Global Incident application for hazard, incident, and injury reporting. Reports are extracted from Rapid Global and reported to the various Mallee CMA committees.

Mallee CMA recognises the importance of incident reporting and supports continuous improvement through its commitment to retaining ISO 9001:2015 certification for the QMS.

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 and Safety Act 2004*.

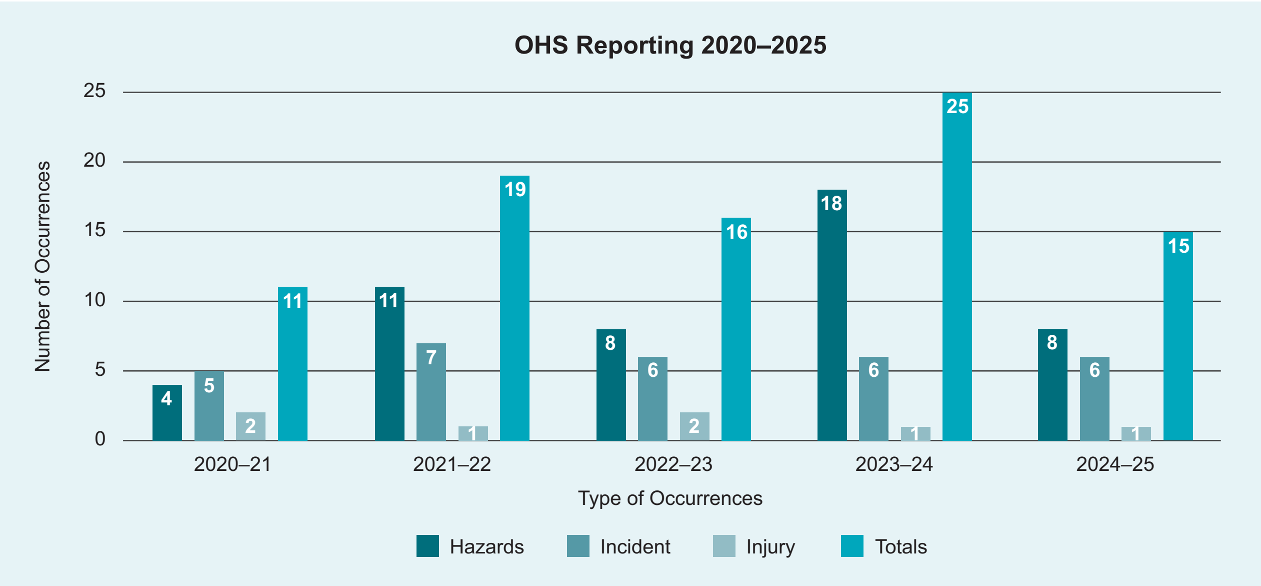


Figure 6 | Mallee CMA OHS reported occurrences 2020 to 2025

Table 25 | Performance against OHS management measures

Measures	Key Performance Indicators	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Incidents	Number of incidents (rate per 100 FTE)	10.9	12.7	15.2
Claims	Number of claims (rate per 100 FTE)	1	0	1
	Number of lost time claims (rate per 100 FTE)	1	0	1
	Number of claims exceeding 13 weeks (rate per 100 FTE)	1	0	0
Fatalities	Fatality claims	Nil	Nil	Nil
Claim costs	Average cost per standard claim	$16,767	$0	$2,982.38
Return to work	Percentage of claims with return to work plans <30 days	Nil	Nil	1
Management commitment	Evidence of OHS policy statement, OHS objectives, regular reporting to senior management of OH&S, and OHS plans (signed by CEO or equivalent)	Completed	Completed	Completed
	Evidence of OHS 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	100%
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
	Percentage of issues identified actioned arising from:			
	Internal audits	100%	100%	100%
	HSR provisional improvement notices (PINs)	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Worksafe notices	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Percentage of managers and employees that have received OH&S training:			
	Induction	100%	100%	100%
	Management training	100%	100%	100%
	Contractors, temporary workers, and visitors	100%	100%	100%
	Percentage of HSRs trained:			
	Acceptance of role	100%	100%	100%
	Re-training or refresher training	100%	100%	100%
	Reporting of incidents and injuries	100%	100%	100%

Part 3

Workforce Data

Workforce Data

Table 26 discloses the headcount and full-time employee equivalent (FTE) of all active public service employees of Mallee CMA, employed in the last full pay period in June of the current reporting period (2025), and in the last full pay period in June of the previous reporting period (2024).

All employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collection.

Table 26 | Details of employment levels in the last full pay period in June 2025 and 2024

	June 2024						June 2025					
	All Employees		Ongoing [ii]		Fixed term & Casual		All Employees		Ongoing [ii]		Fixed term & Casual	
	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE
Gender												
Men	17	16.2	11	11	6	5.2	19	17.78	11	10.70	8	7.08
Women	33	28.84	24	20.58	9	8.26	38	33.17	28	24.01	10	9.16
Self-described	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.59	0	0	1	0.59
Prefer not to respond	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age												
15-24	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	2.22	0	0	3	2.22
25-34	12	10.57	10	8.57	2	2	17	15.59	11	10	6	5.59
35-44	12	10.17	6	4.91	6	5.26	11	8.60	9	6.60	2	2
45-54	12	11.80	9	8.8	3	3	11	10.91	8	7.91	3	3
55-64	7	7	5	5	2	2	10	9.77	7	7	3	2.77
65+	6	4.5	4	3.3	2	1.2	6	4.45	4	3.2	2	1.25
Classification												
CEO	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
General Managers	3	3	3	3	0	0	4	4	2	2	2	2
Managers	9	8.40	7	6.40	2	2	10	9.51	7	6.51	3	3
Project/Support Staff	37	32.64	25	22.18	12	10.46	43	37.03	30	26.20	13	10.83
Total	**50**	**45.04**	**35**	**31.58**	**15**	**13.46**	**58**	**51.54**	**39**	**34.71**	**19**	**16.83**

'n' denotes that no data has been collected

[i] Excluded are external contractors/consultants, and temporary employees employed by employment agencies.

[ii] 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

As a reflection of community diversity, Mallee CMA is working towards creating a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusion in all areas of our business by valuing social and professional identity, alternative thoughts, backgrounds, experiences, uniqueness, and creativity.

Diversity and Inclusion Plan initiatives are delivered against relevant strategies and plans, including Gender Equality, Social Procurement, Innovate Reconciliation, Engagement, People Matter Survey, and Psychosocial Management. Through these initiatives we will continue to develop a collaborative culture that is inclusive of different points of view, actively removes barriers to participation, and fosters a cultural environment where everyone feels safe to express who they are.

Mallee CMA is working towards improving cultural awareness and sensitivity, fostering respect, and reducing cultural misunderstandings for a more inclusive work environment. The Diversity and Inclusion Plan has a target of increasing the percentage of its employees who undertake training through the Centre for Cultural Competency Australia (Module A) to 100% by 2025. The following table outlines Mallee CMA's actual progress against this target in 2023–24 and 2024–25.

Table 27 | Progress against Diversity and Inclusion policy initiative

Diversity and Inclusion policy initiative	Target	Actual progress in 2023–24	Actual progress in 2024–25
Provide regular training and support to Board members and employees to promote a strong understanding of, and support for, diversity and inclusion in the workplace	100% completion of accredited cultural and diversity training of Board members and employees	84%	100%

Part 4

Other Disclosures

Expenditure of funds within the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan 2024–25

The Ministerial Determination of Salinity Impact Zones and Salinity Impact Charges (SIC) fixes the SIC 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 2024–25 totalled $2,997,331.

Total expenditure in 2024–25 within the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan was $5,445,943 with the following projects being delivered.

Managing statutory responsibilities through the implementation of a governance framework to deliver regional monitoring and reporting obligations under the *Water Act 2007* and *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* as delegated to the Mallee CMA, and to support the functions of the SAAC. Implementing actions in accordance with the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan 2020–29 ($445,000).

No expressions of interest for on-ground works and investigations to generate additional salinity credits for Victoria were received for the 2024-25 financial year ($0).

The Mallee On-farm Irrigation Incentives Program, which focuses on assisting irrigators in the upgrade and management of on-farm infrastructure to generate water-use efficiency outcomes resulting in salinity benefits. For the 2024–25 financial year, no SIC funded applications were received ($0).

Five major projects listed on the Annual Salinity Major Works Program that are critical to the offsetting and mitigation of salinity impacts from irrigation in waterways and landscapes were carried out.

- Two field investigations: the first was establishing hydrogeological processes in floodplains receiving environmental and river flood water across five floodplain areas from Nyah to the South Australian border along the Murray River to inform numerical groundwater models for assessing the salinity impact of floodplain watering. The second project established options for reducing irrigation-induced salinity impacts on Psyche Bend Lagoon, identifying feasible mitigation actions and undertaking investigations to verify their effectiveness ($793,277).
- Four IFARM pilot projects were reviewed, resulting in the identification of feasible works. Additionally, the preservation of historic foundational salinity management data addressed an urgent need to safeguard information at risk of being lost due to change in consultancy ownership and evolving technologies. Some of this critical data was successfully recovered from old servers and archives and has been provided to LMW for long-term preservation ($150,000).
- The Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) program progressed through data processing stages, with raw SkyTEM data and validation data from drilling, sampling and geophysical investigation received. Final data processing is currently underway and is scheduled for completion by July 2026 ($1,979,922).
- The Mallee Salt Procedures Manual and the Mallee Salinity Management Framework have been reviewed and updated. The Mallee Landscape Salinity Mitigation and Offset Policy has been developed and is awaiting Mallee CMA Board endorsement ($149,789).

Three salinity research projects were undertaken ($850,000):

- Water and Salt Balance Options Analysis - This project focused on five terminal irrigation drainage basins - Doerings Basin, Karadoc Swamp, Lake Iraak, Woorlong Wetlands, and Red Cliffs Southeast. The aim was to investigate options based on salt storage; the interaction between irrigation drainage and groundwater (including perched water tables); and potential leakage to surrounding areas.
- Regional Irrigation-Induced Salinisation Assessment - This study examined the cumulative impacts of irrigation on landscape salinity across six areas: Lake Cullulleraine, Merbein West, Nangiloc-Colignan, Wemen, Boundary Bend, and Kenley to Nyah. Borehole data near irrigation properties was analysed to detect perched water derived from irrigation. A GIS-based salinity assessment tool was developed, incorporating both regional and perched water table processes. This tool could support the future evaluation of irrigation development applications.
- Groundwater Management to Protect Ecological Values - A concept-level design and cost estimate was prepared for intercepting groundwater at Psyche Bend Lagoon. The proposal included disposal to an existing saline basin via a purpose-built or existing pipeline, aiming to mitigate threats to ecological values. Whilst outcomes from the project showed that this would be an effective salinity mitigation action, further works would require significant investment currently not available.

Project management development and implementation of capital investment projects, including four hydrological research projects initiatives focused on:

- Hydrological investigations
- Assessing the impact of cumulative irrigation on landscapes
- Drainage disposal basin performance assessment
- Saline groundwater interception.

Preparation of the Mallee Salinity Investment Plan and its Final Report, as well as the BSM2030 Annual Implementation Report. Mallee CMA representation at the Victorian Salt Disposal Working Group Meetings, providing input and presenting findings to support statewide salinity management efforts ($313,574).

Annual data collection from Mallee groundwater observation bores and irrigation drainage monitoring stations supported and refined salinity impact assessments that generated salinity credits and debits for the region. This project involved the collection and management of groundwater level and salinity data at 436 monitoring bores on a quarterly, six monthly, or annual basis. Salinity and flow data from 28 irrigation drainage outfall sites and three river sites was also collected and managed. The data informs salinity impact models and reviews of specific accountable actions within the region. This project complimented groundwater monitoring by installing ten new groundwater monitoring bores in locations managed by Parks Victoria and Mildura Rural City Council. Six bores were drilled in Cowanna Bend (Yelta), Bottle Bend (Karadoc) Bridge Creek (Piambie) and Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. Four bores were drilled in Leerson Road, Cullulleraine, and Castle Crossing Road, Colignan. 31 non-monitored redundant groundwater bores were decommissioned at the Yatpool Raak/Buloke Conservation Area in Iraak. Several Mallee network groundwater bores on floodplains impacted by the flood in December 2022 were also rehabilitated ($600,000).

A range of activities and material were completed as part of communication and engagement activities ($164,381) including:

- Challenges and opportunities for irrigation development and salinity management in the Mallee region was provided and discussed at the Sustainable Irrigation Program forums and Victorian Salt Disposal Working Group.
- Irrigators shed meetings in Koorlong, Nangiloc, Boundary Bend, Lindsay Point and Robinvale, providing presentations on irrigation incentives, land and water management options, seasonal water availability and Murray River flows. Over 65 irrigators and 14 agency partner representatives attended these meetings.
- The 2024 Mallee Horticulture Crop Report detailing the irrigation development in the Mallee region was uploaded to the Mallee CMA website to enable knowledge and information sharing.

The balance of funds on 30 June 2025 was $31,734,768. 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

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* introduced in August 2018 brings together the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) and Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy which were previously administered separately.

Mallee CMA is required to apply the Local Jobs First policy to all projects valued at $1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria. MPSG applies to all construction projects valued at $20 million or more. MPSG and VIPP guidelines will continue to apply to applicable projects where contracts have been entered prior to 15 August 2018.

Projects Commenced – Local Jobs First Standard
NIL Local Jobs First Standard project was commenced during 2024–25.

Projects Completed – Local Jobs First Standard
NIL Local Jobs First Standard project was completed during 2024–25.

Reporting requirements – all projects
Mallee CMA has NIL contracts prior to 15 August 2018 for which a VIPP Plan or Local Industry Development Plan was required.

Reporting requirements – grants
No grants were provided during 2024–25, requiring NIL conversations with the Industry Capability Network (Victoria) Ltd.

Government advertising expenditure

Mallee CMA's government campaign expenditure in the 2024–25 reporting period did not exceed $100 000.

Consultancy expenditure

Details of consultancies (valued at $10,000 or greater)
In 2024–25, there were 68 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were $10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2024–25 in relation to these consultancies was $4,982,346.29 (excl. GST). Details of individual consultancies are outlined on the Mallee CMA's website, at www.malleecma.com.au (under the Resources tab).

Details of consultancies (valued at less than $10,000)
In 2024–25, there were 63 consultancies engaged during the year where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than $10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2024–25 in relation to these consultancies was $289,803.67 (excl. GST).

For this reporting requirement the following definitions are applied:

- 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
  - development of a written report or other intellectual output
- a contractor is an individual or organisation that is formally engaged to provide works or services for or on behalf of an entity. This definition does not apply to casual, fixed term or temporary employees directly employed by the entity.

Reviews and studies expenditure

In 2024–25, there were four reviews and studies undertaken which were not commercially sensitive with a total estimated cost of $900,800. Details of individual reviews and studies are outlined in Table 28 below.

Major reviews and studies have been defined as those that met all the following criteria:

- completed as a deliverable output
- conducted by an external provider and exceeded $100,000 (exclusive of GST)
- approved by the Board, CEO or a senior executive
- resulted in a published report.

Table 28 | Reviews and studies expenditure 2024–25

Name of review	Reason for review/study	Scope	Anticipated outcomes	Estimated cost*	Final cost*	Publicly available Y/N & URL
The Living Murray (TLM) Condition monitoring - Hattah	Measure ecological condition of Hattah Lakes	Completion of condition monitoring tree demography, tree condition, wetland understorey, floodplain understorey, lignum, fish and waterbird surveys at Hattah Lakes icon site, and associated data analysis	Updated condition results and trend analysis	$297,000	N/A	Y
TLM Condition monitoring - Lindsay Mulcra Wallpolla (LMW)	Measure ecological condition of LMW	Completion of condition monitoring tree demography, tree condition, wetland understorey, floodplain understorey, lignum, fish and waterbird surveys at LMW icon site, and associated data analysis	Updated condition results and trend analysis	$338,000	N/A	Y
TLM intervention - Aquatic vegetation dynamics	Advancing knowledge of aquatic vegetation dynamics across Hattah and LMW	Advancing knowledge of aquatic vegetation dynamics across Hattah and LMW	Technical Report	$125,800	$125,800	Y
TLM Intervention - Black Box regeneration	Advancing knowledge of black box regeneration across Hattah and LMW	Advancing knowledge of black box regeneration across Hattah and LMW	Technical Report	$140,000	N/A	Y

*Excluding GST

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expenditure

For the 2023–24 reporting period, Mallee CMA had a total ICT expenditure of $633,429.23, as detailed in Table 29.

Note:

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

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

BAU ICT expenditure includes all remaining ICT expenditure and typically relates to ongoing activities to operate and maintain the current ICT capability.

Table 29 | ICT Expenditure 2024–25

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)
$641,092.55	**$72,812.30**	**$72,812.30**	**0**

Major contracts

The Mallee CMA did not enter into any major contracts during 2024–25.

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

Freedom of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (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.

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

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.

Under the Act, the FOI processing time for requests received is 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.

Making a request

FOI request information be lodged online at www.ovic.vic.gov.au. An application fee of $33.60 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 Act.

When making a FOI request, applicants should ensure requests are in writing and clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought and be accompanied by the application fee to be a valid request.

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

Freedom of Information Team
Mallee Catchment Management Authority
PO Box 5017, Mildura, Victoria 3502

FoI statistics

During 2024–25, Mallee CMA received NIL 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 Freedom of Information – Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (www.ovic.vic.gov.au).

Building Act 1993

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 does not tolerate improper conduct by employees, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct. It is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment.

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.

'Detrimental 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 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: malleecma.com.au/corporate-policies.

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000
Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001
Phone: 1300 735 135
Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au
Email: A secure email disclosure process is available on IBAC's website.

Table 30 | Disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*

Disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*	2023–24	2024–25
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

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 2018–23 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.

Emergency Procurement

In 2024–25 Mallee CMA Emergency Procurement was not activated, resulting in NIL spending for emergency procurements.

Social Procurement Framework

Mallee CMA is fully committed to supporting the government's directions under the Social Procurement Framework (SPF) and we recognise that we play a key role in advancing social and sustainable outcomes for Victorians.

Mallee CMA Social Procurement Strategy was reviewed in May 2025 for a further three years to enable a strategic, agency-wide approach to how it will deliver social and sustainable outcomes through our procurement in accordance with the Social Procurement Framework.

- The Mallee CMA Strategy has prioritised four key SPF objectives
- Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People
- Opportunities for Victorians with disability
- Women's equality and safety, and
- Opportunities for Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal business enterprises.

Social Procurement 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. During the 2024–25 reporting year, Mallee CMA continued to develop resources to ensure ongoing efficiency in our procurement processes, forms, and communication.

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

- Continued support and use of Victorian Aboriginal businesses and those that employ Victorian Aboriginal Peoples
- Tracked expenditure and employment of Victorian Aboriginal people through its supplier contracts
- Engaged regionally Recognised Aboriginal Parties and Aboriginal Peoples in the development of Cultural Heritage Management Plan assessments.

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

- Continued its support and use of the services provided by C2A - Disability Without Limits for confidential document destruction service.

Table 31 | Achievements against SPF objectives and metrics

Objective prioritised	Outcome sought	SPF Reporting metric	2024–25
Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People	Purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses	Number of Victorian Aboriginal businesses engaged	7
		Total expenditure with Victorian Aboriginal businesses	$606,000*
Opportunities for Victorians with disability	Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Australian Disability Enterprises	Number of Victorian social enterprises (led by a mission for people with disability) and Australian Disability Enterprises engaged	2
		Total expenditure with Victorian social enterprises (led by a mission for people with disability) and Australian Disability Enterprises	$5,000*
Women's Equality and Safety	Adoption of family violence leave by Victorian Government suppliers	Number of Victorian Government suppliers that have implemented family violence leave policy	8
	Gender equality within Victorian government suppliers	Number of Victorian Government suppliers that have a gender equality policy	21
Sustainable Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal business sectors	Purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses	Number of Victorian social enterprises engaged	4
		Total expenditure with Victorian social enterprises	$13,000*

***Note** $ exclude GST

Procurement Complaints

Under the Governance Policy of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB), Mallee CMA must disclose any formal complaints relating to the procurement of goods and services received through its procurement complaints management system.

Mallee CMA did not receive any formal complaints through its procurement complaints management system in 2024–25.

Environmental Reporting

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 the usage of resources and waste production. As a member of the Victorian Government - Irymple site user group, Mallee CMA has committed 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 state government department as the landlord. All steps taken to reduce environmental impacts implemented by the Mallee CMA contribute to the whole-of-site energy efficiencies and contribute toward the reduction in DEECA energy resource usage.

Mallee CMA has been assessed as a Tier 4 entity under FRD 24 reporting requirements. Further information on office-based environmental impacts is presented in Table 32.

Transportation

Mallee CMA's fleet comprised of 19 vehicles essential to the Authority's provision of NRM across the Mallee CMA region. Mallee CMA has one van that is used for community engagement activities, the remainder were passenger vehicles for pool-use.

Energy used in transport fuels increased by 17 percent from 2023-24 to 2024-25 as vehicle usage was higher in 2024-25 while airline travel decreased. Greenhouse gas emissions from transport also increased by 17 per cent in line with the usage increase and commercial air travel decreased by 43 percent. The transport changes have been driven by differing project activities in the reporting period and use of technology support services for meetings and training.

Table 32 | Mallee CMA office-based environmental impacts

Outputs	Activity	2022–23 Actual	2023–24 Actual	2024–25 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_2-e)	*	*	*
	Percentage of electricity purchased as Green Power (%)	*	*	*
	Units of energy used per full time employee (megajoules per FTE)	*	*	*
	Units of energy used per unit of office area (megajoules per m^2)	*	*	*
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%**	**100%**	**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 or EWaste Contractor for site.	**100%**	**100%**	**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	**74**	**114**	**80**
	Units of A4 equivalent copy paper reams used per FTE	**1.3**	**2.1**	**1.8**
	Percentage of recycled content in copy paper purchased	**100%**	**100%**	**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^2)	*	*	*
Transport	Total energy consumption by vehicle fleet segmented by vehicle/fuel type (megajoules)	**868,779** Diesel	**525,880** Diesel	**664,905** Diesel
		167,217 Unleaded	**189,345** Unleaded	**171,558** Unleaded
	Total vehicle travel associated with operations segmented by vehicle/fuel type (kilometres)	**231,902** Diesel	**167,548** Diesel	**196,708** Diesel
		64,446 Unleaded	**74,551** Unleaded	**83,691** Unleaded
	Total distance travelled by air (kilometres)	**103,369**	**117,852**	**66,570**
Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO2 e)	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with vehicle fleet	**79.28**	**54.32**	**64.09**
	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with air travel	**12.60**	**16.81**	**12.00**
	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use	*	*	*
	Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste disposal	*	*	*
	Greenhouse gas emissions offsets purchased	**Nil**	**Nil**	**Nil**

Continued...

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

Table 32 | Mallee CMA office-based environmental impacts *Continued...*

Outputs	Activity	2022–23 Actual	2023–24 Actual	2024–25 Actual
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%	100%	100%

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

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 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.

The information is available on request from:
Freedom of Information Team
Mallee Catchment Management Authority
Phone: 03 5001 8600
Email: foi@malleecma.com.au

Additional information included in the annual report

Details in respect of the following items have been included in Mallee CMA's annual report, on the pages indicated below:

- assessments and measures undertaken to improve occupational health and safety of employees - page 64
- 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 55
- training undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees – page 64
- details of Freedom of Information and associated fees – page 73

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 Mallee CMA)
- details of changes in prices, fees, charges, rates, and levies charged by the agency (Mallee CMA does not charge other than Freedom of Information applications)
- details of overseas visits undertaken (no board members or senior executives took overseas work-related trips).

Asset Management Accountability Framework

The Asset Management Accountability Framework is a mandatory framework for managing public assets in Victoria that seeks to ensure an organisation's implementation is both fit for purpose and achieves organisational objectives.

Mallee CMA undertook an independent review in 2023–24 as an assurance activity to measure and validate the level of asset maturity assessment of the organisation.

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 no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.

Allison McTaggart
Board Chair
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

24 September 2025

Part 5

Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Mallee Catchment Management Authority - Tier 2 model financial statements

How this report is structured

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) has presented its audited general-purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2025 in the following structure, to provide users with the information about Mallee CMA's stewardship of resources entrusted to it.

Continued...

Declaration in Financial Statements

The attached financial statements for the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance 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 2025 and financial position of Mallee CMA at 30 June 2025.

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

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 27 August 2025.

Kellie Nulty
Deputy Chairperson
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

Jenny Collins
Chief Executive Officer and Accountable Officer
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

Meagan Crozier
Chief Finance Officer
Mallee Catchment Management Authority

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (the authority) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2025 • comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended • cash flow statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policies • declaration in the financial statements. In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the authority as at 30 June 2025 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures.
Basis for opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975.* 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 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (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. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
Board's responsibilities for the financial report	The Board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, 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. 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.

Level 31 / 35 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
T 03 8601 7000 enquiries@audit.vic.gov.au www.audit.vic.gov.au

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Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report	As required by the *Audit Act 1994,* 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 aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report. 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: • 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. • 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 • evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board • 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. • 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. 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.

T McD

MELBOURNE
2 September 2025

Timothy Maxfield
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

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Mallee Catchment Management Authority
Comprehensive Operating Statement
For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	$ 2025	$ 2024
Income from transactions			
Government contributions	2.2.1	17,791,265	14,637,630
Interest		2,185,839	2,254,601
Salinity levies	2.2.2	2,997,414	3,371,247
Other income		33,315	33,531
Total income from transactions		**23,007,833**	**20,297,009**
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses	3.1.1	6,232,858	5,913,408
Contractors - project based		5,184,372	6,880,793
Consultancies - project based		5,568,129	5,327,979
Project operations and maintenance	3.4	1,010,586	1,111,037
Grants and incentives	3.2	1,145,385	1,580,598
Depreciation	4.1.1	292,704	290,747
Operating expenses	3.3	1,886,494	1,644,619
Total expenses from transactions		**21,320,528**	**22,749,181**
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		**1,687,305**	**(2,452,172)**
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain on disposal of non-financial assets [(b)]	8.2	156,440	239,681
Total other economic flows – included in net result		**156,440**	**239,681**
Comprehensive result		**1,843,745**	**(2,212,491)**

Notes:

(a) 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 2025

	Notes	$ 2025	$ 2024
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.1	50,468,476	48,398,229
Receivables	5.1	2,199,639	1,510,835
Total financial assets		**52,668,115**	**49,909,064**
Non-financial assets			
Prepayments	5.3	185,633	86,471
Plant and equipment	4.1	680,556	768,739
Total non-financial assets		**866,189**	**855,210**
Total assets		**53,534,304**	**50,764,274**
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	1,334,436	548,860
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	1,378,646	1,237,937
Total liabilities		**2,713,082**	**1,786,797**
Net assets		**50,821,222**	**48,977,477**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		6,199,733	3,882,247
Reserves	8.3	40,524,154	40,997,895
Contributed capital		4,097,335	4,097,335
Net worth		**50,821,222**	**48,977,477**

Note:

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Mallee Catchment Management Authority
Cash Flow Statement
For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	$ 2025	$ 2024
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		17,606,864	15,238,373
Interest received		2,185,839	2,254,601
Goods and services tax received from the ATO [(a)]		872,352	1,147,593
Other receipts		3,030,730	3,974,258
Total receipts		**23,695,785**	**22,614,825**
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(21,577,456)	(24,005,242)
Total payments		**(21,577,456)**	**(24,005,242)**
Net cashflows from/(used in) operating activities		**2,118,329**	**(1,390,418)**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchases of non-financial assets		(244,218)	(600,850)
Proceeds from sale of non-financial assets		196,136	245,455
Net cashflows from/(used in) investing activities		**(48,082)**	**(355,395)**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		**2,070,247**	**(1,745,813)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		48,398,229	50,144,042
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6.1	**50,468,476**	**48,398,229**

Notes:

(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 2025

	Notes	Reserves	Accumulated surplus / (deficit)	Contributed capital	Total
		$	$	$	$
Balance at 1 July 2023		**43,719,726**	**3,372,908**	**4,097,335**	**51,189,969**
Net result for the year		-	(2,212,492)	-	(2,212,492)
Transfers to/(from) reserves		(2,721,831)	2,721,831	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2024		**40,997,895**	**3,882,247**	**4,097,335**	**48,977,477**
Net result for the year		-	1,843,745	-	1,843,745
Transfers to/(from) reserves	8.3	(473,741)	473,741	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2025		**40,524,154**	**6,199,733**	**4,097,335**	**50,821,222**

Notes:

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

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
308-390 Koorlong Avenue
Irymple, Victoria, 3498

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with *AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities (AASB 1060)* and *Financial Reporting Direction 101 Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards (FRD 101)* .

The Authority is a Tier 2 entity in accordance with FRD 101. These financial statements are the first general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. The Authority's prior year financial statements were general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (Tier 1). As the Authority is not a 'significant entity' as defined in FRD 101, it was required to change from Tier 1 to Tier 2 reporting effective from 1 July 2024.

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.

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.

Revisions 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 Australian Accounting Standards (AASs) that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading: 'Significant judgement or estimates'.

Rounding

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

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.

2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

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.

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	$ 2025	$ 2024
Government Contributions	2.2.1	17,791,265	14,637,630
Interest		2,185,839	2,254,601
Salinity Levies	2.2.2	2,997,415	3,371,247
Other Income	2.2.3	33,315	33,531
Total income that funds delivery of services		**23,007,834**	**20,297,009**

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

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Grants recognised as income of not-for-profit entities (AASB 1058)		
State Government		
State Government Contributions	4,903,663	4,030,559
Integrated Water Management	330,000	-
Catchment Governance	638,000	615,000
Sustainable Irrigation Program	493,000	479,000
Landcare Program	518,274	525,001
Environmental Water Program	759,000	593,000
Environmental Water Holder	953,461	401,337
Water Management Program	1,408,411	1,813,000
Our Catchment Our Communities	375,000	576,000
Total State Government contributions	**10,378,809**	**9,032,897**
Commonwealth Government		
Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project	1,651,631	569,480
Commonwealth Contributions	642,051	633,158
The Living Murray	2,530,308	2,818,083
National Landcare Program	647,694	418,700
Biodiversity Fund	522,500	533,500
Total Commonwealth Government contributions	**5,994,184**	**4,972,921**
Grants recognised as revenue from contract with customers (AASB 15)		
Commonwealth Government		
National Landcare Program	1,418,272	631,811
Total Government contributions	**17,791,265**	**14,637,630**

Income 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 Contributions*;
(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 Leases*;
(d) a financial instrument, in accordance with *AASB 9 Financial Instruments;* 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 is satisfied but not yet billed, a contract asset is recorded. As this funding is generally invoiced in arrears of the work performed, the funding payments are normally received after the relevant obligation is satisfied.

2.2.2 Salinity Levies

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Salinity Levies	2,997,414	3,371,247
Total Salinity Levies	**2,997,414**	**3,371,247**

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. Salinity levies are recognised under AASB 1058.

3. THE COST OF DELIVERING OUR SERVICES

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.

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	$ 2025	$ 2024
Employee benefits expense	3.1.1	6,232,858	5,913,408
Contractors - project based		5,184,372	6,880,793
Consultancies - project based		5,568,129	5,327,979
Project operations and maintenance	3.4	1,010,586	1,111,037
Grants and incentives	3.2	1,145,385	1,580,598
Other operating expenses	3.3	1,886,494	1,644,619
Total expenses incurred in delivery of services		**21,027,824**	**22,458,434**

3.1.1 Employee benefits in the comprehensive operating statement

	Notes	$ 2025	$ 2024
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave		5,630,787	5,251,705
Termination benefits		803	75,749
Defined contribution superannuation		601,268	585,953
Total employee benefits expenses		**6,232,858**	**5,913,408**

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.

3.1.2 Employee benefits in the balance sheet

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.

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Current provisions		
Annual leave	400,748	387,369
Long service leave	634,093	564,337
Time in lieu and rostered days off	1,176	7,623
Provisions for on-costs	204,428	157,477
Total current provisions for employee benefits	**1,240,445**	**1,116,806**
Non-current provisions		
Provision for long service leave	113,555	102,516
On-costs	24,646	18,615
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	**138,201**	**121,131**
Total provisions for employee benefits	**1,378,646**	**1,237,937**

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.

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.

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, except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates for which it is then recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the net result.

Employee benefit provisions: In measuring employee benefits, consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, history 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.

3.2 Grant expenses

	2025 $	2024 $
Payments for specific purposes	1,145,385	1,580,598
Total grant expenses	**1,145,385**	**1,580,598**

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.

3.3 Other operating expenses

	2025 $	2024 $
Supplies and services		
Purchase of services	1,360,707	1,205,006
Office expenses	206,902	124,926
Leases - short term	318,885	314,687
Total other operating expenses	**1,886,494**	**1,644,619**

3.4 Project operations and maintenance expenses

	2025 $	2024 $
Supplies and services		
Cultural Heritage Advice and Assessments	578,080	524,377
Other project expenditure	432,506	586,660
Total project operations and maintenance expenses	**1,010,586**	**1,111,037**

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.

The Authority has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients.
The following lease payments are recognised on a straight-line basis:
- Short-term leases - leases with a term 12 months or less.
- Low value leases - leases with the underlying asset's fair value (when new, regardless of the age of the asset being leased) is no more than $10,000.
- Operating lease - (including contingent rentals) except where another systematic basis is more representative of the time pattern of the benefits derived from the use of the leased asset.

At 30 June 2025 the Authority does not have any commitments for short-term or low value leases.

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.

4.1 Plant and equipment

	$	$	$	$	$	$
	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Motor vehicles at fair value	1,009,718	1,013,237	(386,971)	(383,122)	622,747	630,116
Office furniture and equipment at fair value	8,310	18,124	(5,897)	(12,089)	2,413	6,035
Plant and equipment at fair value	283,131	316,533	(227,735)	(183,945)	55,396	132,588
Net carrying amount	**1,301,159**	**1,347,894**	**(620,603)**	**(579,156)**	**680,556**	**768,739**

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.

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: *Impairment of Assets* does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued, unless any indicator of impairment exists.

4.1.1 Depreciation

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:

	(years)
Asset	Useful life
Motor vehicles	4 to 8
Office furniture and equipment	5 to 15
Plant and equipment	3 to 10

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

4.1.2 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amounts of plant and equipment

	$	$	$	$
2025	Motor vehicles at fair value	Office furniture and equipment at fair value	Plant and equipment at fair value	Total
Opening balance	630,115	6,036	132,588	768,739
Additions	244,218	-	-	244,218
Disposals	(38,337)	(1,360)	-	(39,697)
Depreciation	(213,249)	(2,263)	(77,192)	(292,704)
Closing balance	**622,747**	**2,413**	**55,396**	**680,556**

5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Introduction

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

5.1 Receivables

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Contractual		
Income receivable	1,504,730	-
Other receivables	396,230	1,139,925
Statutory		
GST input tax receivable	298,679	370,910
Total receivables	**2,199,639**	**1,510,835**

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.

5.2 Payables

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Contractual		
Supplies and services	1,334,436	548,860
Total payables	**1,334,436**	**548,860**

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.*

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.

5.3 Other non-financial assets

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Current other assets		
Prepayments	185,633	86,471
Total other non-financial assets	185,633	**86,471**

Other non-financial assets include prepayments, which represent payments in advance of receipt of goods or services or the payments made for services covering a term beyond that financial accounting period.

6. HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS

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.

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.

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Cash on hand	1,000	1,000
Cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet	50,467,476	48,397,229
Balance as per cash flow statement	**50,468,476**	**48,398,229**

Note:

(a) Cash and deposits bear variable interest rate with a weighted-average interest rate of 4.40% during the 2024-25 year.

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.

6.2 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 2025	$ Less than 1 year	$ 1 - 5 years	$ 5+ years	$ Total
Other commitments payable	5,196,727	1,032,168	-	6,228,895
Total commitments	**5,196,727**	**1,032,168**	**-**	**6,228,895**

Nominal amounts 2024	$ Less than 1 year	$ 1 - 5 years	$ 5+ years	$ Total
Other commitments payable	5,647,203	1,649,859	-	7,297,062
Total commitments	**5,647,203**	**1,649,859**	**-**	**7,297,062**

7. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

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, 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.

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 less 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.

7.1.1 Financial instruments - Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category

	$	$	$	$	$
2025	Carrying Amount	Net gain/loss	Total interest income/ (expense)	Fee income/ (expense)	Impairment loss
Contractual financial assets at amortised cost					
Cash and deposits	50,468,476	-	2,185,839	-	
Receivables [(a)]					
Income receivable	1,504,730	-	-	-	
Other contractual receivables	396,230	-	-	-	
Total contractual financial assets at amortised cost	**52,369,436**	**-**	**2,185,839**	**-**	**-**
Contractual financial liabilities at amortised cost					
Trade Payables					
Supplies and services	1,334,436	-	-	-	
Total contractual financial liabilities at amortised cost	**1,334,436**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

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).

2024	Carrying Amount $	Net gain/loss $	Total interest income/ (expense) $	Fee income/ (expense) $	Impairment loss $
Contractual financial assets at amortised cost					
Contractual financial assets					
Cash and deposits	48,398,229	-	2,254,601	-	-
Receivables [(a)]					
Other contractual receivables	1,139,925	-	-	-	-
Total contractual financial assets at amortised cost	**49,538,154**		**2,254,601**	**-**	
Contractual financial liabilities at amortised cost					
Trade Payables					
Supplies and services	548,860	-	-	-	-
Total contractual financial liabilities at amortised cost	**548,860**		**-**	**-**	**-**

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).

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, motor vehicles and office furniture and equipment

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:

- valuation techniques;
- details of significant assumptions used in the fair value determination.

7.3.1 Fair value determination of non-financial physical assets

Motor 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 and Office Furniture and Equipment are held at fair value. When plant and equipment or office furniture 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 2025.

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

Description of significant assumptions applied to fair value measurement unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

2025	Valuation technique	Significant assumption
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
Motor Vehicles	Replacement cost	Cost per unit
		Useful life of motor vehicles

There have been no significant changes to observable inputs for the 2024-25 year.

8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

Introduction

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

8.1 Ex gratia expenses

Ex gratia expenses are the voluntary payments 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 to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability of or claim against the entity.

The Authority had no ex gratia expenses for the year ending 30 June 2025 (2024 $0).

8.2 Other economic flows included in net result

Other economic flows are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows include the gains or losses from the revaluation of the present value of the long service leave liability due to changes in bond interest rates.

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets		
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of plant and equipment	156,440	239,681
Total net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets	156,440	239,681

8.3 Reserves

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Committed funds reserve [(a)]		
Balance at beginning of financial year	7,136,802	6,572,931
Transfers to/(from) accumulated surplus	652,584	563,871
Balance at end of financial year	**7,789,386**	**7,136,802**
Salinity offset reserve [(b)]		
Balance at beginning of financial year	32,861,093	36,146,795
Transfers to/(from) accumulated surplus	(1,126,325)	(3,285,702)
Balance at end of financial year	**31,734,768**	**32,861,093**
Capital renewals reserve [(c)]		
Balance at beginning of financial year	1,000,000	1,000,000
Transfers to/(from) accumulated surplus	-	-
Balance at end of financial year	**1,000,000**	**1,000,000**
Total reserves	**40,524,154**	**40,997,895**

Notes:

(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.

8.4 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:

Ministers	
The Hon. Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water	1 July 2024 to 19 December 2024
The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Water	19 December 2024 to 30 June 2025
The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Environment	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Climate Action	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Board Members	
Allison McTaggart, Board Chair	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Kellie Nulty, Deputy Board Chair	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Robert Matthews, Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Janice Kelly, Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Ann Hodge, Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Antonio Alessi, Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Kym McIntosh, Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Janitha (Ruwan) Jayasinghe, Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Accountable Officer	
Jennifer Collins, Chief Executive Officer	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

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 $290,601-$419,000 (2024: $279,239-$401,017).

8.5 Remuneration of executives

The number of senior executive members, other than Ministers and accountable officers, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the table below. Total annualised employee equivaltents provides a measure of full time equivalent exective officers over the reporting period.

Remuneration comprises employees benefits (as defined in AASB 119 Employee Benefits) in all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by the Authority, or on behalf of the Authority, in exchange for services rendered. Accordingly, remuneration is determined on an accrual basis.

Remuneration of the senior executive officers (excluding Key Management Personnel disclosed in Note 8.6)	Total Remuneration 2025 $	2024 $
Total remuneration [(a)]	708,837	504,301
Total number of executives [(b)]	11	9
Total annualised employee equivalents [(c)]	9.5	8.3

Notes:

(a) The total number of executive officers includes persons who meet the definition of Key Management Personnel (KMP) of the entity under AASB 124 Related Party Disclosures and are also reported within the related parties note disclosure (Note 8.6).

(b) Two executives appointed in 2024/2025 financial year (February and May).

(c) Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period and excludes executives that are not employees.

8.6 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.

All 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. Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Water
- The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Water
- The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Environment
- The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Climate Action
- Allison McTaggart, Board Member, Chair
- Kelly Nulty, Board Member, Deputy Chair
- Robert Matthews, Board Member
- Janice Kelly, Board Member
- Ann Hodge, Board Member
- Antonio Alessi, Board Member
- Kym McIntosh, Board Member
- Janitha (Ruwan) Jayasinghe, 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.

	$	$
Compensation of KMPs	2025	2024
Total [(a)]	**708,837**	**504,301**

(a) Note that KMPs are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of executive officers (Note 8.5).

Government Related Entities

During the year the Authority reported related party transactions with the following government related entities (where the total value of the entity transactions exceeds $100,000):

Name of Government Entity	Details Transaction	Nature of Relationship	Receipts $	Outstanding Receipts $	Payments $	Commitments $
Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	13,611,715	-	1,793,458	233,819
Lower Murray Water	Salinity levies for manageing water use licences in salinity impact zones. Reimbursment of costs associated with joint project.	Joint responsibility	4,393,873	367,807	3,487	-
Parks Victoria	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Significant influence	-	-	275,244	1,023,500
Wimmera CMA Wimmera Catchment Management Authority	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	147,803	-	37,762	-
Goulburn Murray Water	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	121,000	-	-	-
Victorian Enviromental Water Holder	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	272,615	-	-	-
Victorian Fisheries Authority	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Joint responsibility	99,000	-	-	-

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
				$	$	$	$
Sunraysia Institute of TAFE	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Kellie Nulty	Supplier	-	-	2,909	-
Mildura District Aboriginal Corporation	Purchase of goods/services to undertake projects	Kellie Nulty	Supplier	-	-	604	-
Millewa-Carwarp Landcare Group	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Kellie Nulty	Contractor	-	-	15,127	-
Woomelang Lascelles Landcare Group	Provision grant funding to undertake projects	Janice Kelly	Contractor	-	-	13,752	-

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.

8.7 Remuneration of auditors

	$ 2025	$ 2024
Victorian Auditor-General's Office [(a)]		
Audit of the financial statements	24,700	23,800
Total remuneration of auditors	**24,700**	**23,800**

(a) The Victorian Auditor-General's Office is not allowed to provide non-audit services

8.8 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.

8.9 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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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 the identification of the CMA's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

Table 1 | Ministerial Directions and Financial Reporting Directions Disclosure index

Legislation	Requirement	Page
Report of Operations		
Charter and purpose		
FRD 22	Manner of establishment and the relevant Ministers	7
FRD 22	Nature and range of services provided	7
FRD 22	Purpose, functions, powers and duties	9
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Appendices

2 Condition and Management Report

1 Introduction

Condition and management reporting is undertaken 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 include in its report of operations prepared under Part 7 of the Financial Management Act 1994, 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 current condition of the region's environment and a reflection on the likely impact of annual-scale actions (management), external drivers, and observed changes over both the 2024–25 reporting period and the preceding five years. A key purpose of monitoring change within this short-medium term operating context is to help identify opportunities for adapting and changing the way we manage the environment.

Assessments are reported against five headline themes and associated sub-themes (Table 1) to align with the state-wide outcome framework that links the outcomes being sought by our regional communities (i.e. as established by the Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) 2022–28[1]) to the high-level policy outcomes of the Victorian and Australian Governments.

Developed as per DEECA Guidelines for Annual Condition and Management Report[2], this 2024–25 report has a focus on assessing Mallee CMA's contribution to the management of land and water resources, with detailed reporting on medium-long term changes in condition indicators for each headline theme to be undertaken as part of the mid-term and final reviews of the RCS.

Table 1 | Headline themes

Headline theme	Sub-theme	Definition / Scope
Biodiversity	Threatened Species and Communities	Populations of threatened or significant species, occurrences of threatened ecological communities (aquatic and terrestrial species/communities).
	Terrestrial Habitat	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 associated floodplain ecosystems (including groundwater dependent ecosystems and the groundwater flow systems and aquifers they are reliant on).
Agricultural Land	Dryland	All parts of the landscape developed for the purpose of dryland and irrigated agricultural production (including the soil and water resources they rely and impact on).
	Irrigated	
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).

[1] See https://mallee.rcs.vic.gov.au/
[2] Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2025)

1.1 Assessment Framework

Condition and Management assessments are 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. Three levels of indicators are applied:

- **Management indicators** are applied annually to rate the delivery of CMA programs and activities against planned targets (see Table 2)
- **Contextual indicators** help identify how external environmental factors and internal drivers may have influenced program delivery and associated asset/threat responses to management actions throughout 2024–25.
- **Condition indicators** are applied every six-years, reflecting the timeframes to observe changes in the natural environment and the availability of the supporting data. With the next complete assessment scheduled for 2027–28 (i.e. as part of RCS final review processes), an interim 'summary' rating is included in this 2024–25 report to build on previous year's assessments. A 6-year trend assessment is also provided to reflect changes in condition over the short to medium term, with change assessed against the direction required to contribute to the achievement of regional outcomes (see Table 3).

Table 2 | Management Assessment

Management rating	Description
Above expectations	Delivery of activities and programs associated with this indicator is assessed as above expectations for the 12-month period (i.e. majority of activities delivered /targets met or exceeded).
Satisfactory	Delivery of activities and programs associated with this indicator is assessed as satisfactory for the 12-month period (i.e. targets for some activities were not achieved or the majority were almost achieved).
Below expectations	Delivery of activities and programs associated with this indicator is assessed as below expectations for the 12-month period (i.e. some critical activities/ targets not delivered, or the majority of activities/targets not delivered).
Not applicable	A management rating is not applicable for this indicator.
Unknown	The rating for this indicator is not known and or assessable.

Table 3 | Condition Assessment

Condition rating	Description
Good	The condition is classified as good.
Moderate	The condition is classified as moderate.
Poor	The condition is classified as poor.
Not applicable	A condition rating is not applicable for this indicator.

6-year Condition Trend	Description
Positive	The condition is moving in a positive direction over the short to medium term pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.
Neutral	The condition is in a neutral state over the short to medium term and is considered stable pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.
Concerned	The condition is cause for concern over the short to medium term and will continue to decline pending ongoing management and environmental impacts.

2 2. Regional Catchment Condition and Management Summary

A summary of condition and trend assessments for each theme (and sub-theme as applied) is provided in Table 4. The reporting format aims to provide a transparent path between the evidence and the assessment. It is not a definitive assessment but rather a point-in-time assessment based on available evidence and expert advice.

Table 4 | Overview of regional condition and management assessments for each theme

Headline Theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Sub-theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Summary Comment
Biodiversity	Moderate Neutral	Above Expectations	Threatened Species and Communities	Poor Neutral	Above Expectations	**Condition Rating**: Overall condition considered poor on the basis of the proportion of both FFG and EPBC listed threatened species/communities which are recorded as occurring in the Mallee (i.e. FFG = 20% of species /17% of communities and EPBC = 2% of species / 6% 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, and the expected trajectory of key species without effective and sustained interventions. **Condition Trend**: Several site-based assessments of individual threatened species and communities over medium (6-year) term 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 (e.g. responses to 2022–23 rainfall and flood events). **Management**: All 2024–25 scheduled activities delivered /targets met by three programs implementing species x location specific on-ground interventions, encompassing: Protecting and reconnecting critical Malleefowl and Mallee Bird Community habitat; and Murray hardyhead translocation and habitat rehabilitation.
			Terrestrial Habitat	Moderate Positive	Satisfactory	**Condition Rating**: While there has been an estimated three percent decline in native vegetation extent across the region since 1985[3], current condition (as measured by leaf area index) is above the 22-year (2000–22) average[4], resulting in a moderate condition assessment. It is also recognised however 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. **Condition Trend**: Significant areas of targeted works have been 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 under varying climatic conditions. This includes grazing management programs maintaining herbivores (rabbits and feral goats) below regional thresholds to support recruitment outcomes, and evidence of ecological functionality returning to revegetated sites. **Management**: Most planned activities and associated delivery targets were met or exceeded in 2024–25, including: 551,418ha of pest animal control (rabbit, feral goat, fox, feral cat), 12,798ha of weed control. 84ha of native vegetation established or maintained as part of a new 4-year program commencing in Autumn 2025 was 14ha below target due to plant shortages but considerably higher than previous year.

Continued...

3 Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2019), Victorian Land Cover Time Series
4 Australian National University and TERN (2024), Australia's Environment Explorer

Table 4 | Overview of regional condition and management assessments for each theme *Continued...*

Headline Theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Sub-theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Summary Comment
Waterways	Moderate Positive	Above Expectations				**Condition Rating**: Overall condition is assessed as being moderate to reflect the findings of previous regional scale and site-based assessments of Mallee waterways (i.e. good to poor condition ratings). Ongoing decline in the extent of wetlands is of concern however, with the area of seasonal wetlands estimated to have declined by 23 percent (3,431ha) between 1985 and 2019; and perennial wetlands by 53 percent (88ha) over the same period[5]. **Condition Trend**: Evidence that management actions are having a positive impact in the medium-term with significant areas of inundation achieved through environmental watering having a demonstrable impact on waterway connectivity and both aquatic and riparian habitat condition. Targeted threat mitigation works (e.g. invasive plant and animal management) are also further securing environmental outcomes achieved by recent environmental watering and riverine flood event. Ongoing decline in the extent of wetlands is of concern however, with the area of seasonal wetlands estimated to have declined by 23 percent (3,431ha) between 1985 and 2019; and perennial wetlands by 53 percent (88ha) over the same period[6]. **Management**: Most planned activities were met or exceeded in 2024-25, including: The area of waterways targeted for priority weed species (48,850ha) being 15x the average for the previous four years, reflecting a lower overall density of weeds on site which enabled an increased areas to be treated with the same level of resources; 13,653ha of pest animal control (rabbit, feral goat, fox, feral pig); 18ha of native vegetation, and 40 watering regimes inundating 1,262ha.

Continued...

5 Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2019), Victorian Land Cover Time Series
6 Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2019), Victorian Land Cover Time Series

Table 4 | Overview of regional condition and management assessments for each theme *Continued...*

Headline Theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Sub-theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Summary Comment
Agricultural Land	Moderate Positive	Above Expectations	Dryland	Moderate Neutral	Above Expectations	**Condition Rating**: While widespread management changes over the over the past 30 years have provided for increased productivity, while also supporting increased vegetation cover, soil aggregation and overall soil stability; it is also evident that there continues to be significant risks to associated soil resources. Groundcover observations demonstrate that on average, 81 percent of agricultural land in the region exceeded the total vegetation cover (TVC) target of >50% between 2001 and 2023. TVC levels have however been consistently below average when dry conditions are experienced; a key example being 2019 when 26% of agricultural land achieved the >50% threshold, resulting in significant erosion events and associated declines in soil health and productivity. Impacts that would have been further exacerbated had ongoing practice change not occurred. **Condition Trend**: While 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 regard to providing effective management responses in dry seasons. **Management**: All planned activities and associated delivery targets were met or exceeded in 2024–25, including: The establishment of 15 on-ground research, demonstration, and extension sites to validate best practice strategies for protecting soil health and increasing yield potential in a drying climate; and ongoing implementation of the Mallee Land Use and Wind Erosion Monitoring Program to improve stakeholder understanding of spatial/temporal variability in land management practices and associated soil health impacts.
			Irrigated	Moderate Positive	Satisfactory	**Condition Rating**: Overall condition is assessed as being moderate to reflect 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. **Condition Trend**: Considered to be improving in the medium to short-term, with evidence that the ongoing implementation of targeted management actions is continuing to reduce the incidence and impact of key threat processes. **Management**: Most planned activities and associated delivery targets were met in 2024–25, including progressing priority actions established by the Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan (e.g. production of the 2024 Mallee Crop Report) and the annual Mallee Salinity Investment Plan (e.g. implementing regional surface and groundwater monitoring programs). Irrigation infrastructure upgrades/conversion targets associated with Mallee Irrigation Incentive Program were not achieved however, reflecting the large proportion of irrigators already applying best practice (e.g. 98% with pressurised systems).

Continued...

Table 4 | Overview of regional condition and management assessments for each theme *Continued...*

Headline Theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Sub-theme	Condition Rating / 6 Year Trend	M'ment 2024–25	Summary Comment
Culture & Heritage	Moderate Positive	Above Expectations				**Condition Rating**: Overall condition is assessed as being moderate, based on 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, 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. **Condition Trend**: 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 4,582 Registered Aboriginal Places in the Mallee, a three percent (119) increase since 2020–21. These Places were comprised of 6,674 individual components in 2024–25 a seven percent (460) increase since 2020–21. There is also evidence that formal recognition of the important role Aboriginal people plays in caring for and healing Country is supporting an increase in self-determined participation and economic inclusion in NRM. This includes an increased number of regional programs delivering on cultural objectives and priorities through the application of Traditional Owner-led practices. **Management**: All planned activities and associated delivery targets were met or exceeded in 2024–25, including: compliance with legal requirements for the protection of Cultural Heritage (intangible and tangible); nine programs incorporating Traditional Owner groups as decision makers; eight place-based on ground works focused projects delivering against cultural objectives and priorities; and more than 20,000ha of Traditional Owner-led practices being applied to manage and heal Country.
Community Capacity for NRM	Moderate Positive	Above Expectations				**Condition Rating**: Overall condition is assessed as moderate based on individual stakeholder, community group and government agency/organisation responses to associated evaluations (e.g. Landcare group health surveys, land manager capacity surveys). 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. **Condition Trend**: Ongoing participation by stakeholders and the broader community in awareness, skill development, and collaboration focused activities is providing for condition improvements over both the short and medium term. Participant evaluations identify a high level of satisfaction in regard to the delivery of these events, with 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. **Management**: All planned activities and associated delivery targets were met or exceeded in 2024–25, including: 3,938 participants attending 346 capacity building and engagement events; 228 communication materials produced and disseminated, 56 formal partnerships; 56 management agreements established/maintained to facilitate cooperative action, and four Citizen Science programs supported.

3 Contextual Information

3.1 External influences

Climatic conditions can have a significant impact on both the condition and management of regional assets. In 2024–25 total rainfall experienced across the Mallee was 'very much below average' to 'below average', with the exception of some unseasonal spring rain in the northern and eastern Mallee (Figure 1). This followed 'average' to 'below average' rainfall in 2023–24 and 'very much above average' to 'highest on record' rainfall in 2022–23, demonstrating the significant spatial and temporal variation experienced across the region in recent years.

The area of unprotected (exposed) soil in 2024–25 was slightly higher than the previous year but still below the 25-year average, and the area inundated returned to 2021 levels after two higher-than-average years (Figure 2).

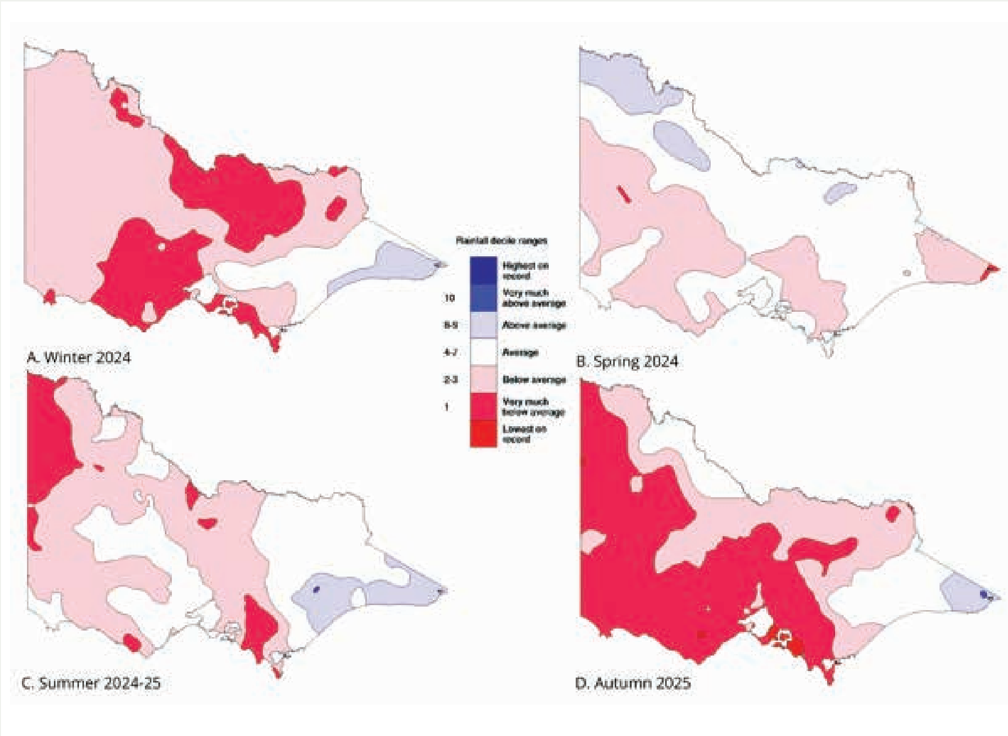

Figure 1 | Victorian Rainfall Deciles for A - 1 June to 31 August, B - 1 September to 30 November, C - 1 December to 28 February 2025, and D - 1 March to 31 May (Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology).

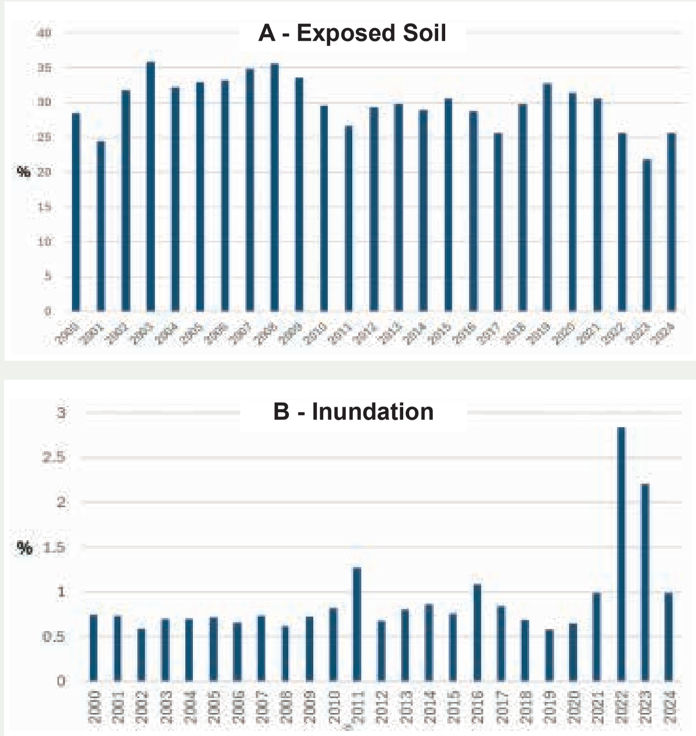

Figure 2 | A – Annual mean percentage of Mallee soil unprotected by living vegetation or litter, and B – Annual maximum Mallee water extent (Source Australia's Environment Explorer).

After the sixth highest inflow water year on record in 2022–23, volumes across the Murray system were less than half the long-term median inflow volume (Figure 3). No large bushfires were experienced across the region in 2024–25; with the area burnt being around average for the decade since 2014 (Figure 4).

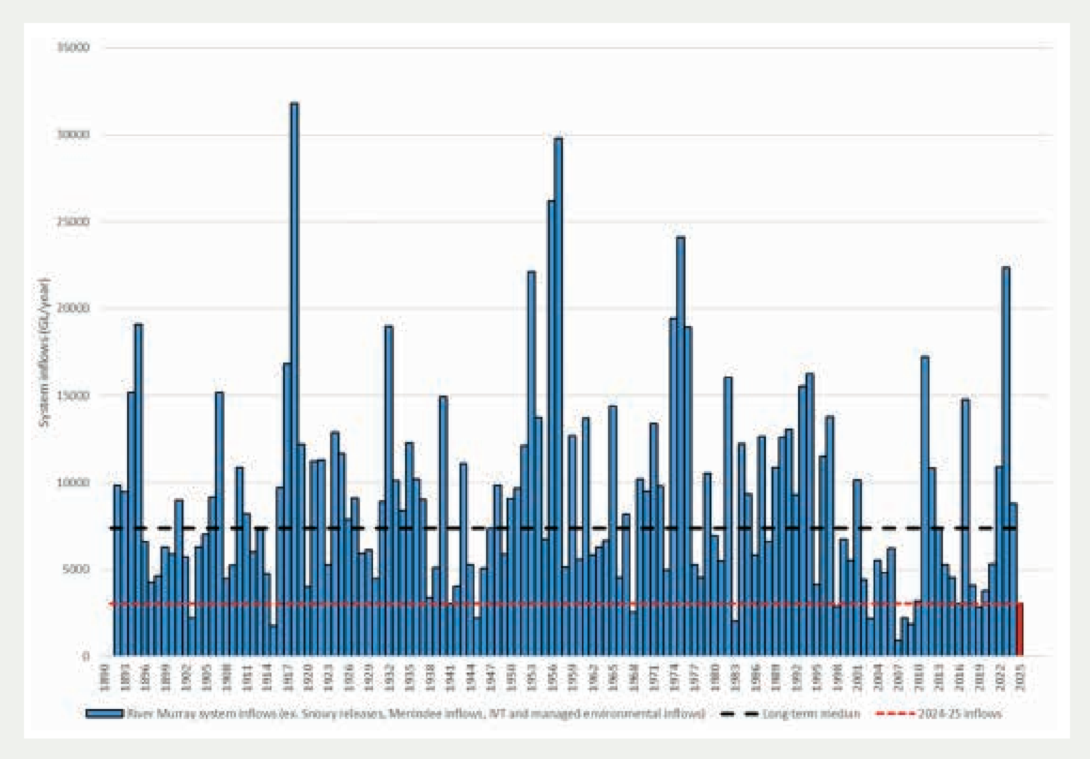

Figure 3 | River Murray system inflows - water year totals (to end May) since 1897 (Source: Murray-Darling Basin Authority 2025). Black dashed line shows the long-term median. The red dashed line shows the 2024–25 inflows compared with all years on record for the 129 years. *Note: inflows exclude Snowy Hydro inflows, inter-valley transfer (IVT) delivery, managed environmental inflows and inflows to Menindee Lakes*.

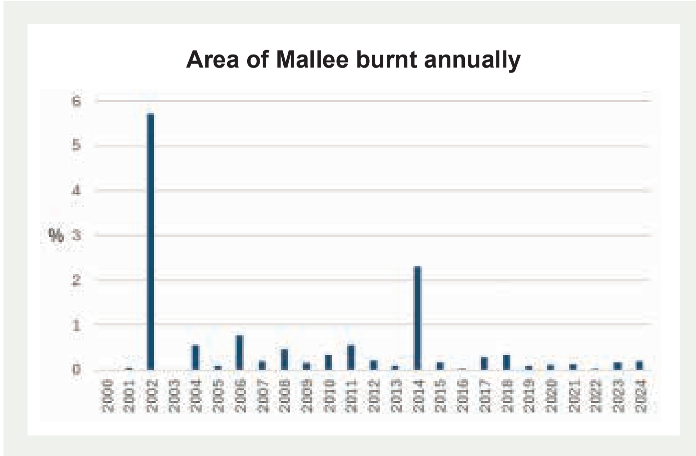

Figure 4 | Area of Mallee burnt annually (Source Australia's Environment Explorer).

3.2 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 2024–25 management actions delivered within the region's priority landscapes (i.e. Local Areas and Priority Corridors) under each headline theme are illustrated spatially in Figure 5. Local Areas 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 Local Areas to support ongoing adaptation processes.

Overall, a large proportion of 2024–25 on-ground management activity was delivered within the region's priority landscapes (Table 5). 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 5 | Proportion (percent) of 2024–25 on-ground actions (outputs) delivered through Mallee CMA programs within the region's priority landscapes[7].

Output type	Delivery	Delivered in priority landscapes (percent)*	
	2024–25 Total	Local Areas	Priority Corridors
Irrigation Infrastructure	3.1ha	100	0
Fence	1km	100	9
Terrestrial Structure	1	100	0
Threatened species response	1	100	0
Waterway structure	2	100	0
Revegetation	127ha	100	34
Weed Control	61,648ha	99	85
Pest Animal Control	565,070ha	99	95
Water Regime	40	99	18
Agricultural Practices	3136ha	0	85

* Overlap of Local Area and Priority Corridor boundaries means that the collective percentage of works occurring within can be greater than 100 percent.

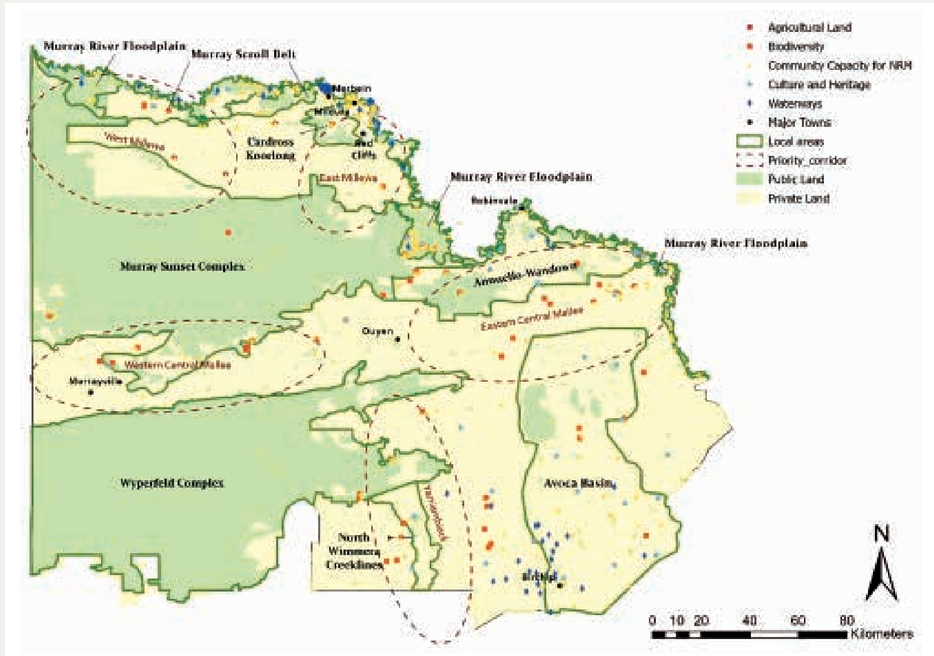

Figure 5 | Spatial distribution of management actions (outputs) delivered in 2024–25 under each of the RCS headline themes.

[7] The output data presented in this section represents works delivered through Mallee CMA programs in 2024–25. It does not 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.

3.3 Strategic Framework

Key strategic documents developed or reviewed by Mallee CMA in 2024–25 to support ongoing advances in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of NRM focused activities, included:

- Mallee CMA Engagement Strategy (2024–25)
- Mallee Drought Resilience Plan (2024): *Implementation Plan*
- Mallee Floodplain Management Strategy (2018–28): I*mplementation Plan Annual Review*
- Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (2022–28): *Mid-term Review*
- Mallee Salinity Investment Plan (2024–25)
- Seasonal Watering Proposals (2025–26): *Encompassing Living Murray Icon Sites, Lower Murray wetlands and Wimmera Mallee Pipeline wetlands*
- Site based Environmental Water Management Plans: *Scheduled reviews of 3 Plans - Pound Bend, Karadoc Swamp and Bottle Bend*
- Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan (2024–25): *Annual Action Plan review*
- Victorian Mallee Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan (2020–2029): *Implementation Plan Annual review*.

Notes

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